

Care Experienced - Discussion Group Summary Report

This focus group consisted of three young parents who are/have been service users of either Family Nurse Partnership and/or Health Visiting service in Warwickshire. Not all participants answered every question. The below is an analysis of the responses given.

The questions in the focus group were intentionally phrased differently to the survey questions, but retained the same areas of focus so that they were accessible and enabled greater space for open dialogue and discussions. Two participants were unable to attend, a copy of the focus group questions for them to fill in was provided with one response which has been incorporated into the summary below.

The session was recorded with the permission of participants so that notes could be cross checked after the session for accuracy. Any analysis below has all names and identifying information removed – some quotes may be modified to exclude any potentially identifiable information.

Key messages

- All participants agreed that a partnership between services would be beneficial.
- Having consistency, trusted working relationships and clarity of the service offered was noted as important to respondents.
- All participants agreed accessible information and better communication tailored to their needs is important.
- When asked about equalities, one respondent commented that the service might not be as easy to access for dads.

Below is a summary of the responses provided for each question.

What do you like the most about the support you receive?

Respondents were unable to answer the above question, therefore the below reflects their experiences:

- Participants explained they didn't receive a health visiting service or had very limited contact.
- One participant described different professionals giving conflicting advice about how to care for their baby.
- Participants explained if they have another baby they will probably not be inclined to engage with the service as they have lost faith in the system and service.
- One participant had been a client of the Family Nurse Partnership programme and reflected that it was very supportive, non-judgemental and built trust with the young mum. The nurse helped with looking after their health, wellbeing and finding a nursery place, in addition to encouraging the participant to apply for a job.

What is the best thing about having this support?

- One participant said that when they were given a duty number to ring for support, the health visitor who took the call asked me to bring in my child and took away the negativity, was receptive and non-judgemental.

How did you hear about Health Visiting? How easy is it to contact the support you need for you and your baby? How important is that to you?

- One participant shared the health visitor turned up on door unexpectedly, no phone call or letter, they felt it was a impersonal service.
- One participant remembers receiving a letter and another said her GP referred her to the FNP programme and then they were referred to health visiting.

Participants noted very different experiences and healthcare relationships when accessing the Family Nurse Partnership versus the health visiting service.

Have you used any other services/support for you and your child, during the first few years? If so, who?

- Participants shared that they are vulnerable young people, have trauma, lack of support network and role models, constantly worrying if they will “*have their children taken away*”.
- Another participant agreed and added there is a lack of information about wider support and having the information they need at the right time, is important. Another participant shared they had accessed the Early Help service and found the offer helpful.

Do you feel the right services are available to support you and your baby?

- One participant reached out to Early Help because of their worry. They reflected that Early Help is an incredible service, encouraging the participant to get their child into nursery, to get a job and the mental health support they needed.
- Participants noted there are some services available however they had to find them alone.
- Another participant had a key worker who supported them throughout, was there to contact if they needed support and helped attend appointments.
- Participants shared that professionals need to work together and build a supportive, flexible and adaptive network around each person.
- Two participants both explained the service needs to foster a supportive environment and relationship that is non-judgemental.
- Participants explained they want to give their child a better life and require additional support to do so. They felt, as a group, they don't have the support networks others have.

Participants were then asked to rate how important each of the proposed benefits of the proposal were to them.

How important are these to you? Where 10 is super important, 1 is not very important at all.

Number 1. Knowing what services you can go to for support?

All three participants said 10.

Number 2. Services who support you working together such as the Family Nurse Partnership, Health Visiting, mental health support or other support you may need?

Varied scores - 8/7.5/9. Participants explained their experience of workers can go against you (“*if one thinks you are not a good parent and tells others it can influence others' perceptions of you & the service they consequently offer*”)

Number 3. Being able to easily access support?

All three participants said 10.

Number 4. Having a regular point of contact, and not having to have any disruption to the support you receive part way through?

All three participants said 10 and one added “*especially with our group as we get many different professionals supporting*”.

Number 5. Having the right level of support for your needs, so when things are more difficult you feel you can access/ask for more support and you can have support in a timelier way, rather than a long-time waiting?

All three participants said 10.

Number 6. If you have more than one person supporting you, knowing what each of them does and what to go to them for?

All three participants said 10. Collectively agreed that clarity of what different professionals and services do is needed.

Number 7. if you have more than one person supporting you, they talk to each other to ensure you can have the best support available by sharing information and building a better picture of your needs?

Scores varied - 7/ 4/ 5. Participants gave feedback to say communication is key but from experience, communication must work for them and not against.

Number 8. As your child grows, how important is it you can access in different ways support for you and your baby in such as home visits, clinics, online etc?

Scores varied - 10/6/9.5. Participants added [the support is] so much better at home visits as a lot of the other options they can't take up or would struggle to access.

Number 9. Feeling understood, accessing the right service first time and that your voice is listened to?

All three participants said 10. Participants agreed this is very important.

One participant added "*When looking at partnership working making sure you are really thinking about which partners are involved. Who are the key people based on who your service/cohort groups are*".

Thinking about what we have discussed so far, about the proposal and the potential benefits, to what extent do you agree that this will be a positive thing for you and your family?

Possible answers - Agree, not sure, Disagree.

- One participant fed back that if the service stays the same, they would not see the change as a positive.
- Two participants answered that all [the identified benefits] are important and would agree if the benefits were realised.

When, we look at designing services and support for mothers and their babies is there anything else we need to consider or keep in mind to ensure you have the best experience and support available?

Participants noted the following:

- One participant said that having a health visitor from the local area to support who have knowledge and expert information of the local area.
- Highlighted the need for a supportive, non-judgemental and informative service.
- Consistency of healthcare professional visiting,
- Participants explained they won't reach out first, they get worried. They relied on the health visitors proactively reaching out by text or phone call.
- One participant explained NHS staff are early to make referrals for care leavers, they may for example make a referral to social care to make them aware they are having a baby. This, they felt is judgemental and worries the young parent to be.

Equalities Section: Finally, when we consider a proposal like this it is important for us to understand that it may impact different communities and people of different genders, faiths, ages, disabilities and

ethnicities differently, as we all can have a different experience of things. Based on what you have heard today, and other information do you feel the proposal will impact well or badly for anyone in society?

- Participants shared that health visiting advice can be very strict and comes across that raising a baby must be done in a certain way. However, this must take into account cultural differences i.e. weaning earlier in some cultures. This shouldn't go against the person.
- Participants recommended working with themselves and other care leaver parents to design a supportive and adaptive service.