



## A Better Start Nottingham - Small Steps Big Changes Overview

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 20 November 2018

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### 1. Background

#### 1.1 What is Small Steps Big Changes?

Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) is a £45m Big Lottery Funded 'A Better Start' Programme; Nottingham is one of five areas nationally who have received funding over a 10 year period to transform the system and improve outcomes for 0-3's and their families.

The Programme is a partnership of parents and professionals working together, through co-production and parent powered change, to drive the delivery of the programme and focus on helping children to live happy, healthy and fulfilled lives.

The key partners in the Programme are Nottingham CityCare who are the 'accountable body', Nottingham City Council, the CCG, the VCI sector and parents and communities.

In Nottingham, the Programme operates across four communities; Arboretum, Aspley, Bulwell and St Ann's (The Big Lottery Fund and the Programme Board are aware of the imminent changes to the ward boundaries and are planning for the additional children/babies to be included in the Programme).

#### 1.2 Our Vision

*Growing our children together with love and respect.*

#### Our Core Principle

*Children at the heart, parents leading the way, supported and guided by experts.*

#### Our Approach

*Building adult capacity and capability in Nottingham in order to improve children's outcomes.*

#### Our Outcomes

- *SSBC children will have healthy and positive social and emotional development*
- *SSBC children will have effective and age-appropriate communication and language skills*
- *SSBC children will have good nutrition*
- *Cross-partnership system change*

#### Our Aim

*We want all our children to be ready to learn at 2, ready for school at 5 and ready for life at 16.*

### 2. Key Successes

The SSBC Programme has successfully completed Phase 1 (Years 1 – 3) with notable achievements including; capital works completed, engagement with communities and parents, establishment of Programme Team, establishment of Partnership Board, delivery of over 40+ projects, current Programme reach at 69%, establishment of a new workforce and service 'Family Mentors' who work with families to deliver the locally developed handbook and Programme 'Small Steps at Home' and a local evaluation partner has been commissioned and is currently evaluating elements of the Programme.

#### 2.1 How much have we done?



The tables show the numbers of individual children and mothers who have accessed the SSBC Programme.

Unique Children – April 2015 - September 2018	
WARD	PROGRAMME TOTAL
Arboretum	605
Aspley	1339
Bulwell	1069
St Ann's	960
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3951</b>

Unique Mothers – April 2015 - September 2018	
WARD	PROGRAMME TOTAL
Arboretum	472
Aspley	1023
Bulwell	842
St Ann's	808
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3109</b>

## 2.2 How well are we doing?

SSBC activities mainly use a from 'birth' model, this means that SSBC activities have had a phased approach since 2015, and the first cohort of SSBC children are now celebrating their third birthdays. The table below shows current reach (% of children accessing at least one activity) as of September 2018.

Child Reach – at September 2018						
WARD	0 - 1 YEARS	1 - 2 YEARS	2 - 3 YEARS	3 - 4 YEARS	4 - 5 YEARS	TOTAL
Arboretum	83%	85%	84%	37%	10%	67%
Aspley	84%	91%	89%	45%	12%	70%
Bulwell	81%	92%	88%	47%	18%	72%
St Ann's	70%	88%	87%	42%	8%	66%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>69%</b>

## 2.3 Is anyone any better off?

### SSBC Family Mentor Service

This service is a brand new workforce created by SSBC to deliver the Small Steps at Home Programme to families. The delivery of the Family Mentors and Small Steps at Home has been commissioned via two contracts **delivered by local voluntary sector organisations**. The Service is now live in all four SSBC wards with Family Mentors working with children from pregnancy & birth.

Recruitment was designed to **encourage local residents to the roles**, bringing their own specific knowledge of the local area and some of the challenges faced by local parents. Family Mentors were recruited for their values and behaviours and local knowledge, rather than needing any qualifications prior to starting. It was a requirement of the successful contract providers to also **pay all staff above the National living wage**.

