



# A Fairer Start Stockton

Health & Wellbeing Board Report

**A FAIRER START – PROGRAMME UPDATE  
JULY 2017**

# A Fairer Start (AFS)

## July 2017 – Programme Update Report

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1** This report provides an update on the 'A Fairer Start' (AFS) programme as it progresses through its final year of delivery and details key themes to consider going forward including observations from training programme delivery; learning from the volunteers Champion Programme; embedding the AFS approach across services; making the most of the FUSE external evaluation and developing a clear exit strategy for all stakeholders.

## 2. Recommendations

**2.1** Members are requested to:

- Note key developments within the volunteer Champion Programme and continue to encourage practitioners to fully engage with the service through the final year of delivery.
- Consider key observations from delivery of the Culture Change Training Programme to support planning of future workforce development models.
- Consider next steps for the final year of the A Fairer Start programme and engage in activities to maximise the quality of learning achieved from the pilot, particularly in the context of developing changes to Stockton-on-Tees 0-19 services.

## 3. Background

**3.1** In recognition that the first few years of a child's life are crucial to their development, A Fairer Start aims to ensure that every child has the best start in life. Evidence shows that investing in early years improves social, emotional, physical development of children and has an impact on their education, health & wellbeing right through to adulthood.

**3.2** A Fairer Start recognises that each parent, child and family has a unique journey and the importance of understanding where they are on that journey. A range of factors including housing, relationships, mental health and finance all play a part in the development of a child which can be supported through improved community links and multi-agency working. A Fairer Start is an ethos and philosophy that aims to ensure better life chances for 0-3 year olds through culture change, awareness raising, knowledge building and empowering communities to raise children in a healthy and happy environment.

**3.3** A Fairer Start is currently in the final year of a 3 year pilot funded by Stockton Borough Council Public Health and NHS Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees CCG; focussing on improving three key outcomes for 0-3 year olds living in the Stockton Town Centre ward.

- Social & Emotional Development
- Speech & Language Development
- Nutrition

The overarching outcome is for all children to be 'School Ready' by the age of five.

**3.4 The approach is based on the ten recommendations set out by WAVE Trust in their 'Conception to Age of Opportunity' report:**

1. Increase breastfeeding and good antenatal nutrition
2. Promote language development
3. Reduce domestic violence; and stress in pregnancy
4. Achieve a major reduction in abuse and neglect
5. Set up an effective and comprehensive perinatal mental health service
6. Assess and identify where help is needed
7. Focus on improving attunement
8. Promote secure attachment
9. Ensure good, health-led multi-agency work
10. Ensure early years workforce have requisite skills

### 3.5 Pilot Area: Stockton Town Centre Ward

Stockton Town Centre not only has a diverse population with high levels of BME and transient communities, it also has very distinct geographic communities that have their own identity and cultural needs. Based on these demographics and the diverse mix of health inequalities, deprivation and societal complexities; it was agreed that Stockton Town Centre ward would be the target population for the A Fairer Start pilot.

## 4. A Fairer Start Structure

4.1 The management of the A Fairer Start is co-ordinated by Catalyst Stockton with additional senior support from Public Health to help shape services and build on current relationships and multi-agency working. Catalyst Chair the Steering Group which consists of:

- Chief Executive of Catalyst
- Catalyst VCSE Health & Wellbeing Officer
- Director of Public Health
- Director of Childrens Services
- Head of Midwifery & Children's Services for NTH Foundation Trust
- General Manager of Women & Childrens' Services for NTH Foundation Trust
- Stockton GP Lead for Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees CCG
- Big Life Families Executive Director

4.2 Underneath this sits the Project Team which meets fortnightly and includes the Catalyst Health & Wellbeing Officer, A Fairer Start Project Officer, Early Intervention Manager at Public Health and Planning & Partnership Manager for CESC. The formal meeting of the Implementation Group was disbanded in April however email/phone contact is still maintained with members to support engagement with AFS activities.

## 5. Champion Programme

5.1 In March 2015, Catalyst awarded the 3 year Champion Programme contract to Big Life Families who currently manage a number of Children's Centres in Stockton-on-Tees. The Champion Programme provides the opportunity for local charity, voluntary and community groups, businesses and families to improve the lives of pregnant mothers and 0-3 year olds living in Stockton Town Centre through befriending, signposting/handholding to services, awareness raising, pregnancy support and family sessions. The Champion Programme is now in its final year of delivery and during quarter 1 of 2017/18 Big Life Families engaged **104 families/58 children** from the AFS area including 17 pregnant women. **30 families/34 children** were also engaged from outside the AFS area.

