



Family Hubs' Service Annual Report 2021

Children & Families Directorate



Thriving children, fulfilling their dreams.

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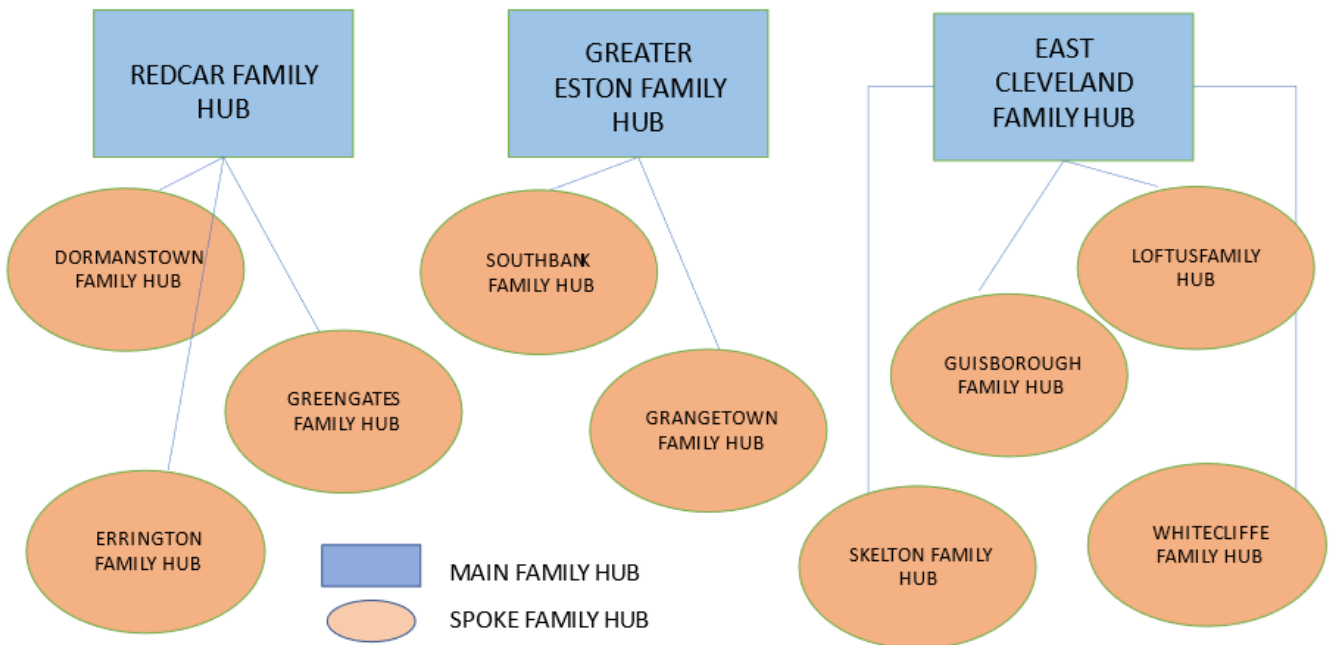
*Photos are of local children and families unless stated



1. Introduction

Our Family Hubs, previously known as Children's Centres, support families with young children. This report provides information about service delivery and the programmes provided between January and December 2021, including the changes we made that allowed us to continue to deliver our interventions throughout the challenging time of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Our Family Hub provision is delivered as a Hub and Spoke model with a main family hub located in each area, providing children and families with an integrated early help prevention offer, and satellite hubs where services can be deployed as needed. Each of the Family Hubs bring together council services, including family hub support staff, health visitors, school nurses, Child & Family Intervention Officers and Careers and NEET Advisors. We are privileged to have retained our 12 Family Hubs throughout the borough so we can continue to deliver services to families within their own communities.



2. Service Context

The Family Hub Team brings together staff with a range of early years experience, parenting support and engagement skills, breast feeding and healthy eating knowledge, and administration skills to work as a team. The team mainly consists of early years trained practitioners, community engagement practitioners and business administration staff.

Over the last year we have continued to deliver both universal sessions open to all, and targeted support to those that require it. Targeted families are referred in to our services with details of the referrer's worries and the children's needs. With the continued COVID restrictions in place, the universal sessions delivered within the hubs were restricted on numbers to ensure we kept those attending as safe as possible. These capacities were increased in line with the government guidance, risk assessments, social distancing and the oversight of the health and safety team throughout the year. We worked closely with our health visitor colleagues to ensure those who really needed the peer support of these groups were prioritised.

Those interventions delivered within homes continued to include the use of personal protective equipment of masks, aprons, gloves etc. before entering the premises. The staff were encouraged to take up the offer of the early vaccination programme and continue to ensure that regular lateral flow tests are taken.

During the period of 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2021, the Family Hub service registered 1705 children and their families. This is an approximate 34.5% increase on registrations when compared to 2020 at the height of the pandemic. However, due to the



COVID restrictions we've had in place over the last year, this still represents a reduction of 1000 new registrations when compared to data in 2019, before the pandemic.

Despite this, we have provided 1227 individual families with a group intervention within our family hubs between January and December 2021.



3. Universal Offer—How did we do?

3.1 New Parents' Group

We have continued our new parents' group throughout the year, providing support for those who are isolated, struggling with low mood, or just really needing some peer support. The group capacity has been significantly reduced this year due to COVID restrictions and initially started with a virtual group, but we soon realised that the parents needed some face-to-face peer support. This was all risk assessed to ensure both staff, parents and babies remained safe.

The aims of this group are:

- To offer a safe space with lots of opportunities for play
- To promote parent/child interaction and positive relationships; talking with babies, mirroring sounds, gestures and movements, modelling baby-centred attuned relating play
- To encourage floor-play; Staff member has role as 'magnet on the mat' greeting babies directly
- To build relationships, promote baby socialisation and make connections within the group
- To promote a secure attachment bond between parents and their baby
- To promote health messages
- To support maternal emotional wellbeing and mental health support
- To promote responsive feeding



The group covers topics such as home safety, breastfeeding support, baby brain development, the importance of reading to your baby, maternity pay, starting solid foods and child development. The sessions explore play between parent and baby, including sensory, messy and mirror play; tummy time, story sacks, with lots of encouragement to extend this into the home environment.