Currently the Family Mentor workforce is close to **50 new staff, with over 80% of mentors living within the city boundary**. One of the long term goals is that these roles are seen as potential job opportunities to local parents who have received a Family Mentor themselves. The Programme has already seen local parents who have had a Family Mentor subsequently go on to become a Family Mentor, thus building community capacity in local areas.

The table shows the total number of individual children 'year on year' who have received the Small Steps at Home Programme since the introduction of Family Mentors



Family Mentors & Small Steps at Home - Unique children					
WARD	2015 / 2016	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 - Sept	PROGRAMME TOTAL
Arboretum	N/A	24	67	45	136
Aspley	66	167	190	69	492
Bulwell	74	153	161	63	451
St Ann's	N/A	42	119	84	245
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>1324</b>

### What are Families saying about our Family Mentor Service?

This year we asked **230 families**, who are in receipt of Small Steps at Home 'How likely is it that you would recommend us to friends and family? **91% (210) said it was 'very likely'** that they would recommend us.

#### Examples of Feedback from Families –

- ***It's an excellent service; I feel I've become a better parent because of the help my Family Mentors have given me.***
- ***I am always telling my neighbors and friends about SSBC and all the services and information we receive.***
- ***I find my mentor ... very friendly and very helpful. She encouraged me to join the play groups and at first I was shy but she went to my first one with me and I haven't looked back. Both me and my daughter love all the groups we attend.***
- ***Really valuable service. All my new mum friends outside of St Ann's are incredibly jealous! I end up sharing lots of my new knowledge each month.***
- ***Really happy with the service, happy to have someone come round and help with the development of my child. Feel like I'm doing the best thing for them to get the best start in life. These family mentor sessions make me think of lots of things I don't normally think about.***

### 3. Early Learning and Impact

The SSBC Programme is a 10 year Programme that is just entering year four, it is a deliberate test and learn model over a long enough time period to enable a robust evaluation of the impact. The Big Lottery Fund has commissioned Warwick University to conduct a national evaluation across the five sites which will commence in late 2019.

Locally the first cohort of children who have received SSBC activities from birth are about to turn three years old. Locally we are beginning to measure the impact and look at the early learning around what has worked and what has not gone so well so we can refine the offer over the next 7 years. However, it is still too early to be able to accurately evaluate the impact of the SSBC Programme at this stage.

#### 3.1 Local Evaluation Partner

In May 2018 through a robust and competitive tender process a local evaluation partner was successfully appointed to evaluate the impact of the projects and activities being delivered. Nottingham Trent University and the Nottingham Centre for Children Young People & Families will lead the local evaluation over the next few



years.

It is anticipated that this evaluation will provide us with the information required to understand which elements of the Programme are having the greatest impact and could be scaled across the city and beyond. This longitudinal study requires support from all of the partners within the SSBC partnership and the evidence base is essential to our ethos of 'test and learn' which will enable us to review, revise and strengthen our offer to families.

SSBC are also part of the Big Lottery's national evaluation led by Warwick University. From 2019, this evaluation will recruit a cohort of expectant mothers and follow them over a five year period to answer the key question: 'can an area-based intervention break the cycle of disadvantage?'

### 3.2 SSBC Volunteering

Providing volunteering opportunities has been a key element of the Programme and one of our early successes. There are several volunteer roles within the SSBC partnership that enable members of local communities to get involved with SSBC; these include organising events and promoting our activities, supporting with Family Mentor community groups and being part of our decision making processes through recruitment, tender evaluation and SSBC Board membership.

The table below provides data on volunteering across the Family Mentor Service to September 2018.

Programme Volunteers	
April 2015 - September 2018	
Number of volunteers recruited since the beginning of the project	124
Number of active volunteers at the moment	62
Number of volunteers that have gained employment as Family Mentors	10
Number of volunteers that have gained employment/moved onto education	25
Number of total volunteering hours	8,257

## 4. Opportunities

### 4.1 Nottingham Literacy Hub

The National Literacy Trust has partnered with SSBC and Nottingham City Council to establish a National Literacy Trust Hub in the city. The Hub is known locally as 'Read On Nottingham'.

