

# The 28-week Health Visiting Contact in Pregnancy; supporting parents in Walsall to give their child the best possible start in life.



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## Background and Aims

The Healthy Child Programme (HCP) from the Department of Health, recommends that all families receive an initial Antenatal Contact (AC) from the Health Visiting (HV) Service at 28/40. This provides parents with essential information on bonding, attachment, health, supporting learning and key public health messages. This contact is the gold standard - it is an opportunity for parents to receive key information and guidance before baby is born, which supports the first 1001 critical days. Parents are most receptive to change in pregnancy and early years, so early information is imperative for the most positive outcomes. The World Health Organisation reports that a greater number of antenatal contacts leads to timely detection of risks, reduces complications and addresses health inequalities. Therefore, this contact is also greatly beneficial for pregnancy outcomes as it is an opportunity to echo our colleagues in Midwifery on vital health messages e.g. smoking in pregnancy, importance of movements etc. In Walsall, this contact was only being offered to targeted families (those with known support needs) on a 1:1 basis. Universal families were not receiving this contact due to service restraints. Therefore, the aim of this QI Project was to develop a meaningful HV AN contact that would be offered to all Universal families in Walsall in line with the Healthy Child Programme standards.



## Methodology

We used HCP guidance and held professional discussion groups to ensure multi-dimensional expertise were incorporated into the content. Service user feedback also informed our selection of resources. It was essential that the contact would be offered to all families, as well as be a quality contact that was engaging and gave opportunity for meaningful discussion between parent/practitioner and the parents themselves. The volume of families requiring the contact led to the contact being delivered as a group. We also developed resources (see fig 1) which promoted discussion both within the group and at home, to ensure that we were able to deliver that engaging contact that we set out to achieve. We designed a data collection form and opportunity for confidential discussion at every group to ensure that the group setting would not prohibit any identification of support needs. We launched 4 weekly groups across Walsall called "The Postnatal Preparation Group".

Fig 1; Group resources

## Results

Since January 2024, 215 Universal families have now attended this contact. Furthermore, it is being offered to 100% of Universal families, resulting in all Universal and Targeted families in Walsall now being offered a HV Antenatal Contact (see fig 2). Overall, the current uptake across the four groups is 25%. Review of the quantitative data shows the most well attended group is on Wednesday afternoon (35.3%) and the least well attended is the Wednesday evening group (19%) (see fig 3). Use of the SPC tool (see fig 4) shows although a slight reduction in attendance in May, attendance is still higher than the first 2 months of the project. Review of the qualitative data shows the Universal contact is being well received with many positive verbal and written feedback comments from families (see fig 5

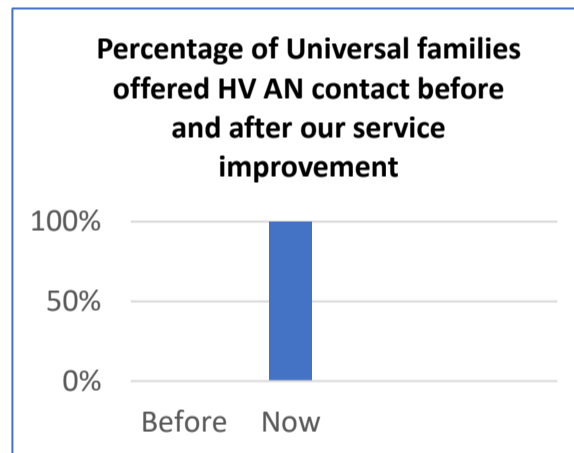


Fig 2 (above); Percentage offered the contact.

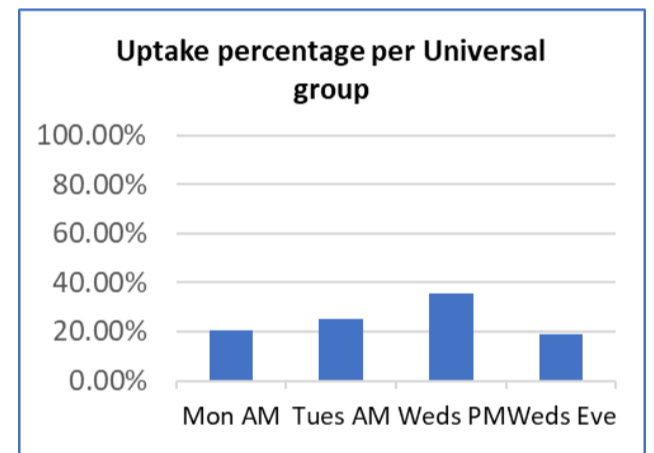


Fig 3 (above); Uptake per group

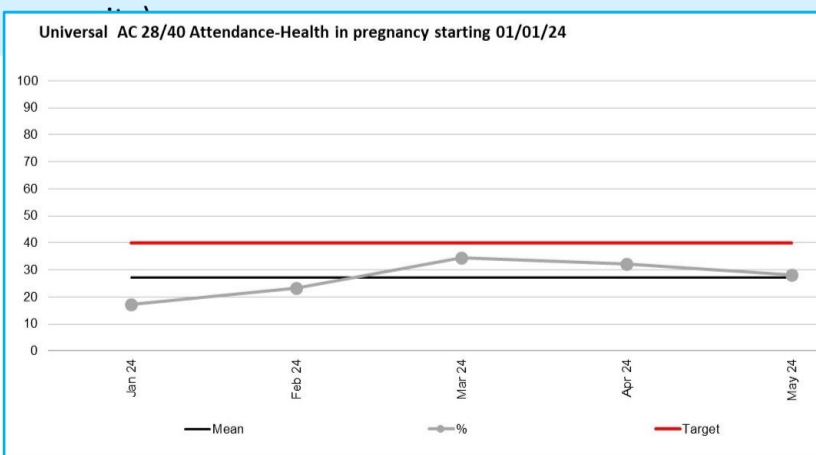


Fig 4; Average attendance by month.

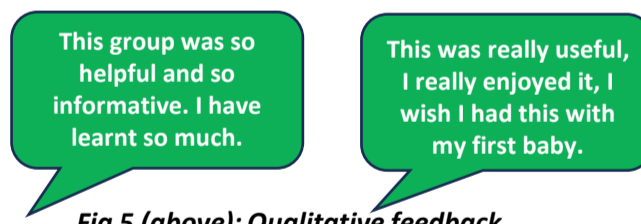


Fig 5 (above); Qualitative feedback

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The HV AN 28 week contact for Universal families has been successfully implemented. Initial aims have been achieved and we look forward to continued progress. We have reviewed the data using the SPC and PDSA cycle tool (see fig 6 opposite), as well as service user feedback, and have implemented change. We hope to see further increase in the uptake of the contact and will review again in 6 months using the SPC tool and service user feedback.

<b>PLAN</b>	Universal Health Visitor AN contact for all families in Walsall.
<b>DO</b>	Group contact launched January 2024 in 4 locations across Walsall.
<b>STUDY</b>	Used SPC to highlight trends. Reviewed service user feedback for qualitative data.
<b>ACT</b>	-Send invitations earlier -Change in access to evening group. -Adding a group more accessible to those in South Walsall

Fig 6 (above); PDSA cycle analysis

## Health in Pregnancy Team

Pregnancy and the early years are a critical time period for laying the foundations of children's health and development. Early support and intervention such as the 28 week HV contact are fundamental for positive outcomes for parents, children, communities and overall public health in Walsall.

**Working in partnership**  
 The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust  
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