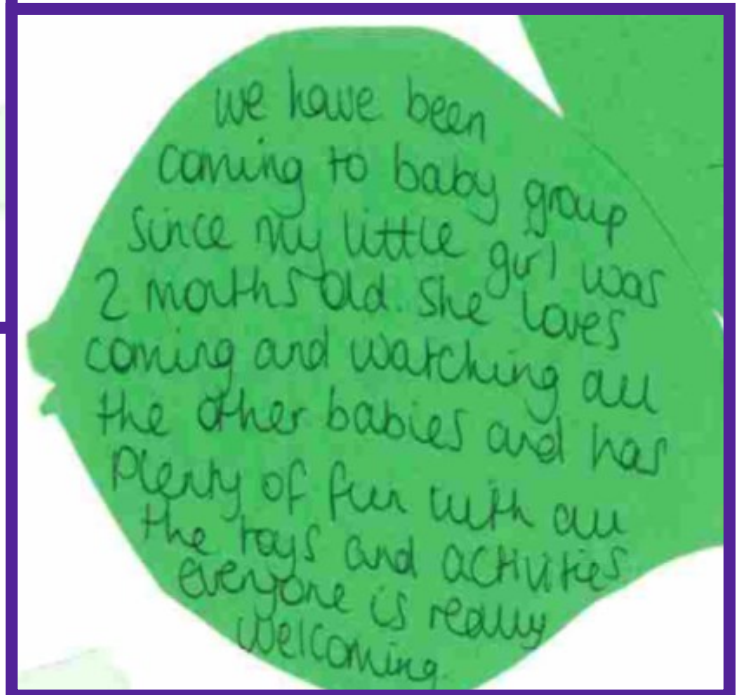
A Mum attending the New Parents' Group commented:-

'Attending the new parent group has helped build my confidence meeting new mums and sharing experiences and advice with them. I've learned how to interact and play with my baby to maximise her development with a range of different activities. I've had people to talk to, just to vent or share my worries to make me feel less alone. At the end of lockdown, it also helped me get out of the house rather than being stuck inside which has helped W interact with other babies and meet different people. Overall attending the group has been a key part in the first year of motherhood and has been great for W who enjoys going every week. Thank you! '

Here are some example's of our parents



comments:



3.2 Little Explorers' Group and Wake up & Shake Up

During the spring and summer, and with COVID restrictions still in place, we decided to hold our Little Explorers outside to allow us to provide a face-to-face activity for our families to attend. The objective of this session was to provide active play opportunities for families using our outdoor space as a learning environment. Young children need physical activity to help them develop and grow and be healthy. Physical activity is vital as children learn to master control of their own bodies. Running these sessions also supported our priority to help the reduction of childhood obesity and increase physically activity in families. We advertised this as Outdoor Little Explorers.

We aimed to offer:

- A safe space with lots of opportunities for play
- A wide range of learning opportunities for children to use their fine and gross motor skills; developing children's coordination, control and movement.
- Physical play opportunities for children and their families to improve their health and fitness

The practitioners record a summary of each of the sessions to show how we are meeting the objectives:

Children enjoyed the session playing in all areas of the outdoor garden. They played alongside each other, and we heard them copying off each other saying *wheeee* as they rolled the balls down the guttering. This was good for the children where they have an identified Speech and Language delay. Parents played with the obstacle course with their child, encouraging them to use the different areas for throwing the frisbees, using the hula hoops and large ball. The children enjoyed using the wheelbarrow to move the balls and bricks. Children enjoyed playing in the water, pouring the balls down the chute.





Our little explorers' group allows children to free play with their parents/carers and other children, supporting with emotional and social skills, communication and language, and physical development, with an overall focus on movement and activity.

The session also gives parents the opportunities to chat to workers and each other about other issues which could be having an impact on the child at home. Themes recorded as being discussed within the group included bedtimes, child's behaviour and how to manage this, screen time and for how long.

Another activity which started through the pandemic also taking place outside, was 'Wake Up Shake Up', again with an emphasis on movement and activity, encouraging the use of action rhymes and singing with both children and their parents.

Since we started these groups in our outside areas in June 2021 after the third lockdown, we have had 61 individual families attending our groups across the borough.

Comments from an Early Years Practitioner and parents that attend the Groups:

"K was talking before lockdown but has really regressed over the time we have spent at home; he has a referral for speech and language, and this has been really good for him. He's really enjoyed it, it was nice to see him playing with other children."

Mum gave fantastic feedback about Barry's group, stating her son loves the songs each week. Mum said he "lights up" when he sees Barry and said they look forward to the group every week.

"Thank you for letting us come and play it's been so nice to get out and see people and she has really enjoyed herself."

3.3 HENRY—Starting Solids

We deliver a session for all parents to attend when they are getting ready to introduce their baby to solid food. The session is part of a suite of evidence-based HENRY programmes (see 4.2 for more) and starts with sharing key messages to help parents build healthy eating and feeding habits at this critical stage. This goes some way to supporting our priority around reducing childhood obesity in our borough to ensure as many new parents as possible have access to this information so they can make healthy choices. It shares complementary feeding and guidance. It familiarises babies with a wide range of tastes and textures to develop long-term healthy food preferences. We look at responsive feeding, building on parents' strengths and supporting them to introduce solid food successfully, through what can be a stressful time. The programme provides colourful resources for each family to help them continue with their journey.



*Stock photo

Since January 2021, we have delivered the programme to 123 parents. We started it virtually but moved back to face-to-face groups from September 2021. Our health visiting colleagues provide information within their letters to parents when their child is 3-4 months old, which gives parents information to contact the family hubs and book onto a session. In the new year of 2022, we are looking to trial a hybrid offer of virtual and face-to-face groups to maximise attendance for all parents who need it. As well as our own Family Hub evaluations of this programme, which are extremely positive, we are looking forward to receiving a comprehensive evaluative report from HENRY later this year, which will enable us to demonstrate its effectiveness at a national level.



3.4 Breast Friends

Our 'Breast Friends' group has been running for many years. This group provides parents with peer support from others who are breastfeeding, who can give advice and tips, discuss their breastfeeding journey and talk about the lows and difficulties they have had and how they've overcome them. Parents have benefitted from having this type of support and other mums to talk to. We also provide specialist support in the shape of our level 3 UNICEF Breastfeeding Friendly trained staff members who run these groups and are trained to a level to be able to answer most general queries from parents around this topic.

We also have access to a Specialist Infant Feeding Coordinator within the health visiting team who provides the Family Hub staff with relevant training and support to run these groups. As well as offering one-to-one support to mums via a referral process, the Specialist Infant Feeding Coordinator also attends the 'Breast Friends' groups on an ad-hoc basis to provide any specific support there and then, as needed.

