



# A Fairer Start Stockton

Health & Wellbeing Board Report

**A FAIRER START – PROJECT UPDATE  
MAY 2016**

# A Fairer Start (AFS)

## May 2016 Project Update Report

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1** This report provides an update on the progress of the 'A Fairer Start' (AFS) programme and details next steps in continuing full implementation throughout the rest of 2016. There has been a great deal of planning, research and analysis carried out to ensure the needs of the community, early years workforce and stakeholders are met – with great emphasis on whole system approach, behaviour/ culture change, representing the voice of families/workforce and making a sustainable, positive impact on the lives of 0-3 year olds, expectant mothers and families living within the Stockton Town Centre ward.

## 2. Background

**2.1** 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.

**2.2** 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.

**2.3** A Fairer Start is a 3 year pilot currently 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: The 'A Fairer Start' project focuses 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.

**2.4 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

***"Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing health inequalities across the life course. The foundations for virtually every aspect of human development – physical, intellectual and emotional – are laid in early childhood"***  
*~ Marmot*

### **2.5 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.

### 3. A Fairer Start Structure

**3.1** The management of the A Fairer Start is led 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
- Director of Public Health
- Corporate Director of Children, Education and Social Care
- Head of Midwifery & Children's Services
- Professional Lead Nurse NTH Foundation Trust
- Stockton GP Lead for Hartlepool and Stockton on Tees CCG
- Catalyst VCSE Health & Wellbeing Officer
- Big Life Families Executive Director

**3.2** Underneath this sits the Implementation Group which includes Operational managers representing Midwifery, Health Visiting, Children's Centres, Schools, Early Help, Public Health and Housing. Members of this group form the necessary task/finish groups to progress the A Fairer Start Implementation Plans and work closely with the Project Team.

### 4. Champion Programme

**4.1** 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, awareness raising, pregnancy support and handholding to services. Branding and marketing material has now been approved for the Champion Programme to assist with promotion and community engagement. To date, **63 children/49 families** aged 0-3 have had contact with A Fairer Start including a number of families who are currently not engaging services or registered with a Children's Centre.

#### 4.2 Volunteers

There are currently 28 Champion Programme volunteers in place representing a wide range of communities, ages, ethnic backgrounds, geographic areas and experience/skills. 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, social life/building relationships and health, with 6 champions progressing into employment during quarters 3 and 4.

**4.3** A number of roles have been identified or taken up by the champions including:

- Tilery Primary School placement supporting the Raising Early Aspirations in Literacy programme
- Development of toddler group at Frank Wiseman Community Centre in Tilery
- 'Two Year Champions' supporting access to the Two Year Provision
- Supporting Midwifery team, Health Visiting Team and families in Early Bird sessions, Antenatal classes, attending appointments, befriending and handholding
- Breastfeeding peer support champions to assist with bonding and attachment
- Mental Health Peer Support programme with MIND Stockton
- Community development team/ Community Champions Parents' Forum
- Supporting Thirteen to identify new families in the area.
- Dental Health Champion – 1-1 support with families and presence at events raising awareness
- Buddy Champions – Befriending and supported access/handholding to services
- Community sling library established to support families in parent/baby bonding and attachment
- Post-Natal Depression peer support group with Raindrops to Rainbows.

#### 4.4 Family Outcomes

The Champion Programme has achieved a range of outcomes for A Fairer Start families through the roles and placements described above.

- 42 children supported through Tilery Primary School nursery in Nutrition, Speech & Language and Cognitive Development activities – including the Raising Early Aspirations in Literacy (REAL) project.
- 10 children supported through new stay & play group at Frank Wiseman Community Centre in Nutrition, Speech & Language and Cognitive Development activities including 'Change 4 Life', crafts activities, story sessions and provision of dental health resources.
- 25 families identified as **NOT** registered with a Children's Centre who are engaging and accessing A Fairer Start activities in the community – partial 'family registration form' completed with Big Life Families to keep updated with activities etc.
- 1 family supported with access to nursery through 2 Year Provision Champion and 1 home visit attended. This role will continue to be developed as referrals come in.
- 19 parents supported at Ante-Natal appointments with information on nutrition, Change 4 life, breastfeeding and alcohol in pregnancy
- 2 parents supported through post-natal depression peer support group
- 5 families supported through the 'Family Hub' on Saturday mornings.
- Local Chinese family with limited English language supported by Buddy Champion to engage with services.

