



In Blackpool, we all have a role to play in ensuring that our children have high aspirations and reach their potential.

In the early years, children's experiences have a major impact on their development and future outcomes. So by ensuring they have the best possible start in life, we enable them to maximise their achievements, which in turn builds a stronger Blackpool for us all.

That is why the work of Blackpool Better Start, a partnership led by the NSPCC, made up of the Blackpool community including parents, Police, Local Authority, the Hospital Trust, Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health and the Voluntary Sector, is so important to our town.

Better Start is funded by The Big Lottery and partners to deliver lasting change so that Blackpool will be a place in which families raise happy, healthy children who grow up to take pride in belonging to, and giving back to, the community.

Better Start will improve services for 0-3 year olds and their families and every new baby in Blackpool will enjoy the early care and nurture they need for healthy development and to be ready for school.

Initially we are focussing our work in the seven wards where the local community faces the greatest challenges: Bloomfield, Brunswick, Claremont, Clifton, Park, Talbot and Victoria. Linked Children's Centres are Claremont, Grange Park, Mereside, Revoe, St Cuthbert's, Talbot & Brunswick and Thames.

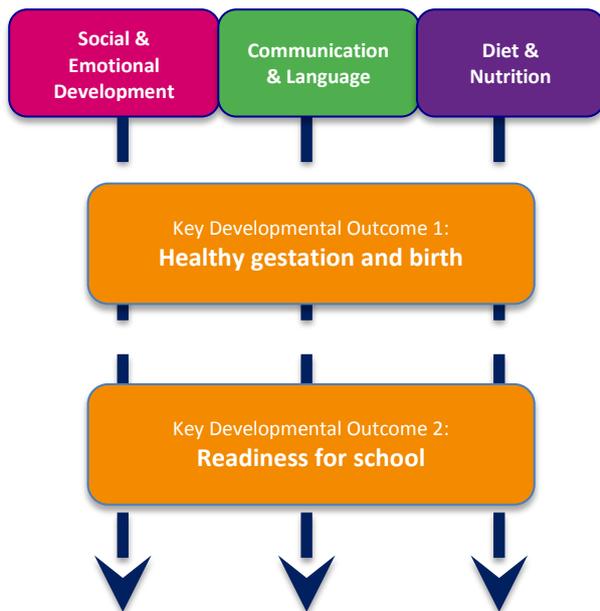
If we think of the developing brain as a construction project, Better Start's ambition is to give every new baby born in Blackpool a better start at a time when their brains are developing rapidly. Building healthy brains is the key to future success

One of the things that we know supports positive brain development is the back-and-forth interaction between the baby and their caregiver, known as 'Serve and Return' interactions. This crucial aspect of development helps to build strong foundations for brains, forming a good basis for a child's future and enabling them to cope better with life's challenges.

We will ensure that high quality support is available to our communities by delivering appropriate services and evidence based interventions, including those which promote the 'serve and return' that our children so richly deserve and that will enable our families to thrive.

Within 10 years the partnership is determined to change outcomes for our youngest children and their families which will create a generational change for our town and our people.

A Developmental Strategy



Our developmental strategy focuses on two key milestones for families: Healthy Gestation and Birth and School Readiness. These will achieve long lasting positive outcomes for all our babies and children and form strong foundations for when they are parents themselves.

We have “effectiveness factors” that we know will work, for example Family Nurse Partnership provides home visits from specially trained nurses to all mums under the age of 20, throughout their pregnancy until their child is two. This high quality support helps young mums to bond with their baby, strengthening the foundations in the baby’s developing brain and increases the chance of positive outcomes for the child. We will also enhance Breast Feeding Support to new mums to initiate and maintain breast feeding; giving babies the best possible nutritional start. Breast feeding also provides a great opportunity to build the baby’s brain through ‘serve and return’ – as the baby ‘serves’ by babbling or gesturing, the mum speaks and engages with the baby to ‘return’. Research shows that this ‘serve and return’ approach builds strong links in a baby’s developing brain that has a lasting effect on development and learning.