The priorities of this group are:

- To promote breastfeeding
- To provide confidential, non-judgemental, evidence-based information and support to mothers and mums to be
- To promote responsive feeding
- To support maternal emotional wellbeing and positive mental health
- To offer a safe space with lots of opportunities for socialisation and baby play
- To promote a secure attachment bond between parents and their baby and enhance the social and emotional development of babies

We have supported 55 individual mums at the group since we've been back up and running face-to-face. The topics discussed in the groups include growth spurts, expressing breast milk and freezing / defrosting, discussions around returning to work, childminders and nurseries, struggling with a baby's reflux, night feeds, safe sleeping and baby brain development.

Our Breast Friends' groups support a key public health message and council priority to improve breastfeeding rates across the borough. There has been a steady upward trend in rates since 2016/17, and the latest published data (Sep 2021) shows that the rate for babies breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks old has nearly doubled from 20.9% to 37.8%, which is an increase from 71 babies to 140.



Comments from Mums attending the Group:

- “I don’t know what I’d do if this group stops, I love coming here”
- “We love coming to the Breastfeeding group. I’ve found it really beneficial for my mental health to get out of the house and meet other mums and share experiences and advice. We’ve now made a What’s App group to meet up outside the group.”
- “If it wasn’t for this group, I don’t think I would have met these ladies, so I am very grateful for this service.”
- “Thank you also to the staff, being do friendly, approachable, and non-judgmental, you are the support we need on difficult days especially.”
- “Coming to this group has helped me again a lot more confidence in breast feeding. Also, to talk about problems along the journey such as mastitis, which really helped me.”
- “I have met some good friends and look forward to coming to this group. It’s good to see how the babies are progressing.”
- “The breast-feeding group has been so amazing for me. The mums and Dawn have been so supportive. Breastfeeding wasn’t an easy journey, having this group has helped improve my confidence.”
- “The Breast-feeding group has been beneficial to me for many reasons. Support, reassurance, making new friends, socialisation, and interaction. Myself and L have made many friends and we hope to continue providing support to other breastfeeding mums attending the group. Being Vegan, I was also a bit anxious and discussing my views on raising L Vegan, but I was so happy to meet another mum who was also doing this. We hope that our children may even go to the same school.”



*Stock photo



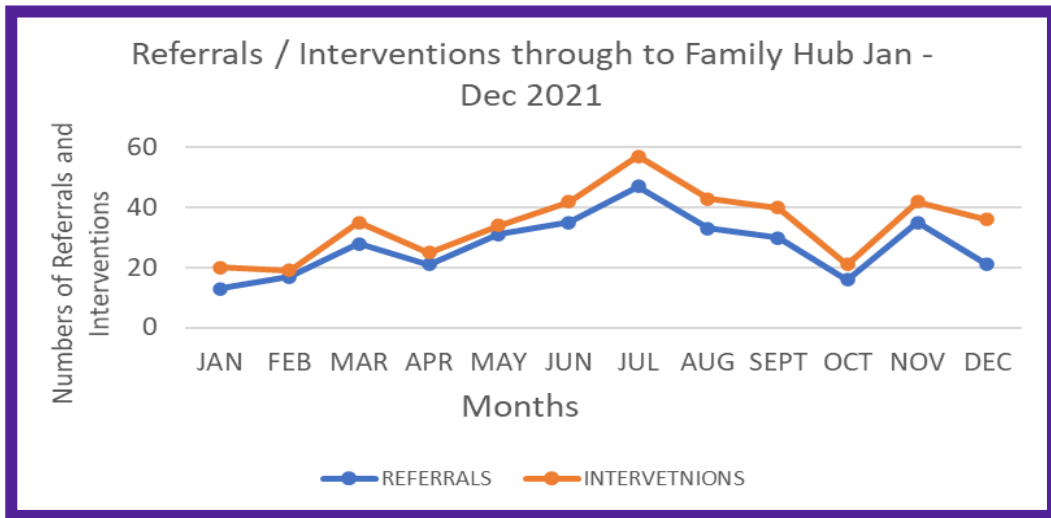
3.5 New Birth Data

Since February 2021, we have been receiving information on all new babies born each month from our health visiting colleagues. This allows us to contact each individual family and talk to them about the family hubs, register them with us and provide a contact number for any worries they may have. We currently get between 90-130 contacts passed to us every month. This is proving to be a great way to ensure as many families as possible know about the services available to them through the Family Hubs. A few decline the opportunity to register with us at this initial point of contact, but by sharing our contact details with them, they know where we are and what we can offer if they need our support at any time in the future.

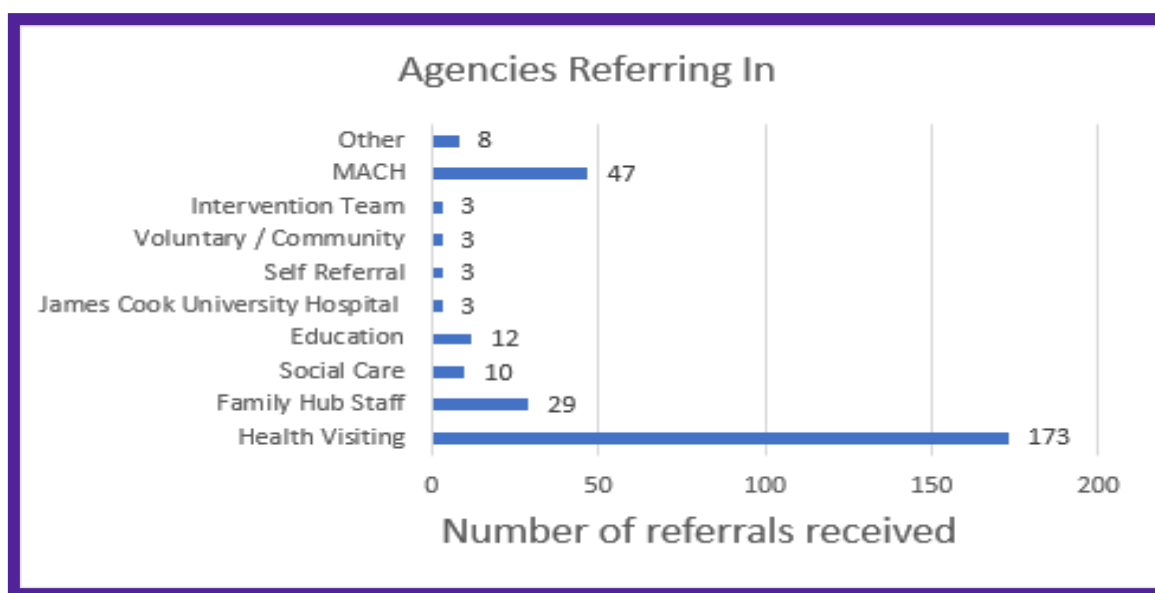
4. Targeted Offer—How did we do?

