



# Reducing Inequalities in Early Childhood: Learning from A Better Start

Report from the Annual Learning Event

March 2022



Delivered by



## About A Better Start

[A Better Start](#) (ABS) is a ten-year (2015-2025), £215 million programme set up by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF), the largest funder of community activity in the UK. Five A Better Start partnerships based in [Blackpool](#), [Bradford](#), [Lambeth](#), [Nottingham](#) and [Southend](#) are supporting families to give their babies and very young children the best possible start in life.

Working with local parents, the A Better Start partnerships are developing and testing ways to improve their children's diet and nutrition, social and emotional development, and speech, language and communication. The work of the programme is grounded in scientific evidence and research.

A Better Start is place-based and enabling system's change. It aims to improve the way that organisations work together and with families to shift attitudes and spending towards preventing problems that can start in early life. A Better Start is one of five major programmes set up by The National Lottery Community Fund to test and learn from new approaches to designing services that aim to make people's lives healthier and happier.

[The National Children's Bureau](#) (NCB) is delivering an ambitious programme of shared learning and development support for A Better Start, working within, across and beyond the five partnership areas. The programme is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund.

We aim to amplify the impact of these programmes by:

- Embedding a culture of learning within and between the partnerships.
- Harnessing the best available evidence about what works in improving outcomes for children.
- Sharing the partnerships' experiences in creating innovative services far and wide, so that others working in early childhood development or place-based systems change can benefit.



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## Introduction

*Giving children the best possible start in life is at the heart of the 10-year A Better Start (ABS) programme. The ABS partnerships have demonstrated how through improving systems of support, they are improving outcomes for babies and young children, and reducing inequalities in early childhood.*

The National Children's Bureau, on behalf of The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) and the five A Better Start partnerships, was delighted to host this virtual conference on Tuesday 22 March 2022. The event showcased how A Better Start partnerships are working to change and integrate systems, and are influencing practice and policy at a local level and more widely.

The event was attended by more than 500 stakeholders from across the country (see appendix 3 for full details of organisations represented), including commissioners, policymakers, practitioners, academics and parents; and aimed to raise awareness of and improve knowledge of the innovative work that is going on across ABS.

Through a mix of keynote sessions and Q&A panels, attendees had the opportunity to hear directly from ABS practitioners, parents and directors as they shared their expertise on improving systems to reduce inequalities, and improve outcomes through:

- Empowering communities through co-production
- Changing systems with a focus on evidence, data and outcomes
- Mobilising the workforce and community

The full agenda for the event is included in appendix 1. This report provides a summary of the presentations, and the questions and answers covered during the panel sessions.

The recording of the event is available [here](#).



## Welcome and purpose of the day

### Frances Lyons, Head of Research and Evidence

#### National Children's Bureau

Frances welcomed delegates to the second ABS annual Shared Learning Event, '*Reducing Inequalities in Early Childhood - learning from A Better Start*', sharing the ground-breaking work that is going on across the five ABS partnerships to improve outcomes in early childhood. She reflected on the wide reach of the conference breadth in terms of roles, backgrounds, and geographical locations, with over 500 attendees from across central and local government, the voluntary and community sector, and representatives from across ABS teams and their partners.

Frances outlined the focus of the event, raising awareness of and improving knowledge of the innovative work that is going on across ABS and the difference this is making to the lives of babies, young children, their families, as well as those who work with them.

The event also provided delegates with the opportunity to hear about the direction of travel of some of the key government policies in early childhood. To set the event in context, Frances welcomed David Knott, CEO The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF), to provide an overview of the ABS programme.



## Overview of A Better Start

**David Knott, Chief Executive Officer**

### The National Lottery Community Fund

David expressed how delighted he was to be at the event, with such a great number of people signed up to find out about the work of ABS, and he reflected on the importance of using opportunities like this to bring together a wide, diverse range of stakeholders.

David recounted his recent visit to the ABS programme in Lambeth, delivered through the [Lambeth Early Action Partnership](#) (LEAP), where he had the opportunity to talk with families and staff, join in activities with the children and hear about the real difference the programme is making in this area of London.

David reflected that the theme of this year's shared learning event, reducing inequalities, is really at the heart of ABS. Since its inception, the focus of ABS has been on promoting good early childhood development, improving the life chance of babies and young children, supporting families to give children the best start in life, and reducing inequalities. This is such an important issue as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, as we know the pandemic has further exacerbated many inequalities.

Each of the five ABS partnerships have shown they have a strong, shared local vision and are using existing resources to contribute and bring innovative forward-thinking approaches to improving outcomes for children. This has been particularly implemented where there's been a combination of deprivation and high levels of need, and real local strengths and commitment to change. The involvement of parent and community volunteers has been at the heart of helping shape the local priorities in decisions, leading to much greater insight into what works and what doesn't.

David noted the great synergy between ABS and the UK government policy agenda for children, including the implementation of the Best Start for Life vision, which ABS contributed evidence to, the expansion of Family Hubs, and the plans to level up disadvantaged parts of the country. In the [report](#) the House of Commons Health and Social Care committee shared the view that ABS delivers a truly place-based approach and that involving families and wider communities in the service design has seen significant improvements in services. David reflected this is a great testament to the ABS programme.

David reflected on the numbers involved in the ABS programme to date, testimony to the importance and value of collaboration and partnership working together to reduce inequalities.



A key mission of TNLCF is to ensure the evidence and experience from ABS is shared and used to its fullest, which it is doing through:

- A comprehensive programme of shared learning available through the [evidence library](#) on TNLCF website, giving firsthand insight into early years services, challenges and best practice
- Informing and shaping local and national policy, disseminating the learning widely, ensuring that others working in early childhood development and place-based system change can benefit
- Working with NCB to publish a number of [Insight reports](#), sharing the learning in relation to system change, COVID-19, trauma- informed practice, data-informed decision making
- A [national evaluation](#) of ABS, which will explore some of the experiences of families and parents from diverse backgrounds who have participated in the ABS programme

In October 2021, TNLCF published its [commitment to communities](#) and has launched a [conversation](#) about where resources should be focused in the years ahead as part of a wider strategy renewal. TNLCF are keen to find out what people think, and everyone is invited to complete the survey [here](#).

David concluded by saying TNLCF is confident that ABS will provide that rich experience and evidence to inform how funding is invested in communities and to support children to prosper and thrive.



## Prioritising the early years

### Will Quince, Minister for Children and Families

#### Department for Education

Minister Will Quince provided delegates with an overview of the government's commitment to supporting children in the early years. The Minister began by stating a better start is one of the most important things we can strive towards, with the data clearly showing children's early development has a lifelong lasting impact.

One of the most important ways the government supports young children's development is by funding 15 hours free childcare for disadvantaged two-year-olds and 30 hours free childcare for three and four-year-olds. The Minister stated his commitment as Children and Families Minister to do more, strongly believing that the best way of making sure all children get the best start is to strengthen families and provide intervention early.

Building on the [Leadsom Review](#) to reduce inequalities and outcomes for young children, the government has announced £500 million to transform Start for Life and family help services, which will fund a network of Family Hubs and provide specific support to join up services locally and improve access. The model prioritises connections between families, professional services and providers, and puts relationships at the heart of family help.

The Minister stated this record investment will transform services in 75 local authorities over the next three years and builds on the existing £39.5 million investment to champion Family Hubs. It will also expand the Supporting Families programme, helping 300,000 vulnerable families with integrated support to improve their lives.

Since becoming children's minister, Will Quince has had the privilege of meeting those working with children and families across the country, stating they are some of the most inspiring, dedicated people he has had the pleasure of meeting.

***“None of this would be possible without the unsung heroes who work in early education and childcare”***

The Minister wants to give those working with children and families the tools they need to do the best job possible, therefore the government is investing £20 million to train professionals in disadvantaged areas, alongside £150 million to train early years staff to support the learning and development of the youngest children. The government has also provided additional funding for early years entitlements, so councils can increase the hourly rates they give to childcare providers.

The Minister concluded by highlighting the government is taking these important steps to support families, the bedrock of a strong society. He reiterated it would not be possible without the continued engagement and hard work of all those working with young children and families.

***“My door remains open to you - thank you for listening and thanks for all that you do”.***

# Policy opportunities to give children A Better Start

## Matthew Dodd, Head of Policy and Public Affairs

### National Children's Bureau

Matthew provided delegates with a comprehensive overview of current early years policy initiatives in England and how this relates to the work of A Better Start, outlining the extensive influence the programme has already had on policy development and the opportunities that are still available to influence.

Matthew reflected that there is much to welcome in recent government policy:

- **Recognition of first 1001 days of life** - recognition that the first 1001 days of life are crucial, evident in [The Early Years Healthy Development Review](#) and the Family Hubs agenda
- **Integrated approaches to health and care** - meeting the needs of children and families through integrated approaches to service delivery
- **Co-production with families and communities** - service development, commissioning and delivery will all be better achieved and in a more responsive way if they are built with the communities and families they are meant to serve
- **Targeting health inequalities and vulnerabilities** - this built into ABS from the start and is now a focus of the health and social care integrated care systems
- **Focus on family support and the parent-child relationship** - family is a crucial concept for government, and strengthening the family and providing additional support is a priority

### The context

Matthew provided an overview of investment for children and families announced by the government in the autumn spending review and of proposed changes to the NHS. There is investment in some areas hoped for, yet at the same time recognition that the investment is not everywhere it is needed, and the investment is not sufficient to fund services in the long-term.

However, it is important to note that there was a section in the Chancellor's speech dedicated to young children, an unusual occurrence as it is very rare for children to be mentioned, so to see this central in this speech is real progress.

### 3-year Spending Review Autumn 2021 - main investment for children and families

- £300 million to deliver Andrea Leadsom's Best Start for Life
- £82 million to create or develop Family Hubs
- 40% increase in funding for Supporting Families programme to £200 million a year
- £170 million per year increase to the hourly rate to be paid to early years providers

### 2021 - NHS structural reform

The white paper '[Integration and Innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all](#)' (DHSC, 2021) sets out the direction of travel and sets out the government's plans to create integrated care systems (ICSs), which is the new model for NHS delivery in England. These new structures are going to be crucial in terms of commissioning decisions

and in terms of priority of young children within the local system.

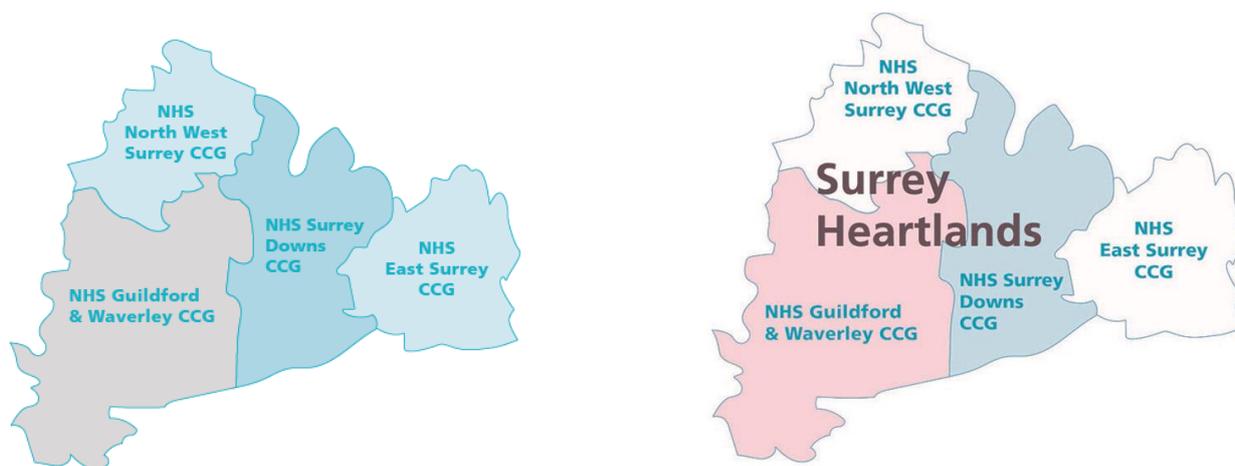
### Integrated care systems - systems that care for people in an integrated way

ICSs are fundamentally partnerships between organisations that meet health and care needs across an area, that is, between the NHS and local government, and other key partners.

The role of the ICS is to plan and commission services in a way that improves population health and reduces inequalities. They explicitly have an all-age focus, with maternity services, early years services, and first 1001 days all sitting within this. ICSs are expected to work closely with the communities they serve and prevention is a key principle they will operate under. This very much resonates with the ABS approach.

Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) sit within the ICS and will replace Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs). There will be 42 ICBs compared to 200+ CCGs. From 1st July 2022, CCGs will cease to exist, and ICBs will take on all of their legal duties and direct commissioning duties.

ICBs are much bigger than the previous CCGs, as shown in the example below:



Current CCGs serving parts of Surrey and ICB

Surrey Heartlands is the new ICS

**A commitment and recognition have been made within government and by parliament that babies, children, and young people must be a priority with ICSs**

- ICBs will be required by primary legislation to set out how they will meet the needs of babies, children and young people
- NHS England will issue statutory guidance that states that each ICB must nominate an executive children's lead.
- There will be bespoke guidance for ICSs on meeting the needs of babies, children and young people

Matthew urged everyone to take the message back to local areas that **children must be a priority in these new systems**

### The Best Start for Life

Andrea Leadsom has been responsible for driving this agenda within government. The [report](#) was published last year and is currently in the implementation phase.

