

# Health Improvement: Children and Young People

## 2022/2023 Flash Report South Lanarkshire

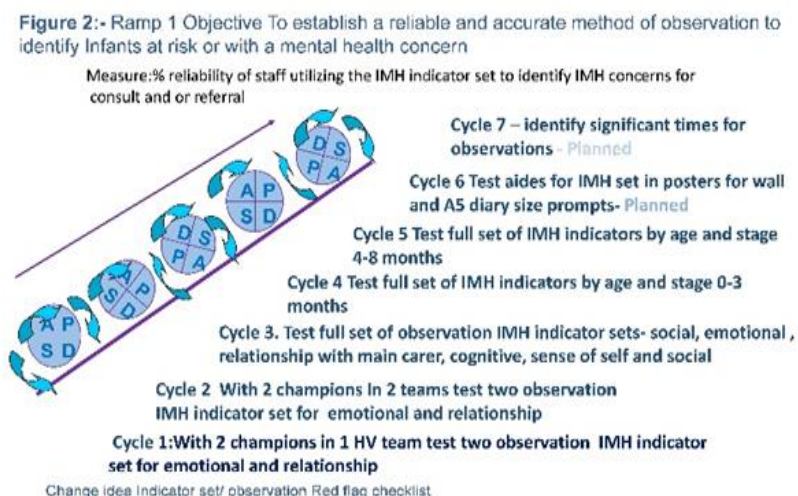


The period between pregnancy and three years is increasingly seen as a critical period in shaping children's life chances this is based on evidence of; brain formation, communication and language development and the impact of relationships formed during this period on mental health. **It is therefore also a critical opportunity to intervene to break cycles of poor outcomes** "Scottish Government, The Early years Framework, Part 11(p8):2008

### Overview

The *concept* of mental disorders in infancy is not widely recognized. This lack of widespread recognition of disorders of infancy is particularly concerning due to the unique positioning of infancy at the beginning of the developmental process. Applying local modelling to Infant Mental Health (IMH) incidence data, a recent scoping exercise in Lanarkshire suggested 16% (n=3,310) of under 3's may have mental health disorders and are in need of specialist mental health service input. Our **Theory of Change**: An IMH change package including evidenced based observation tools will improve identification and support in a timely manner for infants and families who have experienced adversity.

The PDSA ramp in figure 2 below outlines the iterative cycles for the IMH indicator set change idea.



Qualitative data highlighted **75%** of staff reported the indicator set improved their understanding of the presentation and development of an infant from an IMH perspective. **100%** felt the consult helped clarify whether or not there was mental health concerns about the infant, **88%** reported the consult helped them carry out their role in supporting the mental health of an infant through their work with the parent/carer, **88%** considered the consult helped identify further questions needing exploration about the nature/level of concern and **100%** reported the consult helped identify the need to escalate a request for assistance to another service e.g. CAMHS/Social Work Department/Paediatrics/Speech & Language Therapy.

## Key learning Points

- The importance of increasing Increasing Mental Health awareness, knowledge, skills and capacity is an important feature in the priorities for staff working in children services.
- A gap in service provision has been identified for children 3-5 years of age presenting with Emotional and Behavioural concern but out with IMH age group service access (0-3).
- Infant mental health observational set used as part of the referral process to the new specialist service
- An IMH 'link Health Visitor' role is now emerging as a means of improving the quality of care delivered to families through communication, networking and motivating other staff to improve practice and ensure the consistency of key messages offering a sustainable body of local expertise.

Parental feedback suggested that parents felt empowered and more confident in building parent/infant relationships and supporting their infants to achieve developmental milestones in emotional wellbeing and social relationships.



## Scale and spread

The IMH consult line and request for assistance (RfA) access to the specialist service is currently being scaled up across health visiting, family nurse teams, social work and early years.

Learning and adoption of the indicator set is being shared with colleagues in other NHS board areas including Fife, Ayrshire and Greater Glasgow and Clyde.

