

HEALTHY START

Vitamins Case Study



Organisation: The Royal Borough of Greenwich

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Who can get Healthy Start vitamins in your area? We provide universal distribution to all pregnant women during their booking appointment and to beneficiaries only following the birth of their baby.

Where are they available?

From antenatal clinics, all Greenwich Children's Centres and certain baby clinics/health centres.

Who orders the vitamins?

This is varied. Currently, Public Health orders on behalf of the midwifery teams. Health Visiting order supplies for Health Visitors and Children's Centres.

Who claims reimbursement?

Health Visiting claim reimbursement for vitamins distributed by Health Visitors and Children's Centres. Public Health is responsible for claiming any reimbursement owed from midwifery distribution.

How is Healthy Start organised?

Healthy Start sits within the Health Improvement and Determinants of Health division of Public Health and links very closely with the Childhood Obesity and Food Poverty agendas. The programme is co-ordinated centrally by Public Health, who also take responsibility for providing midwifery with their vitamin supplies. Public Health work very closely with the Health Visiting Services who issue vitamins for eligible families from their bases and baby clinics and co-ordinate supplies in Children's Centres.

How do you embed vitamin distribution into local delivery plans?

The promotion and provision of vitamins is included in the service specifications for Healthy Visiting and Midwifery Services. It is also identified as a key performance indicator for all Greenwich Children's Centres as outlined in the mandated in the local Healthy Early Years Awards programme.

What works well and what has been a challenge?

The establishment of a multi-agency steering group oversees the implementation of an annual Improvement Plan and has helped to co-ordinate activities centrally and improve communication between partner organisations. Additionally, the implementation of the midwifery scheme has led to an increase in the number of

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early self-referrals to Healthy Start amongst pregnant women which has meant that eligible families are starting to benefit from the scheme sooner.



Have organisational changes had an impact?

No. Internal restructuring has meant that the programme has recently transferred to a different division within the Directorate but the work is still a priority and will continue.

What advice would you give other areas?

Universal provision helps to simplify the programme and promote take-up amongst beneficiaries and health professionals alike. If local funding does not permit universal provision for all pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under 4 – pregnant women, as an at risk group, have the most to gain from vitamin supplementation.