There will be investment and service development in 75 local areas - the funding is £300 million, covering:

- Parent Carer Panels and a co-produced local Start for Life offer
- Breast feeding support
- Infant parent mental health services
- Parenting programmes
- Workforce pilots

### Family hubs policy

Another key area of current government policy is the development of Family Hubs.

A good Family Hub has

- An effective multi-agency board and joint commissioning plan
- Families and young people co-designing services and programmes
- Pooled budgets across a range of funding sources
- Start for Life as a core element of delivery

[Family Hub Model Framework](#) (DfE, 2021)

ABS has a lot of synergy with all these current key government initiatives: Integrated Care Systems, the Start for Life agenda and the Family Hubs programme, and much to offer in terms of learning and evidence as these policies are implemented.

Matthew concluded by highlighting that the **Independent Review of Children's Social Care** report will be published in Summer 2022. This is another chance to **make the case for the earliest years**, ensuring that we can identify and support families, through a strong early years' offer right from conception through to 5.



## Learning from A Better Start

The ABS partnerships collectively shared learning from their experience and expertise on improving systems to reduce inequalities, and improve outcomes. The partnerships presented on the following three themes:

- Empowering communities through co-production
- Changing systems with a focus on outcomes, data and evidence
- Mobilising the workforce and community

All of the partnerships have examples to share that demonstrate each of the themes in practice, with the examples provided at the event just a snapshot of the innovative work that is going on across ABS.

Following each of the presentations, delegates were invited to put questions to panelists representing each of the five ABS partnerships.

A summary of content for each of the sessions, along with links to the recording, are presented below.



# Empowering communities through co-production

## A Better Start Partnerships

### Introduction

Central to the aims of [A Better Start](#) is the approach to working with and empowering parents across all areas of the programmes. Building community capacity and supporting the development of parental skills can improve services, shape local places, and ultimately contribute to better outcomes for babies and children.

This session explored the theory of co-production, showed some examples of how the five A Better Start sites are working alongside parents and communities to harness and embrace their energy and passion to make a lasting difference for families, and finally reflected on the impact of ABS on policy and practice.

### Theory of co-production

There isn't one single agreed definition for co-production, but co-production is a process in which **experts by lived experience** work with **experts by profession** and other relevant **community stakeholders** in **equal partnerships** to **deliver outcomes** that are **meaningful for citizens**.

Integral to co-production is the principle of reciprocity or mutual benefit, and power is shared. Maintaining reciprocity, genuine power-sharing and ensuring diversity of lived experience in the beneficiary participants is integral to a robust co-productive process.

Thinking about what stages of co-production a project might involve, it can be helpful to think of the **4 Cs** or the **4 Co-s**.

### The 4 Cs or 4 Co's of co-production

#### Co-planning

Co-planning captures the idea of getting stakeholders around the project as soon as possible. Planning together helps to develop the project's aims and gives everyone ownership over co-creating a shared understanding.

As part of planning the group might

- talk about resources needed
- whose voices are missing from around the table
- look at data
- do some discovery work
- define any problems
- decide what needs to happen next

Some models, like the [Co-production Star](#), call this the Commissioning stage.

This stage is key to how the A Better Start programme commissions projects and services.

#### Co-design

Co-Design is when the group, drawn from the planning group, or involving new participants, or a bit of both, work together to decide the what, where and when of the project.

Working together as co-designers allows the group to co-create innovative and inclusive solutions that are recognisable to all stakeholders involved. Groups might want to consider drawing on the skills of service design experts to support this stage.

### Co-delivery

Co-delivery is when the project can only operate by actively involving the community, either as staff or volunteers. This is one of the stages that often takes time to establish and some projects aren't designed to include co-delivery.

Challenges to embedding co-delivery successfully can be expectations about particular qualifications and training needed to deliver certain public services. Whilst not every service will be co-delivered from the beginning, it's important to be clear about whether there are developmental pathways for that as part of the co-design process.

### Co-evaluation

Co-evaluation reflects on the project's impact. It measures

- whether the project has met its aims
- what has been learnt
- the impact on people's lives.

The Co-Evaluation phase is also an opportunity to reflect on the co-production process itself and the learning taken from it.



## Co-parent champions, A Better Start Southend



A Better Start Southend's (ABSS) model of co-production is considered within the local system to be a mature one, and there is a lot of demand for the skills, expertise and community reach of Parent Champions, who are a huge asset in the community.

Through the Southend Parent Champion model, parents:

- Co-produce end to end engagement projects through the parent-led Engagement Fund
- Hold governance roles
- Assess funding applications

Co-production runs both **vertically through the ABS partnership**, from the point of parent engagement to the Partnership Board, and **horizontally across the programme**.

The ABSS experience is demonstrating that co-production values and approaches build community capacity and resilience, as well as supporting the delivery of programme objectives.

- The co-governance model of co-production is actively developing capacity in community and system leaders.
- Involvement in the co-production process develops knowledge and skillsets for all participants, both the experts by experience and professionals alike.
- The ABSS approach builds relationships for future collaborations and generates system learning and intelligence to inform the wider system



## Co-production in practice

### Ingredients for success

Across all the ABS partnerships there is a shared agreement of certain factors engrained as part of empowering communities through co-productive working.

These include:

- Thinking about the processes and approaches that contribute to effective co-productive working
- Understanding the need for and importance of power distribution
- Being open to learning and trying new things
- Recognising opportunities for bringing about effective change and lasting impact

### Effective processes and approaches

Capacity building, or capacity development, is often an important first step in ensuring those within a co-productive space are included, prepared, equally in the know and feeling confident to contribute.

Key approaches to build capacity include:



It is recognised that this is not necessarily cheap or a quick fix, and inviting communities into a co-productive space requires thought and takes time. It involves providing opportunities for those involved to gain confidence to challenge and question, as well as develop knowledge and understanding of the organisational structures and processes involved.

This is seen in the example from Small Steps, Big Changes (SSBC) Nottingham, which recognises that co-production is not cheap or easy, therefore to ensure it is embedded in the programme and system, commissioned a provider to deliver a broad offer of support which has enabled the role of Parent Champions and Ambassadors to grow.

## Parent champions and ambassadors, SSBC Nottingham

Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) commissioned Coram Family and Childcare (CfaC) to manage their 'Community Voice Community Connections' contract in 2019.



The last three years have seen robust systems put in place around recruitment, induction training and development plans for the Parent Champions and Parent Ambassadors. Together, this means that SSBC parent volunteers have or can access the skills and knowledge to support workforce and partners across Nottingham with all their co-production ambitions.

This takes time and commitment. The volunteer manager, coordinator, Parent Champions and Ambassadors work hard in the local SSBC wards of Aspley, Bulwell, Hyson Green and Arboretum, and St Ann's ensuring they are visible within the communities; using consistent messaging and having a continuing presence helps them to slowly develop relationships with community partners, health and public sector services, families, and parents to show the value of the volunteers and to encourage more parents to get involved.

The work also extends to all levels of partners, workforce and services across Nottingham City so they understand the importance of co-production and are supported to coproduce services with parent volunteers.



*"I'm a parent champion for SSBC (Aspley) one of the things I've enjoyed about working alongside professionals is knowing that our voice has an impact with not only families but within our communities as well. The more we've influenced and changed the system the easier it became to challenge the system and the more our opinions and voices were respected. I've always believed it takes a village to raise a child and the aim of all the partners working with SSBC is to give children opportunity, regardless of circumstance"*

**Amanda, Parent Champion, SSBC**

Parent volunteers in Nottingham have had their voice heard across Nottingham City in the following different spaces:



Engagement events	SSBC partnership Board	Triple P working group
Staff recruitment	Breastfeeding project group	Neglect strategy steering group
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire CCG weight management service design	Contract/Tender development: Scoring, moderation and interviewing prospective contract holders as part of the tender process	Speech and language implementation group
Strategic system change board		SSBC Partnership Executive implementation group
Oral health steering group		

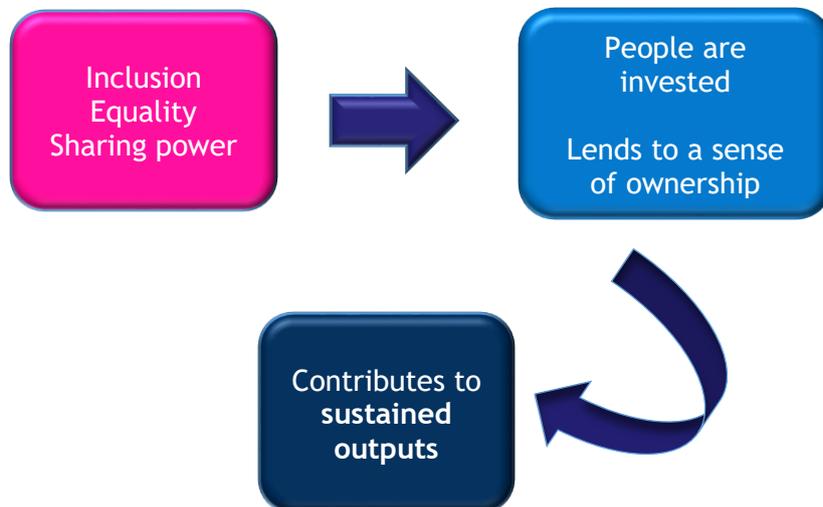
Watch the video about Parent Champions and Ambassadors on the recording [here](#) [starts at 55:00]

**The need to share power**

**“When empowering communities through coproduction we are truly working with and not to our communities”**

The real benefits of building others up to work collectively in a co-productive manner, results in everyone feeling a true sense of ownership of the work. This hugely influences the degree to which outputs are sustained.

Central to collective working is ensuring power dynamics are shared. This encourages trust relationships to form and involves the mobilisation of others to take the lead - to steer discussion, planning and delivery.



Co-productive work involves letting go and the sharing of power can be challenging but very rewarding, as demonstrated through [CoCreate](#), the community funding arm of the Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP).

## CoCreate Fund, LEAP

[CoCreate](#) is the community funding arm of LEAP that aims to encourage and support organisations and groups who may not normally think about or work in the early years space.

A key value of this work concerns partners working closely with (and not just to) their service users in order to develop and deliver local-level initiatives which benefit LEAP local children, their families and communities.

One CoCreate initiative which beautifully showcases why parents from the Lambeth community should firmly be in the driving seat is exemplified by Bestys Inspirational Guidance or 'BIG'.

All ABS sites are passionate in vocalising that parents are not a homogenous group, and this initiative is passionate about recognising that young parents (aged 16-24) are an important group with a distinct set of needs. CoCreate funding has enabled this organisation to develop a young parent steering group to support the development of a parent hub.

BIG recognises that parents play a pivotal role in shaping and developing spaces that truly work for them. Central to this delivery is the steering group, which is further enabled by the offer of lunch and provision of creche; providing parents with respite, and ensuring an accessible space for networking and working co-creatively as an equal group of members.

From intergenerational work to the development of food pantries which support families with young children to eat well, CoCreate is really showcasing how small amounts of investment can provide rich opportunities to work and develop strong initiatives.

Find out more [here](#)



Watch the video about CoCreate on the recording [here](#) [starts at 58:51]

## Open to learning and trying new things

The ABS programme has enabled all the partnerships to explore co-productive working through creating a culture where there is support and freedom to test and trial what works. This has provided time to truly explore what works, what doesn't, and to better understand those factors contributing to change.

While there are real benefits to be had when working co-productively with communities, all ABS partnerships agree that while it doesn't always go to plan, it is a valuable part of the learning process and the learning opportunities when working this way can be rich and plentiful.

In Blackpool, this approach of trying new things enabled the development of a new group, *Blackpool Football Therapy*, to meet the needs of local men and provide a space for dads to support each other.

### Blackpool Football Therapy, Blackpool Better Start 'Street to Scale' case study



Blackpool Football Therapy FC was started in May 2021 by a group of local dads to create a 'brotherhood' of likeminded men to help improve their physical, emotional, and social wellbeing, regardless of their footballing ability.

Its launch was made possible by a grant of £1,000, that was awarded through Blackpool Better Start's 'Street to Scale' project. This scheme encourages local people to submit ideas and proposals on how money could be used to help families and children in the community. Blackpool Football Therapy used their funding to purchase training equipment, including 40 footballs, cones, bibs, water bottles and jackets, and they now run three training sessions weekly at local community pitches.

With their focus being 'more than just football', each session starts with a peer-to-peer support chat; enabling players to meet new people and talk openly with likeminded fathers, particularly for those who became new parents during lockdown.

