

Cyngor Sir CEREDIGION County Council

REPORT TO: Healthier Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

DATE: 24 May 2023

LOCATION: -Hybrid

TITLE: Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To gain approval for the adoption of the Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales, from a Ceredigion Local Authority perspective

**REASON SCRUTINY
HAVE REQUESTED THE
INFORMATION:** For information.

BACKGROUND:

In 2018, Welsh Government invited bids from Local Authorities and Health Boards to become pathfinders for the Early Years Integration Transformation Programme. An application was submitted by Carmarthenshire and Ceredigion Local Authorities alongside Hywel Dda Health Board to become Pathfinder areas. Funding was secured (2019 - 2024) to pilot and test approaches to Early Years Integration Transformation and a Maternity and Early Years Steering Group was formed. In January 2021, Pembrokeshire successfully applied to join the Pathfinder Programme and therefore all Local Authorities in the Hywel Dda footprint have been involved in the Programme.

In 2021/ 2022 representatives of the three Local Authorities and Hywel Dda Health Board worked together to formulate a Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales.

CURRENT SITUATION:

The Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales is guided by the Welsh Government's agenda for providing better integrated public services as iterated in the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The strategy focusses on support in the first 7 years of a child's life, recognising the importance of these formative years in shaping the child's future health and wellbeing.

The draft strategy was widely consulted upon with professionals and service users throughout the region and amendments were made on the basis of feedback received. The consultation was open between the 1st of July and 30th September 2022 and response were as follows:

- Online Consultation – 54 responses
- Parent focus groups – 55 participants
- Professionals Focus groups – 28 participants
- Responses received from: Childcare Team; School Nurses; Midwifery Team; Health Visiting Team; Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer; Speech and Language Therapy Team
- In addition, within Ceredigion, meetings were held with the Corporate Director and Cabinet Member for Through Age Wellbeing to consider the draft strategy.

The strategy and website development has been overseen by the Maternity and Early Years Steering Group.

The Strategy aims to promote collaboration between support services both at pre-birth and Early Years stages. The strategy is located within the Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales Website, which is a collaboration between Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire local authorities, Hywel Dda University Health Board and third sector partners. (The strategy section of the website is also available in PDF format).

Based upon extensive consultation with Service Users and Early Years Professionals, the Strategy for West Wales was written with the intention of promoting excellent services at every stage of Maternity and Early Years. The strategy aims to deliver:

- Positive engagement/ early intervention with families at the ante-natal stage.
- Positive Engagement with Families during Early Years
- Positive transition from Childcare to Early Years education

Furthermore, five strategic themes are identified as vehicles for achieving the above aims:

- Integrate our services
- Take a person-centred approach to service design
- Develop technology infrastructure and systems to enable collaboration
- Develop our Workforce
- Provide accessible information.

[Maternity & Early Years Strategy for West Wales – Working together to give children the best start in life \(earlyyearsstrategywest.wales\)](http://earlyyearsstrategywest.wales)

[Strategaeth Mamolaeth a'r Blynyddoedd Cynnar ar gyfer Gorllewin Cymru – Working together to give children the best start in life \(strategaethblynyddoeddcynnarargyfergorllewin.cymru\)](http://strategaethblynyddoeddcynnarargyfergorllewin.cymru)

SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING ACT (WALES) 2014

The Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales is consistent with the principles of the Act, specifically Prevention, Early Intervention and Partnership working/ Integration.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales is consistent with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, promoting Collaboration, Integration, Service User Involvement and Prevention.

RECOMMENDATION (S): That Scrutiny Committee Agree endorses the Maternity and Early Years Strategy for West Wales.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S): In order to promote clarity of purpose and a collaborative approach to Maternity and Early Years services.

Contact Name:	Iwan Davies
Designation:	Corporate Manager Early Intervention
Date of Report:	24 April 2023

Our Strategy



Excellent services at every stage

Based on what we know about the current service landscape and what we've learned from families and early years professionals, our strategy for 2022-26 aims to deliver:



Positive engagement/early intervention with families at the ante-natal stage

To ensure that specialist services provide support to prepare families for parenthood and offer support at the earliest possible opportunity.



Positive engagement with families during Early Years

To ensure our family needs are at the heart of joined-up services, so that families access the right support at the right time.



Positive transition from childcare to Early Years education

To ensure a seamless transition process for all children and parents from pre-school settings into early years education.





