

### **1.0 Background**

The Project's last report to the Trust was for the quarter up to December 2014.

### **2.0 Overview of the Project's activities January – June 2015**

The Project is commissioning and delivering services which will impact on 3 factors which have a significant impact on school readiness: the home learning environment; parental mental health and well-being; and parental warmth and sensitivity. The services which have run in this period (January – June 2015) are as follows:

- 2.1 Bump-Start:** one-to-one peer support for women from the 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy until the child is 6 months old. Ran throughout the period, delivered by Home-Start Wirral: target 50 families across the year: actual in this 6 month period **31** (23 in previous six month period).
- 2.2 PEEP Home Play:** one-to-one play in the home with child and parent(s) to encourage those who feel unable to attend groups, because of low self-confidence or practical obstacles to accessing services. Aims are to firstly encourage play in the home and subsequently to support parents to access group services. The project team maintained a minimum level of delivery during the first 3 months, whilst arranging transfer to delivery by Home-Start Wirral: target 8 families; actual - **4** supported (4 in previous six month period). Now the transfer of the delivery has taken place referrals are increasing again. Addresses support for the home learning environment.
- 2.3 Stay & Play:** informal parent and child play group with structured activities for children and progressive development of parental involvement. Ran throughout the period, delivered by the project team: target 30 families; actual **35** families (28 in previous six month period). Some sporadic and one-off attendance but a core of 12 families attended the majority of sessions. A third group started during this period. Addresses support for the home learning environment.
- 2.4 Read it Together @ (RITA):** parent and child group with supported parent and children reading together, followed by adult reading while children have play session. Ran throughout the period at the Manor school, Rock Ferry Children's Centre and Our House, Rock Ferry. Target of 15 families with sustained attendance; actual **49** families attended (24 in previous six month period), with 16 consistent attendees. Addresses support for the home learning environment and parental mental health and well-being.
- 2.5 My Child:** group programme for families when child starts the Foundation 1 stage at school, delivered by Home-Start Wirral in collaboration with the primary school: target 3 groups and 24 families; actual 3 groups (two schools) and **18** families (did not run in previous six months). Addresses support for the home learning environment.
- 2.6 School holiday activities:** all programme participants were invited to school holiday activities in February (Birkenhead Park), April (Tam O'Shanter's) and May (New Brighton beach). A full programme is planned for the summer holidays. Addresses support for the home learning environment.

### **3.0 Monitoring and outcomes**

Poverty indicators are being collected: no member of household in paid work; living in social housing/with parents/in rented housing; no access to car. These were chosen as externally recognised poverty indicators which are also less intrusive questions for families. There has been some disruption to the collection of full monitoring data as a consequence of transferring play services to Home-Start Wirral. We are concentrating in the remainder of

2015 on finalizing our processes and approach to monitoring in anticipation of an external evaluation.

The Basic Early Skills and Support Index (BESSI) has reached the stage of its development where Cambridge University Centre for Family Research are confirming that it is valid for use from the age of 2.5 to 5.5 years. We will therefore be adopting this as a measure for all children reaching that threshold (2.5 years) we support. The BESSI manual is undergoing testing and we will be trialing it using data from Birkenhead schools, which will allow us to independently score the questionnaires. We are in discussion with WMBC officers in relation to bringing the Cambridge team to the Wirral to provide a briefing in September as a stimulus to wider adoption of BESSI across services.

#### **4.0 Longer term developments**

##### **a) Location**

We are developing additional services in Rock Ferry with the aim of running the full range of activities across both areas by December 2015.

##### **b) Added value**

- The Foundation Years Trust's profile has resulted in invitations to speak at conferences in Hampshire, Suffolk and a recent Westminster Social Policy Forum at which the project and the BESSI indicators have been promoted. The Cambridge University team are promoting BESSI, its development and part-funding in the Wirral, at a series of national and international conferences. Two peer reviewed articles detailing the BESSI research are now published and resulting in increased interest in the tool e.g. a number of London Boroughs planning to adopt it.
- Additional PEEP practitioner training is being delivered in the autumn and we will seek opportunities to include colleagues across the sector.
- The BBC have offered to bring a CBeebies Roadshow to Birkenhead, to showcase the range of resources available across a variety of 'platforms', for children, parents and practitioners.

##### **c) External evaluation**

A commissioning document has been developed and we are in discussions on the shape of the external evaluation.

##### **d) Project funding**

The Birkenhead Foundation Years Project has currently sufficient funding to last until July 2016. Further funding is being sought by the Foundation Years Trust to secure continuation of the project until December 2018; funding for an external evaluation; and funding for the post of Trust Director. There are a number of avenues of funding currently under discussion with major private funders.

**Report Author:** Zoë Munby  
zmunby@foundationyearstrust.org.uk

**Contact:** 0151 647 4830

#### **Appendices:**

- 1. Milestone report**
- 2. Extract from analysis of Bump-Start data**