

# Improving Futures

New projects to transform the lives of children



## Improving Futures

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We have identified three values that underpin our work: making best use of Lottery money, using knowledge and evidence and being supportive and helpful.

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# Introduction



“Improving Futures is all about improving the lives and future opportunities of children experiencing difficult circumstances. Our aspiration stretches further than that though: we want to help transform the way services for families living with multiple and complex needs are delivered. We’re doing this through supporting new partnerships between Voluntary and Community Sector and public providers and by delivering pioneering models of child and family support. The year one programme evaluation report highlights some very promising early progress in identifying who these families are, what their specific circumstances are and how the projects we’ve funded are meeting their needs”.

**Peter Ainsworth**  
Chair

The Big Lottery Fund is providing up to £26 million to transform outcomes for children living in families with multiple and complex needs across the UK. This brochure provides details of all 26 projects, each of which has been awarded up to £900,000 to deliver their project over 3–5 years.

Improving Futures was launched in March 2011. Through the programme, the Big Lottery Fund is making a significant contribution to the development of better services for families with multiple and complex needs. The 26 local partnerships, lead by voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations from across the UK, are delivering the following outcomes:

- Improved outcomes for children in families with multiple and complex needs.
- New approaches to local delivery, demonstrating replicable models which lead to more effective, tailored and joined up support for families with multiple and complex needs.
- Improved learning and sharing of best practice between public services and VCS organisations.

Projects are building upon existing best practice, for example many are using a key worker to enable trusted and coherent interactions with families. There is a particular emphasis on demonstrating effective early intervention for families on the ‘cusp’ of acute need. Improving Futures is trialling a range of new approaches to early intervention and the VCS-led partnerships are working closely with local public services, aiming to maximise value from sharing cross-sector expertise and capacity. Several are evolving the next generation of integrated services, building on learning from Sure Start and other family interventions. Many are implementing proven approaches from abroad that have not yet been widely adopted in the UK, such as the Community Group Programme, Roots of Empathy and Incredible Years. Others are piloting new approaches to outreach, personal budgets, data-sharing, asset-based community development, or using mentors and peer support.

The Big Lottery Fund commissioned Ecorys to undertake an independent evaluation of the Improving Futures programme to assess the impact our investment has on children’s lives and identify models of best practice to inform the future work of voluntary and public sector practitioners. The first year evaluation report, published on 1 November 2013, highlights the early progress being made in turning around the lives of families with complex needs where the eldest child is aged 5–10. These include signs that families who may not have previously approached statutory services for support are joining the programme voluntarily, increased school attendance, reported improvements in behaviour and targeted support being offered to family members with specific needs.

For further information please visit [www.improvingfutures.org](http://www.improvingfutures.org)

# Evaluating and sharing learning from Improving Futures

Big Lottery Fund has commissioned a partnership led by Ecorys with the University of Nottingham, Parenting UK and IPSOS Mori to undertake an independent evaluation of the Improving Futures programme over five years from 2011 to 2016. The partners bring complementary expertise from across research, academia and the voluntary sector. Together they will ensure that the evaluation is robust and maximise its relevance for policymakers and practitioners. The evaluation aims to assess the outcomes, impact and cost-effectiveness of each of the 26 projects.

## Methodology

The evaluation will include qualitative and quantitative research tasks, as follows.

- ▶ Literature review and typologies – a review and critique of previous research and evaluation reports, to consider the range and effectiveness of ‘whole family’ approaches, and select a range of suitable outcomes measures for this programme that will be measurable, robust and comparable.
- ▶ Measuring outcomes and impact for children and families – each project will have its own evaluation plan. Findings will be reported at least once a year.
- ▶ Case studies – six longitudinal case studies and 14 snapshot case studies will be completed, involving 200-250 in-depth qualitative interviews with children, families and project staff.
- ▶ Participatory Action Research – an evaluation toolkit and training for the projects will be available to help them involve families themselves in the evaluation and reflect their perspectives.
- ▶ A longitudinal quantitative survey of 650 families – tracked over time to measure outcomes and distance travelled.
- ▶ Cost-benefit analysis – of the projects and programme as a whole.
- ▶ e-surveys surveys of 520 local stakeholders (about 20 for each project) – to help measure and attribute local impacts.

## Sharing learning

Alongside the research activities a number of dissemination activities will share learning from the programme:

- learning events and workshops for projects
- policy briefings, seminars and webinars
- publications, reports, think pieces
- wider dissemination, press and publicity.

There will be a strong emphasis on ‘formative’ evaluation. Findings will be shared on a continuous basis and for the programme as a whole at the end of each year. This will ensure that the evaluation is beneficial and supports local delivery, during the lifetime of the programme.

A publicly available evaluation website was launched in April 2012. The evaluation website will be the focal point for sharing learning for internal and external stakeholders, with regular news updates and good practice. Each project will have an evaluation webpage to showcase their work, and will be supported to update this with a range of evaluation evidence as the programme develops.

You can visit the website at:

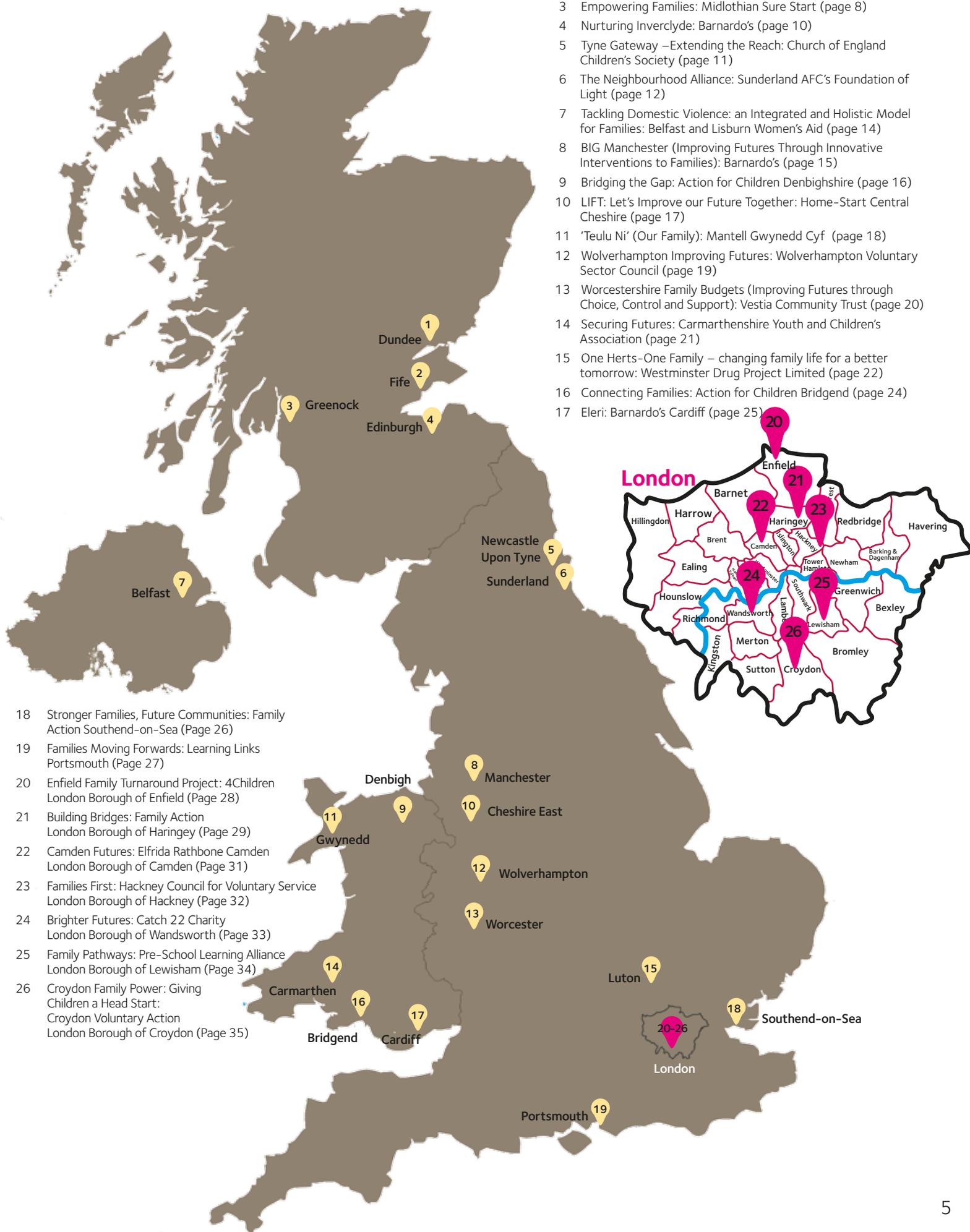
**[www.improvingfutures.org](http://www.improvingfutures.org)**

For more information about the evaluation, contact: James Ronicle, Ecorys ([james.ronicle@uk.ecorys.com](mailto:james.ronicle@uk.ecorys.com))

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# Dundee Early Intervention Team

**Location:**

Dundee, Scotland

**Length of project:**

3 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

200

**Partners:**

Aberlour Child Care Trust (Lead),  
Action for Children, Barnardo's  
Scotland, CHILDREN 1<sup>st</sup> in  
partnership with Dundee City  
Council and NHS Tayside

These four major children's charities in Scotland will be working together for the first time, pooling their considerable expertise and resources. Utilising evidence-based approaches, the Team will work with families to find effective and sustainable solutions to social, health, relationship or parenting difficulties, both at and before the point of crisis.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ The Team's Early Intervention family workers will act as key workers, taking an assertive and persistent approach to outreach.
- ▶ Informed by international evidence, they will adopt a 'social pedagogy' approach. This combines education and care, emphasising that bringing up children is the shared responsibility of parents and society. The project characterises their expectations of family workers as taking 'a head, hearts and hands' approach to living out social pedagogy in practice, and will provide training for family workers around this.
- ▶ Referrals to the Team will be made by a wide range of services, with particularly strong and seamless collaboration with the Health Visiting Service.
- ▶ The Team around the Child and Family approach is adopted to deliver a tailored programme of interventions, that are supportive and based on strength while at times challenging to families.
- ▶ The service will provide support 7am to 10pm Monday to Friday and at weekends where necessary, as these are times when families often experience stresses. In addition 24/7 telephone support will be provided.
- ▶ This project will aim to provide a model suitable for replication across all 32 Scottish local authority areas, which will deliver on the principles of the Scottish Government's 'Getting it right for every child framework'. Central to this model will be a strong evidence base and demonstrating the tangible benefits for children and families that can be achieved through greater collaboration.

## Gateway – Levenmouth Partnership Family Support

The Gateway project will address an identified gap in services by engaging with families whose circumstances are being adversely affected by issues such as unemployment, poverty, substance misuse, or domestic violence, but who are not yet perceived as eligible for core statutory provision. By offering a range of individually tailored services, the project will create opportunities for families to tackle their difficulties, building upon their resilience and developing personal and inter-personal skills. It is intended that these early interventions will prevent family breakdown, severe trauma, and a need for intervention by statutory services.

### Key features of the project:

- ▶ The main aims of the project are to support families cope with key significant events, increasing parenting capacity and access to information.
- ▶ The project will work with primary schools to identify and support children and families in need. During six-month pilot the partnership group will try out various approaches to engaging with families with a view to firming up protocols and processes before rolling out to 14 other primary schools.
- ▶ The Family Mentor will act as a mentor/coach to the family, supporting family members themselves to identify their needs and consider ways in which to address them. Throughout the process, the Family Mentor will adopt a child-centred approach, taking careful account of the assets offered by the wider family, and by the community.
- ▶ Through a wide range of activities, families will be encouraged to view learning as a means of developing core skills, personal skills, improving employability, building family relationships, and all the time having fun together.
- ▶ At every stage of the project, the Project Team will identify individuals with the potential to become volunteers, making a difference in their community, and giving something back. Volunteers may provide support to families, as buddies and advocates, or 'shadow tutors'.
- ▶ The service will be delivered from local primary schools, Adam Smith College, the offices of Fife Gingerbread as well as in the homes of beneficiary families.

### Location:

Fife, Scotland

### Length of project:

3.5 years

### Number of families supported by the project:

500

### Partners:

Fife Gingerbread (Lead),  
Barnardo's, the Adam Smith  
College Volunteering Fife,  
Fife Council

# Empowering Families

**Location:**

Midlothian, Scotland

**Length of project:**

5 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

300

**Partners:**

Midlothian Sure Start (Lead), Bright Sparks, Children 1st, Home Link Family Support, Mid and East Lothian Drugs, Midlothian Community Health Partnership/Lothian Health, Midlothian Council, Midlothian Parent Carers Support Group, Midlothian Women's Aid, Play Therapy Base, The Action Group, Volunteer Centre Midlothian

Midlothian Sure Start's Empowering Families project will take an asset-based approach, enabling families with multiple risk factors to take control of their situation and make positive changes. The programme will focus on families that have not yet been referred for child protection, and will particularly look to reach out to disabled children and those whose families are affected by unemployment and substance misuse.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ Asset-based approach builds on Midlothian's Parenting and Family Support Strategy, ensuring parents and carers are at the heart of decision-making and solutions for their families.
- ▶ Using Family Group Conferencing, families will be supported to discuss issues affecting their children's development and develop a plan for their future, identifying their needs and possible solutions.
- ▶ Incredible Years parenting programmes will strengthen parents' skills, such as positive discipline, confidence, and involvement in school activities.
- ▶ Support workers, who will help families engage with statutory agencies, will have therapeutic backgrounds and also purchase additional therapeutic support where this could strengthen families.
- ▶ Peer support will be encouraged from families who have been through the project or who are in a stronger position being supported to help new entrants.
- ▶ The work will be based out of local Sure Start centres, but also involve 1-2-1 work with families in their homes. Community transport will also be offered to facilitate families' participation, in this rural context.



