



BUILDING PARENT’S CAPABILITIES, REDUCING PRESSURES FOR FAMILIES

Collective development of the Blackpool Better Start Model of Change

Defining a collective strategy for transformational work requires a whole system to come together to define an agreed course of action and long term-strategic plan of how to get there. The Blackpool Better Start Partnership developed its solution to preventing poorer outcomes for children through a simple Model of Change.



Understanding the Challenge

In 2014, when the A Better Start - National Lottery Fund Community Grant was announced, Blackpool’s youngest children were significantly behind their national peers. Children born in Blackpool had more challenging births and early childhoods. They were starting school not ready to learn and across the town this generational cycle of poorer outcomes was being felt in the high costs of social and health services.

The Blackpool Better Start Partnership was formed to collectively develop a vision and strategy for the town’s youngest residents. We support and empower families to have the best outcomes for their babies and children from pregnancy to starting school.

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 Setting the collective vision for Blackpool Better Start enabled all agencies to see how their own work could make a difference for families with young children. It also let us to realise what a critical contribution Better Start could make to our wider ambitions for regeneration and renewal of Blackpool. When we invest in early childhood, we are investing in the future of our town.
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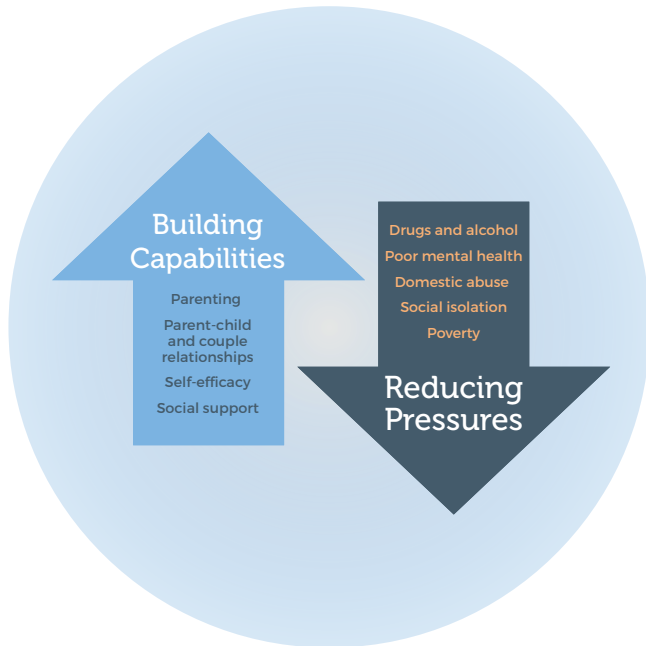
Neil Jack, Chief Executive – Blackpool Council

What we did

Senior leaders, professionals and parents came together to develop a shared understanding of what it was like for families from pregnancy to their children starting school. Professionals and parents spoke about their experiences of services and support, what was working well and where there could be opportunities to enhance the offer. Data insights were also shared about the outcomes for women in pregnancy and early childhoods, identifying any gaps in provision. And examples of best practice were shared of where services and systems for early years families were making a difference.

This collective understanding formed a simple Model of Change which focuses two critical components:

1. Building parent’s own capabilities
2. Reducing the pressures that families face

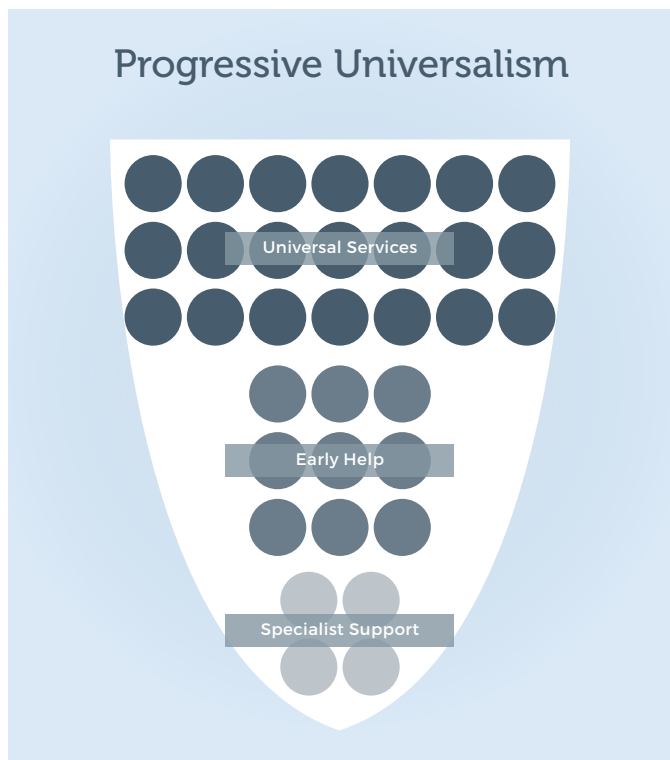


From this simple illustration of how early years families can be supported to thrive, all activity across the early years system is focused relentlessly on ensuring that parents have the knowledge and skills to understand how to best support childhoods. At the same time, they have access to specialist, evidence-based services when they need them.

Our pathways of support are based on the principle of progressive universalism. This provides a tiered portfolio of services, providing high-quality science and evidence-based services for all, and additional targeted and specialist services for those most in need. Providing a balanced approach of enhancing universal provision whilst addressing inequalities ensures that the most vulnerable families receive additional support.

Over the last decade, Blackpool has transformed its early years offer, enhancing provision of existing services with evidence-based approaches as well as introducing new and innovative services and approaches.

The commitment from the partnership to ensure generational change has been evident in the sustainability, upscaling and embedding of services within existing systems. Leaving a legacy of providing all families with support at the earliest opportunity.



“Better Start is an inspiring example of how important and impactful it can be to bring organisations together –with a common vision and a steely determination –to listen to people at a local level and put families at the centre of services.”

Christian Guy, Director – Royal Foundation

Outcomes

Reach
52% of individuals that have accessed funded activities and services reside in Blackpool’s most deprived households, those categorised as IMD1.

Impact
Over 40 new services or service enhancements have been brought into the town, reaching over **30,000** children 0-3 and **7,600** pregnant women.