Local dad of four, Anthony Barrot, volunteers as one of the head coaches and says the funding was the 'springboard' to get their idea off the ground and get as many local men involved as possible. He says: *"For us it's never about score line; it's about men getting out of the house, talking, getting fit and enjoying life. At the end of every session, everyone walks away with a smile on their face."*

*"Our mental health and well-being impacts upon our everyday lives and during lockdown I personally really benefitted from meeting friends at the park for a kick about. I saw first-hand how football can really help to channel thoughts and feelings into something positive."*

*"That's what we wanted to create at Blackpool Football Therapy. Our motto is 'encourage, motivate, inspire'."*

*"With 95% of our players being dads, step-dads or carers, it's so important for us to offer a space to help boost motivation, socialise and get fit - which all helps to reduce stress, anxiety and depression. As a dad myself, I know what positive impact this can have at home."*

## Blackpool Football Therapy, Blackpool Better Start 'Street to Scale' case study



One of the players, Chris Morgan, explains how Blackpool Football Therapy FC has helped him after suffering with health issues last year. Chris had a mini stroke and lost movement down one side. Despite not being able to play, he'd cheer the group on from the side-lines every week. His stroke rehabilitation is now going so well, he is now able to play in goal:

*"Football Therapy means a lot to me. I go to two sessions a week to maintain my physical wellbeing. I lost the use of my arm and leg when I had my mini stroke and the guys have just been so supportive for me. It's been really good for me, both mentally and physically."*

Clare Law, Director of the Centre for Early Child Development, comments:

*"We are all so proud of what this project has been able to achieve to benefit the physical, mental and social wellbeing of so many dads and male carers in Blackpool."*

*Street to Scale can help to give the initial boost for wonderful ideas like this. What's fantastic is that by being at the heart of our community, applicants know what matters to families on their street, or at their local community group, church or open space and so the breadth of applications we receive is inspiring and shows authentic co-production."*



Watch the video about Blackpool Football Therapy on the recording [here](#) [starts at 1:01:53]

### Creating lasting Impact

Empowering communities through co-productive working can be highly effective when other key players are also invited to collaborate and get involved in the development journey and decision making.

Indirect benefits of working this way can see participants develop an improved understanding of community need and challenges, as well as an appreciation of how local systems work and how navigating these can be difficult.

Co-productive working which involves a range of stakeholders can be powerful when informed by policy or aligned to existing agendas, it can also strengthen the likelihood of something being sustained or having a legacy.

Over the years Better Start Bradford has led a range of active co-production activities to engage communities in the co-design of local projects, leading to lasting impact.

## Creating lasting impact, Better Start Bradford

### Better Place Project



Responsible for identifying and overseeing improvements to local parks and outdoor spaces, with the aim of providing a healthier and happier environment for babies, young children and families. As parents have been involved in the co-design process from the very start many of them are now represented on local grassroots environmental groups and take community ownership of the spaces to maintain and develop them for years to come

### Moments that Matter



A co-designed video campaign features key messaging developed by parents and Bradford parents who actually filmed themselves. The campaign focuses on the everyday interactions that parents have with their little ones and how these are fundamental to an infants' future development and success.

Parents involved wanted the campaign to be: *“made for parents by parents, non-judgmental and not to see Instagram-perfect parenting because life isn't like that.”*

### **Community Engagement Strategy**

Better Start Bradford recently re-designed their Community Engagement Strategy involving community members, practitioners and researchers collaborating virtually to learn from each other and to reshape the Better Start Bradford offering in the midst of the pandemic. Stakeholders shared experiences within the process and worked within the guidance of the community-defined concepts of 'voice', 'choice' and 'power'.

The impact of this is evident in the comprehensive community engagement logic model and strategy that allows for accountability, action planning and the amplification of Voice, Choice and Power from the community themselves. This has influenced a sustainability plan to embed community engagement and co-production activities in the wider system plus several research articles and dissemination reports

Watch a photo montage showing Bradford's lasting impact on the recording [here](#) [starts at 1:07:36]

## Impact - ABS influencing policy and practice

The five ABS partnerships have extensive experience of working with and alongside communities, and know this effort to deliver in a co-produced way will achieve positive outcomes for years to come.

Collectively ABS partnerships are sharing the narrative of experts by experience whether that be a parent, community member or member of the workforce, and there is an equity of voice and power which builds meaningful relationships within the local community.

There are a number of ways that co-production can be part of local, regional and national policy and practice, with ABS leading the way and influencing work in this space, locally and beyond.

### Local

Many people are familiar with parents' forums or patient liaison groups when talking about audience involvement, but locally for the A Better Start partnerships, the community are involved in full design and delivery, including spend and evaluation. They are considered a critical friend throughout the process.

For ABS partnerships, co-production isn't just about working with the community, it also involves co-producing and supporting stakeholders such as health, social care and early years professionals and commissioners. These working groups lead in the design and delivery of services, ensuring that they are maximising local knowledge and expertise.

ABS partnerships have found that working with stakeholders at the earliest opportunity in the process allows for limitations to be discussed before going live with projects, and offers a wider pool of support to identify any solutions.

An example of ABS influencing local policy and practice can be seen in in SSBC Nottingham: a local commissioner's perspective of the co-production process in Nottingham and how it has impacted this area of work.



## Commissioning, SSBC Nottingham

Katy Ball - Director of Commissioning and Procurement,  
Finance and Resources - Nottingham City Council



Health and care systems are changing fast; coproduction means reimagining how service commissioners, service providers and service planners work with service users to get the right resources to the right places at the right times.

There's a big national push to design solutions together at local level and partnership and coproduction is central to that.

It's definitely not a one-off activity, or something that you get totally right or wrong; it's about working in partnership from the start, asking questions together of each other and redesigning and bringing in fresh perspectives along the way.

Co-production needs to work at a number of levels -at micro level, it's the Health Visitor working with a family to support them to find solutions to breastfeeding challenges and changing the outcome for that family.

At neighbourhood level it's listening to and hearing families when designing services - making sure that services are held in the right location, at the right time; not making assumptions. Designing services that work for the people who will be using them.

And then at a whole city level for Nottingham, it's talking with people and understanding the communities they live in; realising that you might get different support depending on where you lived and working together to deliberately choose a set of evidence based best practice approaches for all the families no matter where they live.

It's a great way of working.

It's about being practical, being a bit messy and readjusting a lot along the way.

It's about working together and staying focused on the outcomes that we want for our babies and children.

Things are changing and at national level, coproduction is being embedded into all of the national policies that are emerging now and that's really setting a platform for how we need to continue to work going forward.

Watch the video on the recording [here](#) [starts at 1:12:29]

## Regionally and nationally

It is evident that current government initiatives, such as the Best Start for life agenda, Family Hubs and integrated care systems, are working towards agendas to ensure that parents and community members are intrinsic in the governance structure of these services. This very much resonates with and reflects the ABS approach, with great synergy between ABS' co-productive work within the five localities and what is happening regionally and nationally in early years policy and practice.

As well as advocating for co-production with parents and community members, the ABS approach has shown it is vital that babies and young children are also part of the process, as

facilitating children to have a voice and an opinion at such an early age is vital to improve outcomes for children before they start school.

The learning shared from across ABS on co-production aims to give understanding, direction and motivation to enable others to initiate co-productive practices in local areas and work places, as well as ensuring co-production is kept central to agendas involving young children and their families.

The aim of ABS is to have long term impact on community leadership for generations to come, leaving a truly co-productive legacy.

## **Q&A panel**

***How do you achieve the inclusion of communities who are seen as 'hard to reach' or 'seldom heard' and how do you engage them in coproduction within communities?***

- ABS partnerships work with diverse communities, it's important to build on relationships that are already there with grassroots organisations and voluntary sector groups to reach and include all communities
- Neighbourhood project works to link into these different organisations.
- Meeting the expectations of the community during co-production of the development strategy has been challenging. Clear messaging and a focus on two-way feedback helped to overcome the challenges.
- Using local people that are representative of the communities in which they serve is key to engaging local families.
- Investing in interpreting services and utilising community leaders supports engagement with new communities.
- Governance structures include 50% community board members and 50% local professionals.
- Decisions at board level are always fed back to grassroots level.

***What are some of the highlights for a parent involved in co-production and what skills developed through your involvement?***

- Being involved in co-production helps to build confidence.
- Being in meetings and on boards with professionals means parents feel respected and it is easier to challenge aspects of the projects being delivered from this position.
- Over time, barriers have been overcome and challenge has become a mutual exchange which results in benefits and learning on both sides.
- Patience.... Learning to have patience during changes and services production is a key skill learned through being involved in co-production.
- Broadening local knowledge has also been a useful skill to learn during the co-productive process.
- Learning acronyms and speaking out about the difficulties in two-way communication when they are frequently used has also developed throughout the process.
- Reading professional papers and making sense of the wording and terminology that is used is vital to ensure that parents voice is heard in context and language used is appropriate to express the parent point of view.

***What processes and structures are designed to overcome conflicts during co-productive work?***

- It is important to acknowledge that conflict is not always a negative thing and can actually enhance the co-productive process. When conflict arises, it creates an opportunity to stretch knowledge between both parties and go outside of the zones of comfort for individuals and teams.
- Working towards a shared goal helps during times of conflict and it helps to build a foundation of trust and equal power distribution early on in the relationship.
- Signs of conflict can be seen as a marker that things are working well and when beginning co-productive activities, it is important to highlight that conflict is to be expected at points throughout the process.
- It is challenging to meet everybody's needs when a diverse range of people work together. Equally, it is important to recognise the variety of viewpoints and experiences represented by those involved.
- Having open, honest communication throughout the process will ensure that valuable discussions take place when conflict arises.

***How do you build skills and confidence in the parents you are working with?***

- By providing tailored support and different spaces and structures that encourage interaction and contribution.
- Time, consistency and not being tokenistic, being invested in what you are doing for the benefit of the services not just to tick a box.
- Having co-production as an underlying value.

***What are the legacy opportunities for continuing this co-productive work?***

- Building trust between services, service leaders and citizens underpins the ethos of co-productive work and investing in lasting relationships.
- Building confidence in parents to be seen and heard by a range of audiences will be a lasting legacy of ABS work and has been a significant part of the learning throughout the programme.



Watch the recording of *Empowering communities through co-production* [here](#) [starts at 43:41]

# Changing systems with a focus on evidence, data and outcomes

## A Better Start partnerships

### Introduction

System change is one of the core ABS programme outcomes and it is anticipated and expected that the transformations that occur at local level can contribute to wider system change in policy and practice.

The ABS programme acts as an instigator for system change by:

- Working through co-production
- Applying a strong evidence and research base to inform and evaluate the system change
- Providing opportunities to ‘test and learn’
- Innovation in service design and practice

This session explored each of these instigators for system change and provided examples from across the five partnerships on how this is happening in practice, finishing with reflection on the impact of ABS as a catalyst for change.

### Working through co-production

The value and importance of co-production is increasingly recognised across various sectors with key learning from A Better Start’s work involving co-production reflected in [The Best Start for Life](#) policy document. This key policy, developed in response to the Early Years Healthy Development review, outlines six areas for action to improve the health outcomes of all babies in England. A key facet of the policy is establishing parent and carer panels, to co-design services and feedback on them.

As seen in the session on *Empowering communities through co-production*, the ABS programme has much learning to offer on working co-productively and demonstrates that by working through co production, there is an increased likelihood of developing services that are efficient and effective, that work for the families in local areas and by doing so, reduce inequalities in early childhood.

Across the five A Better Start partnerships there is a commitment to utilising lived experience to improve services and systems, as seen in the examples shared from SSBC Nottingham.

## Consultation with fathers, SSBC Nottingham

SSBC Nottingham commissioned Coram Family and Childcare to undertake a [Fathers Consultation](#) between June and November 2020.



The findings from the consultation identified further opportunities for interdisciplinary working and we have developed practical, low costs solutions with the ambition to improve care pathways for pregnant women, children and families.

Key findings from the consultation are actively being used to influence the local system, including

- development of a specific resource ensuring dads get the information they need to support good child development and to keep their baby safe.
- influencing workstreams to ensure dad's needs are considered as part of workstreams
- standard working practices/policies altered to be more father inclusive
- local perinatal mental health pathway to ensure fathers' mental health needs are considered



## Responding to COVID-19, SSBC Nottingham

Nottingham commissioned Nottingham Trent University to undertake an evaluation of [Impact of COVID-19 on families with children under 5](#) -These findings are being used to help shape the recovery and response to COVID to encourage the system to recognise children's needs as part of recovery from COVID-9.

- This includes making representations to Local Authority, including sharing the findings to help shape the Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy
- Sharing the findings as part of a submission to the Health and Social Care Committee, Children and Young Peoples Mental Health enquiry
- Identify future work needed to assess impact of virtual delivery, work that is currently underway and will shape service delivery going forward

## Applying a strong evidence research base

During the early years, children and their families receive care and support from numerous different organisations including health, children's services, education settings, and other key services (e.g. Families first, police, housing etc.). However, across the UK this data is held in organisational siloes, and not shared, even when services are supporting the same family. The ABS programme is working to change this.

An example of this can be seen in Bradford, where they are moving from the current perspective of data that is at the level of the service to a shared data record that is focussed on the perspective of the child.

### A shared child data system, Better Start Bradford



Led by [Born in Bradford](#) and [Better Start Bradford](#), partners from key services across Bradford joined together in a task and finish group to co-produce a 0-19 Children and Young Peoples' [shared outcomes framework](#) that measures important aspects of children and young peoples' safety, health and development.