**Location:**

Inverclyde, Scotland

**Length of project:**

3 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

400

**Partners:**

Barnardo's, Inverclyde Council

The project will create a family resource centre in Inverclyde, providing a range of interventions and supports to prevent or address family problems by strengthening parent-child relationships and providing whatever parents need to better nurture their children. It will be the platform to implement statutory and voluntary agencies working together to become more preventative, responsive, flexible, holistic and family focused.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ Informed by a community development perspective – and wrapped in principles of being open, honest, challenging and empowering – strong relationships with families will deliver effective holistic child-centred support.
- ▶ The project will demonstrate how government policy, research and practice guidance (GIRFEC, Early Years Framework, Hidden Harm Next Steps, Join the Dots) can be applied in an effective and replicable model.
- ▶ The project will enhance families' protective aspects of their behaviour and environment and reduce levels of harmful neglect, aggression and violence.
- ▶ The project location, approach and support available will create a non-stigmatising environment. This in turn will help to identify and engage with those families affected by domestic abuse, mental ill-health, addiction, trauma, abuse and neglect, creating an effective platform for a programme of intense work.
- ▶ The project will offer a range of intensive supports including parenting support, emotional and practical support, advocacy and advice, outreach, learning and employment support and group work.
- ▶ These supports will include access to evidence-based programmes, for example, Triple P, Incredible Years.
- ▶ Interventions will focus on nurture, in partnership with colleagues from statutory and voluntary organisations, including breastfeeding initiatives, parenting groups, outreach support to establish and maintain routines, dads groups, financial maximisation, art therapy, homework clubs, good food groups.

## Tyne Gateway – Extending the Reach

This project will expand the award-winning Tyne Gateway initiative that has been tackling child poverty across North and South Tyneside since 2009. With Improving Futures funding, the project will look to engage additional families and focus on raising children’s behavioural and educational abilities.

### Key features of the project:

- ▶ Family Entrepreneurs will be recruited from the local community, and lead on non-judgemental outreach to other local families. This ‘barefoot professional’ model will help families influence and access services they need, instead of being simply signposted to services.
- ▶ The FEs will help reach out to families whose needs may be ‘off radar’ of existing services. These families will be able to self-refer, as well as being engaged through traditional routes such as local primary schools.
- ▶ Activities being undertaken by families will be based on the continuous needs assessment by the FEs for both the child and their family.
- ▶ The FEs will work closely with the voluntary sector locally to map existing services and anticipate future needs. They might also employ their entrepreneurial skills to help develop new services in the area.
- ▶ Training of the FEs will also aim to create pathways into paid employment, where those recruited may not currently be in work.

### Location:

North and South Tyneside, England

### Length of project:

3 years

### Number of families supported by the project:

270

### Partners:

Church of England Children’s Society, Tyne Gateway Trust, North Tyneside Council, South Tyneside MBC. Additional delivery partners: Pathways 4 All, Universal Youth and Connexions Service, Escape Intervention Services, Family Lives, Impact Family Services, Children North East, Job Centre Plus, Barnardo’s, YMCA North Tyneside, Taking Part Workshops CIC, Helix Arts

**Location:**

Sunderland, England

**Length of project:**

4 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

160

**Partners:**

Foundation of Light (Lead), Sunderland City Council, Local Primary Schools, Gentoo Group (Housing), Sunderland North Community Business Centre, Sunderland Voluntary and Community Centre Network

Based out of Sunderland Association Football Club's stadium, the Foundation of Light has a track record of using 'the power of football' to engage local children and families in positive learning activities. Through this new Neighbourhood Alliance Project, their partnership will reach out to disadvantaged neighbourhoods and collaborate with families to re-design services. Innovative use of technology will unlock potential for better information sharing and user experiences.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ A neighbourhood mapping process will engage families in identifying community and personal needs. Each family will develop a 'pen portrait' and these will be layered to create a better understanding of local needs and priorities.
- ▶ The family will be asked to identify a 'neighbourhood friend' who will receive training and supervision to become a supportive advocate for the family. The neighbourhood friend will come alongside the family's Lead Partner, to support them in achieving goals set out in an agreed action plan. The neighbourhood friend will also be the point of contact for out of hour's queries and the resolution of minor issues.
- ▶ Specific tools will be utilised such as a 'neighbourhood pathway' – which shows relationships between the family, Lead Partner, their neighbourhood friend – and a new 'family star' – will be used as a monitoring tool to engage families that are ready to pursue a pathway out of poverty, helping track their issues and progress.
- ▶ An innovative secure 'Information Space' is being developed by Sunderland Council and is supported by new user-permissioned data-sharing protocols. These new systems will be piloted through this project, with the aim of enabling families to be in control of the data they share with agencies, therefore increasing information-sharing between all partners and families themselves. This will in turn improve coordinated delivery of services and communication between all parties.
- ▶ A significant and strategic emphasis on 'unblocking' barriers, including better tracking and coordination of services at the most local level through Neighbourhood Alliance Community Meetings.
- ▶ Bespoke interventions, spot purchasing and commissioning will be used on a case-by-case basis. A new resource allocation process will be established to support this, putting the needs of the family first and enabling them to choose which agency/provider interacts with them.



