

Welcome to the Birmingham Forward Steps Newsletter July 2020

COVID-19 continues to dominate our lives, both personally and professionally. This month's newsletter focuses on how our colleagues strive to adapt and innovate their services during the global pandemic.



Share Your COVID-19 Stories

In order to capture innovation and good working practices, a survey has been created for staff to impart their COVID-19 stories. It's designed for colleagues to share the challenges faced due to the pandemic.

The survey was produced by BCHC communications department but is open to all BFS staff and partners.

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/COVIDStory/>

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Covid Story: Sarah Hynett , Family Support Worker, Spurgeons

Sarah Hynett, from the Sutton Coldfield District discusses how she's adapted to work during COVID-19:

“As a family support worker, working from home has been hard due to not being able to visit our families in their home. Some families with a ‘Child in Need’ or under ‘Child Protection’ have been the most challenging to make sure the children are safe and well. We have been talking to them on the phone and started to video call them on WhatsApp (with permission) allowing us to see and capture them in their home environment. It also allows us to capture the child's voice while completing activities with them.

We are able to go into the office now twice a week, but families still cannot be visited at home and families do not feel safe to come to the Children's Centre. I will continue to video call and capture the child's voice until restrictions are lifted.”

This excerpt was submitted via: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/COVIDStory/>



Sarah Hynett,
Family Support Worker

Rhythm and Rhyme & Startwell Summer Challenge

With summer on its way, activities are being organised to keep young minds and bodies active. ‘Rhythm and Rhyme’ is a 6 week virtual programme focusing on rhythm, tone and beat, as well as the importance of music and language development. For more information, please email: satnam.nischal@barnardos.org.uk

Also, Startwell’s ‘6 Week 6 Challenge’ activities are designed to keep the family busy throughout the school holidays. There are both physical and food challenges including; preparing healthy food, summer walks, crazy cricket, mini Olympics and more.

For more information about Startwell, visit:

<http://startwellbirmingham.co.uk/>



Health Visiting Team: Response to COVID-19

As a response to COVID-19, a new Health Visiting 'Standards Of Practice' was developed and implemented. Staff rota's were implemented to ensure social distancing was maintained in the work environment and risk assessments sent to all staff. Isolated clinics were also set up in every district with PPE and safe disposal of clinical waste made available to all staff.

In addition, 33 staff were redeployed into the health visiting service enabling the service to offer above and beyond national recommendation.

CASS (Children's Advise and Support Service) continued to work remotely and staff provided appropriate packages of care to families, utilising video call platforms and mobile phones to keep in touch where necessary. Duty Health Visitors for every team are available every day via telephone.

Mandated services have continued and been offered Virtually (Antenatal, New Birth Visit and 6 week review) by a health visitor with face-to-face follow up offered if deemed appropriate.

Expectant women have received antenatal letters and virtual contacts have been offered where concerns are identified.

Recovery of the service is being planned and reviewed by the senior management team. The professional curiosity within the practice of health visiting has led to some practitioners offering more face-to-face contact.

A review of the COVID-19 risk assessment and amendments have been made to support the health visitors in the decision of what is a compelling need.

'Take a Break' Boxes



The BCHC Organisational Development Team delivered well deserved 'Take a Break' boxes to Health Visiting sites as a starting point to address morale.

The boxes consisted of Wellbeing information, tea, coffee, UHT milk and biscuits. This is a great way to say thank you for all the hard work!

Helping Families Stranded Abroad

The following feedback was relayed from an Assistant Practitioner based at Northfield back in May.

The Northfield Health Visiting team made extraordinary efforts to help 2 families stranded abroad in these trying times.

“I just wanted to let you know a little bit of good news. I have been completing an ‘Ages & Stages Questionnaire’ and an ‘Ages & Stages Questionnaire Social Emotion’ on the phone over the last week along with families from Northfield. I have also completed development checks over the phone to families that are stuck in other countries such as China and Sri Lanka due to the COVID crisis; these families were delighted to hear from us as a service and both families had questions that I was able to answer. Just thought it is brilliant we were able to reach them and offer support even though they are in difficult situations.”

Virtual Support Groups

Numerous ‘virtual’ groups are being delivered to engage with families and service users across Birmingham.

Groups include, ‘Twilight Parenting Sessions’, ‘Breastfeeding Virtual Lounges’ (held at various times depending on each district), and the ‘HENRY Healthy Families Programme’ have all started online.

For more information on these support groups and more, please visit:

<https://bhamforwardsteps.co.uk/support/>



‘Right Help, Right Time’: e-Learning for BFS Staff

‘Right Help, Right Time’ offers guidance for everyone who works with children, young people and their families in Birmingham. It advises what support is available; it is our collective practice guide on how all individuals, agencies and practitioners work together in Birmingham.

E-learning for ‘Right Help, Right Time’ is considered to be essential training for all BFS staff. For more information, please visit: <http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk/delivering-effective-support>

Formula Milk Scheme



Baby Aid Birmingham will be managing the 'Formula Milk Scheme' for Birmingham mothers diagnosed with HIV. The scheme provides formula milk for women who are HIV positive with an infant up to 12 months of age.

For further information please contact:
Kathy.lee@birmingham.gov.uk

Gardening Week at Foxhollies Children's Centre

"Growers Packs" were devised and delivered by 'Arts in the Yard', a local organisation that supports families within the Yardley district. Foxhollies Children's Centre received 20 Growers packs including plants, compost, pots and seeds which could be distributed to any family that wished to participate with the gardening week arranged via the Yardley BFS Facebook page.

A Facebook video was created explaining to families how they could get involved with the gardening week activities. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, it was decided that the best option for collection was for a drive through service to take place on Thursday 28th May and Friday 29th May, between 11am – 2.00pm.

Parents would call and book a slot to collect their Growers Packs and two members of staff would wear PPE to distribute the packs to the families. Families would arrive by car or walk to the car park to collect their pack. An information sheet was given explaining when and how to plant their seeds and also information on how gardening can help to alleviate stress and anxiety.



MECC: Make Every Contact Count

'Make Every Contact Count' (promoted and designed by Public Health England) is a message for all practitioners to ensure that, in the event of a face-to-face contact with a family, all the children and adults are considered and their needs discussed irrespective of the nature of the professional making the contact.

There are resources available for agencies including presentations, training for trainers & staff:

<https://www.makingeverycontactcount.co.uk/>