

# Report for Nottingham City Health and Wellbeing Board

Report Title: Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) Supporting the Legacy

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Lead Board Members: Councillor Cheryl Barnard and Catherine Underwood

## 1. Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to: -

- 1.1 Provide an update to the Nottingham City Health and Wellbeing Board on the Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) Programme and current legacy plans.
- 1.2 Request that the Nottingham City Health and Wellbeing Board note the proposed areas of legacy, system risks and next steps.
- 1.3 Request that the Nottingham City Health and Wellbeing Board members discuss and identify future legacy opportunities as a Board, or within their organisations linked to the SSBC Programme's activity and wider learning and agree to progress with SSBC direct.

## 2. Governance Interdependencies

SSBC is governed by a Partnership Board, hosted by Nottingham CityCare Partnership as accountable body. The Board includes representatives and voting members from Nottingham City Council (NCC), Integrated Care Board (ICB), Nottingham CityCare Partnership, Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service (NCVS), Nottingham University Hospital Trust (NUH) maternity and parent champions representing the four wards and their wider community. SSBC has several Health and Wellbeing Board members as part of its governance.

The Programme is due to provide an update to the Children's Partnership Board in September and will be securing a space at the Integrated Care Partnership Board in the Autumn.

## 3. Background

### 3.1 The Programme

Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) is one of five National Lottery Community Fund's (TNLCF) A Better Start (ABS) sites. The Programme is a Partnership that is committed to improving three core child development outcomes in pregnancy – four years, alongside locally defined system change.

The outcomes SSBC has sought to improve are:

- Improving children's diet and nutrition to support healthy physical development and protect against illness in later life.
- Supporting children to develop social and emotional skills so they can develop positive relationships and cope with demanding situations.
- Helping children develop their language and communication skills, so that they can engage with the world around them.
- Bring about 'systems change;' that is to change, for the better, the way that local health, public services, and the voluntary and community sector work together with parents to improve outcomes for children.

The Programme has received £45 million of funding from 2014/15 – 2025 to 'test and learn', evaluate and then sustain through the Partnership new services and approaches. Over the last eight years SSBC has commissioned evidence based and informed, codesigned services and activities, workforce training, public health campaigns, and developed resources in four wards of the City. The wards are Bulwell, Aspley, Arboretum and Hyson Green and St Ann's. Some of the SSBC Programme activity has been

delivered across the City with services expanding their offer and others have developed to include the wider Integrated Care System.

### 3.2 How much have we done?

Since the start of the Programme in 2015, SSBC has commissioned a wide range of 45 services and activities, designed, and delivered four public health awareness raising campaigns, funded the creation of over 70 new living wage/apprentice levels roles including the Family Mentors and Pregnancy Mentors (previously known as Maternity Support Workers).

The portfolio of services and activities have as of quarter one 2023/24 reached at least 84.6%\* of the eligible children (\*these children could have received a DPIL Book, attended a group, or had a Family Mentor), 40.1% or 5,475 eligible children have accessed the Family Mentor Service as of May 2023.

The Programme is the current sole funder of the Child Friendly City Project, working with NCC, UNICEF UK and wider partners, and 'Read on Nottingham' (a partnership with the National Literacy Trust, NCC, schools and parents), with over 90 volunteers working across the City.

The breadth of the SSBC activity can be broken down as below:

- Improving children's diet and nutrition

Healthy Lifestyles Pathway Service – delivered by CityCare 0-19

Cook and Play groups - delivered by the Family Mentor providers

Feed You Way – Breast/infant feeding campaign

Healthy Start promotion

Pregnancy and Parenting Ramadan Booklet for parents and workforce

- Develop social and emotional skills

Healthy Little Minds Service – delivered by NCC

Big Little Moments – social/emotional and early language campaign

Triple P Parenting programmes – delivered by NCC and the Family Mentors

Child Development Resource for early years workforce

Purchased 133 recliner chairs for maternity wards at NUH to support early attachment and father inclusive practice

- Develop language and communication skills

Hometalk service – delivered by Notts Healthcare Foundation Trust

Funded over 7,700 Dolly Parton Imagination Library books

Fund 'Read on Nottingham' Literacy Hub

FRED (Fathers Reading Every Day) sessions – delivered by the Family Mentors

Language Leads project

- Develops across all outcomes/other outcomes

Family Mentors delivering Small Steps at Home – delivered by VCS providers

Family Nurse Partnership (additional resource to core contract) – delivered by CityCare 0-19