Referrals

As well as our universal provision, we also received 327 referrals for targeted support between January and December 2021. These referrals led to the delivery of 414 different interventions. This is a slight increase in the referrals received, when compared to 2020.



The referrals came from a number of different teams and partner agencies, including the health visiting service, as shown in the graph below:



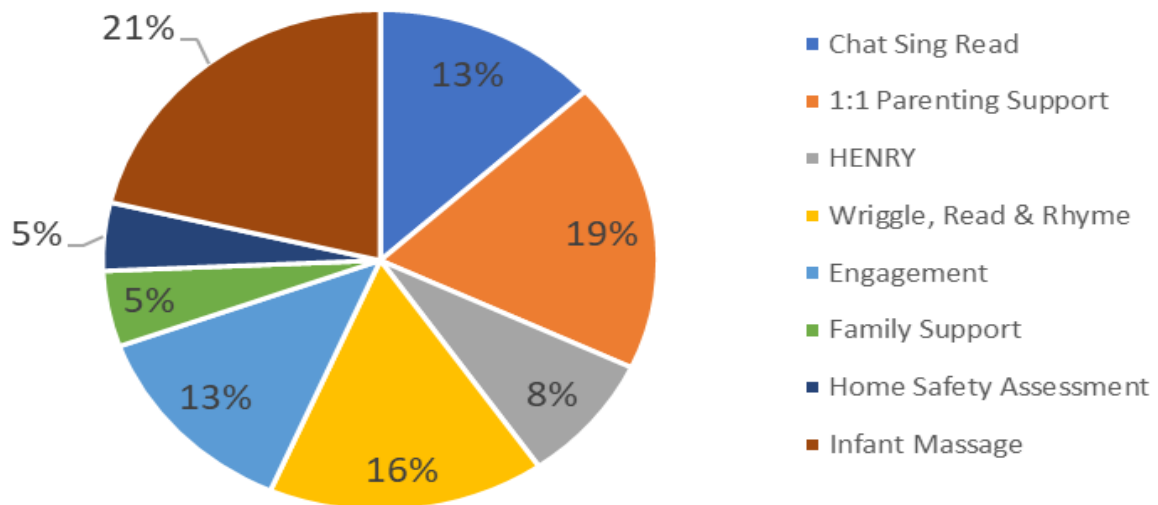
The health visiting referrals have significantly increased this year. This is due to a change in process we initiated for the universal groups under the tightest restrictions at the start of the year. We asked Health Visitors to identify the parents that needed the groups the most, due to the limited spaces we were able to offer to allow for social distancing. This included our new parents' groups, infant massage and breast friends. As the restrictions lifted, and there was more space available, we no longer required the referrals for what we usually class as our universal, open access provision.

Interestingly, the referrals coming into the Family Hubs directly from the MACH have increased by 42% over the past year. These are referrals which have come in on either a SAFER referral form, or an early help referral form looking for support for a child and family. When the social worker determines that needs can be met at an early help level, referrals are then passed to the Early Help Coordinators who decide which cases can be led by Family Hub staff to provide the appropriate intervention.

The interventions requested for families have included support for children to help meet their developmental milestones, parenting support, guidance around healthy eating and general family support. Once the worker initiates the support to address the primary need, they may uncover some additional unmet needs. They may then undertake an early help assessment to help them. identify an holistic plan of support for the child and family.



Interventions requested on referrals



Of the referrals we received into the service this year, we have provided targeted support to 296 individual children through our home visiting programmes and family support service. Whilst the majority engaged really well with the interventions (c.75%), some families did disengage due to the lack of availability of face-to-face interventions and group interaction for the children. We actively engaged a further 497 children through our universal groups programme offered this year.



4.1 Chat, Sing and Read at Home



Chat, Sing and Read at Home is an adaptation of the 'Early Words Together at Two' initiative. It aims to improve the home learning environment with an emphasis on communication and language. Parents are their child's first educators and extensive research has demonstrated how a positive home learning environment can impact on a child's educational success from a very young age.

Playing with children from birth is important for their overall development, learning and wellbeing. Through play, new-borns learn about the world around them and how they can interact with it.

New play experiences also help a baby's brain connect and grow. Indicators of a strong home

learning environment include parents engaging in play activities with their babies/children, sharing books and stories, singing nursery rhymes etc.

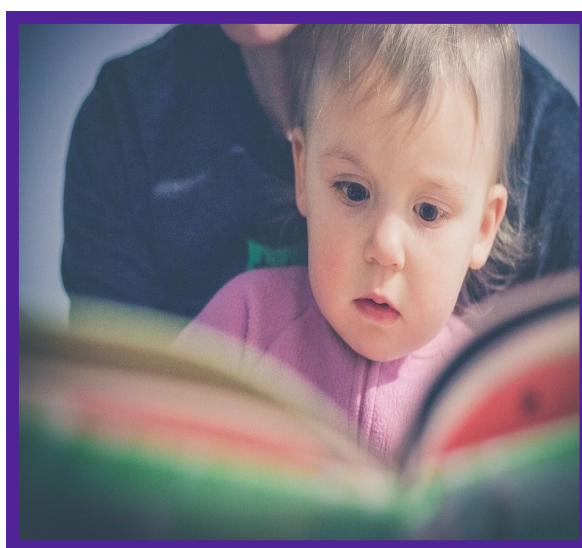
New play experiences also help a baby's brain connect and grow. Chat, Sing and Read at Home provides parents with the tools they need to play and engage with their children and helps them to understand the importance for their child's overall learning and development.

This early literacy programme contributes to a key council priority to improve the school readiness of pre-school aged children, so that they have the best preparation for nursery. All local authorities are measured on children's progress at the end of Reception to see if they have achieved a 'Good Level of Development' (GLD). In Redcar and Cleveland in 2019, 71.1% of our children achieved the GLD, which was in line with the National England average of 71.8%.

We have completed the programme with 23

families over the year,

with 25 families still receiving this ongoing support.



