Better Start Bradford Innovation Hub

Neighbourhoods Project Final Report August 2023

This report has been produced as a conclusion to the commission of the Neighbourhoods Project by Better Start Bradford. The report includes a Theory of Change and Logic model for the project as applicable at the end of this commissioned period and a summary of the qualitative data collected from Neighbourhood Workers reflective diaries.

This work has only been possible because of the enthusiasm and commitment of the staff and volunteers who have supported this work. We are grateful to the Better Start Bradford team, the Neighbourhood Workers and to all those in the community who have participated.

Authors: Cara Hammond, Josie Dickerson, Sara Ahern, Lizzie Caperone, and the Better Start Bradford Innovation Hub

Version 1.0

Approved by: Josie Dickerson, Director: Better Start Bradford Innovation Hub

Produced for Better Start Bradford

Executive Summary

Project background

The Neighbourhoods Project was launched in 2019 in recognition of the need to optimise recruitment into BSB projects from under-represented groups and to ensure that the programme messages reach as many families as possible. There was a desire to have grassroots involvement and prioritise the needs and interests of local families in the wider BSB offering. The project brought together a number of organisations with existing relationships within the BSB community and tasked them with disseminating programme messages, engaging families and, where appropriate, referring them into BSB projects. As a newly designed intervention, creating and testing the project's theory of change with input from the community was vital, and is a prime example of BSB's test and learn processes in action.

Aims of the evaluation

The Neighbourhoods Project has received an implementation evaluation using monitoring data collected by partner organisations and a qualitative study using reflective diaries completed by Neighbourhood Workers. The aims were to:

- understand the strategies used to engage the BSB community, particularly those less well reached
- test whether the project delivered in practice reflects the theory of change and logic model developed during service design, and adapt these as required.
- use learning to revise the theory of change and logic model and increase understanding about this type of community engagement model

Findings: Progression criteria/monitoring data

Available data suggests that the Neighbourhoods Project reached approximately **2000 new families** and made around **900 referrals to BSB projects and related activities** over a four year period**.** It is not possible to say that all of these are definitely new families, or unique and successful referrals because of the way data had to be collected and challenges with tracking referrals through BSB projects. However, these numbers do represent significant engagement with the community and practical and emotional work on the part of Neighbourhood Workers that offers potential added value to individuals, communities, and BSB.

Qualitative findings

Qualitative work completed in summer 2022 identified key components of the model which enabled successful engagement with families. Neighbourhood Workers used a range of methods to engage with and maintain the engagement of families, including regular contact and focussing on the needs of each individual family. This element of the evaluation also showed regular proactive contact with other projects and services supported the Neighbourhood Workers knowledge of and access to those teams and that they developed in confidence and skills through their role within the project.

Theory of Change and Logic Model

The primary output of this evaluation has been the creation of an theory of change and logic model informed by delivery. This represents significant progress towards having an evaluable model that accurately represents the work of the Neighbourhoods Project and provides a legacy of the BSB test and learn process. This has also nudged the project up the EIF rating of interventions.

Learning from the challenges of evaluating this project

There were many challenges to evaluating this project, these related to the timing and structure of the project, particularly those that impacted data collection, and the evolving nature of the project over its lifespan. The key learning from this is that a project such as Neighbourhoods, which feeds into and serves other projects should ideally be developed and implemented prior to or alongside those projects it serves. This would make it possible to build better tracking of referrals into the design and data requirements of the projects receiving referrals from the Neighbourhood Workers. This would support evaluation of the impact and outcomes of the Neighbourhoods Project to establish whether the project was achieving its goals.

Executive Summary

Conclusions and Recommendations

Delivery
The characteristics of the Neighbourhood Workers are the key to the success of a project like this. Their skills and energy in engaging and supporting families as well as adapting their ways of working to specific circumstance is vital to manage hyper-local community building and supporting families to access wider services and broader opportunities.

Evidence Review
It is worth noting that a project employing a similar peer to peer model was recently evaluated as part of Blackpool Better Start [1]. The project uses 'community connectors' to directly engage 'hardly reached' families and link them in to relevant projects and services. While the project is not identical to the Neighbourhoods Project in its aims and activities, findings from the evaluation aligned with those from our qualitative work which highlighted the value of person centred relationship building in reaching these communities.

Recommendations for delivery:

- Additional investment in support and development of Neighbourhood Workers will ensure they are best able to engage families in a meaningful way. This may include training related to mental health, migration, trafficked people, trauma recovery, Roma families, challenging parents appropriately, and building trust with vulnerable families.

- Given the complexity of and variation in families' needs in the BSB area, supporting Neighbourhood Workers with their own mental health and wellbeing is also important as is a clear structure of supervision and team support.

- Collaboration and connection to other projects is fundamental to the Neighbourhoods Project. Should this project or one similar expand outside of the BSB programme it would be necessary to ensure there was a role facilitating those connections and providing sufficient name recognition to get them access.

Evaluation
The type of evaluation possible for the Neighbourhoods Project has been limited by its complexity. One of the biggest limitations is the inability to accurately understand who is being engaged by the project. However, the current evaluation has facilitated a great deal of relevant learning. It has enabled the development of a more accurate and comprehensive theory of change and logic model. This can be used by the delivery organisations to communicate the work they have done over the lifetime of the project, and support commissioning of similar projects in the future.