1. Integrate our services

We need this because:

- Siloed working creates barriers between services, and gaps that families can slip between
- We know that families (especially families in need) get better care when services work together
- Resources are stretched; by working together, we can avoid duplication, minimise waste and build on each other's work

We need:

- Shared decision-making supported by shared information
- Systems for collaboration between councils
- A place-based approach to service delivery, including co-located EY teams where appropriate
- Better communication between services and agencies
- More positive relationships between professional groups
- A workforce motivated and empowered to work across service boundaries
- A workforce who feel like a single team, pulling together for the same goals

We'll get there by:

- Setting up more co-located teams across the region
- Exploring options for joint or co-commissioning
- Learning from evaluations of pathfinder pilot work
- Helping professionals to gather feedback from families, so it can be used in planning and future service co-design activities



2. Take a person-centred approach to service design



We need this because:

- We want to offer accessible services that families want to use
- With current resources, it's hard to design services to be truly person-centred
- We don't know enough about the needs of all our service-users, and we don't recognise how different these needs are, or how they change over time
- Families can feel undermined and abandoned when services don't build from their strengths as well as their needs

We need:

- Regular research with service-users and simple feedback loops, so we can see our services and workforce through the eyes of the families who depend on them
- To develop the skills of the Early Years workforce, so that they're better equipped to recognise family strengths and listen to family needs
- Community-led services, commissioned from the ground up
- To identify and remove barriers to service access, eg by making services work better across council boundaries
- Less bureaucracy

We'll get there by:

- Budgeting for regular consultation with service users
- Doing more workforce co-design training and development, to help professionals capture and represent the voices of families
- Increasing regional collaboration and service integration
- Investing in community-led services



3. Develop technology infrastructure and systems to enable collaboration

We need this because:

- Service professionals don't have access to up-to-date shared information about families, which means family members have to constantly repeat their case history at every meeting and consultation
- Staff in different councils, services and professions can't easily and securely share information across organisational boundaries
- Children can be missed when referrals are incomplete or delayed, because of other system barriers
- We would like to improve our monitoring of service targets and make it easy to track outcomes for individual children and for our Early Years population

We need:

- A way for service professionals across the region to easily access, update and share family information, from the device they already use and from the place where they already do their work (which, if they're a midwife, will often be on the road)
- Agreed standards for data collection, storage and access
- Automated reporting of population level indicators

We'll get there by:

- Embedding the voice of service-users into everything we do (by putting more emphasis on gathering feedback and making use of it to improve services)
- Continuing to build an evidence base that supports investment in shared IT, and lobbying for that change to be prioritised
- Continuing to make the case for simple feedback loops that would allow staff to suggest changes and improvements



4. Develop our workforce



We need this because:

- Families aren't always getting the care and support they need, due to lack of staff.
- Staff in health, care and education are extremely busy and the work environment can be stressful.
- There's no common language to describe the same things between different organisations and professions. This caused unnecessary confusion and slow things down.
- Not all colleagues have been training on evidence-informed services.

We need:

- To attract and train new and returning recruits to the EY workforce
- Happier, more confident and less stressed colleagues
- A widely-used common language and common ways of working
- Cross-service training opportunities, particularly in evidence-based care
- Recognition of transferable skills between services and professions
- Clearer career paths for EY workers
- More multidisciplinary teams



We'll get there by:

- Investing in growing the team, with appropriate marketing, recruitment and training
- Building closer links with schools, colleges and careers services, to promote jobs and work experience placements in the sector
- Developing a common basic training offer for all EY professionals
- Developing clear career progression plans, including personal development and training options





5. Provide accessible information

We need this because:

- Information about available services simply isn't easy to find, for families or professionals. As a result, some services are under-used
- Consequently, families don't know where to turn. Professionals don't always know where to refer them to.
- The information that does exist is fragmented; if you don't already know where to look, it's hard to find.
- It's costly and time-consuming to keep the Family Information Service up-to-date, and staff time for this is limited

We need:

- Clear, accessible, comprehensive, simple information in one place
- Online information that's so good and so easy to use, it markets itself through word of mouth
- The ability for professionals to edit or annotate information on it, quickly and easily
- Better institutional knowledge about care pathways, and options for referral; if professionals know more about the Family Information Service, they will be more likely to suggest it as a source of help for families

We'll get there by:

- Exploring ideas and options for a single shared online information service
- Exploring how we could invest in roles with responsibility for publishing and maintaining that information
- Undertaking mapping/reviewing work to understand current pathways better
- Providing training for service professionals, so they feel better equipped to refer families to information services
- Seeking out opportunities to work with other agencies on future investments in online information services

