

‘Me in Mind’: an empathetic and compassionate movement to assist the recovery of women who have their children removed

Kelly Wilkes

Pause Practice Lead, West Sussex County Council

Context

- Last year WSCC began developing a programme of worked called 'Better Change'
- Consultant Midwife from Public Health, Kelly Pierce, seconded to WSCC to be part of the development
- Pause launched in West Sussex September 2017 under the umbrella of this change programme

Better Change



**A focused programme of work over two years that will,
improve the way we work together
and improve the impact and efficiency of support ,
for vulnerable families from pre-birth to 5 years old**

Our Ambition

1. We will be confident that we have done everything we can to help a vulnerable family stay together.
2. If infants need to be removed from their parents we are confident that we have approached this in a way that :
 - starts from pre-birth where possible
 - improves the health outcomes for children and parents
 - Improve life chances of children and young people
 - helps prepare parents for their recovery journey as much as possible.
3. We will meet our statutory duties in a way that reflects these ambitions, and provides a connected pathway of support across agencies in West Sussex that makes sense to families from pre-birth to 5 years old.

We are developing 5 areas of focus

1. Prevention

Accountable: Chris Tuke

2. 1001 Critical Days Vulnerable Pregnancy Pathway

Accountable: Kate Soutter/Michelle
Sanders/Kelly Pierce

3. By Your Side

Accountable: Kelly Wilkes/
Kelly Pierce/Sarah Foster

4. Early Years Boost

Accountable: Marie Foley/Sarah Foster

5. Data Tracking

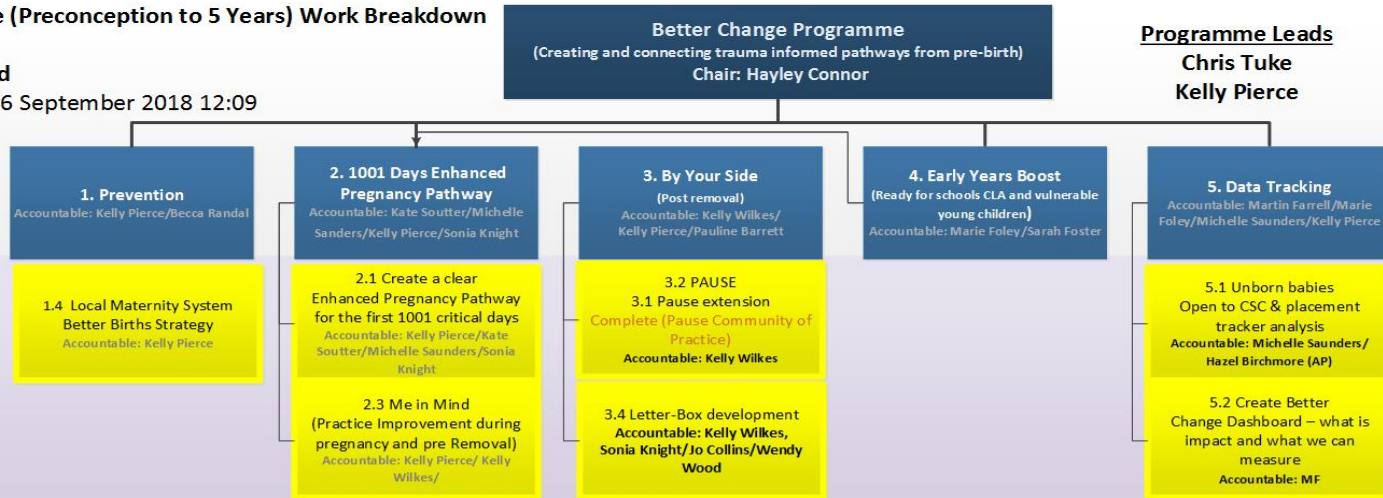
Accountable: Martin Farrell/Marie Foley

Priority Areas

Better Change (Preconception to 5 Years) Work Breakdown Structure

BC_v0.9_js.vsd

Wednesday, 26 September 2018 12:09



Pause in West Sussex

- Part of wave 2 of Pause pilots funded by DfE
- Supports women to break cycle of repeat removals
- Tenacious assertive outreach programme for 18 months
- Clear focus on their needs and empowering them to define their own outcomes
- Women agree to take long acting contraception to have the opportunity to focus on their own needs
- Pause in West Sussex now at capacity working with 22 women

What Pause is teaching us

- Through our experience of Pause we have further developed the Better Change ambitions
- Learning from the women's perspective and looking to develop and shape our services as a response
- This includes areas such as post-adoption contact and our wider birth parent support offer and Me in Mind – the focus today

What we are learning from our women about their experience of removal at birth

- Not always received empathy; sometimes felt judged and criticised
- Not had consistent advice about what they can and cannot do with the baby
- Good practice happened by chance rather than process
- Missed opportunities for gathering memories for the parents and the child



How does it work?

'Me in Mind' helps practitioners be mindful of their practice if women have previously had a child removed, or may have this baby removed at birth. It is a collection of tools and resources to help approach sensitive discussions about pregnancy and birth; and a constructive way of collecting memorable items for parents if the infant is removed. MIMM also helps to gather early items and information for the child's life story and will help signpost parents more effectively.

1. Mindful practice standards for professionals pre-birth

- Talking about the birth plan, place of birth, skin to skin
- Importance of behaviours for baby brain development
- Motivational, non-judgemental and supportive approaches
- Engaging the parents in behaviour changes
- Language and tone to help parents recover after the removal and to engage with services later on

2. Information and tangible resource for professionals

*Medical notes
Sticker for women
on the pathway*



- A 'sticker' for case notes so professionals can see women are on the pathway to help them discuss things more appropriately e.g. if they have already had children removed
- Links to sources of information / resources
- Training and shared learning - Practical help and advice to using the memory box, and how to discuss difficult issues and sensitive subjects
- Also consider national sticker for mental health

3. Memories - A 'Me in Mind' memory 'box' for parents after a removal - Mindful preparation of items for parents to keep

- Fantastic examples of transferable work from bereavement midwifery care
- A memory box to keep items in and take home
- Help to sensitively gather items in a timely way
- Where to go for help for recovery



4. Memories - Mindful preparation for Life Story Work for children pre and post-birth

- Help to sensitively gather items in a timely way with parents
- CSC will hold items for the child, to ensure they go with the child, if plans for permanence away from their parents are finalised.



Intended Benefits

- Good practice, guidance, confidence for professionals with more focus on of what they 'can do' to support parents
- Parents experience less trauma
- Improved life story work for infants
- Opportunities for parents to engage better with services
- Deeper professional understanding of complex social circumstances

How will we measure success

- Parents/practitioners engage in design process
- Take up by parents (essential to the project that parental lived experience supports co-design i.e. PAUSE women will advise on memory box content)
- Feedback from parents and professionals
- Endorsed by partners (Model would be transferrable to other areas)

Where we are now

- Working group in place who have endorsed in principle to go forward by: Pause West Sussex, Pause National, WSHFT, Better Change Board WSCC, Royal College of Midwives.
- Prototype – looking at bereavement boxes
- Sharing prototype with Pause women for views and ideas
- Seeking funding for boxes
- Exploring what practice standards exist – eg foster carers collating memory work – only good practice?

How to keep in touch

- Sign up today to keep updated
- Email questions to kelly.pierce@westsussex.gov.uk or kelly.wilkes@westsussex.gov.uk