The framework was based on:

- existing outcomes frameworks from Better Start Bradford, ABS, maternity, public health and children's services
- the existing evidence base of the major drivers of inequalities in child health and development
- priorities of each of the partners in the co-production group

The aim of the shared 0-19 outcomes framework is to:

- enable in-depth, locality based, needs assessment
- evaluate the impact of interventions through improved outcomes over time
- act as a catalyst for a single shared child record across organisations

The outcomes framework has been used to assess the needs of children aged 0-5 in each ward of Bradford district to identify inequalities in outcomes and differences in needs for prevention and early intervention support across the wards.

The findings of the needs [assessment](#) show that, when data is looked at from the child's perspective, we start to identify stark inequalities and differing patterns of needs that are not clear when using data from a single service or organisation.

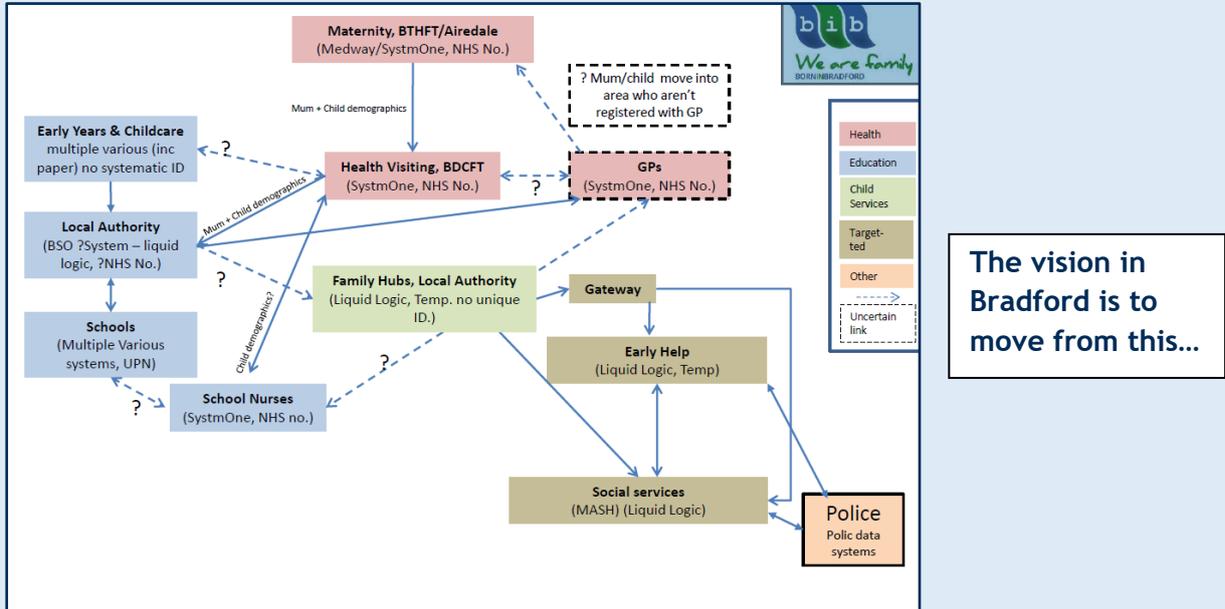
This work is now being used by the prevention and early help teams to highlight the importance of the 1001 days prevention agenda, and to implement appropriate support in each locality. The outcomes framework will then be used to evaluate the impact of these interventions. **A second needs assessment of 5 to 19-year olds is now underway using the shared outcomes framework.**

The vision in Bradford is to develop a single shared child record across organisations where important information that is in the best interests of the care of the family can be shared across the services that are supporting them.

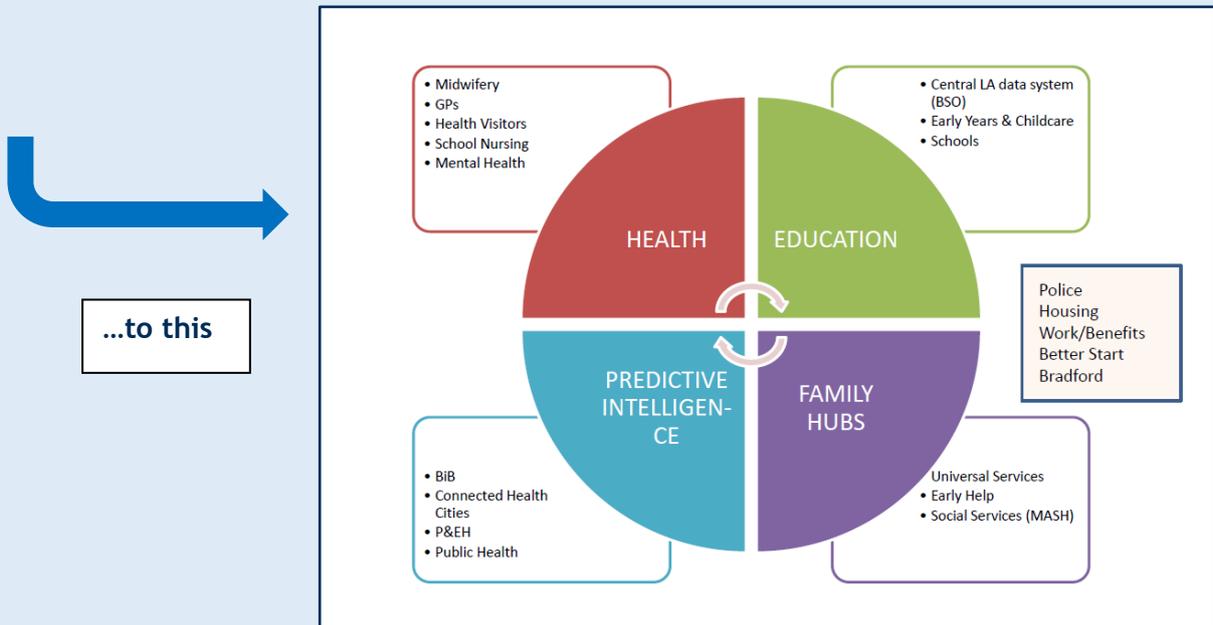
This is a work in progress and updates will be available [here](#)

# Changing the way we look at data

## Bradford: current child data flow



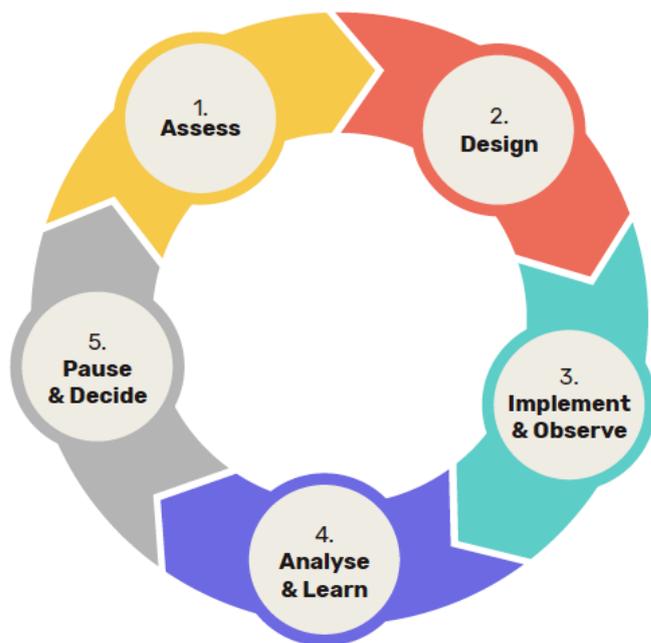
## Bradford: shared child record data flow



## Creating a framework for ‘test and learn’

Test and learn is an approach that involves testing ideas at a small-scale before embedding changes more broadly. It helps provide timely and relevant information for service providers, so they can learn about and adapt their services.

For all the A Better Start partnerships, test and learn is a key approach that helps ensure we are continually improving services, as seen in the Dartington Service Design Lab’s [Rapid-Cycle Design and Testing Method](#) shown here.



*Rapid-Cycle Design and Testing Method*, [Dartington Service Design Lab](#) (2021)

**STEP 1** - organisations assess and understand the context in which their service or service adaptation is, or will be, delivered.

**STEP 2** - designing the service adaptation and the associated tools and processes.

**STEP 3** - put the new approach into practice and collect data to see how it is working.

**STEP 4** - analyse the data to see what it tells us about the effectiveness of the service adaptation.

**STEP 5** - make decisions about next steps.

The test and learn approach requires comprehensive data to make informed decisions, and therefore the development of a strong data infrastructure is a crucial foundation for work around test and learn and data-informed decision making, as seen in the example shared from LEAP.

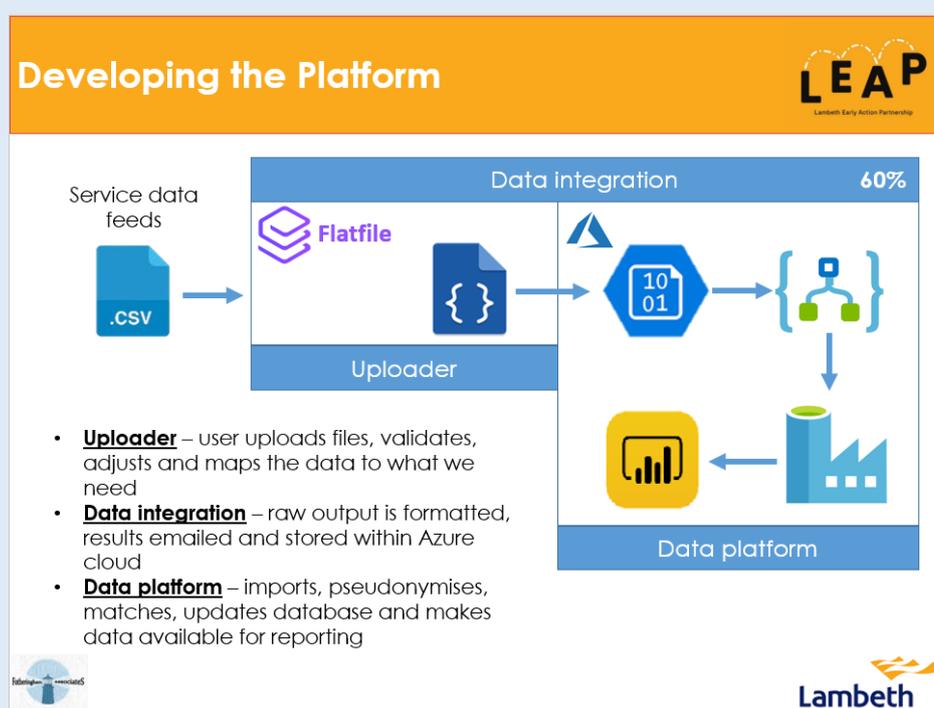
## Creating a framework for 'test and learn', LEAP

In Lambeth, every service receives a standardised quarterly report with comprehensive data on their delivery covering:

- which families are using the service
- how these families are engaging with the service
- what families think of the service
- intermediate and longer-term outcomes



LEAP has established a [Data Integration Platform](#) that links person-level data across the entire portfolio of services. The Platform, which incorporates local administrative datasets to be able to compare the progress of service users with non-service users, is a key tool for understanding and improving the broader Lambeth early childhood system.



Alongside these reports, regular opportunities are created for learning and reflection at the level of individual services, clusters of services, and the programme as a whole. Through these sessions, service providers and wider groups of practitioners identify areas for improvement and establish pilots to test, and learn about, new approaches.

The overall vision is to create a data-informed learning culture, where reflection and adaptation are an integral part of the local system.

In Lambeth, the aim is for every service, and the wider system, to be on a continuous improvement journey - becoming ever more responsive to the needs of local families and ever more effective at improving child and family outcomes.

## Innovation through data and evidence

All A Better Start sites have committed to the collection of data and evidence to demonstrate the impact of focused provision within early years, and to be the catalyst for local systems transformation.

At local level this can be translated into better decision making around provision for children and families, and more widely, the knowledge can be used to support national decision making, such as the levelling up agenda and start for life policies.

An example of this is seen in Blackpool Better Start, where the Data Linkage Project enables data held in health and social care systems to be linked with service attendance data. This provides data for the partnership to monitor the demand for services, and supports understanding on the immediate and future outcomes and impact for those benefiting from services, thus helping to improve the overall quality of service delivery.

### Data linkage and scale up of antenatal education, Blackpool Better Start



The Data Linkage programme provides an opportunity for Blackpool Better Start to demonstrate both locally and nationally the impact of the work undertaken across the BBS partnership, and the importance of sustaining and expanding this approach.

To generate evidence and effectively demonstrate the impact of programmes and services, Blackpool Better Start has taken several approaches:

- At **intervention level**, direct impact for beneficiaries is gathered by the local evaluation team, using standardized tools, evaluated measures and participant and practitioner feedback. This data provides insight into the acceptability, feasibility and importantly, the impact of interventions on the lives of children and families who use them
- At **population level**, health and social care administrative data sets have been monitored at aggregate level (that is, taking an overarching view rather than broken down to reflect individuals) to identify trends in the direction of change. Blackpool Teaching Hospitals and partners has developed a Data Warehouse containing these population-level metrics, such as birth weight, breastfeeding initiation, smoking/alcohol consumption during pregnancy, tooth extractions, and hospital admissions.

