

## Being Healthy

This section is all about the steps we are taking as partners to encourage children, young people and their families to stay healthy throughout their lives. It covers both physical and mental health, as well as children's happiness and emotional well-being. Good health includes being able to do all the things we need to do and being able to cope with what is going on around us.

### Where are we now?

The YorOK partners have been working hard to help promote better health from conception onwards. Health visitors and midwives are now based in our local Children's Centres, and other health professionals regularly use the facilities. This means we can provide the best possible mixture of universal and specialist services, especially to our most disadvantaged communities. We need to continue to ensure that rates of breastfeeding and of immunisation for one, two and five year olds remain above the national average, while those for infant mortality remain below.



By July 2008 all City of York schools were registered on the 'Healthy Schools Programme'. 78% of our schools have achieved 'Healthy School Status' and an action plan is in place to achieve 100% by Summer 2009. York is leading the way regionally on this and is the 6th best performing council in the country in this area.

Being active is an excellent way for people of all ages to maintain a healthy lifestyle, and it is important to make sure that good habits are encouraged in childhood. Since 2007 we have improved facilities for both indoor and outdoor sport, and have encouraged schools to offer every child an average of two hours high quality PE and school sport per week. In 2006/07, 71% of 5-16 year olds were participating in this; the figure increased to 90% in 2007/08. It is expected and needs to improve still further in 2008/09 if we are to meet the new, more challenging national targets. At the same time we have been encouraging more children and



young people to walk and cycle to school, and have improved provision for the 6% of children and young people in the city who are considered to have a particular sporting talent. We have also invested in better play facilities.

Nevertheless, we are keeping a close eye on the trends in childhood obesity. The latest figures for 2007/08 indicate that 8.2% of reception-age children (four/five year olds) are at risk of obesity, which is a welcome decrease from the 2006/07 figure of 8.4%.

The 2007/08 figure for Year 6 pupils (ten/eleven year olds) is 16.6%, which is a rise from the 2006/07 figure of 15.6%. Tackling this will remain a priority for all the YorOK partners. One way will be by continuing to improve the quality of school meals by using better ingredients, and by educating children about healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. We are part of a new national initiative in this area with the School Food Trust<sup>2</sup>.

Since 2005, the rate of hospital admissions due to accidents for 0-19 year olds has been decreasing each year, which is very welcome. However, drug and alcohol related hospital admissions for 0-19 year olds have increased in the last five years and this needs to be the focus of more attention.

We have introduced a range of initiatives to tackle unwanted or unintended teenage conceptions, which are high by international standards, but in line with national trends. Our initiatives are based on best practice and a significant local research project carried out in 2008 by the University of York. We have met our chlamydia screening targets, but we are facing a rise in the number of sexually transmitted infections, especially chlamydia.

The last few years have seen an increasing emphasis on initiatives to promote children's emotional well-being. Innovative work has ensured that the 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' are now embedded in the curriculum in all of our primary schools, and our secondary schools too are increasingly looking to such techniques. We have been working to improve our child and adolescent mental health services; York has been praised both for its preventative work and for its services for the most vulnerable groups. Our 'Biomation' project to improve young people's (and others') understanding of physical and mental health conditions has achieved national recognition. We have also invested in new facilities at Limetrees, and at our popular Castlegate Advice Centre. But as the importance of emotional well-being is more widely understood, demand for such services will continue to rise.

We are proud of the improvements in our services for disabled children and this must remain a priority. We will continue to increase short stay provision, provide better transitions at all ages, improve communication with, and involvement of, parents and ensure better strategic planning.

<sup>2</sup> See [www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk) for more details

As a result our priorities are:

## 1. Promote positive health choices from conception onwards by:

- ▶ working with parents to encourage healthy eating and promote healthy relationships with their children. This starts from conception and continues through to the teenage years, when many parents face fresh challenges and may need information and assistance about drugs and sexual health;
- ▶ providing more opportunities for young people to take regular exercise, including walking and cycling to school, or to develop a sporting talent;
- ▶ increasing the number of children and young people participating in regular, high quality PE;
- ▶ further expanding our play facilities, access to green space, our Street Sport activities and sporting options available after school;
- ▶ promoting awareness of the issues around alcohol and substance misuse, recognising that young people will always take risks, but helping them to make positive choices;
- ▶ continuing our work with young people to improve their awareness and self-management of their own physical and mental health.

"Make sports cheaper. My mummy has to pay £4 every time she takes me or my brother to play tennis."

## 2. Develop specific programmes to tackle obesity, substance misuse, unwanted conceptions and sexually transmitted infections by:

- ▶ encouraging multi-agency work to prevent childhood obesity, including breastfeeding campaigns;
- ▶ further emphasising, through our schools and Children's Centres, the need for healthy local food and food preparation – linking this to healthy lifestyles in a coherent strategy;
- ▶ providing sensitive support to help children manage their weight;
- ▶ ensuring multi-agency work to prevent and treat drug and alcohol misuse;
- ▶ expanding our programmes to combat unwanted conceptions by developing specific initiatives to raise girls' self-esteem and boys' awareness of their responsibilities;
- ▶ further promoting good sexual health through lessons in schools;
- ▶ providing accessible, local screening facilities, with clear targets to reduce sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia.

## 3. Support emotional well-being by:

- ▶ further expanding the successful 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' programme, extending its reach into secondary schools, and providing advice for parents;
- ▶ where possible, using a recognised framework to measure the emotional well-being of children and young people;
- ▶ expanding our successful child and adult mental health services and the counselling services available to children and young people;
- ▶ equipping all of our workforce to have the confidence to recognise emotional health issues and how to deal with them;

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All quotations with a yellow border are from children and young people across the City



- ▶ ensuring better services to teenage parents, for example, expanding the successful 'Mums2Be' programme and ensuring that young mums have every assistance to return to education or employment if they wish;
- ▶ supporting the particular emotional needs of parents with disabled children through networks and support such as 'short break' programmes;
- ▶ supporting the particular emotional needs of young carers;
- ▶ recognising that children's happiness is as important as any of the indicators that can more easily be measured.



#### 4. Bring integrated health services closer to local communities by:

- ▶ encouraging our staff to work jointly in all venues, including Children's Centres. Our staff includes development workers, health visitors, children's social services, midwives, youth workers, Connexions staff and others;
- ▶ providing a full range of services from our Children's Centres, covering every family in the city, by 2010;
- ▶ ensuring all our staff have the skills they need to do their job, and that those who provide universal services know how to recognise the early signs of a problem or issue that might require the intervention of a specialist;
- ▶ working with other partnerships to develop policies and targeted programmes that recognise the links between poverty, poor housing and ill health.

"I wish for a good breakfast, snack and lunch at 12 noon so I am not thinking about being hungry when I am learning."

#### How will we know we are making a difference?

The YorOK partnership collects a wide range of information about the health of children and young people. As we make progress against the priorities set out above, we would expect to see improvements in:

- ▶ obesity among primary school age children in Year 6,
- ▶ the under 18 conception rate,
- ▶ sexually transmitted infection rates,
- ▶ substance misuse by young people,
- ▶ services for disabled children,
- ▶ children's participation in PE and sport,
- ▶ the emotional health of all children,
- ▶ the number of Children's Centres open and offering fully integrated services.

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