Case study: Integrated Approaches in Bristol

Every children’s centre in Bristol has a linked health visitor and speech, language and communication therapist. The children’s centres receive sophisticated data to inform the priorities for their community, and all live birth and GP move data to support effective outreach work and the delivery of universal and targeted services.

Protocols are in place to share information between health visitors and children’s centre leaders (with parents’ permission) on any families or children considered vulnerable at the 14 day check. This enables a holistic joint plan to be agreed and hopefully prevents later escalation of difficulties.

A number of specialist children’s centres offer community based health assessments for children with multiple and complex needs, associated therapies and a specialist resource base, alongside the regular children’s centre core purpose. Joint funded (health and education) Early Support Developmental Assessment posts are an effective example of aligned resourcing and support a shared vision and purpose. The attendance rate at clinics has improved dramatically since the introduction of the Specialist Centres, as families can now access appointments locally and feel much more confident in an environment that they know and trust.

From April 2013, two key members of the Public Health team – the Healthy Early Years Lead (Nutrition and Exercise) and the Breast Feeding Lead, will be joining the Early Years Service in Bristol. This will again strengthen an aligned and integrated approach to achieving improved outcomes for children and families, including those associated with obesity and oral health as well as healthy life styles and early attachment.