These two pieces of the puzzle are then matched together. Linking service data to population level change data enables understanding of the richer picture and fills in the story behind the trends, ensuring the wider context of the impact for families is understood.

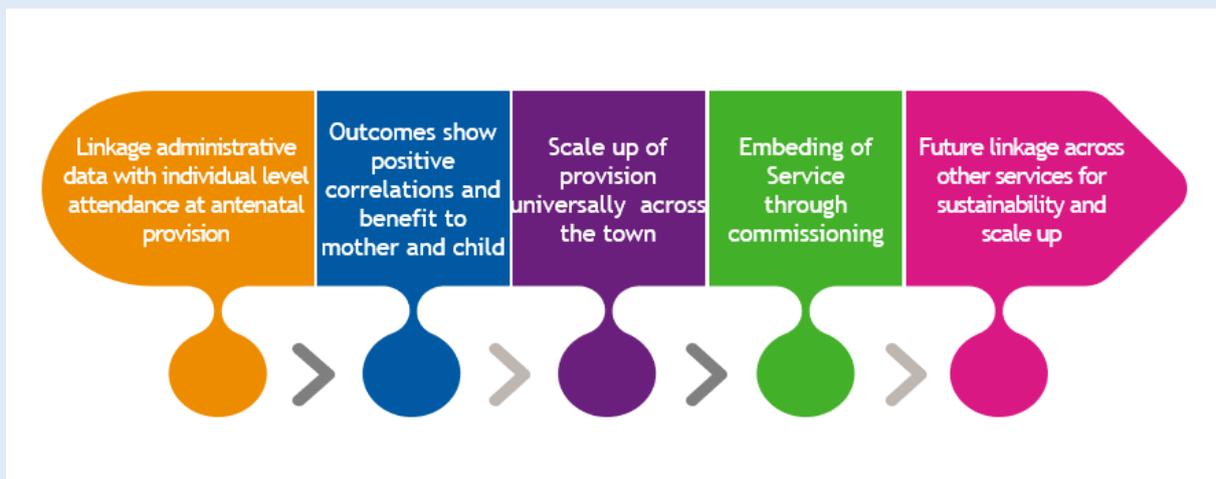
The data and evidence from the Data Linkage Project has been used to help inform decisions about scaling up antenatal education in Blackpool.

The Baby Steps Antenatal programme was previously delivered at a targeted level, through the NSPCC, to vulnerable families in Blackpool, and universally, through the Blackpool Better Start programme, to all pregnant women and their partners in the Better Start Wards.

The evaluation of the BBS programme, using the same measures as the NSPCC national evaluation, demonstrated outcomes for participants which were comparable to the national evaluation. This supported conversations with both the local health commissioner and provider about the potential to deliver the programme universally to all pregnant women and their partners across the town, and the service has now been scaled up across Blackpool.

The success of the programme resulted in the delivery team being TUPE transferred over to the health provider, thus embedding the antenatal service within the provision of maternity and health visiting services. This means that the work of ABS is now benefitting parents right across Blackpool, not just within ABS wards.

There is an appetite in Blackpool to extend the approach of linking early years data across the town. This would give a rich insight into the families using services, helping to understand patterns of stability, economic functioning of households in receipt of services and patterns of change, and therefore better target more appropriate services to meet local needs. Data analysed at this level will support both operational and commissioning decisions on the provision of services for families. It is also hoped that the learning generated will not only benefit Blackpool, but will have a wider influence across national policy and practice decisions.



### Changing systems through partnerships

System change is fundamental to ensuring that the impact of ABS lasts and ensures an ongoing legacy. By changing the systems that early years services are provided within, the Better Start approach can be built into those systems, ensuring:

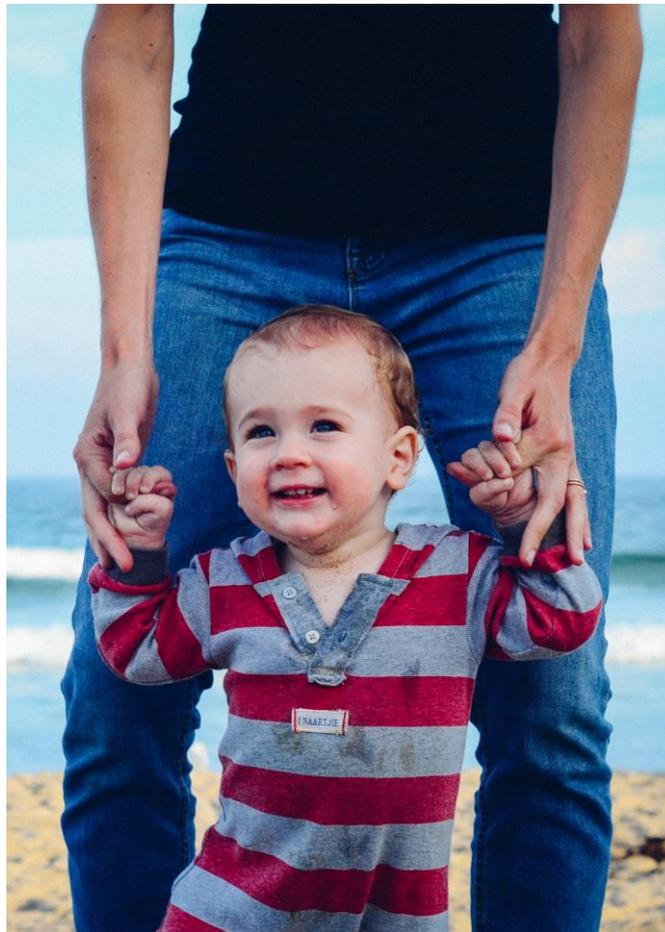
- Projects and services are sustainable beyond the end of the funding period
- The great gains made by A Better Start across a range of outcomes are maintained and continue into the future, rather than falling back in the absence of the A Better Start programmes
- Family and community voices remain at the centre

Partners within A Better Start are based across multiple disciplines and work within multiple systems. This can be a challenge, but it is also an opportunity to re-shape systems and ways of working together to include parent voices and to meet the needs of families.

A Better Start can be an example within those different systems, and can:

- Demonstrate the importance of using evidence to inform decision making and our actions
- Advocate for co-productive ways of working
- Provide relevant local examples of successful change
- Create trust in the ABS approach by working alongside other organisations or systems
- Demonstrate through action the value of ABS approaches

This creates an opportunity for ABS to be a catalyst for systems-change at a broader level - whether geographically or across different service areas, or reaching into new organisations and potential partners, as demonstrated in the example shared by A Better Start (ABSS) Southend.



## A Better Start Southend as a catalyst for systems change



### The new landscape



The Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System (ICS) formed from a number of different organisations and partners

As one of the partners, A Better Start Southend is working with the ICS on the development of a new Children and Young People Care Plan.

As part of this partnership, ABBS

- is a trusted neutral party, able to bring together these disparate partners from across the region and each with their own cultures.
- provides the tools and evidence they need to work together as well as provide that neutral space where they can build this new partnership
- bring experience of co-production and the centring of those family and community voices and experiences
- is mapping out what that changed landscape looks like, and what the key priorities are within it
- identifying challenges and opportunities arising from this new landscape

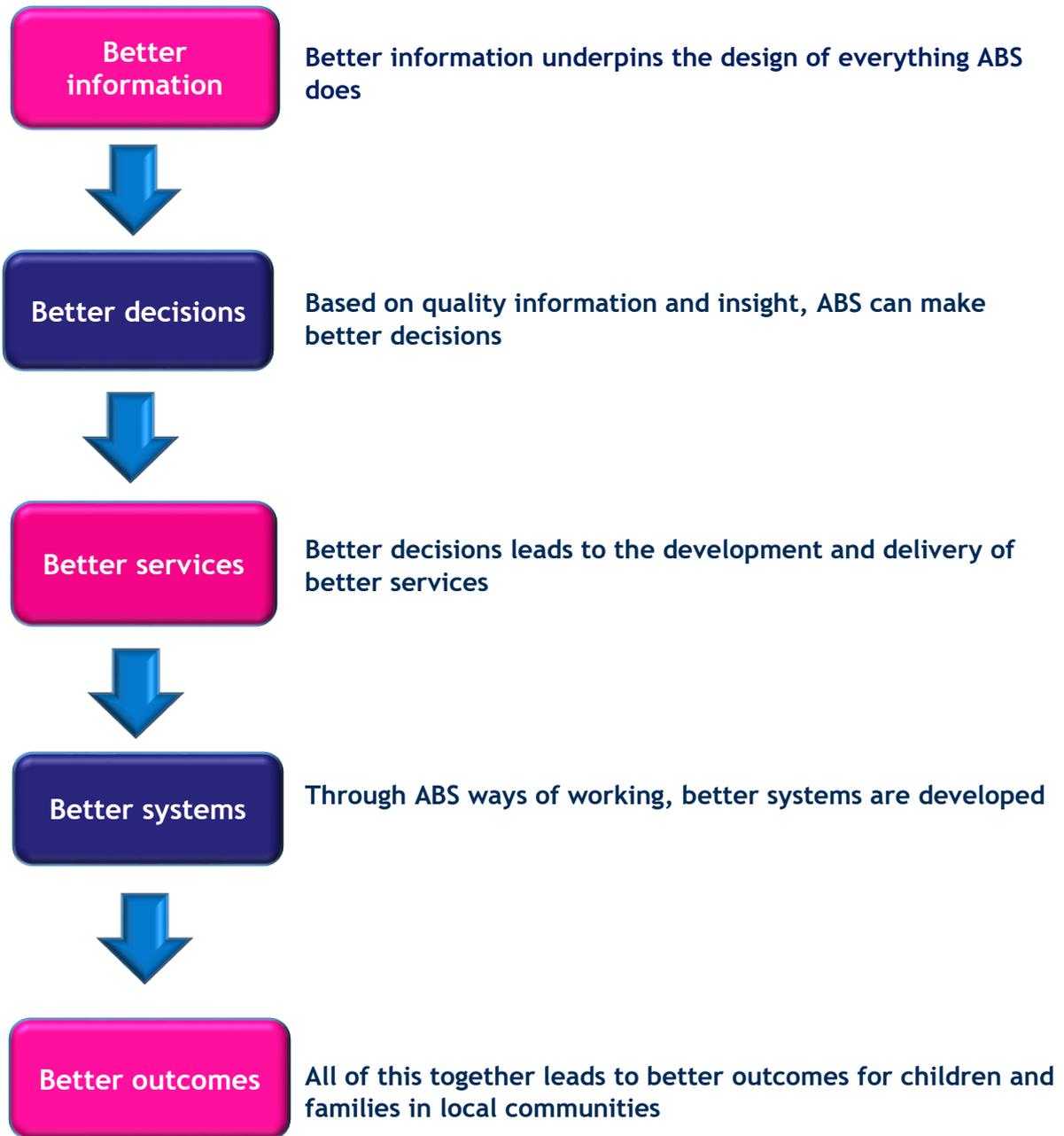
It's the partnerships, relationships, and ways of working that are the key outcomes from this work, rather than the new Children and Young People Care Plan in itself. ABSS, through its partners at the University of Essex, have carried out some original research, bringing together evidence of the kinds of models of children and young people's services that have been used elsewhere. By providing this information alongside the neutral space that allows new relationships to grow, ABSS can contribute to the development of systems that really work for all those involved.

This approach is about how people work together to identify what needs to be done, and to build on evidence that's already out there.

For further information about the work completed with Mid and South Essex ICS, contact Clare Littleford, Research and Evaluation Manager at A Better Start Southend, at [Clare.Littleford@eyalliance.org.uk](mailto:Clare.Littleford@eyalliance.org.uk)

## Impact - ABS as a catalyst for change

The approaches demonstrated through the ABS programme act as a catalyst for change, leading to improved outcomes and reducing inequalities in early childhood.



## Q&A panel

***How can ABS sites support cooperative working at ICP (Integrated Care Partnership) level?***

- It is important to recognise this can be a challenge when there are many large organisations working together.
- Starting with a conversation about ‘how’ groups will work together rather than the detail of ‘what’ that work will be.

- Building understanding of the strengths, needs, expertise, and points of view will support the groups in coming together for the purpose of a shared vision.
- Requiring partners to sign up to co-productive ways of working to ensure there is a common ground to start from.

***How can we help statutory organisations see lived experience and ensure that this is at the heart of decision making?***

- By bringing key elements together, ensuring they are on a journey together.
- Building outcomes framework together with partners e.g. key partners such as NHS and Children’s Services to ensure outcomes are shared.
- Having shared key performance indicators.
- Gaining commitment from senior members of organisations to use the data, and in particular to understand more about their locality.
- Ensuring local areas understand why outcomes are particularly low in certain areas and what may be contributing to this.
- By committing to considering how services can be changed to address some of the key issues.
- Delivering information to a wide range of people so that there is a clear picture of what the needs and priorities are.