For every family participating in the Chat, Sing and Read at Home programme, a critical worry statement and wellbeing goal was developed and a pre- and post-evaluation questionnaire was completed. From both evaluations of parents who completed this programme, 87% of families reported an increase in confidence when playing and reading with their children. In addition, 97% of the families reported an increase in undertaking the following activities with their children:

- Sharing books and stories with their child
- Singing songs and rhymes
- Talking with their child including things they are interested in
- Spending time outdoors

Some comments from parents after completing the course:

"L and I have really enjoyed coming to the sessions, it has given us time together and it's been beneficial for L to be around other people. L is not very sociable and struggles around new people especially since lockdown, but she has enjoyed seeing Claire every week and is happy to play and interact. The sessions have helped me to build confidence singing rhymes with L and with my son. They both really enjoyed playing with the playdough and the musical shakers we made in the session."

"Mum stated she feels the sessions they have taken part in have been beneficial and they have both enjoyed attending, mum reports she feels Poppy has flourished and has become more sociable & the sessions have been positive."

"I feel more confident sharing books and singing with J, I know the importance of this. I also don't feel as shy taking him out to the park as I did previously. I have learned a great deal attending this session so thank you"

4.1 Early Years Parenting Support

Many parents are still struggling with children's behaviour which has been negatively impacted by the current pandemic. The parenting support home visiting programme we offer looks at the individual family's needs by spending time with the family in their home and tailoring a package of support. Our programme is aligned with the evidence-based Family Links Parenting Puzzle Programme to ensure it delivers an individualised package of support for parents.

There have been 77 referrals received this year for parenting support, which is the same as last year (78). We continue to receive referrals for parenting support for families where the children are awaiting a referral or currently going through the process for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or autism. We completed the parenting support programme with 33 families altogether over the year, with 46 families still open to Family Hubs and receiving ongoing parenting support.

With each family, a critical worry and wellbeing goal was developed to include a scaling question to measure impact. Of the 33 families that completed the programme, 94% reported an improvement and a positive impact on their child's behaviour after completing the course.

This year we have experienced a number of cases where we have been unable to complete the programme of support for the family within the usual 6-12 weeks. This is due to the increased complexity of some of the needs identified as we start to work closely with the family.



Comments from Practitioners on post evaluations:

Mum has been more confident taking L out and uses strategies discussed during our sessions to get L to go out. L is a lot calmer now and his behaviour has improved with his sister and he is not nasty towards her. Mum said she uses the reward chart with L and this has helped with behaviour. Mum has found all the sessions and support given really useful and has information around behaviour and strategies to use in the future and will continue with what she has learnt.

Mum said the initial introduction to parenting support with me gave her the kick start she needed. She has implemented bedtime and morning routines, which are working well. Mum has put some boundaries in place and uses strategies shared with her, such as rewards charts, choices and consequences, which have positive outcomes most of the time.

*Stock photo



Comments from parents:

"I now have the confidence to put in place boundaries and know I need to be consistent when dealing with challenging behaviour. The suggestions Claire has given me has helped with both of my children. I now know when and how to give praise and not to buy or give things to L just to make him be good. I stick to what I say and mean it. I have also realised I need to look after myself to be a good Mam to the children. Thank you, Claire, for all your help it's been amazing and has really helped"

"I just want to thank you really, you came in and made some suggestions and guided us through being consistent, and even those early small changes we made has had a massive impact, not only on the children's behaviour it has helped with mine and M's relationship. This has impacted on how we are as a family and thanks for not judging us or telling us what to do."

"I have found working with Sarah very beneficial and really helpful. She has helped me to understand that I am doing everything I can to support K and this has helped with my confidence. Looking back, I feel that I was using appropriate parenting strategies with K, I just did not have the confidence in myself."

"It has been good to speak to someone who understands"

"At the start I was definitely at a 2, I was so lost and didn't know what to do, but now I feel like I can calm C very quickly or distract him from when he has angry episodes so I would score myself at a 8 Thank you".



4.2 HENRY—Healthy Families



The most up to date childhood obesity statistics in 2019/2020 for Redcar and Cleveland are concerning: 13.1% of children in reception were classed as obese or severely obese, compared to 12.1% in 2018/2019. For children in school Year 6, this increases to 24% in 2019/2020 compared to 22.1% of children the previous year. This trend is a significant worry and is an ongoing health priority for the borough.

The Family Hub Service has been delivering the HENRY group programme since 2017. HENRY is a unique intervention to support parents and carers to give their child a healthy, happy start in life and tackle child obesity. HENRY's Healthy Families group programme is an 8-week intervention that offers parents a chance to share ideas and gain new skills and tools to address lifestyle issues in a supportive and fun environment. The programme adopts a holistic approach and focuses on five research-identified risk factors for child obesity: parenting efficacy, family lifestyle habits, emotional wellbeing, nutrition and physical activity. The families receive some fabulous resources that can be used at home with their children.

We would normally deliver HENRY in a classroom with the children accessing a creche alongside, mirroring the messages where possible. Due to the pandemic, we had to deliver this programme in a variety of different ways, including a virtual group over Microsoft Teams and also one-to-one with families in their homes, alongside the health visiting team who routinely offer this as part of their role. This required our staff to complete some extra training for the one-to-one delivery, to ensure we continued to meet the HENRY standards.



During the year, we received 34 new referrals for HENRY and in total 38 families completed the programme, as some had been on a waiting list due to the pandemic. In the latter part of the year, we managed to move back to face-to-face groups in the hubs. For any families still preferring to avoid group activities, we completed any training via the previous one-to-one method in the home.

Over the next year, we need to reflect on how we deliver the HENRY-programme and how we receive referrals into the programme. To this end, we have decided to complete some consultation with families to understand how they would like this information to be delivered to them, as some feedback has included that the time commitment to an 8-week programme is too long.

All evaluations for these programmes are sent directly to HENRY to be analysed and a report is sent on an annual basis every 12-months. The next report will be due in April 2022, which also reflects the national picture.

We had positive outcomes for families who completed the programme in the previous year (2020/2021) and these included:

- 100% of children under 18 months and 71% of children between 2-5 years having less screen time.
- There was an increase of 16% to 67% of children being active for 3+ hours per day after the programme and also an increase of 11% to 83% of family's active for 30min+ per day.
- 58% of the families drank sugary drinks fewer times per day.
- 50% children and 33% of parents had an increase in eating 5-a-day.
- 75% of the families rated their family's lifestyle as healthy.



