

Programme Governance Board for Southend: A Better Start Governance Briefing from the Interim Programme Manager

Background

At its last meeting on 1st August 2016 the Board was provided with a reminder of the programme's aims and objectives and an overview of the developing model of co-production at ward level. A key ambition of the programme is to put parents at the heart of the commissioning, design and delivery of services and interventions aimed at improving health and wellbeing outcomes for children aged 0-4th birthday¹, and our ward level co-production model provides a framework for that. The approach requires the engagement of ward Councillors in our 6 target wards (Milton, Kursaal, Victoria, Shoeburyness, West Shoebury and Westborough) together with local voluntary sector organisations, community groups and parents' forums. The programme team will be taking this forward over the autumn as a 'test and learn' model firstly in one or two of the 6 target wards, then for review and potential wider roll out in 2017.

This month's update focuses on two areas of activity: our test and learn of services and interventions and planning for the ABSS Centre for Innovation.

Review of 'test and learn' services and interventions

A core part of the programme is to deliver and evaluate a range of preventative and early intervention services within a rigorous 'test and learn' framework, to identify the most cost effective way of improving outcomes for children in Southend. A key assumption underpinning the programme is that investment in prevention during early years can deliver benefits for all public services further down the life course ("cheaper to develop a healthy child than to fix a broken adolescent or adult") but the evidence base for this is thin. So a core part of the national A Better Start programme is to develop the evidence and science base that will – over the 10 years of the programme - support a whole system shift in public service provision from remedial intervention to prevention that cuts across health, social care, housing, the police and fire service etc.

For each test and learn activity our service design process requires us to:

- a) Use a range of methods to scope the proposed service, map existing provision and identify the effect of the proposed service existing provision
- b) Define the service in terms of the overall logic model, theory of change, outcomes, and the rationale for selecting these (evidence or science base); the target beneficiaries
- c) Consider 'system readiness'. That is, can the service be implemented at scale across the Southend system? What are the referral pathways; how will the target population gain access; what are the ££ costs and staffing resources required; what management and governance are required? etc

To ensure we are maintaining the integrity of our service design framework we have spent the last two months reviewing all the test and learn activity in the programme's portfolio. In

¹ Our BIG three outcomes are to improve children's 1) Social and emotional development 2) Communication and Language development and 3) Diet and Nutrition

conjunction with senior colleagues within SBC and the Pre-school Learning Alliance we have reviewed each activity against the programme's Critical Success Factors to ensure that all components are in place to generate the level of evidence required by the London School of Economics' cost / benefit framework, Preventonomics. The Preventonomics framework will enable us to leverage funding for investment in early years prevention from strategic partners across Southend and ensure sustainability of the ABS approach longer term.

Centre for Innovation

The proposal for an Early Years Centre for Excellence & Innovation was one of the cornerstones of the original ABSS bid to the Big Lottery Fund in 2013/14. Since then, we have identified that there are a number of organisations and service providers already specialising in the area of *evidence based* interventions and that it is a somewhat crowded field. Despite remarkable advances in the *science* of child development, however, and in particular the understanding about brain development from conception to 3 years, these have not translated into system reform or changes in the way communities support families with babies and infants; and few organisations are working in this area.

- **Evidence based:** The service has demonstrated the highest level of evidence of effectiveness and impact in terms of outcomes in the UK and/or internationally either by Random Control Trial (RCT) and/or systematic review or similar
- **Science based:** Has a scientific basis for assuming that the service will support its outcomes. However, it has not as yet been through an RCT or a systematic review or similar
- **Innovation:** There is a strong local need for the service, and to be creative in order to develop the service. The scientific basis is yet to be determined.

We are proposing that we design and develop a Centre for Innovation for ABS Southend to bridge the gap between the science base, public policy and service delivery. Our ambition is to develop expertise in taking the latest science, translating it into innovative services and interventions, delivering it through our test process, and learning from it to deliver impact at scale.

This approach will enable us to improve outcomes for children and the ABSS programme, but building expertise in developing science based innovation could also be used in other service areas with other client groups across Southend. It will enable us to side step the crowded field of evidence based service development and develop international links with the small number of centres leading in this field, for example the Harvard Center on the Developing Child.

We are currently developing the Outline Business Case for this project.

Alison Clare
Interim Programme Director, 31 August 2016
