

Warm n Well, Warmer Homes Healthy Families, Reduced Inequalities in Health Status



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Background

In 2005 Child Health and Housing was identified as number one priority for implementation from the WDH B Child Health Strategy

The underpinning goal of is to reduce inequalities in health status.

Introduction

The Waitemata District Health Board (DHB) embarked on this project to implement a Child Health & Housing Programme across the district.

- There is increasing recognition of the pivotal role that housing has in determining health status (1)
 - Damp and mould are associated with increased respiratory conditions
 - Injury rates are higher in substandard housing
- Children are particularly vulnerable to adverse effects of housing
- Many DHB families live in substandard housing conditions relating to adequacy, affordability, suitability
- There is now strong evidence that interventions that improve housing quality have positive health impacts(2).
- The programme has been branded as 'Warm n Well' since implementation.

Objective

To increase the health status of children in the Waitemata District by systematically identifying those with the poorest health status and offer;

- A health and social assessment of eligible families by a public health nurse to identify and address any factors which may impact on health status
- Free insulation (ceiling and floor, draft stoppers, hot water cylinder wrap).



Method

- A project team prepared resource requirements and a business case
- The business case was successful in gaining funding
- Auckland Regional Public Health Service were selected as the 'Hub' provider to deliver the health and social assessment
- Ecoinsulation were selected as the insulation provider
- Strategic partnerships developed with key agencies
- Programme eligibility criteria developed
- Developed a marketing & communications strategy
- An evaluation is being undertaken.

Results

Assessments and insulation of houses commenced in April 2008.

- The programme is effectively targeting eligible low-income families with children under the age of 14
- 396 families have received a home visit from Auckland Regional Public Health Service
- 57% of households visited required a referral, most commonly for; asthma, dental, child care, hearing & vision and parenting
- 400 houses have been insulated by Ecoinsulation
- To date: 25% of children visited are Maori and 25% are Pacific.

"It is a lot cosier now. Not nearly as damp. It was hard with Rose (daughter) being crook all the time. Her health is improving. She was very chesty, with asthma and always sick, coughing till she threw up. She seems to be a lot happier now. A fantastic service."
Duane of Swanson

Conclusion

Warm n Well:

- Takes an up-stream approach to improving child health within the district
- Is supporting families/whanau and communities to provide a safe, healthy and caring environment while reducing inequalities in health status
- Is a sustainable programme for low-income families with children
- Has received positive feedback in the Waitemata district.

Partners with Waitemata District Health Board-
EECA energy efficiency and conservation authority
North Shore City Council
Rodney District Council
Tihī Ora MaPō. Te Tihī Oranga o Ngati Whatua
Waitakere City Council