



Children and Families Scrutiny Committee

Start Well update

Wednesday 15th June 2022

LJ Woodward Locality Lead (Health and Early Intervention)

Question from Scrutiny 24th November 2021



‘Reflecting on the analysis of the Early Years consultants’ it was identified that the ‘highest level of need was social communication difficulties and sensory needs’.

What impact has this had on the child’s development?

In response, it was stated that the information was not available but that a written response would be shared with the Committee in due course’.



Stockport's challenge – deprivation and risk

- Stockport is the 8th most polarised borough in England
- Increase in births in disadvantaged areas, significant increase in the two most deprived areas of Stockport
- Outcomes for early years children living in poverty were not improving pre pandemic
- Analysis of Q2/Q3 data (21/22), suggests there were 149 'CIN under 1' (inc UBB) of which 46% residing in the most deprived 10% of LSOA's nationally (Brinnington and Central)
- Increase in FSM eligibility in Stockport from 6009 (March 2020) to 8288 (March 2022)
- Inequalities gap widening

Start Well Health Visitor caseload and levels of need (April 22)



Stockport all teams

- Universal – 11,526 - 79%
(receive 5 mandated contacts minimum)
 - Universal Plus – 2,355 – 16%
 - Universal Partnership Plus – 651 – 5%
- Total – 14,532 children

Brinnington only

- Universal – 300 - 45%
(receive 6 mandated contacts minimum)
 - Universal Plus – 265 – 39%
 - Universal Partnership Plus – 109 – 16%
- Total – 674 children

Impact on child development – Data Insights



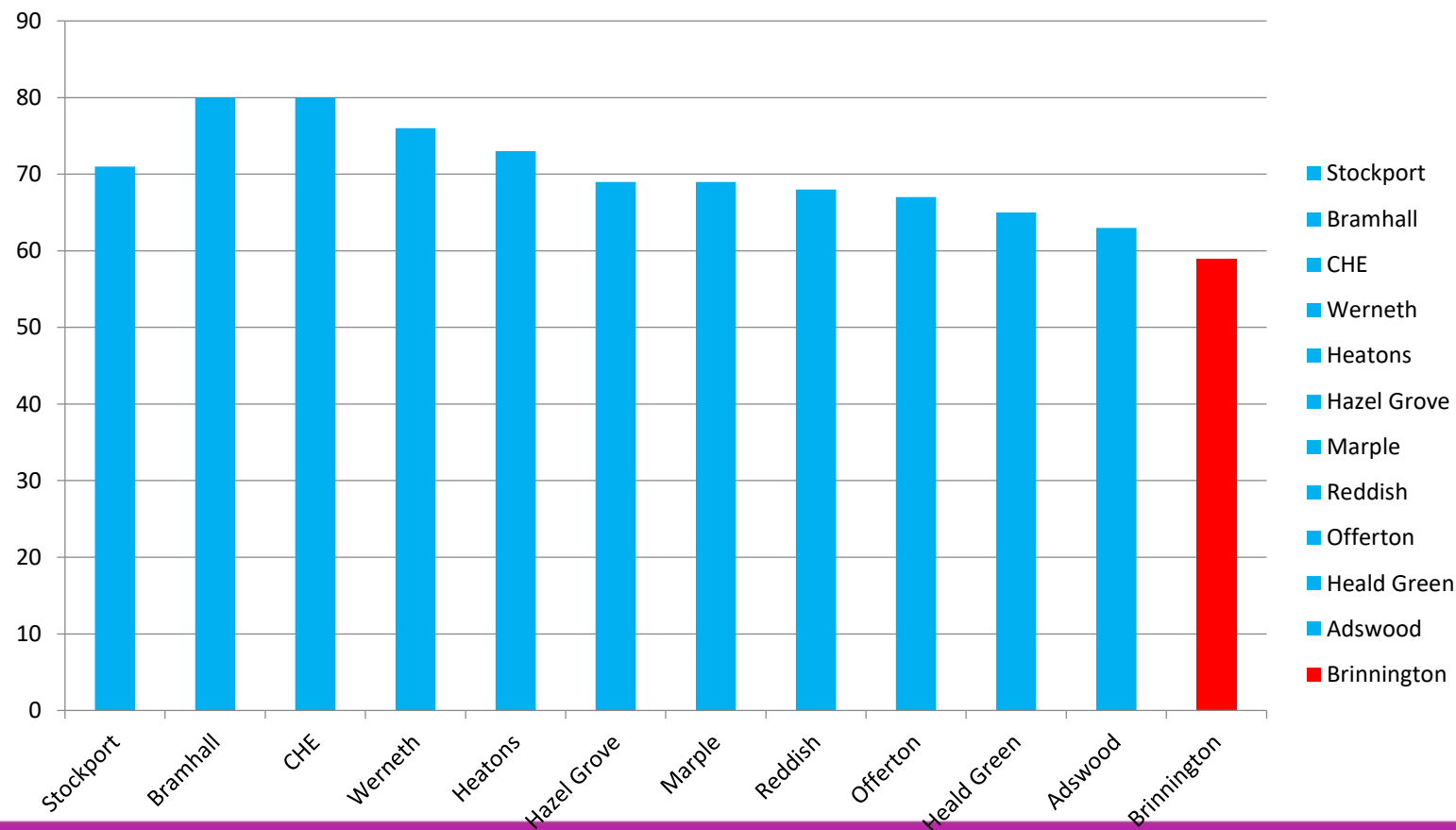
- The **phonics screen** for KS1 children in Autumn 2020 and 2021 have shown a decline from pre-pandemic levels in line with the national trend, and whilst still below pre-pandemic levels, are now increasing again
- PVI provision made **256 referrals to the EY area SENCO** in 2020/21:
 - Communication and Interaction 92%
 - Social, Emotional and Mental Health 86%
 - Cognition and Learning 65%
 - Sensory and/or physical 63%.
- **Proxy for School Readiness** (using PHE's definition of a good level of development at 2 years) shows Stockport, at 74.2% is significantly below the national average (82.9%) in 2020/21
- In Brinnington only 56% (Q3 2021/22) of children were **achieving a good level of development at 2 years**, compared to Stockport average 72.9.%

