

## **BCM Parents' Support Dungannon**

The BCM Parents' Support Project began in January 2014. We provide early intervention and promote parental competency through practical and emotional support and creative play. We work with parents with children up to 17 years of age, many of whom are non-English speaking, and aim to reduce the need for social service intervention. Those using the service are young parents who have recently left care, those with mental health needs, those experiencing often severe poverty and parents who are socially isolated and have little in the way of family or other support.

The project was viewed initially as a service which would offer added value to BCM's Housing Support for Young People (a Floating Support service). Currently the project employs one part-time Support Worker and is part-funded by the Southern Outcomes Group and by Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP).

Parents' Support works in the Armagh and Dungannon locality in disadvantaged urban and rural areas, where those using the service are parents often experiencing severe poverty and who are socially isolated. The service reduces the need for social service intervention by offering one to one emotional and practical support. A key element of the support is the flexibility which is offered to parents, e.g. the Support Worker can visit in the evenings to assist with developing bedtime routines.

To find out more about BCM Parents' Support and how to make a referral, please contact:

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### **Case Study – BCM Parents' Support Dungannon**

“MK was referred to BCM Parents' Support by her Health Visitor as she had post-natal depression and felt very isolated in her community. MK is originally from Poland and moved to NI last year to make a better life for her, her husband and two small children. She speaks very little English and has no support networks in NI. MK also has epilepsy. Her seizures cause her and the children great distress and can leave her feeling extremely tired afterwards, which impacts on her parenting ability.

When I first met MK she broke down and cried saying (via an interpreter) that she felt alone, depressed, anxious and didn't know how things would ever get better. She was walking eight miles per day leaving her five year old to school while pushing the baby in the buggy. She was exhausted. Financially, they were struggling to provide the children with basic needs such as food, clothing and heating. Her son was running around their small flat "hyper" due to lack of space and MK feeling unequipped to discipline him. She was concerned he had ADHD.

In order to support MK we liaised with other key community organisations. We worked alongside STEP to address her housing and benefit issues. STEP are helping MK with a transfer to more appropriate accommodation. We also organised a joint partnership meeting with the Polish Support Worker from Sure Start and MK's Health Visitor, where we agreed how each of us would help MK. As a result of this partnership working BCM have been able to help MK make the following positive changes in her life:

- MK's son has got a place at a nearby school meaning her walking distance has gone from eight miles per day to two miles per day, leaving MK much more quality time with her baby.
- MK has been supported to apply for school uniform grants.
- MK has been referred to Community Dental Services, so her family now attend the dentist and are receiving vital treatment.
- We have provided MK with money towards electric and weekly food donations.
- We have bought a desk for MK's son so he can have his own space to be creative.
- We have given advice and support to MK regarding parenting issues such as potty training, behavioural issues.
- We have taught MK to use behavioural Star Charts with her son which have helped his behaviour.
- MK has better access to healthcare and her epilepsy medication has changed which resulted in her having less seizures.
- MK has had the opportunity to attend the Polish Mass which has helped with her feelings of isolation.

-MK has been given information on local courses and activities and access to transport to these.

There is still a lot more support to be provided for MK and her family but MK would now say she is feeling a lot happier about life, and although she still has quite a way to go before fully feeling content in NI, she can see a plan for a good future for her and her family."