Recommendations for future evaluation

- Using the updated theory of change and logic model develop a project process flow that identifies opportunities for data capture and use this to select measurable outputs and outcomes
- Ensure effective and consistent data capture through a shared user friendly data system that supports regular reporting

This would allow for a robust implementation evaluation, that could address topics including, but not necessarily limited to:

- How many families the project reaches through each element of its work
- Who the project is reaching and whether it is reaching the intended communities

[1] Mills CF, Lowrie E, Kinloch K, and Hall E. Community Connectors (CCx): the strategies employed by peer to peer connectors to foster relationships with early years caregivers to improve universal early child health and development. BMC Health Services Research 2021;21(283).

Project Background

Design and structure

The aim of the Neighbourhoods Project was to develop a model of delivery to drive forward BSB key messages through small community organisations and promote engagement of families across the BSB area with BSB projects and services. The model was co-produced with over 15 Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations, drawing on the skills of local organisations and people of all ages. This was intended to focus on "recognizing, appreciating, and supporting relevant grassroots activity that enables the community to play its rightful role, alongside other partners in the delivery of BSB's objectives".

The Neighbourhoods Project uses a 'Hub and Spoke' model with BSB acting as the 'hub', offering training and expertise, and four community partnerships (BD4 Family, Karmand Centre, Thornbury Centre, and West Bowling Centre) acting as 'spokes'. These partners employ 9 Neighbourhood Workers and develop bespoke engagement projects and strategies to support families living in their local areas to access BSB projects.

The partners

The community partnerships were chosen for the diversity of their activities and the different communities they serve (both in terms of geography and cultural and ethnic background) as this presented opportunity to engage different groups and particularly reach people who may not have otherwise engaged. The Thornbury Centre, Karmand Centre, and West Bowling Centre offer a core service of advice to adults on topics such as benefits, debt, IT, and childcare. Adopting a strand related specifically to early years was therefore new to these organisations. By contrast BD4 Family has an existing focus on families and the early years making them well placed to adapt and incorporate much of the Neighbourhoods Project activities into their existing model. These differences across partners have meant different approaches to and opportunities and challenges in the delivery of the Neighbourhoods Project.

At the conclusion of the project eight Neighbourhood Workers are based within the West Bowling Consortium (see below) and in BD4 Family. A Neighbourhood Worker Coordinator role is also hosted at BD4 Family - this is a role that ensures that the Neighbourhoods Project is recognised and represented across the BSB Area.

Changes during delivery

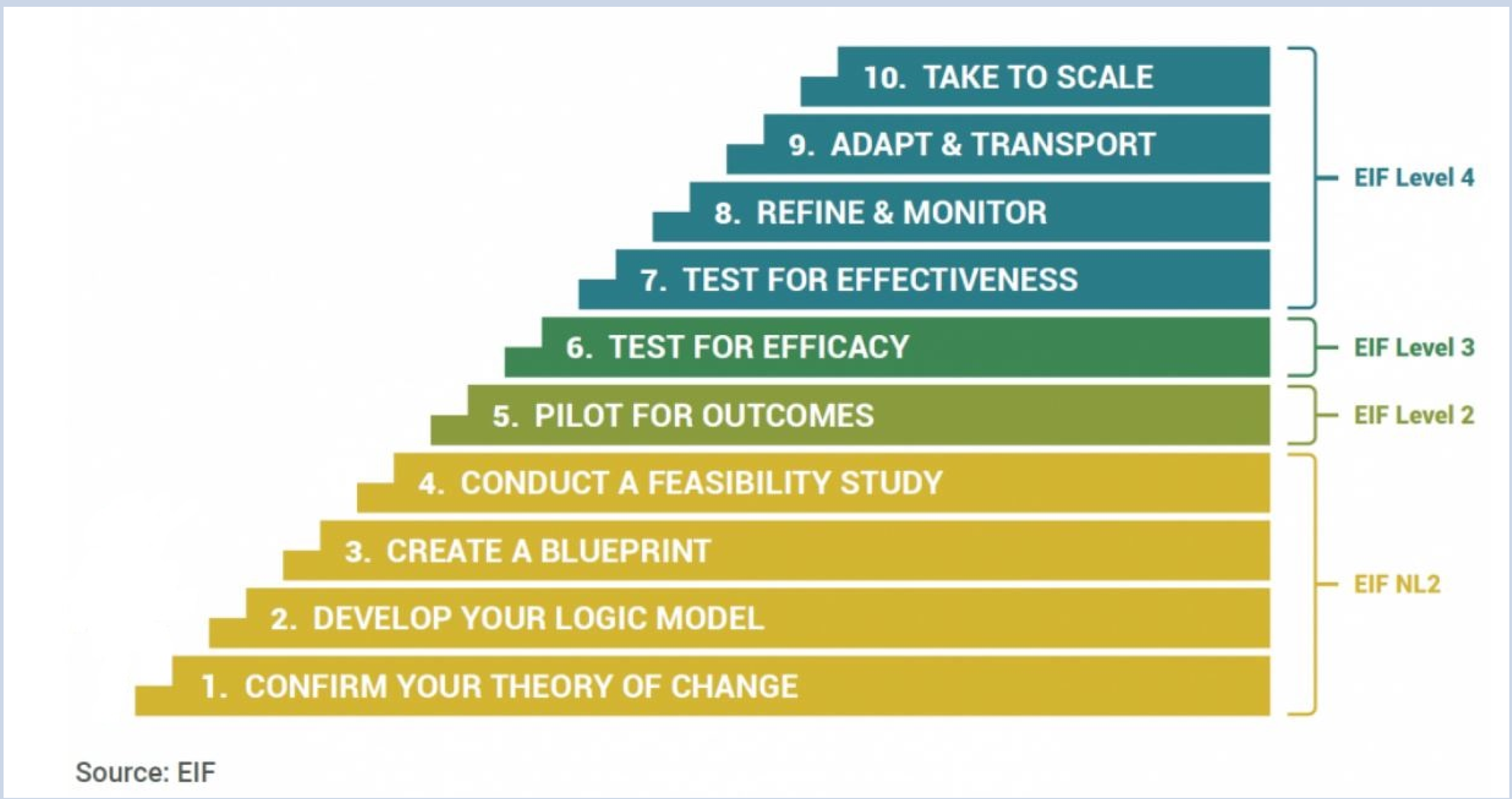
When the Thornbury Centre became unable to continue working on the project, the West Bowling Centre and Karmand Centre formed the West Bowling Consortium in order to continue to manage Neighbourhood Workers in a way that maintained the geographical reach of the project.