Impact on child development – Data insights continued



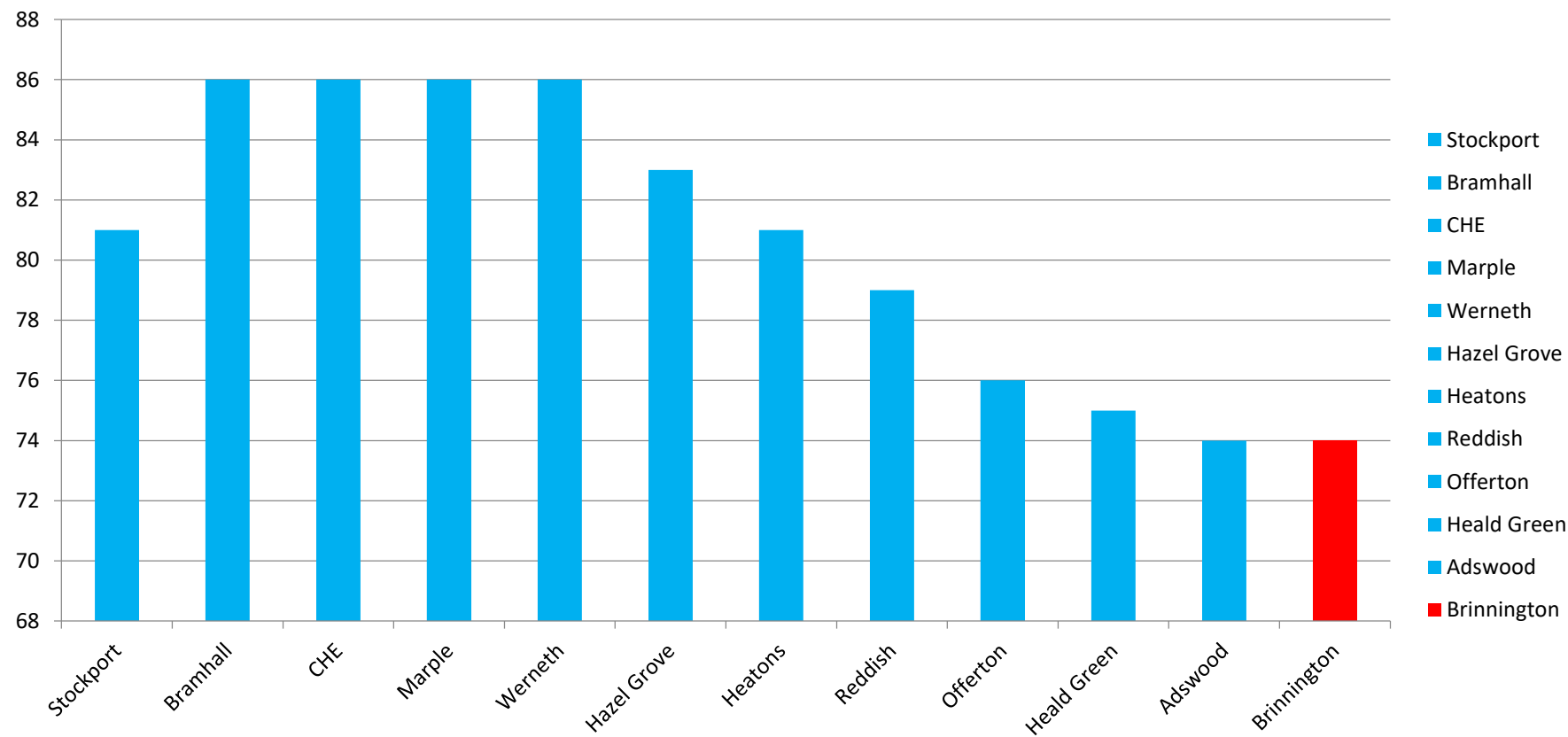
- Since August 2019 those children living in Brinnington who have received a universal 18 month assessment using the WellComm screening tool, **only 35% have met age related expectations**
- The Portage team are **currently working with 131 children - 89 remain on the waiting list**
- **Referrals to the Portage team increased by 76% in 2021/22**
- Attendance by Health Visitors at Team Around the Child/Family (TAC/F) **increased by 60%** April to December 21
- Health Visitor data suggests a **increasing parental mental illness and families living in poverty**