***How can reflective learning spaces be created?***

- Facilitating regular review sessions for services, and provider events so practitioners can come together.
- Working with local evaluators establishing Action Learning Sets.
- Reflecting on what is, and what is not, working.
- Focus on ‘learning’ rather than limiting to a focus on ‘performance’.

***What is the potential impact and barriers for using a shared child record?***

- Acknowledgement that this is a work in progress; the outcomes framework and needs assessment are being used as evidence to demonstrate the value of a shared child record.
- Data sharing and legal agreements are posing a challenge in connecting children’s records.
- Need to change mindsets to **protecting the child** rather than protecting the data.
- Unifying the data enables multi-agency support and care to be provided for children and families.
- The ultimate vision is a Unique Identifier linking all information and services for children together.

***Who collates the data and how will it be stored?***

- In Blackpool data was stored at the teaching hospitals using NHS systems, **which required NHS** staff to be employed to access the data. This created a barrier.
- Data that comes out is at aggregate level and broken down into subsections such as ward level and services level not individual data. However, this is currently being explored to provide greater insight into particular data on individual children and their journeys.

- A benefit is that this enables staff to look in depth at why changes are happening for some children and not for others.
- It is acknowledged that a shared data system is still a long way off
- The COVID-19 pandemic has produced challenges in working with data collection required to measure impact and, in some cases, important data. is missing from children's records (e.g. Early Years Foundation Stage Profile). Looking at alternative places to get data from e.g. adding questions to a survey being conducted within the locality has enabled data gathering.

***How can data relating to the families and communities ABS are working with be made easier to understand and more palatable?***

- It is challenging with such a large quantity of data, but by using helpful infographics that give the highlights with an option to delve deeper into the impact if needed is particularly effective in supporting understanding.

***How can the data be presented to Boards?***

- Presenting too much data can sometimes have a detrimental effect as was learned early on in the A Better Start journey.
- Prioritising the messages being delivered through data, i.e. utilising quarterly governance meetings or reporting, and varying the information within that, results in more clarity on the impact and tells a more accurate story.



Watch the recording of *Changing systems with a focus on evidence, data and outcomes* [here](#) [starts at 1:31:29]

# Mobilising the workforce and community

## A Better Start partnerships

### Introduction

Workforce and community development have always played a central role in [A Better Start](#). It is crucial that quality services are provided through a well-trained and supported workforce and it is vital that communities are supported and enabled to gain new skills, to become volunteers and to gain employment.

This session explored how ABS is not only upskilling the workforce and local community, but also how ABS supports and cares for the people who are integral to shaping the futures of babies and young children.

The session provided practical examples of how different approaches are working across the five partnerships, and whilst there are diverse and different approaches, the work is grounded in 4 golden threads: **Educate, Connect, Nurture, and Sustain**. The session concluded with a reflection on how the ABS approach to *Mobilising the workforce and community* can act as a blueprint for current government early years' policy initiatives.

### Why 'workforce AND community'?

The rationale for combining workforce and community is because by both sectors working together the chances of achieving lasting change are increased, taking a collective approach to improve outcomes for young children and their families. All of the ABS partnerships have made efforts to move away from a 'them and us' attitude, ensuring community and parent voice is part of a combined dialogue in its approaches to working with families and communities.

Many services include a volunteer element that provides opportunities for local community members to be part of this transformational programme. ABS sites have an emphasis on ensuring parents' voice is strong through the development, implementation and delivery of all Better Start activities, and volunteering is a key strand of this work.

Within ABS, the term 'workforce' encompasses a wide range of partners including:

- Health providers such as health visitors, midwives, GPs, speech and language therapists;
- Local authority staff including children's centre workers;
- Childcare settings from the private, voluntary, independent and statutory sector;
- VCS or voluntary and community sector partners, as well as other statutory partners such as the Police and Housing.
- Volunteers, many of whom are parents who are able to share their experiences to benefit other families, including Parent Champions, Food Ambassadors, Breastfeeding Peer Supporters, Parent Ambassadors, Literacy Volunteers, Community Champions, Perinatal Support Volunteer Befrienders, Volunteer Doulas.

## Objectives

Although delivery programmes vary across the 5 ABS partnerships, there is a consensus that the following objectives have informed the approach for mobilising the workforce and the community:

- A shared vision for children and families across the system and a joint approach for realising this vision'
- More integrated planning and delivery of services and resources for children and families
- Opportunities for improved workforce skills and expertise
- Improved service provision and quality

## Golden threads

Four golden threads weave through the A Better Start approach to successfully mobilising the workforce and community, ensuring that although individual ABS partnerships may do things differently, the way it is done across the programme is consistent.



For each of the golden threads, the ABS partnerships shared key messages to support the workforce and community, along with examples of how this has been put into practice.

## Educate

Importance of **investing in** and **valuing** the workforce and community

To reduce inequalities in early childhood, the early years must be prioritised -this includes investing in and valuing the early years workforce and community. Across the ABS programme, it has been identified that

- Offering training to all the early years workforce provides opportunity for shared learning, shared vision, shared understanding and consistency through a shared language
- Covid has brought new ways of working, with benefits to having a blended approach
- Understanding what works on the ground, in real life practice, is crucial

- The importance of all understanding their role in early childhood, and how this supports achieving better outcomes

Investing in and valuing the early years workforce and community leads to practitioners and parents feeling empowered and enables sustainable change, as seen in the examples shared from Blackpool Better Start and LEAP.

### The Brain Story, Blackpool Better Start

Blackpool Better Start has worked with [The Alberta Family Wellness Initiative](#) (AFWI) to deliver the Brain Story to the community and local workforce.



The AFWI has utilised the Brain Story to great effect to improve the health and wellness of children and families in Alberta by raising awareness of brain science, early childhood trauma and poor adult outcomes, and the impact on health and society.

As part of Blackpool Better Start commitment to ensuring the current and future workforce has access to high quality learning and development opportunities to raise awareness of Early Child Development, all early years workforce are offered training in Brain Science, and the impact of early adversity. All of the early years workforce is encouraged to enroll on the AFW [Brain Story Certification](#) which sits within the Blackpool Trauma Informed Care training offer. The 19-module online course is free and features internationally renowned speakers. In Blackpool 1086 people across multi agency workforces and our future workforce have signed up to the course.

Blackpool Trauma Informed training and implementation support offer also includes the Brain Architecture Game which is delivered through dedicated trainers, and to date 1563 of our workforce and community have been attended the Brain Architecture Game. Our workforce has embraced the opportunity to learn about brain science and the impact of early and making the shift towards a trauma informed approach to working with pregnant women, children and families, and each other within their organisations.

Through the Brain Story Blackpool Better Start is building a workforce and community that understand how babies' brains are built and who champion the importance of early child development. A film explaining the work in Blackpool can be viewed [here](#)

*Watch the video about The Brain Story on the recording [here](#) [starts at 2:30:37]*

## Family Partnership Model, LEAP

The Family Partnership Model is an evidence-based programme that was rolled out to Early Years practitioners within Lambeth, including Early Help Teams, Children's Centre Better Start Workers and Health Visiting Teams.



The Model assumes that the process of helping is essentially an attempt to combine the expertise of parents with that of helpers, and to avoid the pitfalls associated with the imposition of expert knowledge.

The development of a genuine and respectful partnership provides the basis for a clearer understanding of strengths and problems of individual families, a better basis for effective problem management and building parental self-efficacy.

Watch the video about the Family Partnership Model on the recording [here](#) [starts at 2:35:02]



## Connect

### Importance of **networking** and **linking different services**

A Better Start has broad reach across a wide range of partners within the local areas and whilst the partnerships have developed different ways to create networking opportunities and to link to different services, there are common features in the approaches taken:

- Holding workforce or provider events and conferences, enabling a wide range of workforces that may not usually meet each other to network, build relationships, share information about their services and reinforce referral pathways
- Creating community connector roles
- Recruitment of Parent Champions and Parent Ambassadors
- Offering Community Partnership meetings regularly, where workforce and parent champions come to together to give updates on their services and discuss items related to the local community
- Delivering shared training events, where programmes are co-facilitated or co-delivered by different groups or services linking up



## YourFamily, A Better Start Southend

YourFamily is a community, co-designed by parents and partners.

Families are asked to join the YourFamily community rather than register to it.

Families choose the support they require and may join to:

- find out what is available to them in their local community
- be connected with others in their community or signposted to agencies that can support their most pressing need
- receive a baby bag, co-designed by parents, this is given to expectant parents with something for baby and something for parent
- access home visiting to help them with parenting challenges

YourFamily team maintain regular contact and check in with families to see how they are, which often leads to further interaction.

YourFamily programme provides integrated training to the workforce.

YourFamily are developing a shared record and case management system, providing opportunities to build community resilience and lead to systems change.

For further information contact Julie Lannon, Programme Manager at [Julie.lannon@eyalliance.org.uk](mailto:Julie.lannon@eyalliance.org.uk)



## Nurture

Ethos of **nurturing, valuing** and **supporting** the workforce, with an emphasis on **'Growing our own'**

Across A Better Start, this ethos is evident through the approaches taken:

- Supporting new and existing workforces
- Robust training linked across the workforce to enable clear and consistent messaging for families
- Providing ad hoc training as new evidence presents
- Offering volunteer pathways
- Supporting parents to have a voice and become Parent Champions and Board members
- Focussing on Workforce wellbeing



## 'Growing our own' - Family Mentors, SSBC Nottingham

The aim of the [Family Mentor Service](#) is to reduce inequalities, provide better support, and to improve outcomes for young children and families across four key wards of Nottingham City.



With the use of 5 age related evidence-based handbooks focusing on Child development, the Family Mentors deliver the [Small Steps at Home](#) program.

Small Steps at home begins at 32 weeks of pregnancy and continues until the child's 4th birthday. Each visit focusses on a range of topics, which are relevant to the child's age, and improve outcomes for children in the areas of diet and nutrition, social and emotional, and language and communication skills.

[Family Mentors](#) are a paid workforce of peer supporters - local people, recruited for their lived experiences and qualities, not for their qualifications.

Family Mentors go through a unique recruitment and training process before supporting local families.

Family Mentors are supported in their development e.g. some Family Mentors have since gained such confidence delivering their roles, that they have been empowered to successfully apply for other roles within the wider workforce.

Some Family Mentors are parents who themselves received Small Steps at home and were encouraged and supported to become a Family Mentor themselves.

Watch *Christina's story* on the recording [here](#) [starts at 2:46:17]

For further information about the Family Mentors service in Nottingham, contact Amanda Boyle [amanda.boyle@nhs.net](mailto:amanda.boyle@nhs.net)



## Sustain

A **shared vision** with the child as the focus

An **integrated** workforce

**Investment**

All ABS partnerships have focused plans to sustain A Better Start beyond the duration of its funding and in regards to the workforce and community, this will be achieved through:

**A shared vision with the child as the focus** that:

- holds prevention at the heart of everything and can readily be articulated at place via a common language with consistent metrics
- values collaborative pathways that are built around need and not where capacity, governance or where the system allows
- rebalances power and creates ownership and clear purpose, led by an autonomous workforce with local intelligence.

**An Integrated Workforce** that is truly integrated, not to be confused with co-located. An integrated place-based system led by a workforce that is reflective of the community it serves and the voluntary community sector and community itself being part of the offer as a partner not as an added extra.

**Investment in relation to capacity that supports the prioritisation of continued professional development opportunities**, including:

- innovative practice becoming embedded within the workforce of local organisations
- the future workforce by influencing and shaping local curriculums to ensure Prevention and Early Intervention are embodied and creates lasting change in practice and workforce culture.

This has been made possible by A Better Start delivering a workforce development plan with shared continued professional development opportunities via a variety of high-quality learning and training for all those working with pregnant women and families with children aged 0-4 years.

The example shared from Better Start Bradford shows how the learning and investment has become embedded within the workforce of local organisations, creating sustainable system change for the workforce.

## ACES, trauma and resilience, Better Start Bradford



Bradford is committed to building a fairer and brighter future by addressing Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs)

The Adversity, Trauma and Resilience (ATR) work in the Bradford district has been supported by Better Start Bradford along a journey of development that has led to a substantive, joint funded ACEs lead for the district.

This leadership will ensure the ongoing development of the work in Bradford and act as active participants in the regional Adversity, Trauma and Resilience structures and working groups.

Watch the video on the recording [here](#) [starts at 2:52:17] to hear Zakra Yasmin talk about the ACEs, Trauma and Resilience programme in Bradford

## Impact - ABS as a blueprint

### The Best Start for Life vision

*A vision that every family will be supported by a range of professionals and volunteers, a workforce that brings skills, knowledge and empathy to interactions with families.*

*That parents and carers should be confident that the people there to help them have the right skills and knowledge and that whoever they speak to is aware of the full range of support available.*

*Above all, families should feel that every individual they encounter treats them with dignity and respect.*

*To make this possible, the Start for Life workforce, whether public or third sector, recommends up to date skills and knowledge for the workforce about their own area as well as manageable workloads and appropriate supervision. However, professionals and volunteers also need to understand how their service fits into the bigger picture of support for families.*

[The Best Start for Life](#) (2021)

[A Better Start](#) is a blueprint for fulfilling the Best Start for Life vision. Through the many examples provided and through the 4 golden threads identified, ABS partnerships are not just upskilling the workforce and communities, but are also providing support and the right infrastructures to enable them to be the best that they can be.