Love Bump - Smoking cessation in pregnancy campaign

Stay One Step Ahead – Home safety intervention to reduce avoidable and preventable injuries in 0-4's – delivered by Family Mentors, CityCare 0-19 and NCC Early Help

- Bring about 'systems change'

The SSBC system change model is focused on four key areas as shown below

SSBC has aligned and supported wider system transformation, invested in workforce developments, is embedding father inclusive practice across pregnancy and early years workforces, has committed to support Nottingham to become a UNICEF accredited Child Friendly City, and placed coproduction with local parents at the heart of all Programme activity.

Outputs include:

Pregnancy Mentors - apprentice level roles employed by NUH.

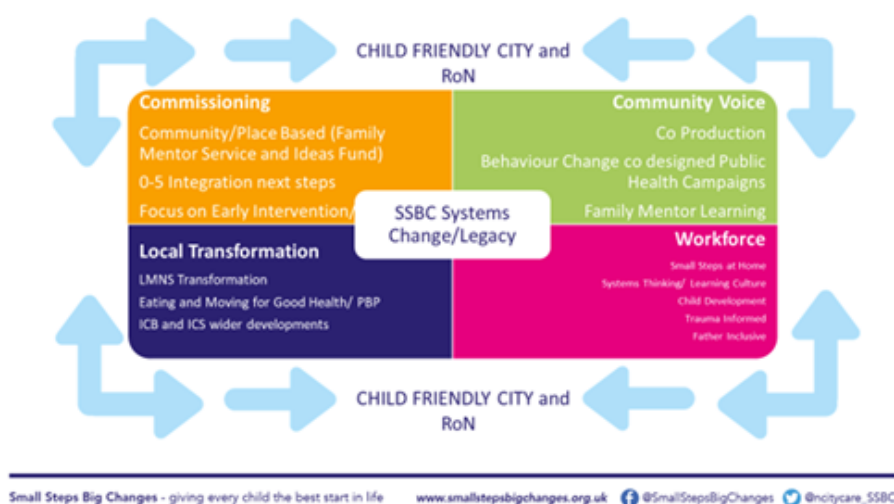
The Dads Pack – a resource for new and expectant fathers.

Developed and trained over 30 parents, 14 are currently active in SSBC governance and coproduction across the wider system.

Match funded the Integrated Care Board (ICB) coproduction team.

Supported the development of the neglect toolkit with Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Children’s Safeguarding Boards.

Supporting Trauma Informed approaches across the City.



### 3.3 Impact

SSBC is evaluating the impact of its services and approaches through a variety of means. TNLCF have also commissioned an evaluation and shared learning partner, who are supporting the fund to evidence the impact of early intervention and prevention and influence policy nationally.

#### 3.31 National ‘A Better Start’ Evaluation

TNLCF are funding a five-site wide evaluation of ‘A Better Start,’ Warwick University were initially leading the evaluation, this contract was terminated in 2019 due to challenges between the academic focussed approach and the locally designed and delivered five Programmes. A consortium led by NatCen is now leading the National Evaluation, this work commenced in 2021/22 and has four objectives:

- To identify the contribution made by the ABS programme to the life chances of children who have received ABS interventions.
- To identify the factors that contribute to improving diet and nutrition, social and emotional skills and language and communication skills through the suite of interventions, both targeted and universal, selected by ABS sites.

- To evidence, through collective journey mapping, the experiences of families from diverse backgrounds through ABS systems.
- To evidence the contribution the ABS programme has made to reducing costs to the public purse relating to primary school aged children.

### 3.32 National 'A Better Start' Learning Contract

TNLCF have commissioned National Children's Bureau (NCB) to lead the synthesis and dissemination of the learning across the five sites. This includes annual learning events, insights, opinion pieces and more latterly influencing opportunities with Government officials and National Bodies.

SSBC has contributed to these, including submissions to select committees, policy reviews, a round table discussion with Deputy Director level civil servants and the Institute of Health Visiting.