# Tackling Domestic Violence: an Integrated and Holistic Model for Families

**Location:**

Belfast, Northern Ireland

**Length of project:**

3 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

1,060

**Partners:**

Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid (Lead), Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

This project tackling domestic violence is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland. It will promote an innovative inter-agency approach, enabling earlier intervention and prevention. A new women's aid team will work alongside social workers in seven gateway teams, the single point of contact and entry for all new family and childcare referrals to social services in and beyond Belfast. The team will enable a co-ordinated early intervention response across all levels of risk, in particular focussing on children and mothers whose needs have been assessed as low risk by social services and requiring no further statutory intervention. The team will include a health visitor who will assist in providing a pathway to holistic and specialised services for the family.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ For the first time, women's aid workers will be co-located with Health and Social Care Trust professionals at a range of locations, covering a significant urban and rural population and geographical area.
- ▶ Children and mothers will have immediate access to tailored support and safety services at the point of referral and assessment to mitigate the impact of domestic violence.
- ▶ Through one-to-one support, counselling and specialised domestic violence groupwork programmes, mothers will build their capacity to safeguard their children by understanding of the dynamics of the abuse and the effects on their children. This intervention increases women's confidence, self-esteem and resilience, enabling them to make good decisions for themselves and their children.
- ▶ In parallel, specialist services will meet children's needs and help them feel safe and supported.
- ▶ The need for multiple agency contact and support with families will be reduced.
- ▶ In the long term, the project will explore developing a sustainable comprehensive multi-agency team as an integrated model of practice across all of the Trust areas.

# BIG Manchester

## (Improving Futures Through Innovative Interventions to Families)

BIG Manchester represents a commitment from a range of partners within the city to improve outcomes and life chances for children, young people and families by working together to manage a co-ordinated approach to effectively meet need, mitigate risk and build strength and resilience. The BIG Manchester initiative is targeted towards families with children aged 5-10 in north Manchester who are affected by complex issues including parental substance misuse, parental mental ill health and domestic abuse. These criteria have been agreed by all partners and by the Local Authority as being relevant and responsive to local need and as being aligned to local priorities to improve the futures of children, families and communities within the city.

### Key features of the project:

- ▶ Key workers will have budget holding responsibility, enabling packages of support to be tailored as closely as possible for families.
- ▶ Interventions will be identified in partnership with families and using a Family Wellbeing Assessment Tool. Support will include advice and information, through to treatment, counselling, family group conferencing and therapy. Particular evidence-based interventions will include: the Strengthening Families Programme, Protective Parenting, and the Health Household Programme.
- ▶ Training packages across the partnership will encompass a range of evidence-based interventions. This will include an assessment tool and accessible resources to empower families.
- ▶ Inclusion of families at every level from design of the model, to strategic governance to developing a follow-on peer support network.
- ▶ Parent and carer peer-support and mentoring network to continue post intervention.

### Location:

Manchester, England

### Length of project:

3 years

### Number of families supported by the project:

180

### Partners:

Barnardo's (Lead), Lifeline-Eclipse, Manchester Mind, Women's Aid, Music Stuff, Community Service Volunteers, Young Enterprise, Wai Yin, Manchester Settlement, Family Action, Body Positive North West, Wythenshawe Community Radio, Water Adventure Centre, Manchester Alliance for Community Care

**Location:**

Denbighshire, Wales

**Length of project:**

3 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

240

**Partners:**

Action for Children (Lead),  
Citizen Advice Bureau, Rhyl  
Football Club in the Community,  
Rhyl Woman's Aid, North Wales  
Woman's Centre, Betsi  
Cadwalader University Trust,  
Homestart, Denbighshire  
parenting service and Flying  
Start. Denbighshire County  
Council (Denbighshire School  
Improvement and Inclusion  
Service)

Bridging the Gap aims to improve educational achievement, emotional wellbeing and family relationships through intensive early intervention to vulnerable families in the catchment area of six primary schools to reduce entrenchment of problems by the time children reach secondary school. The project will deliver one to one support and group work to promote emotional resilience, develop skills and empower families to manage children's behaviours. A co-ordinated package of parenting support from a range of partners will be delivered in the home, community and school.

**Key features of the project:**

- ▶ A menu of services will develop confidence and raise self esteem to encourage positive interactions with others, including schools. Interventions will use recognised models such as Brief Solution Focussed Therapy, motivational interviewing, behavioural management and stress management techniques. Support staff will work flexibly including at weekends and evenings providing practical assistance to families as they implement strategies for change.
- ▶ School attendance will be improved by enabling hard to engage families to develop positive relationships with teachers and implement routines that encourage school attendance. School and project staff will work together to develop shared understanding of the challenges faced and create supportive strategies to address them. A bank of skilled volunteers will work over an extended period with children and their families to sustain these strategies.
- ▶ Group work programmes will be provided in partnership to supplement one to one provision or for families where direct support is not required. The group work will improve skills in parenting, money management and self esteem building, and also increase home and school links by encouraging parents onto the premises for purposes other than to discuss education issues.
- ▶ Replication will be implemented through regular review of the project through an existing multi agency partnership (MAP) which the new partners will join.
- ▶ This initiative is being introduced alongside a Families First programme. The exit strategy of this shorter term project is to demonstrate its impact and link to that funding stream.

# LIFT (Let's Improve our Future Together)

The LIFT project will utilise a community development approach to supporting families, aiming to lever and increase social capital in four contrasting localities across Cheshire. As the voluntary, community and faith sector in Cheshire has been experiencing an increase in families turning to them for support, there will be an ambition to reach families who are not currently engaging with or known to local statutory partners.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ The LIFT partnership will engage families in two urban and two rural localities across Cheshire.
- ▶ A 'family pathways' approach will be adopted, with key workers supporting families to identify desired outcomes for children. They will reach collective agreement about which services to 'purchase' using a personalised family budget.
- ▶ Where possible, services will be 'purchased' from local voluntary, community and faith organisations. Spot purchasing will also be possible where specific needs cannot be met from existing services, and this will be closely tracked to build evidence of local need and inform longer-term development of new services.
- ▶ An innovative element of the programme sees families enhancing their skills and employment prospects by getting involved in the development of new social enterprises. It is envisaged that these enterprises will generate some income, for example through the sale of items grown or made and new skills that adults have developed, to put back into the project.
- ▶ Taking a 'whole systems' approach, the partnership involves a wide range of voluntary and public sector agencies, and strategic alignment will be achieved through representation on local Children's Trusts.
- ▶ The two Children's Trusts will monitor the progress of the LIFT project, cascade learning and facilitate the rollout of the model, if successful.