#### 4.5 Partner and Business Engagement

Big Life Families has engaged with a total of 53 partners to support in a range of areas including volunteer placement, themed awareness sessions, volunteer discounts, rewards catalogue contributions and signposting/service promotion.

4.6 7 organisations have contributed to the Rewards Catalogue scheme which aims to recognise the value of volunteers' commitment to the Champion Programme in the form of family trips, retail discounts etc. including Fun City, Tees Active, The ARC, Pottery Pen, Hollywood Bowl, Rivershack and Showcase Cinemas. New businesses including Boots, Quorn, North Shore Community Zone, Labyrinth Café, Post Offices and Pharmacies have also agreed to take on Champion Programme volunteers to approach and signpost families with children 0-3 years. 5 champions so far have accessed rewards from the catalogue using their banked hours.

4.7 Big Life Families are facilitating a Family Fun Day on 28<sup>th</sup> May with Lifeline and Little Sprouts to engage families and have also contacted 9 GP practices (including the Arrivals Practice and Birch Tree) with information on AFS - further links to be developed in May.

4.8 The coming months will focus on the following as the Champion Programme begins its 2<sup>nd</sup> year of delivery:

- Developing Community Champions Parents' Forum
- Develop and implement health theme calendar for family sessions, stalls/stands in community venues and notice boards.
- Increase referrals into the Champion Programme support available for families
- Consultation/co-design with families and champions on A Fairer Start family leaflet.
- Arrange further awareness training sessions for champions with local support agencies.
- Continued recruitment of Champion Programme volunteers and identifying placements
- Development of 1-1 work with families

## 5. Workforce Development

### 5.1 Personal Development Plan

Following analysis of the Workforce Skills Audit carried out in early 2015, the Workforce Development Task/Finish Group has since produced the A Fairer Start Personal Development Plan (PDP) which has gained approval from the AFS Steering Group. The PDP outlines the desired competencies and soft skills of all early years and health practitioners/volunteers working in the 'A Fairer Start' area. Development of the PDP involved specialist support from NTHFT Speech & Language Therapy, NTHFT Dietetics, SBC Environmental Health, Breastfeeding Specialists and TEWV NHS Trust to ensure that all recommendations given are evidence based, follow best practice and are appropriate to the aims and approach of 'A Fairer Start'.

**5.2** The PDP includes a 'universal' or '1<sup>st</sup> level' of competencies which will be offered to all delivery staff/volunteers to provide a baseline standard of early years/health knowledge and understanding across the workforce. This will also work towards ensuring that a consistent message/approach is delivered across all services, which can be built upon with the identified tier 2/3 qualities as required.

#### **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

**5.3** The PDP will be made available to all 'A Fairer Start' staff/volunteers and is expected to play an important role in their ongoing supervision and CPD through detailing the knowledge, skills, behaviour and levels of performance that are expected and/or to be evidenced as working towards.

### 5.4 Training Programme

It is estimated that there are approximately 100 staff/volunteers operating within the Stockton Town Centre ward, working at differing levels of competency, who will utilise the PDP and be able to access A Fairer Start multi-agency workforce development opportunities via new and existing training programmes.

**5.5** The Workforce Development task and finish group have recently carried out basic mapping of available training deemed currently 'accessible' by the AFS workforce and cross-referenced these with the competencies outlined in the PDP to establish any gaps in provision and focus procurement efforts. Steering Group have approved for Catalyst to source and arrange the delivery of ongoing multi-agency culture change workshops from an external provider to fulfil gaps identified in the mapping exercise and act as a launch of the PDP with AFS partners. A specification and commissioning timeline for this work has been agreed with an aim for new training to start in October – following contract tendering, programme development/planning and recruitment.

**5.6** Catalyst have also made arrangements with SLSCB for Champion Programme volunteers to access their multi-agency training free of charge, using resource from the AFS budget.

**5.7** Catalyst have engaged workforce development leads from key partners TEWV, NHS Foundation Trust and Environmental Health to carry out comprehensive mapping of internal training relevant to the 3 AFS outcomes, including inclusion/exclusion criteria where applicable and the implications of such training being made available to the wider AFS workforce. This approach aims to promote the cultural change required from within key partner organisations whilst recognising and utilising the expertise that is already held within the borough and across partners.