Evidence-based programmes on their own will not change outcomes for children and ABS has shown how to maximise the potential of programmes through being delivered by the right people and in the right way. Models seen throughout ABS ensure **parents feel seen, heard and cared for**, and **practitioners have the right skills, knowledge and tools to provide the best support**.

## The Health & Social Care Bill

The Health & Social Care Bill sets out key legislative proposals to reform the delivery and organisation of health services in England, to promote more joined-up services and to ensure more of a focus on improving health. ABS provides a blueprint for partnership working and delivering joined up services.

ABS partnerships have demonstrated the benefits of joined up working for establishing available information across health systems at a local level, enabling better decision making for practitioners through access to wider sets of information.

## The Levelling Up agenda

Levelling up means giving everyone the opportunity to flourish. One of the drivers of disparity is human capital, that is, the skills, health and experience of the workforce. A Better Start offers validated models that support skills reform and investment, such as Community Connectors in Blackpool, Parents in the Lead in Bradford or Parent Champions and Ambassadors in Nottingham.

For each of these current early years policy initiatives, the work of ABS provides a learning and evidence base, and offers a blueprint for:

- meaningful implementation at a grass roots level
- embracing and fully utilising all assets
- offering real solutions to improve outcomes for children

As demonstrated through the ABS programme, skilling up the workforce and community is crucial to support early intervention, providing the right support for children and families, and therefore reducing inequalities in early childhood.

## Q&A panel

***How do ABS partnerships advocate for professionals during these increasingly pressurised times to improve staff retention and sustain the workforce?***

- These workforces continue to work under extremely difficult circumstances. Shared training plans and investment in quality training opportunities will bring professionals together and demonstrate the value placed on these professions.
- Evidence the investment in the workforce through outcomes reporting
- Focus on what's strong not what's wrong.
- Invest in the future workforce work through embedding ABS practices within the qualifications and learning of the workforce at higher education level.
- Shared advocacy for shared learning and investment.
- Raising the aspiration to be part of the early years workforce, as working with young children within those all-important first 1001 days is a privilege and something to aspire to.

### ***How do ABS partnerships support workforce wellbeing?***

- Wellbeing initiatives such as [Art of Brilliance](#) virtual sessions for practitioners in Nottingham on [Mental Wealth](#) and [Happy Families](#), and the Wellbeing Warriors in Blackpool Better Start.
- Supervision of the workforce is vital and maintaining consistent messages across the programme which are driven by key elements such as Trauma Informed Practice will feed into the wellbeing practices adopted for staff.
- As a result of the pandemic, LEAP utilised surveys and changed working practices to gather information and highlight staff wellbeing as a priority area. These practices have become embedded and will remain in place for the foreseeable future. LEAP also offered team therapy during times when pandemic restrictions were in place.
- Working closely with providers and maintaining relationships is also key to supporting wellbeing.
- ABS partnerships act as role models in how to maintain a focus on wellbeing as this is central to what they are doing across all programmes and deliverables.
- Quality services can only be achieved if staff feel supported and they have good emotional wellbeing in themselves therefore this must remain a priority across ABS sites.

### ***How do ABS partnerships move parents from volunteering roles into paid roles within the ABS workforce?***

- During the bid phase ABS partnerships held consultation with parents where they expressed interest in being in paid work, and discussed the challenges in finding these opportunities.
- An example from LEAP, Food Ambassadors, who gain accreditation in Food Hygiene as part of the Healthy Living platform, have been found paid work opportunities through this initiative.
- Aiming to provide opportunities wherever possible to put the skills learned into practice and hopefully, paid work.
- Providing references for those that volunteer to support their employment seeking who may not be able to provide them otherwise.
- Examples such as Christina's story demonstrates the level of support parents receive through the ABS programme.
- Blackpool Volunteer Academy supports volunteers to go onto paid opportunities or move into other roles within the partnership.

Watch the recording of *Mobilising the workforce and community* [here](#) [starts at 2:20:33]

## Final reflections

### John Mothersole, England Committee Chair

#### The National Lottery Community Fund

John Mothersole gave final reflections on some of the points of the day, reflecting that ABS has answered the question:

*How do you invest in prevention when all of the resources are tied up in dealing with the symptoms?*

Too often there is an unwillingness to invest in prevention, but ABS has stepped up to this mission and shown what can be achieved.

Drawing together the presentations and discussions, John reflected that:

- There is much to welcome in government policy, with the most significant breakthrough the recognition of the first 1001 days of life. The Best Start for Life document is where the long-term change will be rooted.
- Integration really can only take place at the local level, in local places with local partners.
- Commissioning can still be very focussed on inputs; it is more beneficial to commission outcomes, as this enables changes to be made to the way things are done if outcomes are not being achieved as quickly or in the way anticipated.
- Co-production sometimes gets overlooked or thought of as being too hard. John recognised that within ABS this has not been cheap or easy, but because it hasn't been cheap or easy this time round, it will be cheaper and easier for those that follow.
- Every place is different and so it is important to take the 'adaptable not adoptable' approach. What the ABS partnerships have shown is what works so that others can adapt it to suit their place, but they don't have to start right at the beginning.
- Investment in early years does reduce inequalities. Everyone knows that, but the difference through ABS is now we can say, we know it does and we can prove it does - we've moved from a belief system to a provable system and that is very powerful.

John reflected that the purpose of TNLCF strategic programmes was to provide stable, long-term investment to explore change, such as being brave enough to allow others to take the lead, to shape, to co-produce. The return on the investment has been tremendous and public policy is now adopting and reflecting some of the approaches that ABS has brought to the fore.

The real gift of ABS is the ability to show anyone who wants to listen that ABS can prove what works, but has also proved what doesn't work, so people don't need to waste their time and resource going down blind alleys.

TNLCF England committee are reflecting on the strategic programmes and wondering what the priorities should be going forward and would love to hear from anyone through the National Lottery Fund [website](#) about what the themes should be and where the big changes could be made.

John closed by thanking everyone for the years that have led up to today, for being there

and doing it and showing what can be done.

*“What you’re showing is that real change happens in real places”*

Following John’s reflections, Frances Lyons, Head of Research and Evidence at NCB, closed the event by thanking everyone for their contributions and hoping that all leave feeling inspired to

*“continue fighting the good fight for the youngest members of our population who really are the key to achieving the kind of society we all want to see going forward”*

**Find out more on the A Better Start websites:**

[The National Lottery Community Fund: A Better Start Programme](#)

[A Better Start Southend](#)

[Small Steps Big Changes, Nottingham](#)

[Lambeth Early Action Partnership](#)

[Better Start Bradford](#)

[Blackpool Better Start](#)



## And finally... a selection of attendees' reflections

*Fascinating conference and it was really nice to see how much the programmes have developed and matured*

*Really enjoyed the conference, well presented and well-paced*

*It was a great session with a great variety of speakers and topics and videos*

*Very well-rounded agenda and excellently facilitated*

*Thanks very much - uplifting and informative. Well done everyone!*

*Thank you so much for a really informative morning and for sharing so many insights and learning to inform our own journey for developing our services for children and families.*

*Thank you everyone and all the good work that you do!*

*Very insightful and a growing body of evidence emerging*

*Changing mindset from "protect data" to "protect child" - excellent Josie, thank you!*

*This is so inspirational and exciting, given that community development approaches have been so long been left to third sector organisations. It's great to see this approach being brought to the forefront*

*Thank you so much so informative and inspiring*

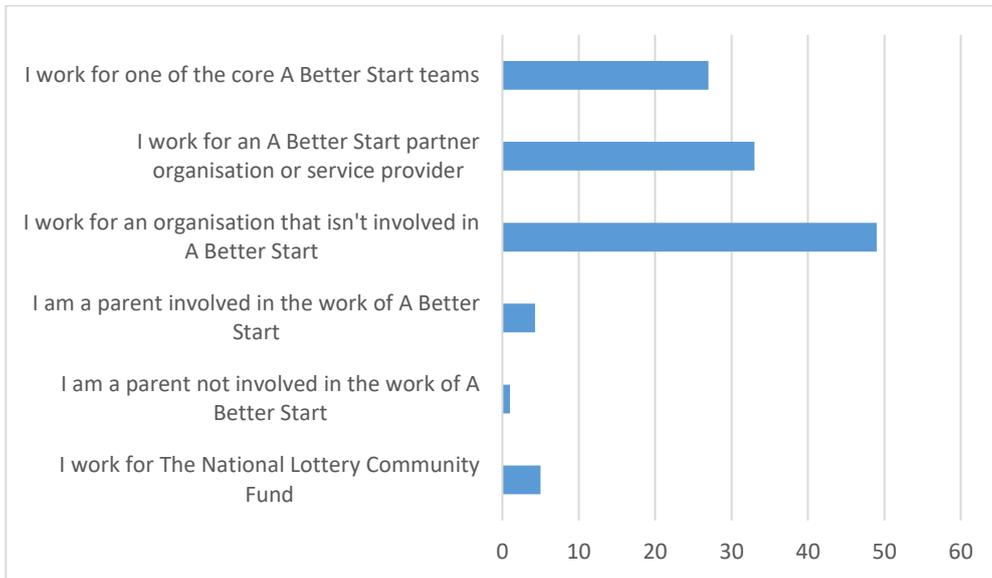
## Appendix 1: Agenda

<p><b>9:30</b></p>	<p><b>Welcome and purpose of the day</b></p> <p><b>Overview of A Better Start</b></p>	<p><b>Frances Lyons</b>, Head of Research &amp; Evidence, National Children’s Bureau</p> <p><a href="#">David Knott</a>, Chief Executive, The National Lottery Community Fund</p>
<p><b>9:45</b></p>	<p><b>Prioritising the early years</b></p> <p>We will hear about the government’s programme of work to support children and families in early childhood</p> <p>Overview of current early years’ policy initiatives</p>	<p><a href="#">Will Quince</a>, Minister for Children and Families</p> <p><b>Matthew Dodd</b>, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, National Children’s Bureau</p>
<p><b>Learning from <u>A Better Start</u></b></p> <p>We will hear from the ABS Partnerships as they share their experience and expertise on improving systems to reduce inequalities, provide better support and improve outcomes for young children and families.</p>		
<p><b>10:10</b></p>	<p><b>Session 1 - Empowering communities through co-production</b></p> <p>Presentation followed by Q&amp;A</p>	<p><b>Laura McFarlane</b>, Lambeth</p> <p><b>Tara Poore</b>, Southend</p> <p><b>Tanya Spence</b>, Lambeth</p> <p><b>Victoria Walker</b>, Blackpool</p> <p><b>Fiona Saville</b>, Bradford</p> <p><b>Donna Sherratt</b>, Nottingham</p> <p><b>Jessica Russell</b>, Southend</p> <p><b>Jeff Banks</b>, Southend</p> <p><b>Amanda Doughty</b>, Nottingham</p>
<p><b>11:00</b></p>	<p><b>Break time (15 mins)</b></p>	
<p><b>11:15</b></p>	<p><b>Session 2 - Changing systems with a focus on evidence, data and outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>Alex Spragg</b>, Bradford</p> <p><b>Amy McDonald</b>, Nottingham</p> <p><b>Josie Dickerson</b>, Bradford</p> <p><b>Chris Wellings</b>, Lambeth</p> <p><b>Annette Algie</b>, Blackpool</p>

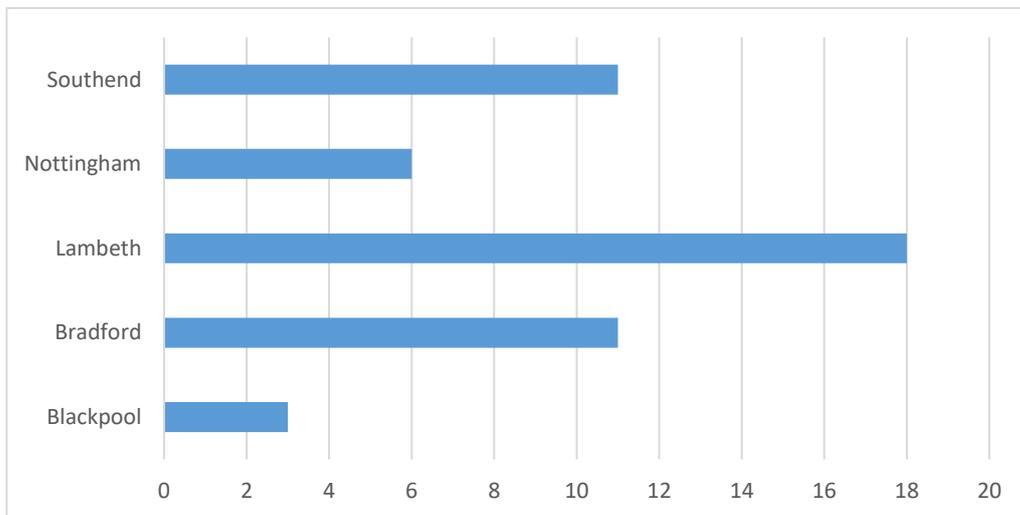
	Presentation followed by Q&A	Clare Littleford, Southend
<b>12:05</b>	<b>Break time (10 mins)</b>	
<b>12:15</b>	<b>Session 3 - Mobilising the workforce and community</b>  Presentation followed by Q&A	Clare Law, Blackpool David Wood, Lambeth Melanie Farman, Blackpool Julie Lannon, Southend Amanda Boyle, Nottingham Kerry Bennett, Bradford
<b>1:15</b>	<b>Reflections on the day</b>	<a href="#">John Mothersole</a> , England Committee Chair, The National Lottery Community Fund
<b>1:25</b>	<b>Close</b>	Frances Lyons, Head of Research & Evidence, National Children's Bureau