## Location:

Cheshire West and Chester, and Cheshire East, England

## Length of project:

3 years

## Number of families supported by the project:

181

## Partners:

Home-Start Central Cheshire (Lead); Cheshire East Borough Council; Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council; Chester Lodgings and Support Providers; Visyon; Friends for Leisure; Community Action Vale Royal; Youth Federation; Children's Trusts (East and West); Health representatives from East and West; Cheshire JETs Foundation; Dial House, Chester; Macclesfield Disability Information Bureau; Catch 22; Cheshire Community Action; Citizens Advice Bureaux (Cheshire East, North East and West); Crossroads Care, CE, Manchester and Tameside; the Welcome, Knutsford; the Children's Society; Learning Together Cheshire and Warrington; Home-Start East Cheshire; Home-Start West Cheshire; Pathways Counselling Service; Deafness Support Network; Proof Matters; Barnardos; Cheshire Centre for Independent Living; Action for Children; LIVE!; Adoption Matters NW; Vale Royal Women's Aid; Blacon Community Trust; the Cheshire Children, Young People and Families' Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector HUB Schools and Families Commissioning Team)

## 'Teulu Ni' (Our Family)

**Location:**

Gwynedd, Wales

**Length of project:**

3 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

120

**Partners:**

Mantell Gwynedd Cyf (Lead), Barnardo's, Cartref Bontnewydd Trust, SNAP, Groundworks, Gwynedd County Council

The 'Our Family' project will target and support families with profound and complex problems living mainly in rural areas who need proactive, integrated and appropriate intervention in order to avoid those problems becoming more profound and complex.

Under the Families First initiative, Gwynedd will already be providing preventative support to families with additional (but not profound and complex) needs. Families who experience profound and complex problems as a result of substance misuse, domestic violence and mental health problems will receive support through the Integrated Family Support Service.

This project will work to benefit families who fall between these two categories and whom, without this support, would be most likely to be referred to specialist services without early intervention. The project will also work with families who have received support through the Integrated Family Support Services to ensure they do not revert to a situation where they will need intensive support again. Filling this gap in provision for families the project adds significant value to the family support provision.

### Key features of the project:

- ▶ The project will integrate other schemes which are aimed at improving parenting skills, particular emphasis is placed on working with the fathers and improving their relationships with the children.
- ▶ The partners offer a variety of services including advice and counselling on family rights in court, family conferencing, supporting families to work with schools around special educational needs and behavioural issues and one of the partner organisations will work to provide environmental and outdoor opportunities.
- ▶ 'Clywed' (Listen) is an important element of the project and works to provide feedback from the children's perspective on the services provided.
- ▶ Operating in a rural location close to Snowdonia National Park the project will exploit natural resources order to provide environment related experiences which will in turn contribute to improving the health of families and developing the skills of parents and children through gardening, growing vegetables, fishing, walking and climbing.
- ▶ A Family Support Budget will be used to plan the support required by the family including the services provided by the partners. The project will also provide spot purchasing where necessary for services not provided by the partners.

# Wolverhampton Improving Futures

The Wolverhampton Improving Futures project contributes to a city-wide continuum of support for children aged 0-18. In consultation with families, this project moves away from an 'intervention' ethos, to focus on helping parents become more effective in their roles. The project is successfully piloting the approach in three areas of the city. In addition, two priority groups for the project have been identified by the local Safeguarding Board as children growing up in families where the adults have learning disabilities, and families affected by domestic violence. These priority groups are supported on a city-wide basis.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ National charity Chance UK has successfully rolled out its child mentoring programme in Wolverhampton. The mentoring programme builds children's self-esteem and personal strengths. Volunteer mentors are recruited, receive intensive training and are "matched" to Children, who they then work with for one year. During that time they receive ongoing support from project staff who are employed by partner organisations.
- ▶ Referrals are received from a range of sources including local primary schools and neighbourhood support teams. Children are assessed using the Goodman's Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire to consider suitability for the mentoring programme and progress is measured.
- ▶ Regular 'graduation ceremonies' for all children finishing the programme are conducted.
- ▶ In parallel, a project worker, funded through "Troubled Families" (families in focus locally) will work alongside families, creating a bespoke plan, and purchasing support to help them address issues such as employment, debt, housing and domestic violence.
- ▶ The City Council and its Multi-Agency Support Teams provide significant in-kind strategic and practical support for the project.

## Location:

Wolverhampton, England

## Length of project:

4 years

## Number of families supported by the project:

200

## Partners:

Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (Lead), Chance UK, Wolverhampton City Council, The Haven, Platform 51, Hope Community Project, Youth Organisations Wolverhampton, Heantun Housing Association. A number of aligned partners will also deliver work as part of the project

# Worcestershire Family Budgets (Improving Futures through Choice, Control and Support)

**Location:**

Worcestershire, England

**Length of project:**

3 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

100

**Partners:**

Vestia Community Trust (Lead), Worcestershire Family Intervention Project, EPIC Community Interest Company, Worcester Community Trust Onside Advocacy, Worcestershire County Council

This intensive project will build upon provision from the Family Intervention Project and take the model a step further by developing an innovative strength based approach that empowers families to make choices on the type of support they need and who provides it by giving them a Family Budget. The project will focus on families whose needs are too complex for universal services but not sufficiently high to meet the threshold for statutory intervention.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ The project provides a link between the universal preventative Early Help work which is being conducted by the local authority and statutory services.
- ▶ Each family, through the family worker, will have access to a personal budget of circa £2,000. The family plan will outline the strengths families can build on, issues the family needs help with and the goals they wish to achieve. The family and family worker will then work together to invest the family budget in services and activities that will help families achieve their goals, tackle issues and improve family outcomes.
- ▶ Family progress will be monitored through the family monitoring form, family star and Independent customer feedback.
- ▶ Families will be invited to join the project through locally managed pathways and focus on children who are displaying behavioural difficulties, being considered for school action. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) will be one of the principal tools for identification of families.
- ▶ The project will be based in two urban (Worcester and Redditch) and one rural (Persnore) community, and will explore the additional difficulties experienced by these families as a result of the inability to find local services or access more centralised services.

# Securing Futures

This integrated and holistic project will target the needs of families where parents have learning disabilities or are experiencing low to moderate mental health problems. The project draws on research, including by Learning Disability Wales, and has been designed to complement Welsh Government's child poverty strategy and other initiatives aimed at supporting people experiencing mental health and/or learning difficulties.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ Children will be provided with a range of support to address emotional health, cognitive and social skills, and learning support needs. These will be addressed through a holistic range of interventions including mentoring, play, therapy, and in- and extra-school support.
- ▶ A continuing support service will help children successfully make the transition from primary to secondary education via the use of volunteer mentors.
- ▶ Work with other family members to address the underlying factors that inhibit child and family development, including parenting, strengthening family ties and improving communication within the family.
- ▶ Support packages for families will be brokered by their key worker. These will include access to a range of psychological and cognitive therapies, as well as support around employment, skills development, debt, financial management, poor housing, domestic violence and substance misuse.
- ▶ Participants will be invited to sit on the project steering group and their feedback will also be sought in a range of ways to inform ongoing project delivery. This is important to address particular barriers that may be experienced by these target families, such as communication needs, that may for example require assistive technology, advocacy, signing or translation to represent the interests of participants.
- ▶ An interactive 'virtual support gateway' and toolkit will help facilitate replication of the project in other areas in the future.