What does the existing evidence tell us?

At the point that the Neighbourhoods Project was developed we were not aware of there being any evidential base or equivalent intervention aimed at pregnant women and/or the parents of under fours. The primary evidence noted at the start of the project was a meta-analysis of community engagement in relation to health outcomes[1], which had found evidence of positive impact, but could not make any conclusions about the most effective models or a certain theory of change.

As a consequence, using the EIF evidence levels as a framework (see Figure below), the BSBIH categorized this project as at the first step of NL2 (i.e. an entirely new intervention with no theory of change or logic model). During the original service design process a logic model and theory of change were created using the knowledge and expertise of the VCS steering group, but without significant evidence available to guide it. As part of this evaluation the project logic model and theory of change have been updated, incorporating learning from the Neighbourhood Workers collated through reflective diaries and meetings with the team. The BSBIH would now categorize the project as on step two (having a theory of change and logic model), moving towards step three (having a 'blueprint' of how the service works) of the EIF NL2.

It is worth noting that a project employing a similar peer to peer model was recently evaluated as part of Blackpool Better Start [2]. The project uses 'community connectors' to directly engage 'hardly reached' families and link them in to relevant projects and services. While the project is not identical to the Neighbourhoods Project in its aims and activities, findings from the evaluation aligned with those from our qualitative work which highlighted the value of person centred relationship building in reaching these communities.

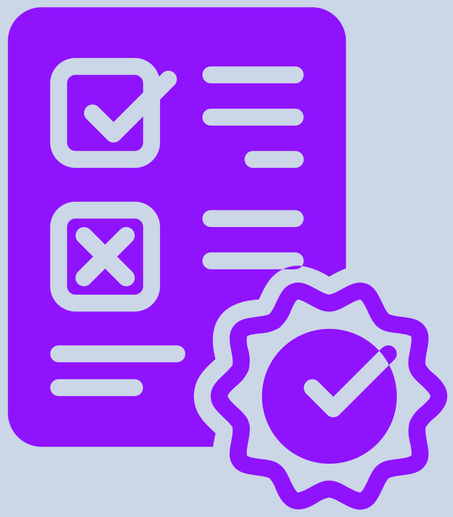


[1] O'Mara-Eves A, Brunton G, McDaid D, Oliver S, Kavanagh J, Jamal F, et al. Community engagement to reduce inequalities in health: a systematic review, meta-analysis and economic analysis. Public Health Res 2013;1(4).
[2] Mills CF, Lowrie E, Kinloch K, and Hall E. Community Connectors (CCx): the strategies employed by peer to peer connectors to foster relationships with early years caregivers to improve universal early child health and development. BMC Health Services Research 2021;21(283).

Aim of the evaluation

This evaluation had several aims:

- to understand the strategies used to engage the BSB community, particularly those less well reached
- to test whether the project delivered in practice reflects the theory of change and logic model developed during service design
- to use learning to revise the theory of change and logic model and increase understanding about this type of community engagement model



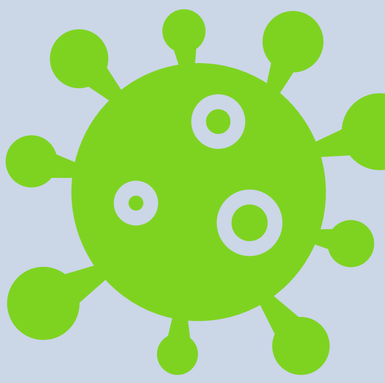
The project was subject to an implementation evaluation using monitoring data collected by partner organisations and a qualitative study using reflective diaries completed by Neighbourhood Workers.

Differences in the nature of the partner organisations and the bespoke delivery of the project has required that data be reported separately for the West Bowling consortium and BD4 families.

As stated, a key element of the evaluation was understanding how Neighbourhood Workers engaged with families and what their experience of the work was. This was largely addressed by the qualitative work done with the reflective diaries completed by the Neighbourhood Workers. This also drew out some of the barriers and challenges that the Neighbourhood Workers experienced and what supported their work.

The implementation element of the evaluation was focused on the Progression Criteria and the logic model to assess whether the project could be delivered as intended. This element faced some challenges that are explored further below, but provided useful learning in regards to design and development towards evaluation of a community project such as this. This is valuable to BSB more widely as a test and learn organisation.

Impact of Covid



To add context to this evaluation, the COVID 19 pandemic was announced during the first year of project delivery with social restrictions in place throughout most of the first two years. These restrictions impacted on the partners' direct work with families, with some stopping completely, and the rest of their face-to-face work significantly limited by numbers and location, or moved online. Given the impact on BSB projects more widely, COVID 19 also impacted on referrals into the BSB projects while services and the community adapted.

Neighbourhood Workers ran online sessions and made much more use of calling and texting families to stay in contact. During this time Neighbourhood Workers reported extensive use of social media and also creating welfare packs for families.