### 3.33 Outcomes Framework

The Programme has an Outcomes Framework that is designed to measure improvements in child level outcomes as SSBC babies reach school. This has been challenging to collate due to the impact of the pandemic on early years foundation stage data, changes to national indicators and GDPR during the last eight years. Work will continue on this and at this stage SSBC can report that,

'There are 2256 children who have lived in SSBC wards (2015 – 2022) and have completed a 24-month Ages and Stages questionnaire (ASQ) assessment with their Health Visitor. Of these children 1507 (67%) have been identified as 'on target' across all five areas of:

- Communication
- Personal and social
- Gross motor
- Fine motor
- Problem solving'

### 3.34 Local Evaluation

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) was commissioned to lead the local evaluation, this was a five-year contract that ended in July 2023. Mixed methods approaches were used to look at a variety of services, offers and approaches. The evaluation methodology and progress were impacted by the pandemic and GDPR changes, however this allowed for a themed evaluation (see below). A cost benefit evaluation formed part of the original tender, NTU were unable to deliver this; challenges included, lack of a treatment group v's a control group, timescales, take up of multiple interventions and changes to the implementation plans.

Findings to date do show positive impact on children's outcomes at 12 and 24 months, alongside rich qualitative evidence, all reports are available on the SSBC website in the [knowledge hub section](#):

#### Family Mentor Service Research

"100% of families interviewed would recommend Family Mentor to families with young children" (NTU Research 2022)

Parents reported improvements in wellbeing and confidence, children eating healthier food options, improvements in sleeping routines and behaviours

'There was a statistically significant difference in mean vocabulary scores between SSBC children and non-SSBC children. This finding suggests that overall engagement with the

SSBC programme is linked to better vocabulary scores.’ (British Picture Vocabulary Scale Research 2022)

‘Children from SSBC wards who participated in the programme for 18 months or more had the highest mean 24-Month ASQ scores (excluding problem-solving domain) and ‘overall’ scores.’ (Family Mentor Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) Research 2019).

#### Father Inclusive Practice Research

‘Both fathers and practitioners described the Pack as a useful source of first reference, especially as it is a comprehensive single document from a trusted source’

‘Fathers saw the Pack as being useful even if this was not their first baby’

‘Fathers and practitioners felt that the language of the Pack was understandable to those with basic English reading skills. Practitioners liked the fact that it could be ‘dipped into’ and did not have to be read all in one go’

‘Both fathers and practitioners reported that the information in the Pack helped with the participants’ knowledge of the financial help available to them. Participants learned about their rights as a new father and what parental leave and benefits they could access’ (NTU Dads Pack findings 2023).

#### Coproduction Research

‘Co-production was seen by participants as reducing barriers between professionals and communities. PC&A felt that their knowledge was more likely than that of professionals to be accepted by local parents, as they are already known. Consequently, coproducing the service with local parents makes SSBC provision more likely to be trusted and accepted by parents’

SSBC professionals felt that coproducing the service with PC&A challenged their assumptions about the community and those who live within it, and understood better that they themselves might come from a place of privilege’

Working alongside the PC&A has encouraged professionals to consider how inequality impacts on people’s everyday lives, and to be more likely to ask more questions to gain a fuller understanding of the lives of those within the community. (NTU Coproduction Findings 2023)

Two new tenders are live to evaluate, Feed Your Way, Healthy Lifestyles Pathway and Healthy Little Minds.

#### 3.35 Local Themed Research and Evaluation

SSBC has commissioned additional themed research and evaluation in the following areas: Impact of Covid-19 on Education and Children’s Services, Parent and Fathers Voice reports, Engagement of Literacy Champions Research, and the Primary Care Network 6 Research.

#### **4. Legacy Model and Planning**

With less than two years until the end of the funding period, the Programme is now focussed on legacy, sustainability and how as a Partnership we articulate and share the SSBC story at a local and national level.

The legacy of SSBC will be built upon the revised system change model highlighted above, agreed by the SSBC Board. The SSBC Board have approved the legacy model below, this will be refined over time but initially focus on the **six areas** identified.

The SSBC Board, has committed resources including funding to realise this legacy, this may require adjustments in the final years. Some areas could feed into the Health and Wellbeing Strategy workstreams as part of the legacy and sustainability planning.