Some parents' feedback after completing HENRY:

"Got advice that really helped. Have managed to get my nearly 3-year-old off bottles, a nice bedtime routine in place, we're getting out more as a family, I'm using the guide choices and reducing portions sizes".

"I really liked that everyone was in a similar situation to me, nobody judged. The facilitators were really friendly – they never told us when we did stuff wrong, they just explained a better way around things that might help. My daughter's in a bedtime routine, she's eating proper meals now and we're more active, whether its inside or out".

"I liked the helpful recipe sharing and healthy eating. We eat less sugar now and get more exercise"

"It was so good to learn new things and helpful when I struggle with certain things. We spend so much more time as a family now".

4.3 Wriggle, Read & Rhyme

Children are referred onto our Wriggle, Read & Rhyme programme when it has been identified that they have a slight delay in their communication and language development. Unfortunately, during the pandemic, it has been highlighted that there has been an increase in communication and language delay prevalent in pre-school aged children, likely due to their lack of socialisation with others during lock-downs.

This is a small group, 5-week programme, for parents and carers and their children. Each week has a different focus around communication and language development and how parents/carers can support this by improving the home learning environment. Families receive some wonderful resources to support the sharing of books, stories and rhymes in the home.

The aim of the sessions is to:

- Introduce and encourage a love of books.
- Raise awareness with parents and carers about the importance of sharing books stories and rhymes regularly with their child.
- Promote communication and positive interaction between parent and child to support development of early language.
- Increase children's school-readiness

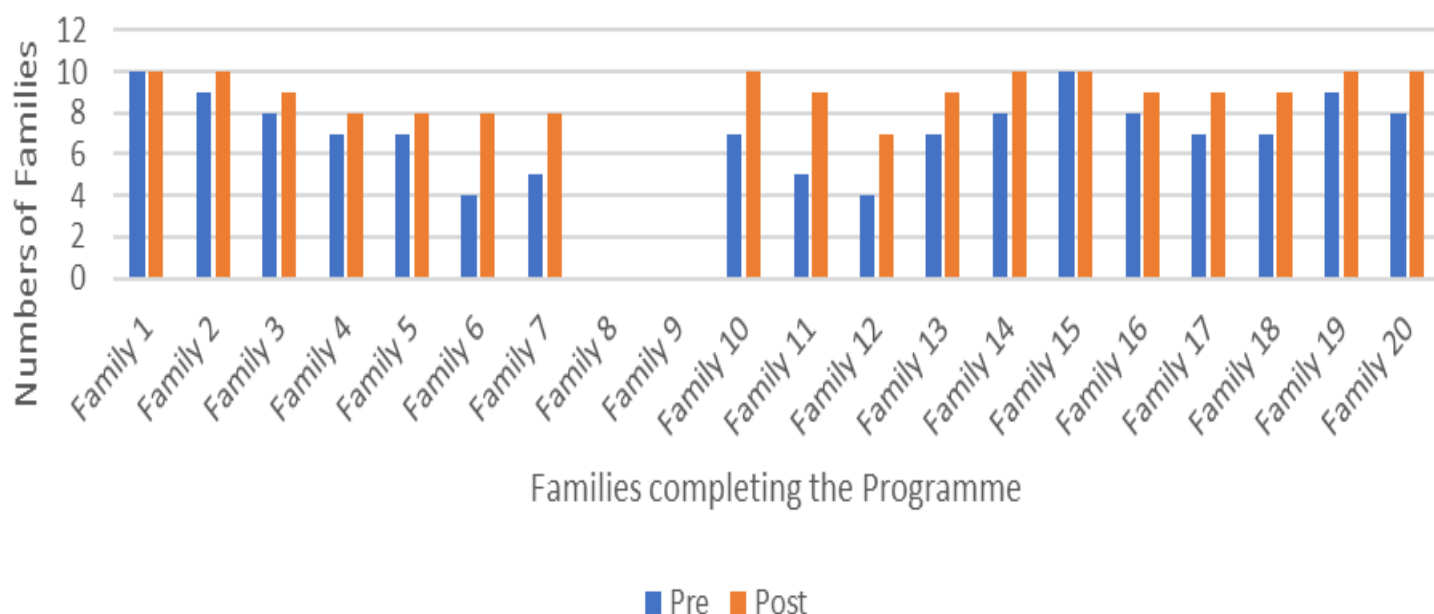
Again, we had a reduced number of families through the programme this year due to COVID and the associated lockdowns.

Recently there has been a speech and language pathway developed with the health visiting team to encourage more referrals into this programme. Now, if children are assessed by the Health Visitor at their mandatory 24/27-month development check as being below average in the development of their speech and language, they will be automatically referred into Wriggle, Read & Rhyme.

As you can see below, 20 families completed the programme in 2021. It is really positive that 80% of the families reported an increase in confidence in knowing what to do to help with their child's communication and language development. Two families stated they did not feel their confidence had increased, but did share that they had changed some of their habits and started to read stories by using just the pictures, were talking more around the home and reading household items like the cereal packets to their children.

Two evaluations were not completed.

Evaluations of the Wriggle, Read & Rhyme Programme



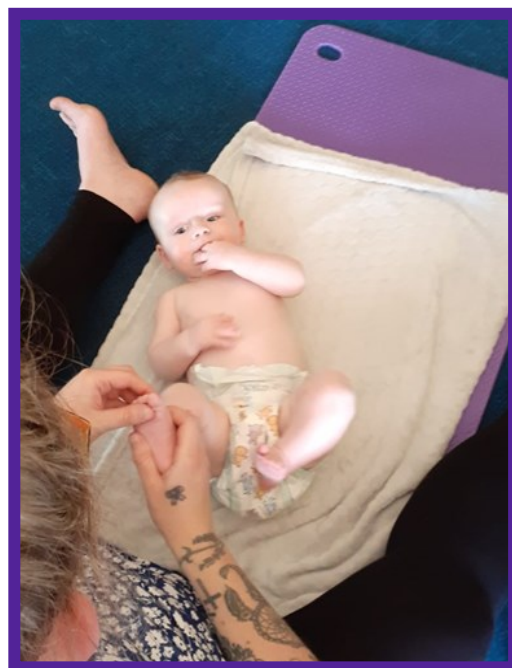
Parents' comments after completing the Wriggle, Read & Rhyme Programme:

- "S has enjoyed his time at his big school and his speech as improved massively. These classes have helped give me confidence to engage him at home more, Thank you."
- "J's behaviour at home is a lot better when I have brought him out to this group and he has got out of the house, had new activities, and played with other children. I have seen a big difference in him."
- "J really loves the Dear Zoo book that you gave him. When we read the book, he has started to try and say some of the animals' names. He can nearly say crocodile now. He never said any words like that before."
- "E loved it. I now regularly read the words out loud in everyday objects. It also helps my 9-year-old with her reading. I now have other types of pens for them to draw with, not just crayons."
- "P struggles to recognise letters and numbers but this class has showed me the areas I can work on with her."
- "Definitely noticed a difference in I's interest in singing. We sing every day in the car now, the songs from the class."

