



# Flash of brilliance

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Service: Health Visiting Service

NHS

Kent Community Health

NHS Foundation Trust

## Aim and background

The aim of the project is to bring the Cliftonville Roma community together.

- To provide a drop-in service and remove some of the barriers when accessing health care, bridging the gap between local services and them at home
- To provide knowledge and skills around healthy eating, exercise and maintaining healthier lifestyles
- To offer free fruit and vegetables bags once a month
- To give additional support in all other areas including development for children aged five and under.

Initially as the Roma link health visitor I went door to door within the Roma community to reach out and offer support with health needs and this in turn developed some trust over the ten-month period, prior to starting this group. From here I completed an innovation project proposal for the community to access support and secured funding from Save The Children for this.

## Change ideas: What changes did you make?

- Offered a foodbank of fruit and veg (funded by Save The Children)
- Promoted good dental health, by giving away toothbrushes and toothpaste
- Promoted sports and healthy lifestyle
- Gave out step challenge information and step watches
- Gave out skipping ropes, hula hoops and footballs to children at the Christmas drop-in/event, promoting this as an exercise
- Promoted healthy home cooking, by raffling slow cookers
- Introduced families to recipes, tasters, healthy soups, smoothies and milkshakes
- Spoke about sugar content in popular drinks
- Promoted the project, through agencies working with the Roma community, by dropping leaflets through doors of known Roma addresses
- Had interpreters present, to gain a better understanding of health and development needs, without a language barrier
- Had the Margate Primary Care Network (PCN) present to advise and help with access to GP and hospital appointments.

## Measures/results: What was the impact of the changes?

I facilitated six sessions, held monthly from September to February 2023, between 1pm and 3pm. Overall there was an attendance of **91** Roma adults, with **43** adults returning. The project enabled us to help:

- **Six** school age children to access school
- **Two** children to access nursery
- **Four** mums to access contraception
- Families to access GP care and register with a GP practice
- The re-referral of children with global delay for assessment who previously did not attend (DNA) their development reviews with the service
- Ensure a joined-up approach for making sure the community can access medical services, by working with the Primary Care Network of GPs
- Chase medical appointments with the local hospitals and ensured an interpreting service was available to help
- Access the One You service for people, for healthy lifestyle advice and stop smoking services
- Give people access to fruit and vegetables, to ensure families were still able to get the vital vitamins and minerals with the current cost of living crisis and post Covid-19 unemployment for the Roma community. I think this could not be timed better to ensure families were still able to get fruit in times of poverty.
- Install trust between services and the Roma community by removing language barriers.

## Lessons learned and what's next?

While there was good attendance from our families and children who were school aged, there was a limited number of children aged five and under who attended.

The limitation of resources, time, space and capacity impacted on what the sessions could deliver and meant we kept the level of advertisement of the sessions down, over concerns that demand would exceed capacity.

There were lots of other agencies who were keen to support, who will need co-ordinating to expand the sessions further.

The face-to-face engagement has offered a better understanding of the barriers faced by the community, when accessing health and helped them to feel heard and understood. This approach helped the community to integrate into wider services.

Expand what this clinic offers, to encourage all communities to access health support by a one stop shop approach.

Extend and utilise the well-baby, drop in clinic at the children centre for vulnerable families including those that are Roma.

Have a stock of developmental toys on offer to encourage more vulnerable families to access this clinic for support (funded by Save The Children).

The session time will continue and be utilised by the PCN who will continue engagement with the Roma community on some level and where possible I will attend to support.