## 5.8 Workforce Engagement Events

Following the success of these sessions in May/June 2015, further quarterly workforce engagement sessions have commenced in March 2016 with mixed attendance from a wide range of practitioners including Midwifery, Health Visiting, Early Years Education, CCG, CAMHS, Children's Centres, Early Help and Champion Programme Volunteers. These sessions aim to:

- Improve working relationships and communication between professionals and volunteers
- Provide an opportunity for workforce to contribute to the ongoing development of 'A Fairer Start'
- Raise awareness of and embed the A Fairer Start aims and approach across the workforce
- Address any key issues, findings and themes via awareness sessions and workshops

The first 2016 session was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> March at Tilery Primary School with over 35 attendees – the session greatly improved links with local schools including Bowesfield, Mill Lane and Oxbridge and identified further Champion Programme volunteer placement opportunities with partners.

## 6. Data, Tracking & Monitoring

### 6.1 Baseline Data Collection

In November 2015 the Data, Tracking & Monitoring Task/Finish Group completed a large collection of baseline data across all partners to help build a comprehensive picture of the Stockton Town Centre ward and how it compares to the Stockton-on-Tees Borough. A total of 50 data indicators have been collected for 2015 with comparative data to be collated again in 2017 - success criteria and performance measures are still to be agreed at Steering Group. Key findings include:

- Children are 3x more likely to be subject to an Early Help Assessment, Child Protection Plan or Looked After in Town Centre Ward compared to the borough average.
- 47% of children residing in Town Centre Ward achieved good levels of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage profile 2015.
- 51% of mothers in Town Centre ward are initiating breastfeeding at birth
- 1 in 4 mothers in Town Centre ward are smoking at delivery
- 41% of children aged 5 in Town Centre ward have damaged, filled or missing teeth

### 6.2 Tracking & Information Sharing

Links are currently being made with partners to improve information sharing and tracking processes across early year's services including Midwifery, Health Visiting and Children's Centres and particular progress has been made in developing Children's Centre E-start tracking system.

**6.3** The project team are also working to improve information sharing procedures with AFS partners and have met with senior representatives from the NHS Foundation Trust to practically progress actions relating to parental consent and implementing a new Information Sharing policy with Stockton Borough Council. Any progress made will impact the wider Stockton-on-Tees borough and influence the overall support available to families and their experiences when engaging with services.

## 7. External Evaluation

**7.1** With A Fairer Start bringing radical change to early years services in Stockton, it was agreed that quality, in-depth evaluation was needed to effectively measure the impact of the various components of the project on the 3 key outcomes outlined in the beginning of this report. 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.

**7.2** A comprehensive evaluation proposal was agreed in 2015 with the A Fairer Start Steering Group, which has since been updated to take on a much more qualitative approach towards assessing system/ culture change and the impact on families. The updated proposal was approved in February 2016 which more appropriately reflects the direction and intentions of A Fairer Start and will provide ongoing recommendations regarding implementation of the programme and wider findings from the 3 work packages: Systematic Literature Review, Qualitative Process Evaluation and Descriptive Data Analysis. A range of interviews/focus groups with frontline staff, strategic stakeholders, families and volunteers will take place in 2017 and be analysed as part of the evaluation process.

**7.3** There is a keen commitment from Steering Group members to roll-out the project to the wider Stockton-on-Tees borough if proven successful and therefore systematic evaluation will help determine if quality interventions have been achieved within the time constraints of the project.

## **8. Next Steps**

- Continued development of Champion Programme as highlighted in item 4 above
- Commissioning, development and Implementation of the A Fairer Start Culture Change Training Programme.
- Analyse and progress recommendations from Training Mapping delivered by partner organisations in 3 main AFS outcomes
- Development of A Fairer Start website for families, professionals and organisations to access
- Development, implementation and ongoing review of Data, Tracking and Monitoring systems
- Development, sharing and use of robust Implementation Plans for 2016
- Continued engagement with Early Years Workforce and promotion of the A Fairer Start approach
- Marketing and public engagement with families/residents on A Fairer Start
- Internal branding of AFS with all partners E.g Children's Centres & Schools

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