## 5. Legacy Next Steps and Opportunities

### 5.1 Community Voice and Coproduction

- SSBC want to continue to collaborate with colleagues across the Health and Wellbeing Board in promoting Nottingham as a breastfeeding friendly city.
- The next phase of the 'Feed Your Way' breastfeeding campaign development is to engage with businesses and ensure public/community spaces support breastfeeding, this also aligns with Child Friendly City.
- The Feed your Way, Love Bump and Big Little Moments Campaigns intellectual property will require hosting post SSBC

- The Programme has much to share on 'how' we have done things not just 'what we have done, and wider learning linked to system change. In particular coproduction and involvement of the community in designing, delivering, and commissioning services.
- SSBC continue to support the ICB/ICP coproduction strategy and ambitions, jointly funding the coproduction team, and hope to develop a 'how to' toolkit on coproduction that could be used by the Health and Wellbeing Board/PBP.

## 5.2 Commissioning and Funding

- SSBC has submitted a bid to the ICB Health Inequalities and Innovation Fund for £200,000 to implement a more targeted Family Mentor/Small Steps at Home offer across the city for 100 children. The bid was selected by the assessment panel and will be recommended for funding at the SPI Committee in August.
- There are significant opportunities to embed the learning and activity from SSBC into the Family Hubs (infant mental health services, approaches to involving parents, home learning environment and breastfeeding/infant feeding support), Start for Life Strategy, Early Help models, future 0-19 commissioning and elements of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy/Place Based Partnership.
- The Programme has also looked at creative ways to engage with all members of the communities they serve, this has included work on translation, multilingual workforce, and work with Primary Care Network 6 (PCN) to understand barriers to accessing services.

## 5.3 Workforce Development

- Another key learning area has been the development and trialling of new workforce models that have supported entry level national living wage roles, apprenticeships and developed employment and training capacity in the community.
- SSBC have continued to collaborate with partners to support trauma informed approaches in the early intervention and prevention space.
- SSBC has been a trail blazer in developing father inclusive practice in pregnancy and the early years, recognising the importance of positively involved dads and father-figures to reflect a whole family approach.
- SSBC would welcome input from the Health and Wellbeing Board to discuss and consider next steps for the above and identify future legacy opportunities linked to the SSBC Programme's activity and wider learning.

## 5.4 Transformation and Partnership Initiatives

- SSBC fully funds the UNICEF Child Friendly City project and has committed over £500,000 till March 2025/26.
- Embedding a child's rights-based approach into the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board and its partner organisations remains an ongoing opportunity that will support the ambition to be a Child Friendly City and the legacy of SSBC.

## 5.5 Assets and Capital Investments

- There are a sizeable number of intellectual property assets (handbooks, website, campaigns, research, and training) developed by the Programme which will require hosting, post funding.
- Discussions are taking place with TNLCF, the SSBC Board and legal advice has been sought.
- It would be helpful for the Health and Wellbeing Board to consider its role and that of the partner organisations in hosting these assets post SSBC.

## **6. Risk Considerations**

The SSBC Team and Board are managing and mitigating for operational and strategic Programme risks in this final phase. However, there are wider system risks to consider.

### **6.1 System Gap**

SSBC funding was always meant to provide opportunities to test and learn innovative approaches and additionality to the core universal and targeted services that were in place.

Over the last eight years the context has changed significantly with reduced budgets across health, social care, and the VCS sector, increasing levels of need, the impact of the pandemic and more recent cost of living crisis.

As SSBC funding ends this will leave an unavoidable gap. It is not feasible nor intended to continue all of SSBC activity, but the Programme has provided a level of stability and has supported to 'fill gaps' where appropriate.

### **6.2 Potential Increase in Demand/need across the System**

When the SSBC delivery ceases in line with the grant funding, there is a risk that need, and demand could increase in these communities and populations that have benefited from the early intervention and prevention services provided.

### **6.3 Sustainability of the Offer**

Where SSBC activity has demonstrated its impact on outcomes, it is still proving challenging to get full financial commitment to continue/ re commission due to the pressures on the system budget and the challenges in evidencing a quick return on investment on prevention programmes like SSBC.

### **6.4 Risks to VCS Providers and their Workforce**

SSBC is acutely aware of the reliance on its funding for some smaller VCS providers and the workforce posts they have created. Redundancy costs have been factored into contracts.

## **7. Next Steps and Recommendations**

7.1 That the Nottingham City Health and Wellbeing Board note the update on the Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) Programme and current legacy plans.

7.2 That the Nottingham City Health and Wellbeing Board note the proposed areas of legacy, system risks and next steps.

7.3 That the Nottingham City Health and Wellbeing Board discuss and identify future legacy opportunities as a Board, or within their organisations linked to the SSBC Programme's activity and wider learning and agree to progress with SSBC direct.