



# **Bristol Early Years Universal and Targeted SLT Service – an example of Joint Commissioning**

A Strategy for System Change

# Background

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- For almost 12 years, Bristol City Council have collaborated with health providers (currently Bristol Community Health) to jointly commission a universal and targeted service for early years children and their families.
- Easy to access support for both parents and early years professionals.
- Training courses for parents, advice drop in clinics and training for early years professionals.
- Close working with family support teams and other professionals to engage with hard to reach families.
- Accessible model replicated in South Gloucestershire over the past 2 years.

# Parent Offer

- 4-5 Advice Drop-in clinics per week

In 2018, 974 children attended a drop in.  
532 were referred to SLT  
442 were not referred but supported at a  
universal level.



- 4-5 Parent sessions a month
- **Confident Communicators** – workshop promoting parent child interaction to support language development.
- **Sorting Out Sounds** – training on speech sound awareness/development and practical strategies.
- **Talk and Explore** – informal community group sessions.
- Hard to reach service – home visits, community groups, non threatening, safe space, joint delivery with Family Support Team.
- Access to information in a variety of media (websites, posters, leaflets, specific advice sheets, social media).

# Practitioner Offer

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- Well established CPD offer for any professional in Early Years. Improving communication, school readiness and pre literacy skills.
- **10-12 Evidence based Hanen Courses per year** – Learning Language and Loving It and Adapted More Than Words.
- **Short courses** - Identifying SLCN training, Speech Sound Awareness for Practitioners in early years.
- Daytime and evening courses offered to increase accessibility (e.g. child minders).

# Key system changes

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- Constantly evolving service – responding to the needs of the city, joint working & joint delivery of services.
- Involvement with local initiatives with LEA. Joint planning and liaison with lead teachers and Teaching school.
- Easier access to information, support and onward referrals.

# Evidence of Impact – Does it work?

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- Families can access rapid advice and support – Barnardos user satisfaction survey: Families waited less than 2 weeks from sign-posting to SLT services.
- Early years practitioners have increased knowledge and skills in supporting children’s speech, language and communication development.
- Numbers of referrals for SLT assessment have decreased.
- Quicker access to therapy due to triage at Drop In
- Case studies -training improves access and engagement with hard to reach families
- Course feedback– 100% would recommend. Detailed outcome measures for practitioner training consistent with research findings.
- Popularity of ‘drop-in’ approach: around 1000 children & their families ‘drop-in’ each year
  
- Prevention – almost half of all contacts each year are not referred.

# Future Plans

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- **Involvement in local initiatives with LEA & Health**
  - 'Together at 2' review
  - Social prescribing book project with health visitors
- **Expanding our 'Hard-to Reach' services**
- Increased focus on early intervention, prevention and language enrichment.
- Preparing for organisational challenges (space, high numbers, supporting a positive experience)