### 5.2 Volunteers

There are currently **46** Champion Programme volunteers in place representing a wide range of communities, ages, ethnic backgrounds, geographic areas and experience/skills. It has also been identified that across the volunteers **15 different languages are spoken** which has greatly improved engagement with particular communities of the AFS area. All volunteers have completed individual balance wheels, learning plans and I-statements to help identify and progress personal development which will be supported and reviewed throughout their role. Areas that Champions felt they had improved on when reviewing Balance Wheels (after 3 months) included employability skills, self-esteem, confidence, relationships with others, health and financial concerns. **5 champions** during this quarter have also progressed into employment or further education and a further 25 candidates will begin volunteer training in August.

### 5.3 Key updates from Quarter 4 for 2016/17 of the Champion Programme include:

- Champion Programme support has been arranged for 2 weekly sessions at Parish Gardens to engage families in reading, physical activity, health messages, early year's activities and signposting.

- The SBC Family hub was supported by Champion Programme volunteers on a Saturday morning before closing in March. SBC are working with Big Life to develop a new jointly delivered hub at the Star Centre once per month.
- The Champion Programme volunteers have setup a new weekly Nutrition Café drop in session following positive feedback from families on similar sessions in the community. This will include stay & play activities; healthy cooking/tasting sessions with advice and recipe cards; craft sessions; clothes rail and toy sale to support disadvantaged families.
- New volunteer support at Star Centre ante-natal sessions building up relationships with families to raise awareness on health issues such as healthy eating in pregnancy, infant feeding choices and home safety. Volunteers have also designed and maintained public health boards for the Midwives to display key messages.
- New 'shadowing' process implemented for buddy champions to join outreach workers on home visits to build vital experience and give continued support to families.
- AFS Welfare Advisor post ended in March as scheduled following a period of sick leave by the appointed worker, however CAB have agreed to continue support for the programme with a fast track services for AFS families.
- There have been some staffing changes during the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> quarters of 2016/17 including a long period of sick leave by the Champion Programme Team Leader from January to May and the Family Champion coach leaving her role in March. Big Life have recruited a candidate internally to fulfil this role and have also provided additional project development and senior management capacity to the programme to support its final year of delivery.

#### **5.4 Next steps for the Champion Programme throughout the final year of delivery in 2017/18:**

- Increase overall engagement between multi-agency partners and the Champion Programme support available for families/professionals.
- Closer evaluation of Champion Programme delivery/model to take forward key learning around what is working well, what the challenges are and how it could be improved with consideration for future 0-19 services.
- Specifically improving links with local schools, nurseries, Parish Gardens, Willows Centre and Stockton library to develop ongoing activities for families (including over the summer period).
- Implementation of 'Service Report Cards' to understand needs of local parents/children, evaluate service delivery and highlight areas for improvement; alongside completion of volunteer/family case studies.
- Implementation of Muslim Values Parenting Programme supported by bi-lingual volunteers.
- Promotion and support of key messages with partners for themes including child safety, smoking cessation, parent/child reading (bath, book, bed scheme) etc.
- Continued engagement with Morelife and Little Sprouts to provide messages/workshops around healthy living/eating and cooking on a budget.

## **6. Workforce Development**

### **6.1 Personal Development Plan, Skills Audit & Training Mapping**

The A Fairer Start Personal Development Plan (PDP) was produced in 2016 following analysis of the Workforce Skills Audit carried out in early 2015 and outlines the desired competencies/soft skills of all early years and health practitioners/volunteers working in the 'A Fairer Start' area.

**6.2** The PDP includes a 'universal' level of competencies offered to all delivery staff/volunteers to provide a baseline standard of early years/health knowledge and understanding across the workforce.

### **Universal Categories**

- Behaviour, Communication & Principles of Best Practice
- Working with Others
- Managing Self

### **3 Tiered Categories:**

- Understanding Vulnerabilities
- Assessment, Planning & Review
- Speech, Language & Communication
- Nutrition
- Cognitive, Social & Emotional Development

**6.3** The PDP has been made available to all 'A Fairer Start' staff/volunteers and is expected to play an important role in their ongoing supervision and CPD, however it has been identified that further work with managers is needed to fully include the PDP as part of standard supervision practice.

**6.4** A comprehensive mapping exercise was completed in 2016 to cross-reference available multi-agency training deemed currently 'accessible' by the A Fairer Start workforce against the 'outer' soft-skill competency areas and 3 AFS outcomes in order to establish any gaps in provision and focus procurement efforts.