Percentage of children achieving a good level of development at 2 years – variation by Start Well Health Visitor team Q1-3 2021-2022



- DPIA between SMBC & FT allowing reporting at a neighbourhood level supporting targeting of resources
- Compared to the National average of 82.9% the percentage of children living in Stockport achieving a 'good level of development' at 2 years was significantly lower at 74.2% (2020/21)
- Awaiting Q4 data and National comparison for 2021/22

Percentage of children achieving the expected level of development in communication skills at 2 years – variation by Start Well Health Visitor team Q1 -3 2021-2022



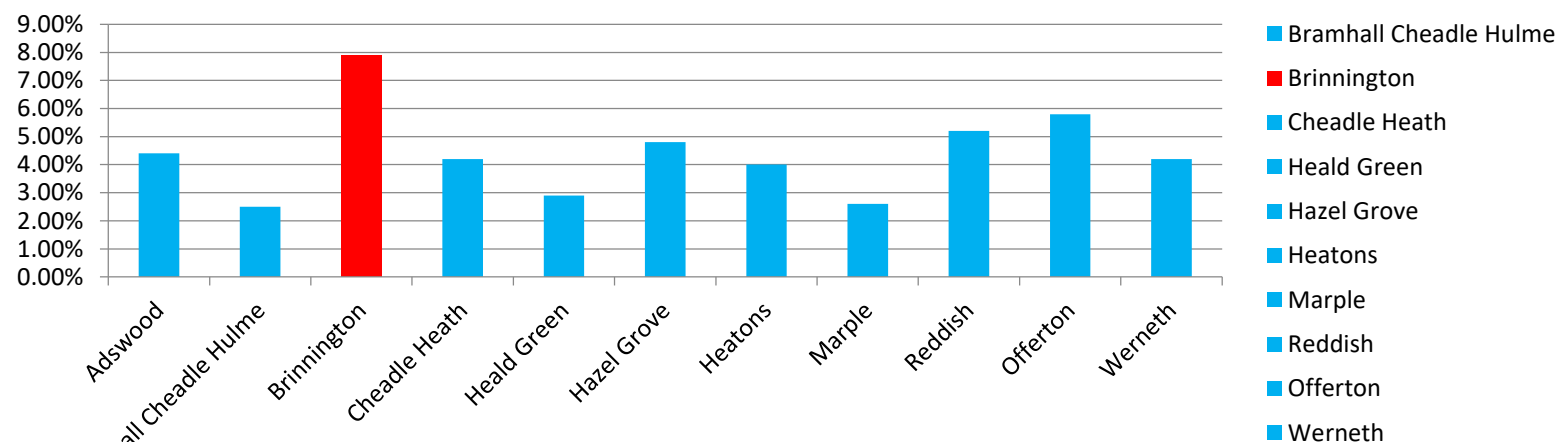
- Communication and language development at 2 years a proxy for school readiness and later life outcomes
- Compared to the National average of 86.8% the percentage of children living in Stockport achieving the expected level of development in communication skills at 2 years was lower at 84.6% (2020/21).
- Awaiting Q4 data and National comparison for 2021/22

Increasing identification of SEND needs - Open referrals to CDU comparison across Start Well Health Visitor teams (March 2022)



Team	Number of children with an open referral to CDU	% with open CDU referral compared to total caseload size
Adswood	50	4.40%
Bramhall Cheadle Hulme	49	2.50%
Brinnington	53	7.90%
Cheadle Heath	41	4.20%
Heald Green	53	2.90%
Hazel Grove	73	4.80%
Heatons	82	4%
Marple	24	2.60%
Reddish	60	5.20%
Offerton	88	5.80%
Werneth	55	4.20%

% children on caseload with an open CDU



What have we learnt?



