

Title	Director of Public Health Annual Report 2016/17 <i>From the very beginning: Pregnancy and Beyond</i>
Date	14 September 2017
Report of:	Dr Jane O'Grady, Director of Public Health

Purpose of this report:

It is a statutory duty for the Director of Public Health to produce an annual report on the health of their population. The theme of the 2016/17 report is the importance of a healthy pregnancy and the first months of life for the health, happiness and success of Buckinghamshire residents.

Summary of main issues:

The report highlights the vital importance of factors such as being a healthy weight, eating well and having good mental health during pregnancy and the particular risks to mother and baby of maternal smoking or alcohol or drug use at this time. The health of mothers and babies in Buckinghamshire is generally good, but 7.6% of babies are born prematurely, i.e. before 37 weeks, and 2% of babies born after 37 weeks are low birthweight, which can have lifelong consequences on their health. Births before 34 weeks account for half of all long term neurological disabilities in children and three quarters of neonatal deaths.

A range of factors contribute to prematurity and low birthweight, some of which are known and modifiable or avoidable. Known modifiable risk factors include maternal smoking, drug or alcohol misuse, domestic violence and maternal stress. What happens before birth and the early years affects a baby's health and life chances over the whole of their life into adulthood.

The report underlines the importance of maternal mental health for mother and baby and warm and sensitive parenting to help babies and children to develop well, be happy and ready to learn. It also highlights the devastating impact that domestic violence can have on the mother's and baby's health. Nationally 1 in 4 women will experience domestic abuse and it often starts or escalates during pregnancy. The ability of parents to give children the best start in life also depends on their social context. Many of the factors that impact on the chance of a healthy pregnancy and early childhood cluster together.

In Buckinghamshire, we need to ensure that people are provided with the right information, skills and support to make the best choices and look after their health and that of their baby. Success depends on the contribution of all partners and we need to work together with individuals and communities to improve outcomes for babies, their mothers and families.

The report recommends:-

- That key factors that could impact on the mother's, baby's and family's health are identified and addressed by frontline staff
- Buckinghamshire County Council and partners consider developing a comprehensive strategy to support parents in Buckinghamshire

- All parents should be encouraged to access universal parenting advice
- Data collection is enhanced so we can evaluate the impact of our services
- Schools consider how they can help prepare the next generation to be successful parents
- That all partners consider how they can contribute to improving outcomes for babies, mothers and families in Buckinghamshire.

The public health team are coordinating a workshop in October to explore how outcomes can be further improved for mothers and babies, and to develop an action plan to support the implementation of the report's recommendations.

Recommendation for the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- For members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to consider and endorse the Director of Public Health's Annual Report.
- For members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to discuss how their constituent organisations are able to support the recommendations set out in the report to improve outcomes for babies, mothers and families in Buckinghamshire.
- For members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to disseminate the Director of Public Health Annual Report through their organisations
- For members of the Health and Wellbeing Board to endorse the partnership workshop planned for October to improve outcomes for families, mothers and babies in Buckinghamshire.

Background documents:

1. From the very beginning: pregnancy and beyond - Full Report available as the first link on the Public Health DPHAR webpage:
<http://www.healthandwellbeingbucks.org/jsna-dphar>
2. From the very beginning: pregnancy and beyond – express version (attached)
3. Data Supplement – Maternity (attached)
4. Data Supplement – Public health outcomes grid (attached)