**Location:** Carmarthenshire, Wales

**Length of project:**

4 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**  
260

**Partners:** Carmarthenshire Youth and Children's Association (Lead), Carmarthenshire County Council, Families First, Hywel Dda Local Health Board, Chamber for Business and Social Action, Coleg Sir Gar

# One Herts – One Family – changing family life for a better tomorrow

**Location:**

Hertfordshire, England

**Length of project:**

3 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

240

**Partners:**

Westminster Drug Project Limited (Lead), Safer Places

This project will focus on providing earlier intervention for children, below statutory thresholds – combining practical and therapeutic support to build family strengths. The locus of the project will be in three areas: Broxbourne, Stevenage and Watford.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ A recent consultation with local families identified the need for more practical support. Benefits include building a sense of 'normality' for children living in difficult circumstances, for example creating leisure opportunities for those in temporary housing or refuges, and making it easier for parents to access services and support, for example by providing childcare and transportation.
- ▶ Family support workers will create care packages for families that include a significant focus on practical support. For example, skills development, practical help to access training and employment, housing and benefits support, advocacy, assistance with daily routines and attending appointments, grants for household items.
- ▶ Provision of therapeutic support will be enhanced. Individual, couples and family counselling will be available, while play therapy will be offered for children. Therapeutic play practitioners will help children to communicate their feelings and parents to better understand their children's experiences.
- ▶ Targeted resilience and behavioural support will also be provided for children experiencing particular issues.



**Location:**

Bridgend, Wales

**Length of project:**

3 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

150

**Partners:**

Action for Children (Lead),  
Bridgend Home-Start,  
Families First, Bridgend  
County Borough Council  
(Connecting Families Team)

This project will deliver targeted family support with children and parents to improve their lives and prevent family issues escalating to crisis point requiring statutory intervention. A flexible service with some delivery outside of normal office hours will provide a high threshold provision for 'low threshold families' who do not currently receive this intensity of provision.

This provision will be focused at helping coping with parents with mental health issues, coping with parents who abuse substances, self esteem, bereavement and loss and domestic abuse, and debt.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ The project will work with two categories of families. Firstly, it will support families with multiple and complex needs who are on the cusp of needing more intensive support, and will work to reduce this additional need. Secondly, those that have seen their needs reduce after receiving intensive support from the Council's Connecting Families Team (from tier 2 to tier 3).
- ▶ The project will use a range of bespoke early intervention programmes including: Brief Solution Focussed Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, Bereavement programme, Behavioural Management techniques.
- ▶ Weekly Family/Parent group meetings addressing issues such as self esteem, and provide education and work advice targeted non working households.
- ▶ Childcare workers will work with the children in an interactive way 1:1 and in groups, involving direct play, drama, arts and crafts and music.
- ▶ Referrals to the project will come from the Connecting Families Service, health visitors, midwives, social workers, GPs, schools and other services including self referral.
- ▶ Each family accepted by the project will be logged on Action for Children's electronic case management system (E-Aspire) which tracks both the quantitative and the qualitative progress. E-Aspire captures whether outcomes for children, young people and families have improved, stayed the same, or deteriorated. In addition, evidence based tools, such as the Goodman Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) will be used to collect evidence which complements the E-Aspire data.

The Eleri project will build on the strengths of existing services across Cardiff, while seeking to improve coherence and delivery for families with multiple problems. The governance arrangements for Eleri will ensure strategic and on-the-ground coherence with the new Integrated Family Support Services and Families First initiative in Cardiff. Implemented in parallel, these initiatives offer potential for transformative impact at a city-wide level as a result of greater multi-agency collaboration and improved provision.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ Four primary schools will lead on identifying pupils whose families are experiencing the 'revolving door' of referrals and uncoordinated services, and would benefit from a more holistic model of support.
- ▶ Through implementation of the Joint Assessment Families Framework, Eleri will place a stronger emphasis on multi-agency coordination and delivery, ensuring that families are not 'signposted into the abyss'.
- ▶ Learning from the LIFE programme in Swindon, Eleri will enable children to select their own lead professional who is a trusted adult. This is because the relationship between this individual and the family is seen as key to the likelihood of achieving successful outcomes.
- ▶ Interventions that will be available for children will include: the 'Bright Young Things' child development programme, residential school holiday breaks, 'Circle Time', a peer-support programme, advocacy and 1-2-1 play therapy.
- ▶ Parents will have access to advice and advocacy, parenting programmes Triple P/Nurturing, or more individual support. A drop-in centre will also provide opportunities for parents to get to know the project staff better.

## Location:

Cardiff, Wales

## Length of project:

3 years

## Number of families supported by the project:

500

## Partners:

Barnardo's (Lead), Action for Children, Cardiff local authority, primary schools

# Stronger Families, Future Communities

**Location:**

Southend-on-Sea, England

**Length of project:**

4 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

700

**Partners:**

Family Action (Lead), Family Matters Institute, Estuary Housing, Youth At Risk, Barons Court Primary School, Southend Citizens Advice Bureau, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Focusing on supporting families to achieve transformational change through a range of integrated services delivered mainly in the home, the project aims to improve family functioning, increase school attendance and attainment, and raise self esteem and confidence for all family members. The partnership will also enable effective income and debt management to reduce of the number of families living in poverty.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ Flexible, professional, and home based family support services that are tailored to each family's circumstances supporting them to effect positive changes in their own and children's lives.
- ▶ Customised support plans developed by a key worker including debt management, budgeting advice, benefit awareness, housing advice, advocacy, and behaviour management and boundary setting.
- ▶ Community engagement events will reduce isolation and build confidence. Using Family Action's participation pathway model, families will be supported to take an active role in their communities through volunteering, training and employment. A range of creative, fun and engaging activities will include drama and fashions shows, gardening and hobby clubs.
- ▶ Group work will be offered in community locations to support effective parenting, address domestic abuse, advice on healthy eating, exercise and personal development and provide child focused activities.
- ▶ Multi-agency learning and development opportunities will be created for the partner agencies staff and volunteers, who will be able to gain a qualification, knowledge and ability to deliver a 'truly' integrated service to children and families.