It is not obvious from the data exactly how COVID restrictions impacted the project's performance against targets and this is particularly hard to assess given that the project was only just getting established when the restrictions were imposed.

Findings: Monitoring Data

The Neighbourhoods Project had three key progression criteria. These were:

- ***Implementation:*** The number of new families with children under 4 contacted
- ***Recruitment:*** The number of new referrals to BSB Projects for families with children under 4
- ***Reach:*** The number of new families contacted by ethnicity

From the start of the project there were difficulties in establishing successful data capture. This stems from differences in the nature of the partner delivery organisations and the way they work with their communities, their existing data capture processes and systems, and the specific requirements of BSB reporting and BSBIH's evaluation. For this reason the organisations are reported on separately. Efforts were made by the BSBIH and project partners to address issues with data part way through project delivery but it is acknowledged that these issues have not been fully resolved, making it hard to draw any strong conclusions from the quantitative data. Specific issues are explored below. However, the data does suggest the project has performed well in engaging new families, while rates of referrals have varied across partners and time periods.

Implementation

As is touched upon throughout this report, families were engaged in a range of ways by the Neighbourhood Workers. Contacting new families could include approaching them at community events of over 100 people for brief conversations. It is worth acknowledging that despite not talking directly with a Neighbourhood Worker, families at these events may have still learned about BSB and even started to engage with projects through literature and resources. It could also include more intensive one to one work with a an individual newly accessing the organisation for support. The way that data is recorded means we can not confidently discriminate between these types of experience so the numbers reported on the next page reflect all families that may have learned some new information about BSB.

Recruitment

As well as methods of engagement differing across families, referral processes for the core projects on offer within the BSB programme also vary. Reflecting this, data suggests that referrals recorded by the project range from more of a signposting role (directing to a self-referral page), to completing a referral by phone or email with full details of the family with their consent. Performance against targets for this progression criteria are reported on the following page but it should be noted that the data could be difficult to interpret. However, the data does suggest that all of the core BSB projects received referrals from the Neighbourhoods Project during delivery, with referrals also being made to the Parents in the Lead/HEY fund, and to Baby Week and other one off BSB events. By far the largest proportion of referrals (over a third) went to Better Start Imagine, the programme's book gifting service, with HENRY and Incredible Years also receiving a good number of referrals.

Reach

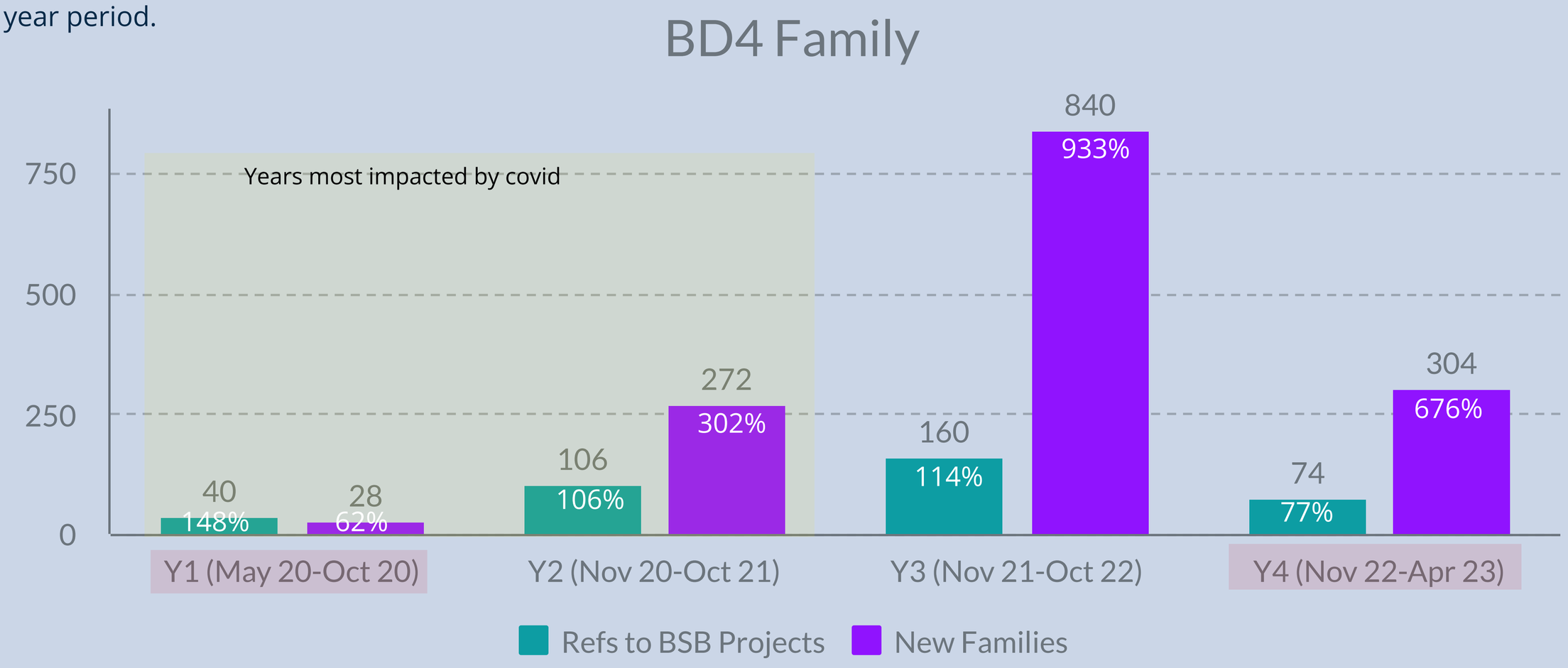
Due to the variation in how families were engaged, Neighbourhood Workers reported that collecting ethnicity for new families was not always appropriate at first contact; it interrupted the important relationship building that needed to take place and that often interactions were fleeting. This means that there is insufficient data to report against this criteria. This lack of data does, however, indicate that Neighbourhood Workers were flexible and person-centred in their ways of working, which is crucial to this model of work. Understanding where data collection is inappropriate also provides valuable learning for designing future progression criteria.

