

HAPPY

Delivered by **Barnardos** from **January 2017 – February 2022**

HAPPY aims to reduce childhood obesity risk by targeting an at-risk group - women with overweight and obesity - during and after pregnancy, by promoting healthy behaviours and addressing key risk factors.

🍏 How it was delivered

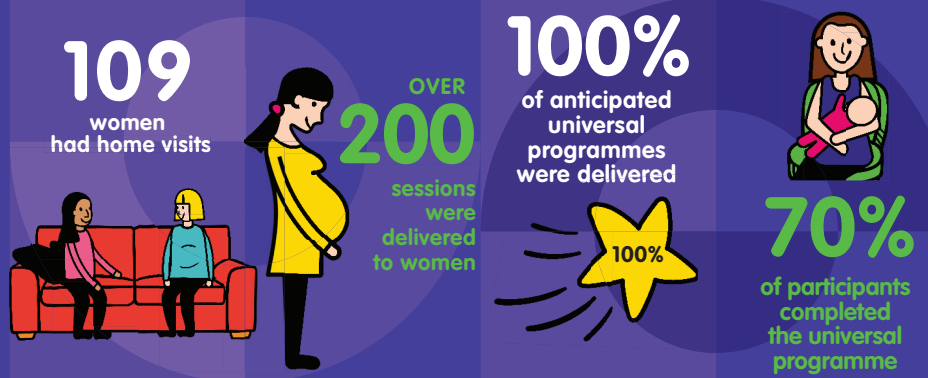
HAPPY was delivered in partnership with children's centres by trained and experienced Family Links practitioners who completed additional HAPPY training. The programme consisted of 12 group sessions (6 antenatal sessions and 6 postnatal sessions). As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, a 6-week online programme was trialled which increased uptake for partners and allowed greater numbers per programme.

🍏 Why this project was developed

The earliest stages of a child's life are a critical period for obesity prevention. High maternal BMI, as well as maternal parenting and feeding styles, have been found to be key risk factors for children in Bradford.

🍏 The project aimed to:

- Encourage mothers to make healthy food choices antenatally and maintain a healthy diet postnatally
- Encourage mothers to be physically active in pregnancy and meet recommended guidelines within 12 months of birth
- Support mothers to develop responsive parenting and feeding practices
- Encourage parents to develop healthy food preferences and dietary intake in their infants
- Encourage mothers to facilitate infant physical activity and limit sedentary time



🍏 COVID-19 alterations and impact

At the start of COVID-19, measurement of women's height and weight (needed to calculate BMI) at booking into the maternity service became less consistent, making it difficult to identify women who would be eligible for HAPPY. In addition, delivery of the universal antenatal offer usually provided through Family Hubs was paused. For these reasons the decision was made to broaden the eligibility for HAPPY so that it became a universal offer.

It was also decided that only antenatal sessions would be delivered, and delivery would take place online. This changed the model from 12 weeks of content across the antenatal and postnatal periods, to 6 weeks of content delivered in the antenatal period only. Towards the end of the project contract in June 2021, the programme was further adapted from 6 weeks antenatal to 8 weeks to ensure all the antenatal content could be appropriately covered. From July 2020 – February 2022, all HAPPY delivery took place online making it a purely virtual offer. The uptake of this universal 8-week offer was much higher. Better Start Bradford ceased delivery of HAPPY in 2022 following a review of the antenatal provision on the programme.

🍏 Impact and findings*

- HAPPY was successfully adapted into a universal and antenatal programme.
- The adapted programme saw improved rates of participation and completion.
- Women reported changes in diet and physical activity at the end of the programme.
- Families reported confidence to attend further groups.
- The addition of an engagement worker enabled raising the profile of the 6-week universal offer and wider recruitment was possible. Retention of families increased significantly.
- Support came from Family Links to adapt and deliver the 6-week programme.
- A baby shower and coffee morning were added into the programme which were popular.
- Families with limited English attended sessions and facilitators could support with interpreting.
- Participants encouraged pregnant members of their family/friends and social circle to attend the programme as wider community knowledge of the programme was gained.
- Home visits were a key element to the programme and enabled women to build a relationship with the facilitator and complete necessary paperwork.

*This section includes information from both the evaluation report/s and project