The Hub activity is focusing on work in early years alongside a behavior change campaign:

- Early Years - ensuring children are ready to start school
- Parental behavior change and awareness raising campaign

The Programme that supports the Early Years outcome is 'Early Words Together at Two'. This Programme is for families of two to three-year-old children, designed to build parental confidence and support a positive home learning environment, and develop supportive relationships between the setting and family. The Programme consists of a series of small group evidence-based activity sessions led by practitioners in 12 Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings in SSBC wards for parents and their two to three-year-old children. The aim of the Programme is to develop the confidence and skills of parents and carers so they are able to support their children.

#### 4.2 A Better Start: Early Social, Emotional and Language Development Communications Campaign

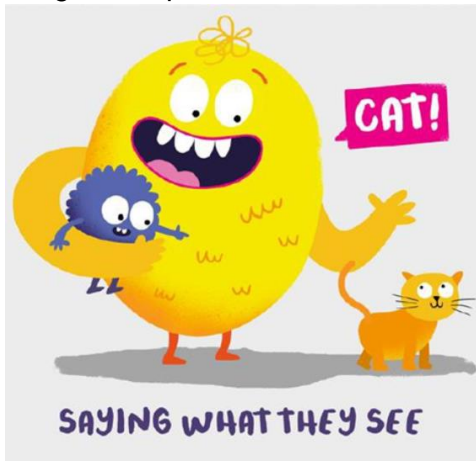
The 'Big Little Moments' campaign will run in the five areas where 'A Better Start' is based; Blackpool, Bradford, Lambeth, Nottingham and Southend. The campaign communicates the 'Core Story of Early Childhood Development' developed by the Frameworks Institute and Harvard University. It builds public understanding of early brain and biological development by translating the science into themes and metaphors that are accessible to the public.

For this campaign, 8 top priority behaviors have been developed into creative communications (cartoon like images and characters).

The campaign will be delivered in two ways:

- A core campaign delivered through paid media by 23red
- Amplification locally through the Partnership, using a mix of owned, earned, partner and paid-for publicity and communication channels.

Image examples



#### 4.3 Community Voice, Community Connections

The aim of this new service is to support, develop and train Parent Champions and Parent Ambassadors. It will also work with wider partners in the community to strengthen the community voice within SSBC and the commitment to building community capacity through our 'Community Connection' approach.

It is a key ambition that the service will also support our parents to explore new opportunities and develop a pathway to greater autonomy and self-determination, and help identify options to create a sustainable legacy for the Parent Champions beyond SSBC.

### 5. Challenges

#### 5.1 Ward Boundary Changes

There are planned changes to Nottingham City electoral ward boundaries that will be implemented at the local elections in 2019. The most significant change that will affect the SSBC Programme is the expansion of the





Arboretum Ward as it becomes Hyson Green and Arboretum Ward. The number of children in three of the Wards; Aspley, Bulwell and St Ann's will lead to small variations in children and families, however the increase in the new Hyson Green and Arboretum Ward will have a significant impact both financially and operationally for the Programme. The Big Lottery is aware of the Ward changes and support the 'expansion' required to cover the additional new births and children up to the age of three.

Although there are operational challenges to overcome with this expansion it does mean that potentially 900 more children will benefit from the Programme.

### ***5.2 Local Context and Changes to the Universal Offer of Services***

In 2014 when 'A Better Start' was launched nationally; the universal offer of services to children and families was much larger than it is now. Since this time the social, economic and political context has changed significantly and continues to do so at a rapid rate. As a consequence the financial and resource envelope across the local partnership has changed due to budgetary pressures and the need for services to rationalise and make efficiency savings.

The Big Lottery Fund is keen to understand the local context and the impact this is having on SSBC as universal services are revised and potentially reduced. This will support the Big Lottery in future decisions regarding sustainability and potential adaptations to the National Programme.

It is also crucial that the Programme is able to demonstrate how a reduction in spend may not equate to a reduction in the services offered, due to improved pathways, integration of the 0-5 offer etc.

The Partnership are aware of this national issue and work will commence in 2019 to consider the local context.