It is acknowledged that despite issues with the data it represents a huge amount of work on the part of the individual Neighbourhood Workers and overall project, including the emotional work of relationship building and the often extended process of ensuring families are ready in practical and emotional terms to be referred which is so central to this model.

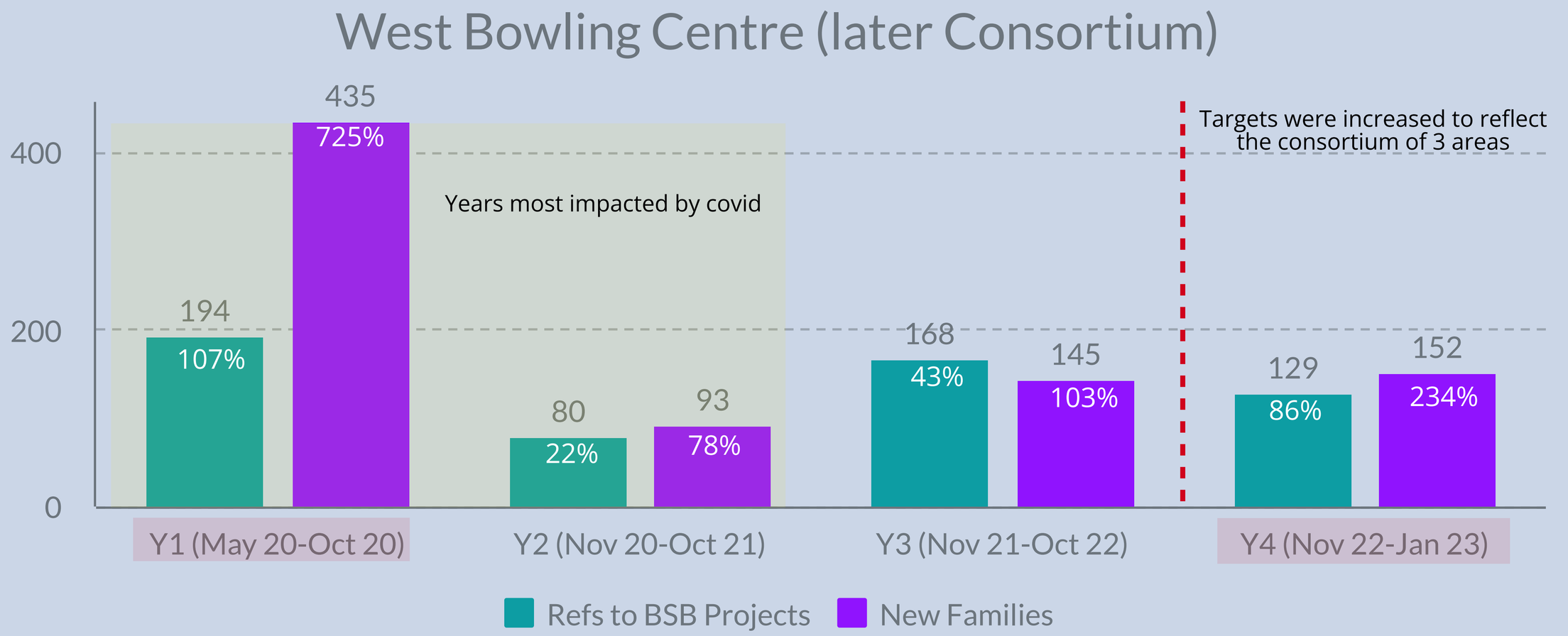
Findings: Progression Criteria

Differences in targets for the progression criteria across partner organisations reflect the number of Neighbourhood Workers and the geographical reach area. Performance against targets is shown in white with actual numbers in grey. Note that both year one and year 4 are not reported as full years here and the targets have been adjusted to reflect the actual period reported on.

Available data suggests that the combined efforts of the partner organisations within the Neighbourhoods Project reached approximately **2000 new families** and made around **900 referrals to BSB projects and related activities** over a four year period.



BD4 Family reached significant numbers of families through large activities such as street parties and organised trips, which were particularly effective in year 3 as lockdown restrictions were lifted.



The figures for West Bowling are harder to track due to the formation of the consortium and different ways of providing data. This means these figures may under represent performance (particularly Karmand and Thornbury Centres). It does appear that this partner was most able to make new connections into BSB in the first year. We note that for this partner the target for referrals was consistently set significantly higher than it was for new families contacted (more than double) and the reasons for this are unclear.

Qualitative findings

A full report on the qualitative findings can be provided on request by contacting BSBIH.

Methods

5 Neighbourhood Workers participated in the evaluation by completing reflective diaries every quarter. These were submitted to the BSBIH. Templates for the reflective diaries were developed with the Neighbourhood Workers to ensure they were easy to use and that questions were appropriate and met the aims of the evaluation. They covered four key areas for reflection; *engaging new families*, *engaging families already known to the service*, *collaborating with external organisations*, and *training and personal development*.