4.4 Infant Massage

In 2021, it was acknowledged that there were a lot of new mums who were feeling isolated and were experiencing low mood due to the restrictions imposed on society because of COVID and the ever-changing government measures . A lot of mums had been missing out on the socialisation of meeting other new parents.

For this reason, we decided to reintroduce Infant Massage into our timetable, as this could be done socially distanced due to the age of the child. This programme offers vital support to promote bonding and attachment with new babies. It provides parents with information on using relaxing strokes which have a positive effect on both the parent and baby's wellbeing, including their emotions and mood. As well as enhancing the bonding experience, it can also help with digestive issues such as colic, and can promote better sleep patterns in babies.



Through 2021, we received 87 referrals to infant massage and 128 families completed the 4 week programme. The families were provided with a mat and oil and asked to bring their own towel. The space is made relaxing and peaceful with gentle music, and parents are taken through the whole body moves which promote relaxation.

Some parents gave us feedback:

"The tummy strokes really helped with the trapped wind"

"Enjoying time with other mums and having 1:1 time with F"

"M is much more settled which has made me much less anxious"

5. What our families and colleagues say about us.

Over the past year, we have received compliments from both practitioners and families about our range of services and the support we offer. Here is a selection of some of the positive feedback received:

- *"As I get ready to return to work, I wanted to say a big thank you. At six weeks old, F had only just started to latch on, but it was still very new for us both. Coming to the group has helped not only our breastfeeding journey, but allowed me to meet and make new friends and it's had a positive impact on my emotional health. Thank you for your advice, support, and guidance and for making us so welcome"*—**Breast Friends Parent.**
- Referral was for digestive issues, *"Jenny was very welcoming and made everyone comfortable, really enjoyed the course thank you very much"* — **Infant Massage Parents**
- *Absolutely loved it thank you so much, always getting the kids singing and dancing no matter how hard they try to stay in moods lol—thank you so much"*
— **Wake Up & Shake Up Parents**



- *“During the time of Tina working with our family, I have found myself managing better having someone to listen and understand our difficulties that wasn't directly involved. Helped me understand that after going through difficult times there were brighter times ahead. Tina was always kind and compassionate and sometimes the voice of reason when I couldn't understand how we had ended up where we were. Me and my young children are in a much better place now and I am grateful to Tina for all her time and help” - Family Support Parent*
- *“Hi, just wanted to say a big thank you for the wriggle, read and rhyme sessions, it has brought H's speech on so much and he has loved each session x” - Wriggle, Read & Rhyme Parent*
- *“I've learnt a lot, about rewards and stuff. I don't shout at him now, I used to talk over him and stuff. Now I listen to him and try and understand what he wants. He listens to me now and I listen to him” - Parenting Support Parent*
- Mum gave fantastic feedback about Barry's group, stating her son O loves the songs each week. Mum said O *“lights up”* when he sees Barry and said they look forward to the group every week.—**Wake Up & Shake Up—Early Years Practitioner**
- I was speaking to B's mum N last week who gave you some lovely feedback, she said you were really helpful and very knowledgeable with weaning advice, you came across as very friendly and passionate. Thank you for your support with B—**Starting Solids—Health Visitor**
- Emma is currently meeting mum at school to deliver 1-1 parenting support. Mum has just started this and is being really positive about it all. Emma is working closely with school and health and put a multi-agency meeting together as initially Mum always had an excuse not to access the support for parenting, but really does need this. A plan is in place to support this to take place via accessing the school to deliver this when Mum drops off at school. This is working well and is nice to know those links are supporting J who's 4 🥰 - **Parenting Support—Nursery Teacher—X Primary School.**



6. Case Studies

Names have been changed to anonymise these case studies.

Case Study 1

A referral was received via the MACH, after a mum was concerned about her son's angry outbursts and meltdowns. Mum was really worried about this behaviour as it could last for hours.

Sarah is not originally from the UK and her husband brought her over to live in England when Oliver was 1 year old. Her husband was very abusive towards Sarah and would often physically abuse her in front of Oliver. After one incident the police were called and Sarah and Oliver were taken to the local refuge. It was only then Sarah started to realise that her relationship with her husband was abusive. She was rehoused with Oliver but was still in a family court case due to Oliver's dad wanting contact with him.

Sarah's English was good but sometimes we struggled with language so would use an app on her phone to find the right words to use. Information was gathered for an early help assessment where mum was very open and honest about her family when trying to find support networks for her. She told me her mum used to beat her and would often leave her with her younger sister and disappear for days, then one day when her mum was fleeing some "bad men" she witnessed her mother's murder.

Sarah's confidence grew week after week, and I could tell this from her body language and how she presented each week. Sarah took on parenting strategies and would try them each week; and we could see a positive impact this was having with Oliver's angry outbursts. Sarah was using the time to calm down and empathy. It was clear that he was reliving his adverse childhood trauma from watching his mother being abused and was playing this out in his play, this was picked up in observations from myself and CAFCASS.

There were discussions with CAFCASS and when the court day came it was recommended that Oliver was not to see his father unsupervised and that father needed to attend a perpetrator's course. Sarah was so thankful, and Oliver was very happy that he didn't have to see his dad.

School report that Oliver is a very clever little boy and they have seen him grow over the last year into a very confident little boy. Sarah is accessing counselling and she is currently volunteering in a local charity shop and working on securing paid employment.



Case Study 2

A referral came from the MACH after a SAFER referral was submitted by the childminder after child attended with a bruise and concerns were raised.

It was initially very hard to engage the family or arrange visits with both parents at the same time, due to their work commitments. Advice was sought from the MACH and previous information shared about an incident of abuse from Dad to Mam, and Dad's poor mental health.

