

# Understanding barriers to engagement with services for 2 year olds - to improve support for families and early child development outcomes

City of York Council  
in partnership  
with Nesta

By Rob Newton & Jodie Farquharson (CYC)  
and Hessa Elliott (Nesta)

- York & Nesta's long-term partnership aims to improve early development outcomes for disadvantaged children in the early years.
- Over the last 6 months we have been working together to understand barriers to families accessing services for two year olds - with a specific focus on the two year Health Review delivered by the Healthy Child Service, and a secondary focus on the two year funded education places.
- Through better use of quantitative and qualitative data we are gaining a better understanding of patterns of engagement and barriers to accessing services.
- We are using this improved understanding to try to improve uptake of the two year Health Review, which is a key element of improving outcomes for two year olds.



We engaged with families via interviews and text messaging survey - to better understand barriers and facilitators to accessing services

### Barriers

- Anxiety, lack of confidence, fear of being judged
- Not understanding what's on offer or the benefits of services
- Logistical barriers

### Influences

- Friends, family, social networks
- Relationship with practitioners & services

### What parents cared about

- Educational, social and emotional development
- Play, imagination, fun
- Reassurance, practical advice & support from a professional (especially on potty training, eating & speech)

### Promising tool for engagement

- Text messaging survey platform - easy to use and good value
- High levels of sign up & completion, and willing to continue engaging
- Now introducing SMS for service reminders



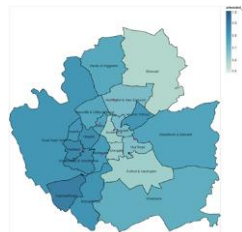
We analysed data and built a new data dashboard system - to better understand community needs and allow service delivery to be more responsive in future

We used data in new ways to better understand patterns of engagement and community needs. We found:

- **Geographical variation:** where a child is born in York seems to be a key indicator for how likely they are to be brought to their Health Review
- **Demographic variation:** white British children seem to have higher attendance rates than other ethnicities

We are developing a **data dashboard** for York which will:

- Allow for ongoing monitoring of real-time data
- Combine quantitative & qualitative data
- Allow service delivery to be more community responsive, improving identification of need and enabling better targeting of support.



We worked with the Healthy Child Service team to design a more engaging, responsive and targeted service for the 2 year Health Review - we are piloting this new delivery model in one area of the city



- The 2 year Health Review is a key opportunity to identify families in need of additional support and children at risk of poor outcomes, and provide or signpost families to the right support.
- Most children in York who take the review are at the expected level of development, but the **take-up rate is low**. Our concern is that many of the children who aren't being seen for their Health Review may be the ones at risk of poor outcomes.

We are piloting changes to delivery to try to increase universal uptake and help identify those at risk of poor outcomes for targeted outreach and support. These changes include:

- Pre-allocating appointments to reduce admin for parents
- Improving communications to increase engagement
- Additional screening of children not brought for risk of poor outcomes, and targeted follow-up for children flagged.

Early results seem promising - the process seems to be helping more children be seen for their Review and flag children at risk of poor outcomes.

We are gathering monitoring & evaluation data, including feedback from parents which we are building into the dashboard.

