

The Bump-Start Project

The Growing Role of the VCS in Perinatal Pathways

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Support and friendship
for families

Overview



- Background to Home-Start
- The Bump-Start Project
- Links with the health sector - NHS perinatal MH services; how we work in partnership
- Challenges and opportunities

About Home-Start



- Founded in 1973 by Margaret Harrison OBE, based on her experiences working in Leicester – in children's homes, with the Family Service Unit, mother and toddler groups and the Child Guidance Clinic:

“What I learned was that what they longed for most was to have a friend – another parent who would understand them and, in an informal way, would help them feel more confident as parents.”

(quote from HS 40th anniversary celebration)

Supporting families in their own homes



Home-Start visits families in their own homes, where the dignity and identity of parents and their children can be protected, the individual needs of the family can be met and a parent's innate strengths encouraged.

“One of the big things was the emotional support. Just chatting with her [the volunteer] was a great help.”

(quote from a mum – HS Westminster evaluation 2015)

Peer support: parents supporting parents



Our committed and caring volunteers have experience of bringing up children. They are friendly, approachable people who other parents can trust and rely on to listen without judging, and help them develop confidence in their own abilities as parents.

Based on their own experiences, volunteers can reassure parents that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual, and encourage enjoyment in family life.

“Jean was like a big auntie. She gave me tips and it was wonderful.”

(quote from a mum – HS Westminster evaluation 2015)

Peer support - parents supporting parents



Volunteers come from all walks of life – very diverse groups in terms of language, ethnicity, education, lived experiences

Careful matching ensures the skills, experiences and qualities of the volunteer complement the family and their needs, helping them build a positive trusting relationship.

e.g. recent mothers supporting new mothers with PND/anxiety

*“Just thinking they are with me made me a bit strong.”
(quote from a mum – HS Westminster evaluation 2015)*

“Bump-Start” perinatal project



- Bump-Start is Home-Start Westminster’s perinatal project which extends Home-Start’s unique home-visiting volunteer support to support families through pregnancy, the birth experience and during the first year of their baby’s life.
- Working across Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea, and Hammersmith & Fulham when funding is available



Background

Since HSW started in 1999 our experience with families, our dialogue with local statutory services and our review of international programmes and research led us to believe that supporting families earlier, during pregnancy, could bring even greater benefits.

Objectives:

To improve:

- emotional wellbeing
- family relationships
- access to services and social networks
- attachment
- confidence in ability to parent

Peer support - parents supporting parents



Our befrienders can:

- offer a listening ear for worries about baby's sleeping or feeding, family relationships, or parenting problems with siblings.
- support isolated mums to try out Children's Centres, mother and baby groups, advice services, etc.
- support bonding with the baby through modelling interaction and play for new mothers who are anxious/lack confidence

“My volunteer helped me get out. Things started to change. Things started to get better. Before I just sat at home, didn’t meet anyone, didn’t speak with anyone except my husband.”

Training & support for volunteers



40 hour accredited training includes Safeguarding, Listening Skills, Attachment, Post-natal Depression, Domestic Abuse Awareness, Confidentiality, Boundaries, Positive parenting and Endings.

Additional Bump-Start training in relevant topics such as breastfeeding awareness and parent-infant mental health – delivered by Dr Maddalena Miele, Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist, St Mary's Hospital

Safe recruitment process: application form, interview, enhanced DBS check, references.

Regular supervision with staff.

*“They were lifelines to me when I didn’t have anyone else to talk to.”
(quote from a mum – HS Westminster evaluation 2015)*



Working with NHS perinatal services

- Referrals come from midwives (45%), perinatal psychiatrists/MH professionals (18%), health visitors (12%), children's services, women's refuges, self-referrals. Specialist PMH health visitor in RBKC.
- Demand for the service: 53% of Home-Start Westminster's referrals are now Bump-Start



Working with NHS perinatal services

- We work closely with PMH teams to ensure we don't duplicate work, and consult where we have concerns
- Sit on the NW London Perinatal MH Network – voluntary sector voice
- PMH teams refer women to Bump–Start who don't meet their threshold for support and would otherwise fall through the gap
- We can offer befriending visits at home – listening, and a free therapy service in the community

Partnership working to achieve the best outcomes for families



- Local perinatal psychiatrist trains Bump–Start volunteers in PMH and offers consultation to the project
- Bump–Start Co–ordinator attends meetings about the family’s care to share information, e.g. discharge/planning meetings, Child Protection meetings

Partnership working to achieve the best outcomes for families



- Local perinatal psychiatrist trains Bump–Start volunteers in PMH and offers consultation to the project
- Bump–Start Co–ordinator attends meetings about the family’s care to share information, e.g. discharge/planning meetings, Child Protection meetings
- Volunteers support/encourage families to attend key appointments, e.g. scans, midwife checks, GP appointments, psychiatry appointments

