

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD



TO:	Health and Wellbeing Board
FROM:	Joanne Siddle
DATE:	Thursday, 5 September 2024

SUBJECT: Start Well Update

1. PURPOSE

To provide an update to the health and wellbeing board on how Blackburn with Darwen Family Hubs are playing a crucial role in supporting the Start Well agenda by providing comprehensive services and resources to families.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HEALTH & WELLBEING BOARD

The Health and Wellbeing Board are asked to:

- a. Note the progress of the Family Hubs.
- b. Note how the Family Hubs are playing a crucial role in delivering the Start well agenda for Blackburn with Darwen Families.

3. BACKGROUND

Blackburn with Darwen's four Family Hubs are now 12 months old and we have expanded on the foundation established by our Sure Start Children's Centres, ensuring that support continues beyond the early years and into school-age. Our hubs consolidate various forms of assistance that parents require to tackle practical and relational challenges, such as parenting issues and interpersonal conflicts.

Blackburn with Darwen Family Hubs cater for families with children aged 0-19 years (up to 25 years for those with special educational needs or disabilities), offering support from birth through primary and secondary education. These hubs and children's centres are welcoming environments where families can access the help they need. Staffed by well-trained, trusted professionals who listen and provide effective assistance, these hubs and centres empower families to confidently seek advice and information, ensuring meaningful support for both parents and children.

Our Family Hubs adopt a strength-based approach, engaging with families collaboratively rather than imposing solutions. This method fosters long-lasting relationships and rapport that endure throughout many stages of family life. The far-reaching impact of the Family Hubs lies in their ability to generate positive outcomes for children and young people, including preparing them for their future roles as parents. Education, health, and local voluntary organisations are all aware of and refer families to the services offered at the Family Hubs, which are complemented by their own services. Families dealing with multiple and/or complex issues can trust that a well-trained practitioner will support them, creating a positive, collaborative team around the family to promote self-reliance and independence. Specialist input from social work, SEND, and health services is also available to enhance the support provided. Even after initial concerns are addressed, ongoing support is available through the Family Hub, with no automatic termination of services, ensuring

families can maintain stability and build resilience over time.

4. RATIONALE

Our Family Hubs deliver a comprehensive range of Start for Life services designed to support families holistically. These services include reducing parental conflict, providing dispute resolution for out-of-court options in private law children's cases, and offering debt and welfare support. Mental health services extend beyond parent-infant mental health, while oral health improvement initiatives such as tooth brushing are also available. Families can access support for substance misuse and a variety of wider family health services, including healthy weight and nutrition, contraception, and sexual health, and stop smoking support. The hubs integrate the Supporting Families programme, housing support, youth services, and SEND support. Additionally, they provide early childhood education and care, financial support for childcare, and promote early language skills (HLE). Parenting programmes and domestic abuse support are available to ensure the well-being of all family members. Start for Life Universal Services encompass midwifery, health visiting, parent-infant mental health, breastfeeding, safeguarding, and SEND. Families can also conveniently complete birth registration at Little Harwood family hub.

5. KEY ISSUES

Blackburn with Darwen aims to improve the life chances of children in Blackburn with Darwen. We are focused on addressing inequalities, narrowing the gap in attainment, and improving outcomes for all children including disadvantaged children and families. The early years are a crucial period of change and the experiences of parents, babies and children during this time lay the foundations for their future and shape their development, educational attainment, and life chances. It is therefore a period of great opportunity, where the combined efforts of parents, communities and services can make a real and lasting difference.

Our Start Well Life Key Themes and Priorities:

- 1: Preparedness for Parenthood Including positive pregnancy outcomes
- 2: Babies and Parents/Carers have good early relationships
- 3: Children and Parents/Carers have good health outcomes
- 4: Parents/Carers experiencing mental health and wellbeing challenges are Identified and supported
- 5: Parents/Carers and their children are fully supported with education.
- 6: Children are prepared for (and have access to) a high-quality early years, nursery and school provision

Blackburn with Darwen Family hubs play a pivotal role in supporting children's early development and providing a foundation for a healthy start for life.

1. Integrated Services

Blackburn with Darwen Family hubs are offering a one-stop shop for various services, including health, education, and social care. This integrated approach ensures that our families receive comprehensive support tailored to their needs, from prenatal care to early childhood development programs.

2. Parental Support

By offering parenting classes, workshops, and resources, family hubs empower parents with the skills and knowledge they need to foster their child's development. This includes guidance on nutrition, sleep, discipline, and early learning activities.

3. Health Services

Our family hubs provide access to healthcare professionals such as midwives, health visitors, and paediatricians, speech and physio therapists ensuring early identification and intervention for any health issues. They are also supporting with health check-ups and immunisation programs help maintain children's physical well-being.

4. Early Education and Childcare

Blackburn with Darwen Family hubs provide high-quality early education and childcare services. These programs promote cognitive and social development through structured learning and play activities, preparing children for school.

5. Mental Health and Wellbeing

Emotional support services for both parents and children are available, addressing issues such as postnatal depression, stress, and anxiety. Blackburn with Darwen is offering counselling and peer support groups, creating a supportive community environment.

6. Social Connectivity

By creating a community spaces, our family hubs facilitate social interaction among families, reducing isolation and building networks of support. This sense of community can be crucial for parents seeking advice and companionship.

7. Specialist Support

For families with children who have additional needs, our family are hubs provide access to specialised services and professionals, such as speech and language therapists or special education needs teachers. Two of our family hubs (Shadsworth and Livesey) have the child development services based within them. This is ensuring that all children receive the support they need to thrive.

8. Information and Referral:

Blackburn with Darwen Family hubs act as a central point for information, guiding families to appropriate services and resources within the community. This can include financial advice, housing support, and employment services, which can alleviate stress and improve family stability. <https://familyhubsbwd.org/>

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

We want every single child no matter who they are, to have a good Start in life. To help us achieve this, we will make progress on Blackburn with Darwen four core missions.

1. A more prosperous borough where no one is left behind
2. Every child and young person to have opportunities to fulfil their potential
3. Deliver our climate emergency action plan
4. Build happier, healthier, and safer communities

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Family Hub grant has supported the extension and increase in some of the activities. The grant ends in March 2025. However, most of the priorities are delivered within existing financial commitments. Staff recruited into grant funded roles are all on fixed term contracts until the end of March 2025. We are exploring sustainability of some projects particularly with regards to perinatal mental health support.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

It is a statutory requirement under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 that each upper tier local authority establishes a Health and Wellbeing Board as one of their formal committees. The HWB have a statutory duty to produce certain assessments and plans – including the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy. They are also responsible for setting strategic direction to improve health and wellbeing in their area and installing mechanisms for joint working and improving the health and wellbeing of their local population. The work and proposals outlined in this report should assist the BwD Health and Wellbeing Board in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Early Years service lead will support the reporting and monitoring of the Family Hubs to the Health and Wellbeing board.

10. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Initial Equality Impact assessments are completed and when required especially for commissioning of new services. A Full EIA has not been required.

11. CONSULTATIONS

We have consistently engaged with parents, carers, young people and professionals throughout the development of the Blackburn with Darwen Family Hubs. In collaboration with partners, professionals, young people, and parents, we established a theory of change to guide our Family Hub initiatives. Feedback from parents, carers, and young people highlighted the critical need for support in mental health, particularly regarding grief, loss, and miscarriage. Currently we have a dedicated group of fifteen parents who meet monthly at the Shadsworth Family Hub to support each other through their experiences of baby loss. Their lived experiences have been instrumental in shaping these services within the family hubs.

VERSION:	V1
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DATE:	19/07/24
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	
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