A small number of the diaries were read by the lead researcher who then created a framework for the analysis of all the information. Every part of each diary was then coded according to this framework using a qualitative analysis software. Two members of the research team then checked the coding to make sure they were in agreement. The key themes identified in the analysis were then taken to the Neighbourhood Workers to discuss so that they could confirm or challenge the research teams findings. A summary of those findings is provided here.

How do Neighbourhood Workers engage families and maintain their engagement? OR

Initial contact:

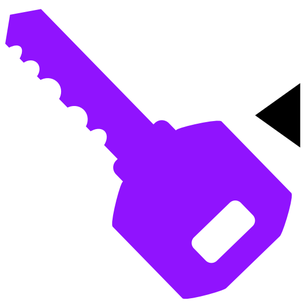
- Relationship building
- Building trust
- Regular contact
- Shared journeys

Barriers to engagement:

- Language barriers
- Time constraints
- Delays in Communication
- Problems with referal processes

Other issues facing families:

- Financial worries
- Mental Health issues
- Isolation concerns
- Food Poverty
- Lack of technology and skills



Overcoming barriers:

- Regular, repeated contact
- Promoting 'what's in it for me' factor
- Virtual interactions
- Social media and communication tools
- Sharing experiences
- Welfare packs
- Fun, interactive activities

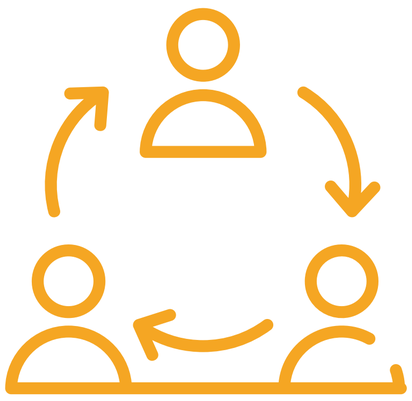
Positive consequences of engagement:

- Expanding support network and making friends
- Building confidence
- Reduced social isolation
- Linking families with additional support for other needs
- Safe spaces
- Opportunities to try new things
- Lifeline during COVID-19

"We're not just showing them where to go, we're sharing the experience with them and going on the journey with them"
Neighbourhood Worker

Qualitative findings

How do Neighbourhood Workers engage and collaborate with partner organisations?

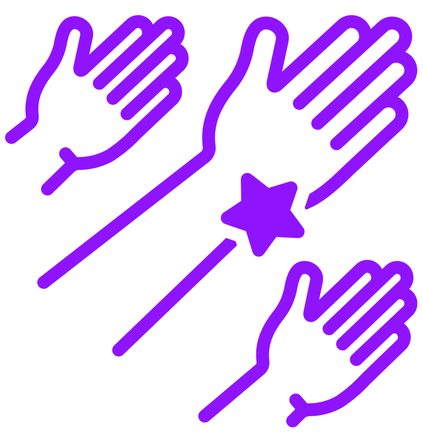


Starting collaborations:

- Weekly outreach work, often with organisations who had seen BSB activity packs
- Reciprocal talks
- Sharing resource packs
- Running sessions for and with local religious organisations
- Setting up taster sessions

Who did Neighbourhoods Project work with:

- Other BSB Projects
- Religious groups
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Non-profits and VSOs such as food and clothing banks
- FACE Team



Benefits of collaboration:

- Opportunities for further outreach work
- The sharing of relevant resources for staff and families
- Connecting families with other organisations such as local religious groups and refugee and asylum seeker groups

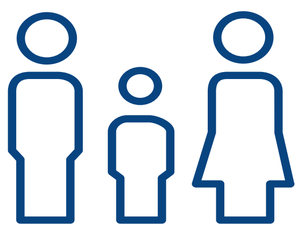
Sustaining collaboration:

- Ongoing conversations with other practitioners leading to further development of professional relationships
- Follow up meetings with external organisations

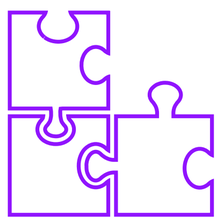
"I have spoken frequently with Homestart to ensure we are all on the same page with our support. I have also had ongoing conversations with social workers and early help support workers. This ensures we are all working together and providing the best support we can."
Neighbourhood Worker

What personal and professional development do Neighbourhood Workers experience as part of their role?

Neighbourhood Workers described many ways in which engaging with families in their roles had improved their practice and professional development.



Their experiences had led to an awareness of the benefits of using a variety of approaches dependent on the needs of the individual family and the need to be creative.



Some workers stated that they had developed critical and creative problem solving approaches with families.

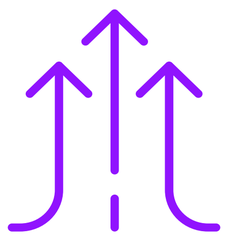
It was clear that the Neighbourhood Workers valued their experiences and felt positive about their roles.

Some Neighbourhood Workers felt ill equipped to deal with families with more complex needs. Specific issues raised included: mental health, migration, trafficked people, trauma recovery, Roma families, challenging parents appropriately, building trust with vulnerable families. Neighbourhood workers also felt they would benefit from training in interview and presentation skills. Some Neighbourhood workers stated a need for more mental health support for themselves, to help them with their work.

Barriers to Evaluation

A range of systemic factors have made the evaluation of the Neighbourhoods Project challenging. This section sets out the barriers that have impacted this evaluation and what we can learn from that.

Project Structure



- The project was designed to be delivered by different organisations, with existing roles and ways of working within their communities. Embedding Neighbourhood Workers within trusted organisations this way was intended to support relationship and community building. However, differences in organisational structure, management and workplace culture, resource, and needs of the communities served meant implementation differed across partners. This hyper-local adaptation is a quality of the project, but makes evaluation more challenging.