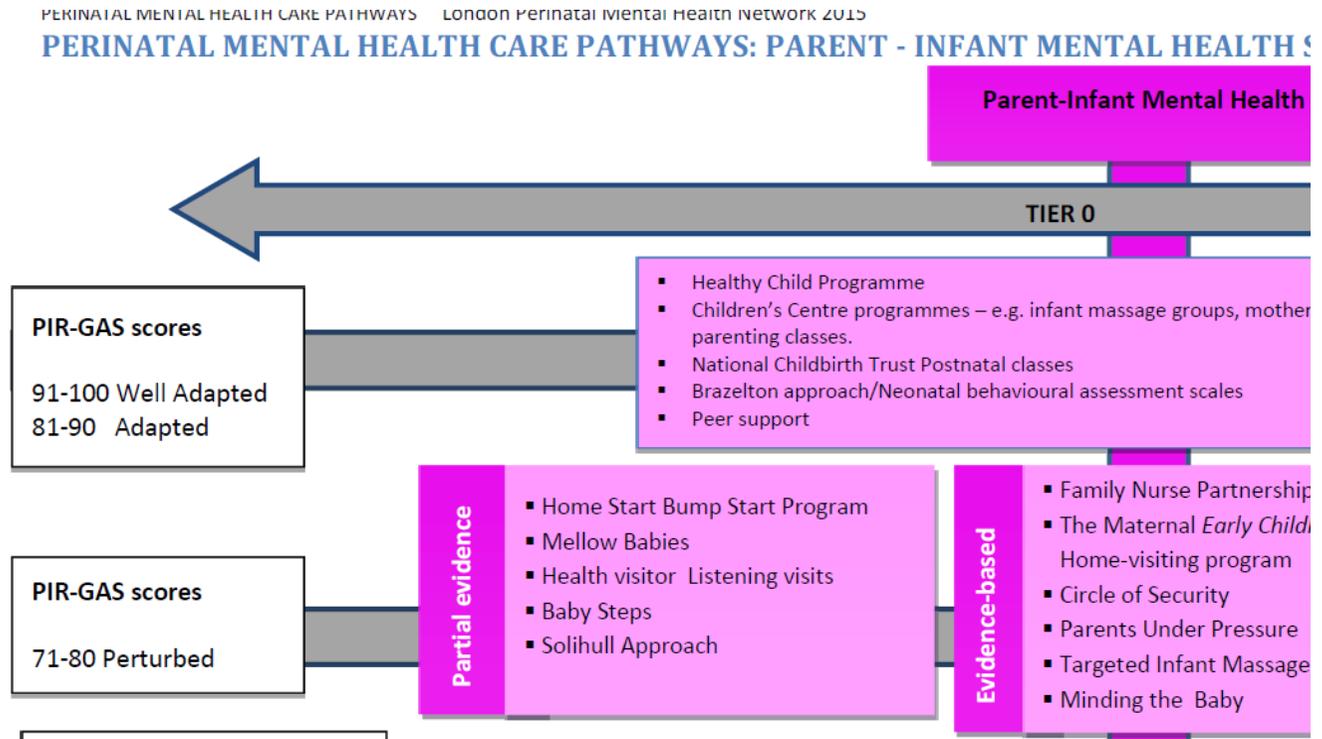
Partnership working to achieve the best outcomes for families



- Volunteers free up time for busy health professionals who identify women/families that need more support; Health Visitors/midwives can't offer listening visits – caseloads are too high
- Volunteers form a relationship with women – can flag up when women's mood/presentation changes after birth; contact the correct service
- Volunteers can support the advice of professionals, e.g. helping women understand where there is a cultural/language barrier, reminding women what was advised where they are overwhelmed and can't remember, helping women have a voice in their care

Working with other providers

- Bump–Start is included in Pan London PMH Network’s ‘Perinatal Mental Health Care Pathways’
- In the Parent–Infant MH and Social Care services strands, for low and moderate risk/need cases



Home-Start London



A consortium comprising of 15 Home-Start member schemes delivering family support services across 20 boroughs.

Last year nearly 900 volunteers supported over 2,000 families and 4,000 children. 49% of these families were referred via statutory health sources.

Home-Start is now delivering perinatal support in 9 boroughs across the capital. Represented on the Pan London Perinatal MH Network.

Opportunities & challenges of VCS and health partnerships



- Professional partnerships – achieving the outcomes we want for the people we serve. Our voice is included, e.g. perinatal MH networks
- Funding from charitable trusts and foundations - opportunities
- Pressure on health budgets – some opportunities, e.g. NHS struggles with peer support, user involvement