- Disruption due to pandemic impacting child development outcomes
- Demand in some areas outweighing resource (can we keep doing differently with what we have?)
- School Readiness metrics are difficult to define
- **Benefits of integration** – sharing of child level data between the Foundation Trust and Local Authority
- Valuable insights from the Nesta discovery project
- Face to face contacts a must for above universal families to assess risk, resilience and vulnerability
- Digital support can be effective in extending reach and engaging dads
- Quality and workforce development frameworks need embedding
- Greater integration needed with children's therapy services
- Power of peer support in accelerating behaviour change – answer not always in the system



Findings from speaking with parents

Positive aspects of parenting in Stockport

- Adaptation to deal with COVID-19 restrictions, notably with **health visitors and midwives** calling regularly and checking in
- Receiving professional advice was **reassuring**, especially when hearing conflicting points from friends and family
- Parents liked being given an **opportunity to build their own support networks**, with other parents and professionals
- Where a parent had a negative experience, they were still keen to continue to access support, and focused on the **individual person they'd interacted with** rather than the council as a whole.

Things that were less positive

- Some parents felt COVID-19 had left them with **limited support available**, especially in relation to connections with other parents and the availability of certain council and healthcare services
- Some parents were concerned **service closures and limited support available** during COVID-19 had **impacted** their child's social and emotional development
- **Reduction in the amount of council services on offer** due to budget cuts, meaning they now rely more on community or charity services
- Initial aftercare in the first 6 months following birth was lacking, **they didn't know where to look** for support
- Parents interviewed who had a child with **special educational or health needs** felt that there was not enough support, and some professionals were not knowledgeable enough
- Parents **lack confidence** or **feel judged** when asking for support

Change that parents would like to see

- **Better communication** of the service offer
- More support from **conception to 6 months**
- **Improved access** to mental health services
- **Reduced waiting times** for specialist assessment and intervention
- **Opportunities** to socialise with children outdoors in **safe play spaces** which have access to peer support and professional advice

Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC) – the power of peer support



- Despite the pandemic **Empowering Parents Empowering Communities (EPEC)** continues to demonstrate **impressive engagement and retention rates - 91% for 2020/2021 academic year, compared to 83% in 2019/20**
- Between Sept 20 to July 21, 127 parents accessed EPEC parenting courses from and training, benefitting at least 254 children
- We have expanded the **skills, expertise and knowledge** within the Hub team to support extending the range of courses available including Baby and Us and more focused EPEC courses for parents with children with ASD
- April 2022. New EPEC ASD course for parents with children 2-11 yrs awaiting diagnosis
- Autism team including in offer when completing 'adapt' meetings – Autism team and Charnwood supporting recruitment
- 2 Parent Group Leaders (PGLs) delivering, both have children with SEND so real authentic lived experience and peer to peer support – member of autism team providing supervision
- Week 3 of first time delivering course and all 7 parents still attending - positive feedback from PGLs, parents and supervisor
- Feedback from a parent attending a pre diagnosis planning meeting with Autism team

“Thanks for your help and support at the meeting. The EPEC course you recommended is brilliant. The women running it are fabulous and know so much from their own experiences which is really helpful. Also meeting other parents that are in the same position who truly understand what your going through daily is such a great support. Thanks for recommending me for it”

- Wider communication of the EPEC ASD course will be considered following evaluation of the first course

Finding a way forward



- Recovery planning which continues to recognise **the impact of the pandemic on babies and children's development and parent mental health**
- **Family Hub Transformation bid successful** supporting transition to a Family Hub network model of delivery
- **Alignment of Start Well strategy with the Best Start for Life** vision, principles and action areas
- **Development of 'Fairer Start Local' partnership** between GMCA/Stockport and Nesta and **greater collaboration with families to identify, design and test potential improvements to early years delivery**
- **Commissioning of the Healthy Child Programme as a Cooperative Agreement**
- **Establish school readiness metrics**
- **EYs commissioner** to help shape priorities and the better use data to support commissioning decisions
- **Explore opportunities for greater integration across health, care and education**
- **Enhanced continuity of care teams** – additional enhanced midwifery teams focusing on family help

Finding a way forward continued



- **Embedding evidence based pathways** e.g. EYs SEND integrated pathway
- **EYs digitisation programme** and the further development of our digital, virtual and telephone offers
- **DFE EY recovery plan**
- **EYFS reforms** and support to childminders, settings and schools
- **Respond to the current slight decline in Ofsted judgements** for early years providers
- **Ongoing design and testing of new models of working** to reduce waiting times and support children with SEND in a more timely way
- **Transition points and the sharing of health, care and education information**
- Clarity on the **EYs workforce development** offer to support **practitioner confidence, quality and consistency in key messaging**
- **Evaluation** of Team Around the Early Years and role of Start Well Coordinator
- **Build capacity** and look for **solutions within the community**