# Families Moving Forwards

Families Moving Forward has been developed to add value to and operate in line with other family support throughout Portsmouth, providing a service where a gap in provision has been identified. The project provides early intervention for families where the oldest child is aged between 5 and 10 years old. The project seeks to reduce escalation to a higher level of support and entry into statutory services.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ Adopting a one-stop-shop approach as a partnership, the project delivers support and advocacy via a dedicated Family Support worker who works with families to identify and prioritise their needs holistically over the year. The project offers support to families for up to a year, ensuring the best outcomes for the children are achieved using the team around the family method.
- ▶ The project works together in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureau, YOU Trust, Home-Start and Portsmouth City Council. Learning Links use their expertise in employment and training to support families back into work or further education.
- ▶ The project uses a budget holding lead professional model, supporting families to purchase services, resources and activities from their family budget. This ensures that sustainable changes are made and the family develop the skills and strengths needed at times of crisis.
- ▶ The project has been part of a multi-agency team that has been carrying out a systems thinking review of family support services in the city of Portsmouth. The systems thinking will influence decision making at strategic level where there is clear evidence from the review that changes will lead to better outcomes for children in the city.
- ▶ Families Moving Forward have developed a volunteering base to ensure families have a soft landing at the end of their time with the project. This supports employability within the local area and current families can become volunteers once their support from the programme has ended.
- ▶ The project has developed a parent forum and dedicates time to ensuring children's views are collated. Families being part of the design and delivery of service ensures the project is meeting the needs of the community it is there to support.

## Location:

Portsmouth, England

## Length of project:

4 years

## Number of families supported by the project:

260

## Partners:

Learning Links (Southern) Ltd (Lead), Relate Portsmouth & District, Home-start Portsmouth, The E.C. Roberts Centre, Portsmouth Citizens Advice Bureau, YOU Trust, Goals UK, Grandparents Association, and Portsmouth City Council.

# Enfield Family Turnaround Project

**Location:**

Enfield, England

**Length of project:**

3 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

150

**Partners:**

4Children (Lead), Enfield Parents & Children, Enfield Council, Home Start, Samafal (Somali and BME populations), Enfield Turkish Cypriot Association, Enfield Voluntary Action

The Enfield Family Turnaround project will reach out to children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties at primary school, and particularly aim to support those from Somali and Turkish families who may experience barriers in accessing existing services. A 'whole family' support model will be promoted through the project.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ A family outreach worker will be aligned with each of four primary school cluster groups, and schools will help identify children who could benefit from the project.
- ▶ A Family Passport will be used with families to plan their support and recognise progress.
- ▶ Budgets will be held by frontline staff to commission the services agreed with families, such as specialist parenting courses, workshops on the UK education system, support groups around domestic violence and other issues, counselling, parent and child learning opportunities.
- ▶ Local parents and carers will be engaged as volunteer mentors. They will receive volunteer training and undertake outreach to their peers using 'appreciative enquiry' approaches.
- ▶ Every effort will be made to overcome potential barriers for Somali, Turkish and other BME families including: all information in a range of community languages, recruitment of workforce and volunteers that reflect the local community, representative focus groups, positive outreach, services that are sensitive to cultural and religious beliefs, close working with Somali and Turkish community and voluntary sector representatives, and learning from other Improving Futures projects in similar contexts.

# Building Bridges

This project is based on a successful model of early intervention, Building Bridges, established over ten years ago. Its evaluation demonstrates this model reduces the number and complexity of problems affecting families and prevents safeguarding issues escalating. It was developed for families where parental mental health is the main issue. This project will build on this work and expand it to include families facing a wider range of support for example with housing, health, learning difficulties, disability, family breakdown and school exclusion as well as drug/alcohol abuse, domestic abuse, poverty or social isolation.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ A dedicated key worker will provide flexible, long-term practical and emotional support to families who are below the threshold for statutory intervention to prevent escalation. Working in their own homes will build trust, develop relationships and support families to engage with other services. An action plan will be developed to access support in a targeted way, with clear goals and regular reviews, helping to establish routines to help parents regain control and to prevent dependency.
- ▶ Referral partners include primary schools, children's centres, midwives and health visitors, adult social care and GP surgeries, and will include shared learning in supporting the whole family between these professionals.
- ▶ Therapeutic and skills based workshops will develop according to needs identified by parents. Services will be commissioned from local voluntary sector partners to provide community outreach, parent workshops, therapeutic play, counselling, specialist advice work, and additional family support volunteers.

## Location:

London Borough of Haringey

## Length of project:

4 years

## Number of families supported by the project:

240

## Partners:

Family Action (Lead), Markfield, London Borough of Haringey



The Camden Futures partnership will offer a range of early intervention services. The project will be linked with GP practices and schools within Camden's most deprived wards to encourage access by families who are not engaged with supportive services.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ The project will include a range of interventions including direct parenting support and advice, support with behavioural issues, help accessing community resources, support for parents to work more closely with schools, therapeutic arts services and advice around financial inclusion.
- ▶ Financial inclusion work will also include early assessment to identify problems and provide specialist support including debt, housing and welfare benefit advice.
- ▶ Activities have been designed around these services to address the unmet needs of families before their needs escalate.
- ▶ The project will work closely with professionals such as GPs and teachers or other community workers to improve engagement with parents that have already built up a relationship. This professional will work to link them with additional support and improved engagement.
- ▶ To encourage access by families who are not currently engaged in other services, the partnership is linked to local GP practices and schools within Camden's most deprived wards. The core delivery partners are also building a wider network of referral partners which includes specialist provision from domestic violence, counselling, educational and psychotherapy agencies.
- ▶ A shortened version of the eCAF has been developed to support professionals in assessment, referral and review processes. The family star tool will also be utilised. Camden Futures keyworkers will be able to act as budget-holding lead professionals.

## Location:

Camden, England

## Length of project:

3 years

## Number of families supported by the project:

600

## Partners:

Elfrida Rathbone (Lead), Coram, Camden's Citizen Advice Bureau, Haverstock Healthcare, and London Borough of Camden (Children, Schools and Families Commissioning Team)

**Location:**

London Borough of Hackney

**Length of project:**

3 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

210

**Partners:**

Hackney Council for Voluntary Service (Lead), Claudia Jones Organisation, African Community School, Day-mer, Inspire! and London borough of Hackney

Hackney Families First Programme is a three year family centred service aimed at achieving better outcomes for 210 families in Hackney. These families live with multiple and complex needs. The Programme focuses its attention on preventative, proactive services and approaches to help divert children aged between 5 and 10 years old and their families away from statutory social care service and criminal justice agencies, when they present with a variety and complexity of problems.

