

Case Study: PACE

The PACE pilot early intervention initiative

PACE (www.thepacecentre.org) is a leading specialist centre for children with motor disorders such as cerebral palsy. Its combination of different educational and therapeutic approaches is unique and highly effective in meeting the total learning needs of the developing child.



In February 2014 the Sir Halley Stewart Trust awarded PACE £50,000 over two years in order to pilot an early intervention initiative. This project aims to deliver an integrated assessment and treatment service, to which very young babies with a high risk of motor disorders could be referred after their discharge from neonatal units. The grant was specifically awarded to fund the salary costs of two Early Intervention Initiative project leaders and also to plan its independent evaluation.

The expectation was that this early intervention approach would develop the individual's skills and support the parents' mental health, which had been shown to contribute to the infant's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. One year on since the project's inception, the service has been fully scoped, successfully established and is receiving a steady stream of referrals – currently standing at one new referral every week.

PACE has combined its Early Intervention and Parent & Child services, re-branding them as PIPS (PACE Infant & Parent Service, www.pacepips.org) to provide essential early therapeutic input for very young babies and children aged 0-3. PIPS provides support both directly to the child, through appropriate therapeutic intervention, and to their parents through counselling and advice, as soon as their child has been discharged from their neonatal unit. The service therefore fills a frightening void for families starting life at home with their baby, but constantly watching for signs of developmental delay and terrified of what the future might hold.



The planned independent research for the Trust-funded project will use a multi-phased and mixed method approach, with elements of participatory action research. As well as using the findings to continue developing the PIPs service, a key aim of the evaluation will be to disseminate the results in order to benefit the wider research and therapy community, and to help local authorities to make cost-effective decisions.

"We are absolutely delighted by the wonderful support given to PACE by the Sir Halley Stewart Trust over the past year. The Trust's funding has enabled us to bring to fruition vital assessment and targeted therapy for very young babies at risk of sensory motor disorders. The Trust's continued support means that this ground-breaking service is now fully operational and providing much needed early intervention to an ever increasing number of babies, and advice for their parents, both locally and regionally." - Amanda Richardson, PACE Chief Executive