- The project was initially set up to run across four partner organisations. However, over the life of the project one partner became unable to continue and so a consortium was created between two of the remaining partners. This allowed the project to continue to serve the same geographical communities.
- In response to the differing circumstances across sites contract variations were agreed with organisations working to different targets. Constant changes to projects are expected in early development, however this does also means that it is difficult to generalise the findings reported.

Learning summary:

1. *Where projects are hyper-local or being delivered by multiple organisations with varying approaches it is appropriate to have organisational level logic models nested within an overall project level logic model. This helps to reflect the variation in delivery while supporting consistent evaluation.*

2. *Change is expected and manageable so long as those changes are well recorded and plans put in place to adapt evaluation accordingly. This may include reporting on things in a way that is different to the original plans.*

Data Collection

- Our qualitative evaluation found that while hugely important for relationship building with families, initial interactions tend to be informal and brief. It is vital in terms of how the project works that these interactions be people focused, and remain non-threatening and friendly. This means that it is often inappropriate to collect relevant data at this first contact; asking parents for demographic information, or details about their children or circumstances on first contact is off-putting and undermines the relationship building necessary to the role.
- Similarly, accurately capturing the number of families engaged with BSB at large informal events such a street parties and fun days is challenging. Some families will have spoken to multiple Neighbourhood Workers, others may not have directly interacted, but could have still learned new information about BSB from leaflets or other families.
- Partners used different systems of data capture with BD4 Family using Lamplight, and all other partners using a comprehensive spreadsheet which was not always found to be user friendly.

Barriers to Evaluation

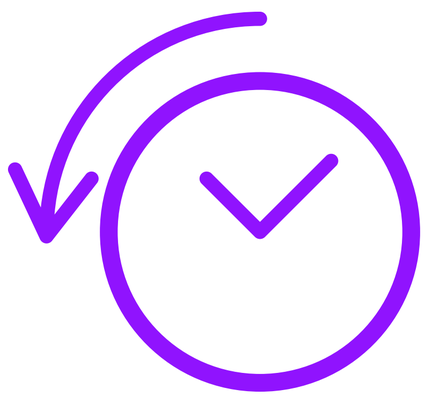
Learning summary:

3. *Careful consideration needs to be put into the selection of progression criteria, specifically thinking about appropriateness of data collection at each time point. The flowchart for appropriate and feasible data capture for differing circumstances developed by BSBIH should be followed, this is attached as an appendix to the report.*

4. *Now that more is understood about the project, the development of a project process-flow would help to identify when data capture currently takes place and if and when where new data capture could be appropriately added and provide an opportunity to plan how this can best done.*

5. *Agreeing a data collection system that works for all partners may support the management of the data both during collection and analysis.*

Service Design



- This project was one of the last to be developed within BSB and came from a recognition that grassroots and community involvement would be of benefit to the wider Better Start aims and support a positive legacy of the programme. However, this created challenges in integrating the project and planning implementation in any detail as it was recognised that it would evolve.
- This project was one of the last to be developed within BSB and came from a recognition that grassroots and community involvement would be of benefit to the wider Better Start aims and support a positive legacy of the programme. However, this created challenges in integrating the project and planning implementation in any detail as it was recognised that it would evolve.
- Initial service design of the project was ambitious and broad, including ideas from many interested stakeholders. This led to wide ranging goals and sometimes ambiguous outputs, outcomes, and definitions. This is reflects the grassroots nature of the project, but does pose challenges to traditional evaluation methods that rely on quantifiable measures.
- Ideally it would have been possible to track families journeys from their engagement with the Neighbourhoods Project to participation in BSB projects. While efforts have been made to enable recording of Neighbourhood Workers' referrals on the BSB projects' data systems, it is likely that this data will underestimate the impact of the Neighbourhoods Project because of inconsistent recording, and a tendency to record families as self referrals where there has been signposting and or support to self refer.

Learning summary:

6. *This type of project would benefit from being designed ahead of or alongside those projects it is intended to feed into so that it can be better integrated into the wider system both in terms of implementation and data capture. Data sharing agreements to enable reporting of this information are also vital.*

Conclusions and Recommendations

Evaluation findings
The characteristics of the Neighbourhood Workers are the key to the success of a project like this. Their skills and energy in engaging and supporting families as well as adapting their ways of working to specific circumstance is vital to manage hyper-local community building and supporting families to access wider services and broader opportunities.

Evidence review:
It is worth noting that a project employing a similar peer to peer model was recently evaluated as part of Blackpool Better Start [2]. The project uses 'community connectors' to directly engage 'hardly reached' families and link them in to relevant projects and services. While the project is not identical to the Neighbourhoods Project in its aims and activities, findings from the evaluation aligned with those from our qualitative work which highlighted the value of person centred relationship building in reaching these communities.

Recommendations for delivery:

- Additional investment in support and development of Neighbourhood Workers will ensure they are best able to engage families in a meaningful way. This may include training related to mental health, migration, trafficked people, trauma recovery, Roma families, challenging parents appropriately, and building trust with vulnerable families.

- Given the complexity of and variation in families' needs in the BSB area, supporting Neighbourhood Workers with their own mental health and wellbeing is also important as is a clear structure of supervision and team support.

- Collaboration and connection to other projects is fundamental to the Neighbourhoods Project. Should this project or one similar expand outside of the BSB programme it would be necessary to ensure there was a role facilitating those connections and providing sufficient name recognition to get them access.