**Key features of the project:**

- ▶ The project will use the Hackney Child and Wellbeing Model to focus on families identified as having complex and challenging needs which do not yet require statutory intervention.
- ▶ The project will work mainly, but not exclusively, with African Caribbean, Turkish and Kurdish families as various evaluation studies have shown this group to be most in need within the borough. Their status will range from refugee and migrant to established citizens.
- ▶ For children making the transition from primary to secondary school a tailored social skills development programme will be delivered. This will include one-to-one mentoring from year 12 and 13 students. This support will help to reduce the risk of children disengaging from education, and will improve educational performance during key stage 3.
- ▶ The Repairing Relationships programme of intensive family mentoring, counselling, training, and advocacy is focused on the restoration of parent, child and school relationships and will lead to improve levels of attainment for children and parents, raise self esteem and improving parenting skills.
- ▶ A community and schools partnership and cohesion programme will bring together the voluntary sector and 20 Hackney schools to develop a coordinated Extended Schools programme. In addition, there will be a cross-partner Family Skills Coaching Service offered to strengthen and embed positive family relationships.
- ▶ Referrals to the project will come from the London Borough of Hackney's children and young people's departments, adult social services and the housing department. Further referrals will come from primary schools, doctors' surgeries, health centres, children's centres, drug and alcohol agencies, Jobcentre Plus, housing associations, counselling and mental health agencies as well as self referral as a result of targeted marketing.

# Brighter Futures

The Brighter Futures project in Wandsworth supports children and their families who are recovering from the experience of domestic violence. The project has an emphasis on accessing support programmes that will help families promote a healthy and safe living environment for children. The project aims to develop a replicable, sustainable model of multi-agency working and shared learning. Brighter Futures reports to Wandsworth's Troubled Families Steering Group, chaired by the Chief Executive. This ensures that the service is properly integrated with other service provision across the borough.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ At the heart of the project is the 12 week Community Group Programme (CGP) practiced for over 20 years in Canada and recently piloted across London. The CGP provides a safe environment for mothers and children to explore their options, goals and next steps with professional facilitators.
- ▶ Fathers may be referred to other specialist provision, such as the Caring Dads programme offered by the probation service.
- ▶ Families will have access to tailored parenting and children's programmes, buddy/peer support network and support and advice from ancillary services (for example housing, health, probation, debt, employment and education). These project elements are essential, as to reap full advantage of the CGP and parenting programmes, families need support to manage complex living situations which create barriers to learning such as poor housing, mental health issues and debt.
- ▶ A lead professional will be allocated to adults and children separately and a buddying network will enable parents to support one another during and post-project.
- ▶ The project will build assets in the community through sharing of practice between larger and smaller partners – including reaching out to additional local grassroots organisations – and training of volunteers.
- ▶ Families are likely to be on the programme for 6 to 12 months although needs will differ.

## Location:

Wandsworth, England

## Length of project:

3 years

## Number of families supported by the project:

120

## Partners:

Catch 22 (Lead), London Borough of Wandsworth, Extended Schools Clusters, Family Action, Welcare, NHS Substance Misuse Team, AVA (Against Violence and Abuse), Citizen's Advice Bureaux

# Family Pathways

**Location:**

Lewisham, England

**Length of project:**

4 years

**Number of families supported by the project:**

400

**Partners:**

Pre-School Learning Alliance Lewisham (Lead), WAVE Trust, Impact Matters, London Borough of Lewisham, Voluntary Action Lewisham, Catherine Rushforth and Associates, Carers Lewisham, Family Action, School-Home Support, St James Family Learning Centre, Clyde Nursery School/ Early Childhood Centre, New Cross and Deptford Partnership, Croydon Voluntary Action, Coopers Lane Primary School. Lewisham Community Safety Team, Lewisham Early Years Improvement Team, Goldsmith University, Hearthouse UK

Family Pathways will provide targeted and holistic support to families, focussing on children demonstrating anti-social or destructive behaviour, or who have witnessed or been part of a domestic violence or other difficult family situation. This project is based on research by the WAVE Trust which supports parents in connecting emotionally to their children.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ Work with 5-10 year old children will take place before they are entrenched in negative and destructive cycles of behaviour.
- ▶ The project will introduce Roots of Empathy programme into England in partnership with Croydon Voluntary Action. The programme will be delivered in local primary schools in order to develop empathy in children as an antidote to aggression and violence, and to develop future positive parenting skills helping to break the inter-generational cycle of disadvantage, begin to change the violence in society and ensure that younger siblings are less likely to follow similar trajectories.
- ▶ Another key feature of the project is a comprehensive training course for practitioners on promoting attachment and attunement between parents and children to create stronger emotional bonds within families.
- ▶ Other services available include: parenting programmes such as Incredible Years, targeted one-to-one support and outreach, counselling and therapeutic activity. These will be navigated by a key worker alongside the family.

# Croydon Family Power: Giving Children a Head Start

The Croydon Family Power project is asset-based and has 'universal' and 'targeted' elements. It includes rolling out several evidence-based programmes in Croydon, to build child empathy, enhance parental capabilities, and strengthen family resilience. The project focuses on strengthening families who are 'just coping', before their problems escalate.

## Key features of the project:

- ▶ The universal elements of this project will include rollout of an evidence-based programme called Roots of Empathy in schools. The Roots of Empathy programme originated in Canada and involves facilitated sessions that help children to explore their feelings and the feelings of others, resulting in greater empathy and a long term positive impact. This activity will be jointly launched with the Improving Futures project in neighbouring Lewisham.
- ▶ As part of Croydon's Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, the project will train 60 adult and child family connectors. These connectors will develop new peer-led projects and social networks, as part of a 'community asset mapping' process that identifies and enhances local resources for more families.
- ▶ More targeted elements are delivered by a pool of six trained family navigators. Targeting harder to reach families, they will enable parents to navigate local services, brokering intensive support where needed.
- ▶ The Just What We Need Parent Pods programme will also be made available to 50 parents and its impact evaluated. This programme will be facilitated by a psychotherapist and aims to promote mental and emotional wellbeing.
- ▶ In consultation with the Improving Futures evaluation team, the project will aim to utilise family and communities Outcomes Stars to help demonstrate the change that each element of the Croydon Family Power project achieves.

## Location:

Croydon, England

## Length of project:

3 years

## Number of family members supported by the project:

3031

## Partners:

Croydon Voluntary Action (Lead), Croydon Council, Croydon Drop In, Croydon Mencap, Disability Croydon, Gingerbread Corner, Home-Start Croydon, MIND in Croydon, Nurture Development, Off the Record – Youth Counselling, Pre-School Learning Alliance (Lewisham), Roots of Empathy, Wave Trust