## Appendix 2: Summary of evaluation findings

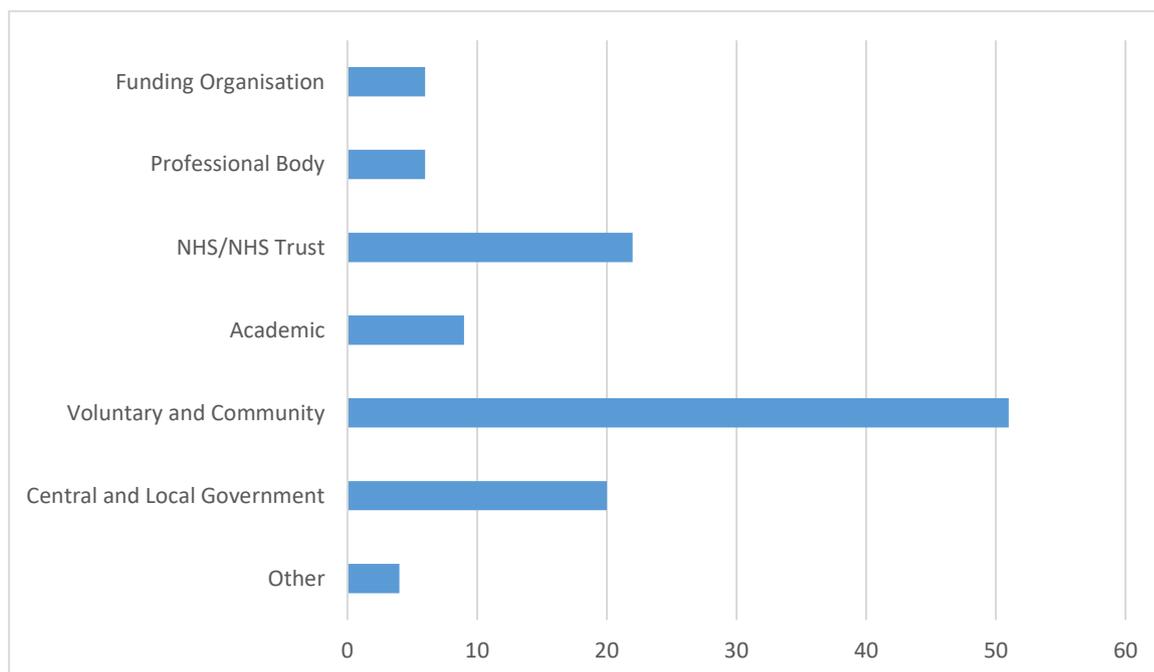
### Q1 Which one of these best describes your role (116 responses)



### Q2 If you work with or for an A Better start partnership, please indicate which below (49 responses)



**Q3 Please select the option which best describes the sector you work in (116 responses)**



**Q4 Please rate how satisfied you were with the following aspects of the event (114 responses)**

	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neither satisfied/nor dissatisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
The event registration process via Zoom webinar	80% (92)	17% (19)	2% (2)	1% (1)
Facilitation of the event	77% (88)	19% (22)	2% (2)	2% (2)
The conference platform (Zoom webinar)	67% (78)	27% (31)	3% (3)	2% (2)
Content of individual sessions	60% (68)	33% (38)	4% (5)	3% (3)
The overall agenda	60% (69)	33% (38)	4% (5)	3% (3)

**Q5 The event aims are listed below. Please indicate how satisfied you are that these aims were met (114 responses)**

	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>Neither satisfied/nor dissatisfied</b>	<b>Dissatisfied</b>
To raise awareness of the work of ABS	64% (73)	30 % (34)	4% (5)	2% (2)
To improve knowledge of the work of ABS on <i>Empowering communities through co-production</i>	63% (73)	29% (34)	4% (5)	2% (2)
To improve knowledge of the work of ABS on <i>Changing systems with a focus on evidence, data and outcomes</i>	54% (62)	39% (45)	4% (5)	2% (2)
To improve knowledge of the work of ABS on <i>Mobilising the workforce and community</i>	57% (65)	36% (41)	4% (5)	3% (3)
To support and develop thinking on policy and practice	46% (52)	45% (51)	8% (9)	2% (2)

## Appendix 3: Organisations represented

A Better Start Southend	Blackpool CCG	Brightsparks CIC
Action for Children	Blackpool Council	Bright Start Islington
Action for Community Ltd	Blackburn with Darwen council	Bristol City Council
Adolescent Support Services	Blackpool FC Community Trust	BSNA
Adrienne Skelton Consultancy	Blackpool Health Visiting	Building Resilience in Communities (BRIC)
Age UK Lambeth	Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Buttle UK
Anna Freud Centre	Black Thrive Lambeth	Calderdale Council
Association for infant Mental Health Northern Ireland	BookTrust	Cake Club
Aughton Early Years Centre	Born in Bradford	CAP UK (Child Assault Prevention)
Autism Voice	Bournemouth Christchurch & Poole Council	Carbon Theatre and Cultural Projects Ltd
Autistica	Bradford District Care Foundation Trust	Catch Up
Bala Damu Foundation	Bradford Doulas	Cattanach
Barnardo's	Bradford Innovation Hub	Centre for Early Child Development (CECD), Blackpool
Barnardo's IOW Family Centres	Bradford Institute for Health Research	Centre for Evidence and Implementation
Barnardo's NI	Bradford Metropolitan District Council	Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
Baytree Centre	Bradford Trident	Central & North West London NHS Trust
BBC Children in Need	Brathay	Cheshire East Council
BD4 Community Trust	Breastfeeding Network	Chickenshed
Beechmount Sure Start	Brent Council	ChildsSide CIC
Bernard van Leer Foundation	Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	Children's Links
Better Start Bradford	Brighter Futures for Children	Child Poverty Action Group
BHT Early Education & Training		Church of England
Bizzy Bees Childminder		Church of God Seventh Day
Blackpool Better Start		

Close-Knit	Devon County Council	Flying Start Luton
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership	Dollywood Foundation UK	Foundation Years Trust
Community360	Doncaster Council	Framework Housing Association
Copef Training Skills	Family Hubs	FRESH CAMHS Alder Hey
Coram, London	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council	Fylde Coast CCGs
Coram Family and Childcare, Nottingham	Doorstep Library	GEM Training and Advisory Service
Cornwall Council	Dorset Council	Greater London Authority
Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change	Dorset Social Care	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Croydon Council	Dream Big Kidz Ltd	Government of Jersey
Cumbria County Council	Ealing Council	Groundwork Yorkshire
CVAA	Early Intervention Foundation	Grass Roots Day Nursery
Dad Matters Blackpool	Early Nourishment	Green Park Primary
Daniel's Den	Early Years Alliance	Green Synergy
Dartington Service Design LAB	East Riding of Yorkshire Council	Guy's & St. Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust
Department for Education	East Sussex County Council	Halifax Opportunities Trust
Department of Economics and Social Research Institute, UCL	Education Authority NI	Hampshire County Council
Department of Education NI	Education Development Trust	Harry's Hydrocephalus Awareness Trust
Department of Health NI	Education Policy Institute	Health & Social Care Board
Department of Health and Social Care	Equalinks	Healthworks
Department of Health Sciences, University of York	Evelina London	Healthy Living Platform
Department of Work & Pensions	Family Action	Healthy London Partnership
	Family Nurse Partnership National Unit	HENRY
	Federation of Houghton Community Nursery School and Mill Hill Nursery School	Herefordshire Council
		Hitchin House Day Nursery

Hitherfield Primary School and Children's Centre	Leeds City Council	London Borough of Lambeth
Home-Start UK	Leeds Trinity University	London Borough of Lewisham
Hope for African Development Organisations	Leicester City Council	London Borough of Merton
Hope for Children & their Families	Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland CCGs	London Borough of Redbridge
HSC Public Health Agency	Literacy Volunteers	London Borough of Southwark
Hull College	Little Hearts Nursery	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Ignite Futures Limited	Lily & Company Ltd	London Councils
Impact on Urban Health	Little Heroes ASD Support Group	Manchester Metropolitan University
Institute of Employment Studies	Liverpool Hope University	Manor Gardens Welfare Trust
Institute of Health Visiting	Locala Community Partnerships	Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, London
Jersey Child Care Trust	Local Government Association	Mellow Parenting
Johnson & Johnson	London Borough of Barking & Dagenham	Mental Health Champion Northern Ireland
Karmand Community Centre	London Borough of Bexley	Mid & South Essex Health & Care Partnership
Kings College Hospital	London Borough of Camden	Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Kindred <sup>2</sup>	London Borough of Croydon	Money and Pensions Service
Kingswood Nursery School	London Borough of Hackney	My Family Organisation
Koala NW	London Borough of Harrow	NatCen Social Research
KPMG Foundation	London Borough of Havering	National Children's Bureau
Lambeth CAMHS	London Borough of Hillingdon	
Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP)	London Borough of Islington	
Lancashire County Council		
Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust		

National Institute of Economic and Social Research	NSPCC Scotland	Royal College of Paediatrics & Child Health
National Literacy Trust	Nunthorpe Nurseries Group Ltd	RSM UK
Nesta	OECD	Save the Children UK
Newham Public Health	Office of the Children's Commissioner	Scottish Government
NHS Cheshire and Wirral Partnership	Office of Health Improvement and Disparities	SEDS Connective
NHS England	Oxford Hub	Sefton MBC
NHS South West London CCG	Ofsted	Select
North East London Foundation Trust	OXPIP	Sheffield City Council
North Halifax Partnership	Pacey	Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS
North Lincolnshire Council	Parent Infant Foundation	Shine
North West Neonatal Operational Delivery Network	Parents 1st UK	Small Steps Big Changes, Nottingham
Northumberland County Council	Pears Foundation	Social Business Trust
Nottingham City Council	Penlee Family Project C.I.C.	Solent NHS Trust
Nottingham City Libraries	Place Matters	Somerset CCG
Nottingham CityCare Partnership	Playskill	Somerset County Council
Nottinghamshire Community Foundation	Poverty Solution Foundation	Southampton City Council
Nottingham & Nottinghamshire CCG	Public Health Agency NI	Southern Health & Social Care Trust
Nottingham Trent University	Public Health Wales	South Tyneside CCG & Local Authority
Nottingham University Hospitals	Reach Children's Hub	Southend Borough Council
NSPCC	Refuge	Southend CCG
	Rhondda Cynon Taff Council	Southend Association of Voluntary Services
	Royal Borough of Greenwich	South Devon Steiner School
	Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea	

South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust	The National Deaf Children's Society	University of Huddersfield
South Warwickshire NHS Trust	The National Lottery Community Fund	University of Leeds
Spark (Burntwood) CIO	The Royal Foundation	University of Oxford
St John's Foundation	The Scouts Association	University of Sheffield
St Michael's Fellowship	The Sylvia Adams Charitable Trust	University of Southampton
St Richards Preschool	The Stockwell Partnership Limited	University of Sussex
St Thomas' hospital	The Sutton Trust	University of York
Starting Point Community Learning Partnership	The Tiny Lives Trust	Uttlesford Buffy Bus Association Buffy Playbus
Steps to work	The Toy Library	Virgincare
Stockport Council	Thrive at Five	Wakefield Portage Service
Stockport NHS Foundation Trust	Together Southwark	Warrington Borough Council
Stonegate Training	Total Education	Western Health & Social Care Trust
Support me	Triple P UK	West Midlands Neonatal Operational Delivery Network
Sure Start	Triskele Solutions	West Sussex Community foundation Trust
Talent Solutions	True and Fair Party	Westminster City Council
The Baby Bank	UBS Optimus Foundation	Wheely Tots
The Colebridge Trust Ltd	UKHSA	Whittington Health Trust
The Diocese of Southwark	University College London, Institute of Education	Wiltshire Council
The Doula Association	University of Birmingham	Women's Health & Family Services
The Electric Sunshine Project CIC	University of Bradford	YMCA
The For Baby's Sake Trust	University of Central Lancashire	
The Lullaby Trust	University of Essex	
The Mercer's Company	University of Haifa	

## **A Better Start**

A Better Start is a ten-year programme set up by The National Lottery Community Fund. Five 'A Better Start' partnerships based in Blackpool, Bradford, Lambeth, Nottingham and Southend are supporting families to give their babies and very young children the best possible start in life.

For more information visit [tnlcommunityfund.org.uk](https://tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)

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