**6.5** Currently **105 frontline practitioners** and **26 managers** have expressed an interest in or attended A Fairer Start training programmes detailed below – with representation from social care, health visiting, Family Nurse Partnership, nursery nursing, midwifery, early help, Children Centres, Nurseries and the Champion Programme. The vast majority of attendees predominately support families from the Stockton Town Ward area, however there has been some crossover with borough-wide/out of area workers to maximise attendance on scheduled training.

**6.6** It was identified that competencies under 'Understanding Vulnerabilities' and 'Assessment, Planning & Review' would be met through part of the Stockton-On-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board training programme and Stockton Borough Council training respectively.

### **6.7 Culture Change Training Programme (CCTP)**

**6.8** In 2016 Catalyst commissioned Interface Ltd. to develop and deliver a multi-agency Culture Change Training Programme (CCTP) to act as a launch of the PDP and cover the below soft skill areas. The CCTP is crucial in motivating all professionals/volunteers to work with and support families differently as per the AFS approach and includes keen commitment from managers/supervisors.

- The AFS approach and Managing Self
- Behaviour, Communication & Best Practice
- Working With Others & Introduction to the Champion Programme

**6.9** The CCTP is offered as a 2.5 day course accommodating 15-20 attendees. 3 cohorts were delivered in late 2016 alongside two half-day implementation sessions for managers, with a further 2 cohorts delivered March/April 2017 following mid-contract review and evaluation in January 2017. A CCTP cohort specifically for managers was also delivered in May 2017 which was well received.

**6.10** Interface Ltd. also facilitated an interactive half-day session with Steering Group members in May 2017 to share learning/feedback from the CCTP and produce an agreed action plan to progress key priorities, specifically including a full exit strategy with consideration for future 0-19 services.

**6.11 CCTP attendance is as follows:**

- **18 managers** have attended two 2016/17 half day sessions (a further 8 submitted apologies).
- **13 managers** have fully completed 2.5 days training (plus 1 partial completed and a further 12 submitted apologies).
- **57 members of staff** have fully completed 2.5 days. 4 members of staff have partially completed the training (2x 1 day only, 2x first 2 days)
- **28 identified members of staff** have completed no training and are on the waiting list for future cohorts if required.
- Completed = 5 social care, 10 health visitors, 1 FNP, 3 nursery nurses, 4 midwives, 9 early help, 10 outreach workers, 12 Children Centre, 2 Champion Programme, 1 SALT.

**6.12 Key observations taken from delivery of the CCTP based on staff/ facilitator feedback are:**

- Stockton-on-Tees has a very passionate, committed and enthusiastic workforce willing to make a positive difference to lives of local families, with understanding of the particular challenges we face as a borough in terms of acute areas of deprivation, health inequalities and diverse communities.
- It is clear that for the AFS approach to be embedded across the workforce, all practitioners, managers and senior managers need to be involved in the CCTP to ensure that all staff are consistently supported to work in this way. A key lesson learned from delivery of the AFS CCTP is to involve managers at a much earlier stage, preferably before staff training to improve general engagement and understanding.
- In particular, continued engagement with operational managers is crucial to successfully embed the AFS approach across services in very practical, sustainable terms as this cohort has been identified as needing extra work to support staff in the desired areas. The project team are currently working with Interface Ltd. to identify priority subject areas for future workforce development; which may also take other forms such as shadowing/ mentoring/ examples of shared best practice.
- Practitioners have greatly welcomed the opportunity to reflect on practice and personal wellbeing, especially in a multi-agency format and have strongly recommended further multi-agency training/networking opportunities to build understanding of local practice and improve partnership working. Feedback on the training overall has been extremely positive.
- As a whole, practitioners agree with and support the AFS approach/ethos as a preferable model for family engagement, focussing on personalised support appropriate to an individual families' circumstances and promoting self-efficacy. However, services are in agreement that current systems, procedures and processes are not wholly conducive to this preferred way of working – particularly in terms of supervision practices, information sharing, flexibility in working and supporting innovation/creativity in practice to best support families.
- Both front-line practitioners and managers are very keen to see this training programme rolled out borough-wide to ensure all services and colleagues are working in the same way and further improve multi-agency links.
- It was noted that the styles, frequency and levels of supervision available to staff was variable across organisations with a noticeable difference in the support available.
- Attendees felt further representation from social care, education, police and VCSE services would be beneficial.

### 6.13 Development Outcomes Training Programme (DOTP)

6.14 Catalyst have commissioned a further 3 training programmes to fulfil identified gaps as part of an overall Development Outcomes Training Programme (DOTP) as detailed below.

- HENRY – Maternal & Child Nutrition
- Interface Ltd. – Cognitive, Social & Emotional Development
- NHS Foundation Trust – Speech & Language Development

6.15 The DOTP aims to provide a standardised knowledge base across all AFS early years/family practitioners and volunteers to ensure families receive consistent, up to date and accurate messages. Training on the 3 AFS outcomes began in April following contract tendering, programme development/planning and recruitment.