Delivering these services and others within our town enables families and communities to thrive. We know how to create programmes that support children’s healthy brain development and we can improve outcomes for our youngest children, their families and for our town.

Running though these two outcomes are the overarching goals of focused support in diet and nutrition, language and communication, social and emotional development

To ensure this happens in all levels of the community, we are **actively engaged** in monitoring how ‘things are done’ and how they could be done better in Blackpool. The parents’ group Community Voice ensures representations at all levels of the decision-making process. Part of the long term goal of Better Start is to **transfer power** from the statutory services to the community to ensure **sustainability and to build capacity** within Blackpool communities. A **Systems leadership** approach is being developed starting with middle managers as well as members of the Executive to ensure a **dynamic** change programme is supported throughout organisations.

As part of the overall **regeneration of the town**, Better Start is linked into some of the other key initiatives which will help us to reinstate **pride** within the town and regenerate the town

back to a stable, healthy and vibrant community. All of the initiatives and work undertaken to transform services for 0-3's will be viewed within the wider vision of the transformation of Blackpool.

As part of this vision Better Start will **invest in the town** ensuring, wherever possible, that local suppliers and services are used. We will invest in **growing our own workforce**, including the wealth of volunteers and apprentices who are ready and able to support the work with families in the town. Better Start is **everyone's** responsibility within a community and **everyone** will have an awareness of the best way to raise children.

Our **strategic programme of action** is based around **four cornerstones**.