An initial visit eventually took place after having the referral open for a few weeks. Both parents were open and honest, and it was clear they were both struggling with their communication and had no time to talk to one another. Dad suffers from anxiety and depression and felt everything was left to him whilst mum worked 12-hour shifts. There were no routines or boundaries in place for Erin, and limited routines for Joshua due to his ADHD. Their expectations of Erin being *"a normal child"* were confusing, and a referral to young carers was submitted to give Erin some understanding of living with a sibling with ADHD.

From the initial visit, the family quickly took on board the strategies discussed and implemented a bedtime routine. This had a massive impact on their time together and communication grew from this. Each week the family grew in confidence and remained consistent in their approach to parenting the children.

They even booked a camping holiday away, something they thought they would never do, and it was successful. Both Mum and Dad said the parenting work has had a positive impact on them all.

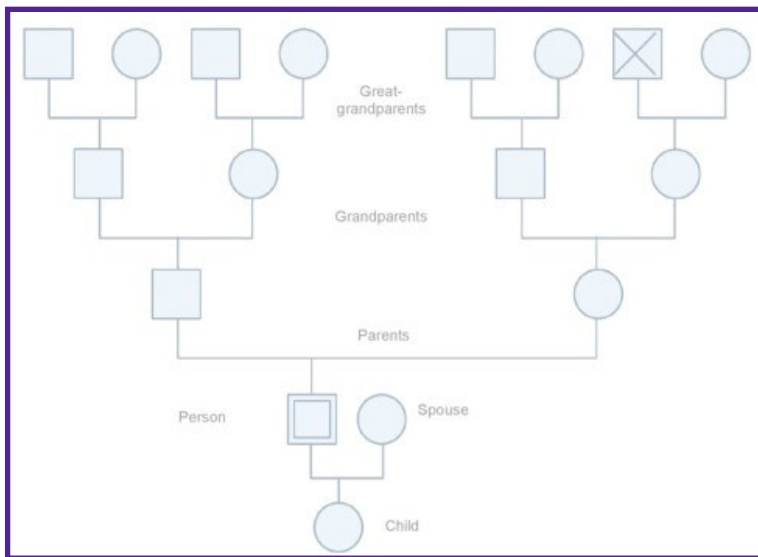
Feedback –

"I just want to thank you really, you came in and made some suggestions and guided us through being consistent, and even those early small changes we made has had a massive impact, not only on the children's behaviour, it has helped with mine and Claire's relationship. This has impacted on how we are as a family, and thanks for not judging us or telling us what to do.

We talk, actually have conversations where we are making decisions together and not battling with what we think is best for the kids. This has had a massive impact on Joshua especially, for example, he asked me if he could watch something on T.V. I researched it and its not suitable, but I didn't make the decision on my own, me and Claire discussed it and we feel like we are more like a team. Before Claire would overrule and say he can, she is more laid back than me but actually it is unsuitable."

7. Signs of Wellbeing

The team has continued to embed the 'Signs of Safety Framework' within our practice. Over the past year we have introduced the development of a critical worry and wellbeing goal into our home visiting targeted programmes, as well as our family support cases, including whole family working. This also includes creating a scaling question to measure impact, alongside the pre- and post-evaluations. We have provided further training to staff on what makes a good case note, to ensure that the Signs of Wellbeing framework is used when recording interventions with the families.



Bitesize training sessions have been delivered on genograms and eco-mapping to ensure each family has a support network before the case is closed. We currently complete monthly group supervisions across the borough to provide support on stuck cases and access the early help clinic for those more complex cases.

We have continued to embed the use of Early Help Assessments. As a service we completed 30 throughout the year, which is an increase of 18 compared to last year.

8. Next Steps for 2022

A report was published in March 2021 – 'The Best Start in Life, A Vision for the 1001 days'. This outlined the vision for Family Hubs in the future to provide a hub of services that parents and their children can access for support for the first 1001 days of a child's life (from birth to 2 years). This would include the breadth of information, advice and support already available from our Family Hubs, but further enhanced, including midwifery services and other direct health and parenting support. The vision is to ensure that families or parents-to-be can access the information and help they need, when they need it.



The Department for Education (DfE) also published their Vision for Family Hubs, including launching a framework for Local Authorities outlining a model in which family hubs will provide a central access point to a wide range of early help services and support. The aim is that families with children and young people aged 0-19 years (and up to 25 for those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) can receive help from a range of professionals in their local community, to overcome difficulties and build stronger relationships.

The vision for Family Hubs has three main delivery areas:

- **Access – There is a clear, simple way for families to access help and support through a Family Hub building and approach.** This includes clear Family Hub branding and information about services available; a physical access point (centres) as well as virtual means to get information and advice; outreach; a family-friendly culture; services that go beyond the early years (up to 19 or 25 with SEND); Universal and universal plus (targeted) services. A strong best start in life offer, clearly communicated.
- **Connection - There are services working together for families with a universal ‘front door’, shared outcomes and effective governance.** This includes co-located services; multi-agency governance and leadership; a strong commitment to develop an outcome-based, joint-commissioning framework between different agencies; Services share an initial theory-of-change and outcomes framework and there is commitment to develop this further; Evidence-led practice, evaluation and quality improvement; Professionals work together, through co-location, data sharing and a common whole family approach to assessment and practice model. There is community ownership and co-production.
- **Relationships - Family hubs prioritise strengthening the relationships that carry us all through life, and building on family strengths, recognising that this is the way to lasting change. This idea is at the heart of everything that is done.** This includes an expectation, understood by all family hub staff, to work in a whole-family way that prioritises strengthening relationships and building on families’ strengths. There is a commitment to, and an initial version of, a multi-agency workforce development plan which helps all partners in the family hub network understand and identify need early, and work in a whole family way; and a plan to develop this further.



Next year will be an exciting and challenging time for us to work with our partners to develop our local vision for Family Hubs in Redcar and Cleveland and deliver on this new Government agenda. We have already started working closely with local midwifery services to recommence their delivery of antenatal and postnatal clinics from our hubs in 2022. We were also successful in September 2021, in our regional bid to receive funding from the Department of Education to develop clinic rooms in 3 of our Family Hubs, to include a sink and wipeable floors to support with this work.



*Stock photo

Improving our digital offer is also included within this regional funding to support us in meeting the 'Access' standard of the framework. With this resource, we will develop new 'Family Hub 0-19' branding, and ensure our new website pages are user-friendly and fit for purpose to provide clear information and advice to families in our borough. We are currently working in partnership with Northumberland County Council to develop an improved digital offer using their previous expertise, so that more families can receive information via a range of methods to suit their lifestyle, their preferences and changing needs.