6.16 A joint providers meeting was held in April to discuss overall key messages and potential overlap to ensure all training shares consistent messages and is appropriately streamlined. The Project Team are confident that the 3 programmes naturally complement each other very well and are well placed to build on the strengths of the CCTP delivery. Catalyst are also working with DOTP providers and Big Life to arrange awareness training sessions in the 3 AFS areas specifically for Champion Programme volunteers. Partners from NTH Foundation Trust have also agreed to provide multi-agency training relating to Infant Feeding which will complement other AFS training.

6.17 Feedback from the first 2 cohorts of **HENRY (26 completed)** and **Interface (18 completed)** DOTP training has been extremely positive, with attendees feeling confident and empowered to make a difference to their practice and particularly challenging engagement with families around child development, parenting and healthy lifestyles. A further cohort for each programme is scheduled for delivery from September to October and are fully booked at 20 people each. Currently **42 practitioners are booked onto SALT training** from July to November. Further feedback will be collated, analysed and reported to Steering Group/Project Team.

## 7. Data, Tracking & Information Sharing

7.1 Catalyst are working with partners to improve information sharing and tracking processes across early year's services including Midwifery, Health Visiting and Children's Centres. Families living in the Stockton Town Centre ward can now be 'tagged' as AFS in E-start tracking systems for Children Centre's, and information relating to 'Early Help, Information & Advice' given during family contacts can also be recorded. However progress is still to be made to ensure that consistent and accurate outcome reporting can be achieved by all parties to fully evidence the impact of interventions with AFS families as currently only number of outputs are routinely evidenced.

7.2 As of May 2017, Children Centre E-start data showed 325 children 'tagged' as AFS (224 at Star and 81 at Sunrise). From these 325, 232 children have engaged in services in the past 12 months.

7.3 The AFS Steering Group and Project Team are consistently working together to drive implementation of a new information sharing policy between Stockton Borough Council and NTH Foundation Trust to better integrate their family/community services and significantly improve outcomes for families. Catalyst brought a paper to the February CYP Partnership meeting which was well received by members and it was agreed that Information Sharing is a priority area for the partnership to focus on going forward.

7.4 In Feb/March a short consultation exercise was carried out with STC ward families registered at Sunrise and Star Children's Centres - in total 90 parents/carers were consulted from Sunrise and 25 were consulted from Star. Overall families described that children centre sessions have had a positive impact and helped child development relating to the 3 AFS outcomes.



## 8. External Evaluation

- 8.1** It was agreed that quality, in-depth evaluation was needed to effectively measure the impact of the AFS programme. A proportion of the budget has been set aside each year to pay for the full time involvement of a PHD Research student as recruited by FUSE/Teesside University.
- 8.2** The comprehensive evaluation proposal takes on a qualitative approach towards assessing system/ culture change and the impact on families and will provide ongoing recommendations regarding implementation of the programme with wider findings from the 3 work packages: Systematic Literature Review, Qualitative Process Evaluation and Descriptive Data Analysis.
- 8.3** A range of in-depth interviews were conducted throughout August/September 2016 with strategic stakeholders involved in the planning and development of AFS to identify the nuances of implementing a culture change/system change programme and the barriers and facilitators in doing so. Recommendations and key observations were brought to the AFS Steering Group for continued development of the programme and have been taken into consideration.
- 8.4** Three more phases of interviews/focus groups will take place throughout 2017 with frontline staff, strategic stakeholders, managers, families and volunteers focusing on the implementation of the AFS Champion Programme and impact of the CCTP/DOTP on early years practice. The aim will be to establish what makes these programmes successful; identifying barriers, challenges and solutions; and what could be improved.

## 9. Next Steps

- Continued development of Champion Programme as highlighted in item 4 above and drawing key learning from the delivery of the programme.
- Continued delivery and review of the A Fairer Start Development Outcomes Training Programme.
- Consider options for engaging borough-wide Early Years Workforce/managers and embedding of the A Fairer Start approach following successfully delivery of the CCTP.
- Progress Steering Group final year action plan specifically including full exit strategy with consideration for future 0-19 services.
- Development and implementation of integrated Information Sharing agreement.
- Monitoring of Early Help/A Fairer Start outcome reporting through Children Centre partners.
- Deliver and review 3 phases of FUSE Evaluation interviews throughout 2017.
- Consider options for expansion/extension and rollout of A Fairer Start approach/learning across the wider borough with an emphasis on sustainability and using lessons learned from the pilot programme.

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