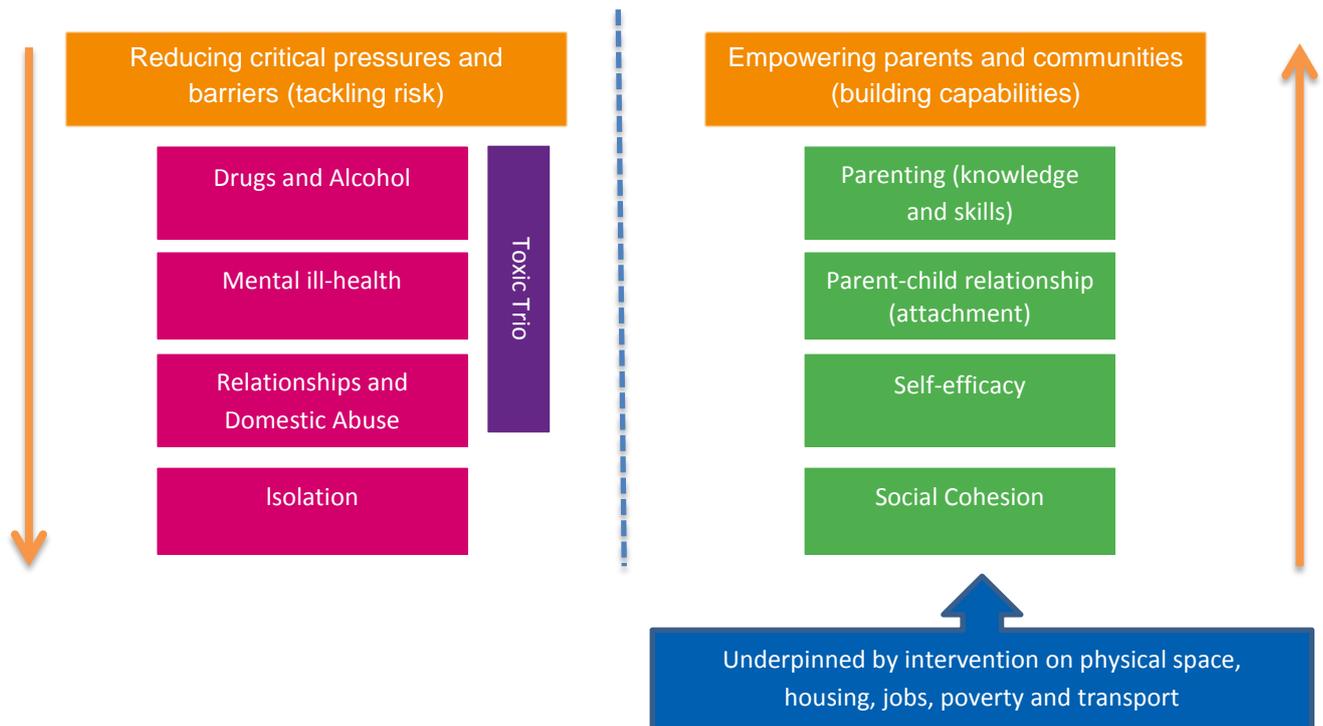
1. Public Health Approach

We are **grounded** in a public health approach, changing the 'norms' across the population by shifting the 'curve' ensuring all new parents have access to a suite of universal health promotion resources.

Together we intend to influence the behaviour of communities around key factors which cause poorer outcomes for children, by building a sense of collective responsibility for our children's well being.

This will be done through universal campaigns and targeted interventions such as a specialist programmes to support dads. We will use our **framework for focused action to reduce barriers and critical pressures** impacting on families and **empower parents and communities** to enable them to address these issues themselves.

Framework for Focused Action



The Blackpool Centre for Early Child Development will work with international experts to help Better Start identify how local expertise can be built upon and enhanced to reduce harmful behaviour

2. Evidence Based Interventions

We will introduce a tiered model of provision of evidence and science based interventions spanning all levels of need for children on their journey through the **Healthy Child Programme** giving support to all parents at the earliest opportunity.

These programmes will all fit with our **framework for focused action** and **developmental approach** they will be tailored according to our local needs and be regularly reviewed by communities and professionals for impact and outcomes.

We will have a staged approach to implementation, firstly we will expand our existing evidence based services and underpinning this will be the extension of the successful Family Nurse Partnership for all parents under 20 in our Better Start wards, and Baby Steps for all other expectant parents.

We will then introduce interventions successfully developed elsewhere for example; programmes to support parents with additional needs and provide pathways to support for parents who have or are experiencing substance misuse, trauma, and mental ill health.

Finally we will look at innovation and research projects, we will develop new interventions designed to address critical gaps in current support such as our work on domestic abuse in pregnancy and infancy and alcohol abuse in pregnancy.

3. Reframing and System Transformation

A key cornerstone of Better Start is systems reform, we will champion change at all levels and ensure there is a shared vision of Better Start. We recognise the importance of **early intervention** and investing in the early years. We are **passionate** about the need to change to impact on the outcomes for some of our most vulnerable children and families and we will **challenge** where and when necessary to ensure this change happens.

Working with the FrameWorks Institute (Washington DC) we will introduce a **shared language** for the community and professionals to talk about early child development, our **Core Story**, which will help our families understand this crucial stage of development.

System Transformation



We will ensure that all the early years workforce **communicate** this vision to service users and the wider community ensuring that **everyone** in Blackpool has a **shared understanding** of Better Start and early child development.

As a community we will break down professional boundaries and build a culture of **trust** and **confidence**. We will identify what communities **need** over the next 10-20 years and work with partners to ensure the Early Years workforce have the **skills and training** to deliver these in our community.

We will make services more **accessible** so that we have services for people not people for services.

4. Centre for Early Child Development

The Blackpool Centre for Early Child Development will have a critical role in driving Better Start it will provide leadership and strategic direction and will ensure that all partners are **actively engaged** in the delivery and **co production** of services.

The centre will keep the **aspiration** of Better Start and **community** at the heart of its work and ensure the **pace** of change is consistent to meet the **change** required.

The centre will build local capacity and expertise by creating a virtual network of national and international experts and keeping research and evaluation at the heart of what it does, the centre will become internationally recognised and a renowned source of expertise and innovation in services and system from pregnancy to three.