Limitations to evaluation:
The type of evaluation possible for the Neighbourhoods Project has been limited by its complexity. One of the biggest limitations is the inability to accurately understand who is being engaged by the project. However, the current evaluation has facilitated a great deal of relevant learning. It has enabled the development of a more accurate and comprehensive theory of change and logic model. This can be used by the delivery organisations to communicate the work they have done over the lifetime of the project, and support commissioning of similar projects in the future.

Recommendations for future evaluation:

- Using the updated theory of change and logic model develop a project process flow that identifies opportunities for data capture and use this to select measurable outputs and outcomes
- Ensure effective and consistent data capture through a shared user friendly data system that supports regular reporting

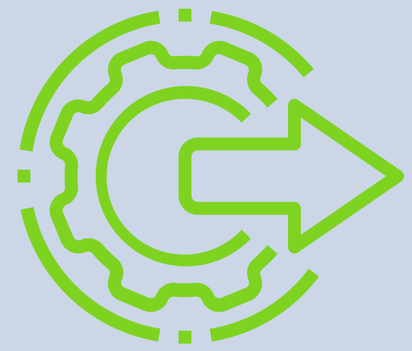
This would allow for a robust implementation evaluation, that could address topics including, but not necessarily limited to:

- How many families the project reaches through each element of its work
- Who the project is reaching and whether it is reaching the intended communities

Setting up new models of delivery is challenging and complex. If other areas wish to set up a similar model they should use the Theory of Change & Logic Model developed here as a starting point and use the identified core components, and lessons learnt regarding evaluation so that they have more success early on in implementation.

Outputs of the evaluation

Theory of change



The primary output from this evaluation process is an updated theory of change. This progresses the project from having being an entirely new intervention to being an intervention with a theory of change based in experience.

Regardless of the future of the Neighbourhoods Project as it currently exists this is a valuable resource to the project, as a more accurate description of the work they have done and goals which may have been achieved. It is also useful to BSB as a model of an intervention which can be shared beyond BSB to inform similar projects.

Particularly relevant within this theory of change is the section addressing why it should work, which is important when other projects are considering how to build connections and relationships with the community in general and in particular with groups which may be under-represented within the services for which they are eligible and from which they may benefit. This element is also supported by similar evidence from Blackpool Better Start's community connector project[1].

Logic model

Alongside the theory of change there is also an update to the logic model. As above this provides a more accurate description of the project in terms of how it was delivered in practice. It may also help to inform future similar projects, by providing a structure for delivery of the Neighbourhoods Project. It also improves our understanding of delivery of a project like this.

Both the theory of change and the logic model are attached as appendices to this document or are available as independent PDFs from the BSBIH or from BSB.

[1] Mills CF, Lowrie E, Kinloch K, and Hall E. Community Connectors (CCx): the strategies employed by peer to peer connectors to foster relationships with early years caregivers to improve universal early child health and development. BMC Health Services Research 2021;21(283).

Need

FAMILIES

Families are not always aware of the available support and how to access it, or are not ready to access that support and information. Barriers to accessing support include, but are not limited to: mistrust of services, language and cultural barriers, practical barriers such as travel options and care responsibilities.

CONTEXT

The Better Start Bradford Area is one of the most deprived in the country. Children in this area have lower levels of school readiness, social and emotional development, and speech and language development. Children and their parents within BSB area are at greater risk of poor mental and physical wellbeing. Better Start Bradford projects provide support and information with the goal of improving these outcomes for children and families within the BSB area.

BETTER START BRADFORD

The Better Start Bradford Projects are involved in evaluation to variously explore feasibility and efficacy of different interventions and they need to reach a specific range and number of families in order to provide useful results; this is not always easy for the projects to achieve as they may not be trusted services and it is hard to dedicate staff time to recruitment.

Intervention

Neighbourhoods Project trains Neighbourhoods Workers who are embedded in existing trusted services. This ongoing-training means that Neighbourhoods workers have a deep understanding of the Better Start Bradford Projects and messages, thus allowing them to share this knowledge in a useful and timely manner with the families that they meet and to actively refer families into services at appropriate times. Neighbourhood workers engage families and support them to link with with relevant projects and with Better Start Bradford in general include:

- Organising and running regular drop in activities such at stay-and-play that appeal to pregnant women and families of young children. These allow the development relationships with local families, enabling Neighbourhood workers to refer and signpost most appropriately for families.
- Outreach and activities beyond their base organisation, including running sessions in local schools, visiting other projects and activities aimed at young families, attending community events.
- Proactively seeking families out through activities such as door knocking, social media, and one-off events such as street parties.
- Hosting representatives from Better Start Bradford Projects, VCS organisations and statutory services at their activities to support links between families and projects.

Why should this work?

TRUST

By basing Neighbourhood Workers in already trusted organisations they have privileged access to families who may not otherwise consider accessing or be willing to access more specialised services and projects.

When Neighbourhoods workers host other organisations they can prepare the families for this to be a positive meeting and encourage the attendance of families for whom they think it will be most relevant making it a more efficient use of the visitor's time and linking in the families with the most relevant needs.

Neighbourhood workers are also trained to work in a family centred way and to build genuine relationships with the families they work with, which allow them to make their signposting relevant and timely to the families they meet. This should mean these are good quality referrals (ie. Referrals that turn into participants, of which a high proportion complete) of families who meet the criteria to join the project and who want to do so. This aids the efficiency and reach of all BSB projects.

COMMUNITY

Neighbourhoods workers include people with a range of languages and cultural experiences that makes it easier for them to communicate with the groups they are trying to reach.

Neighbourhoods workers typically live in the area that they work, meaning families see them out and about in every-day life which increases trust and a sense of community that goes beyond the hubs.

Neighbourhood workers are primarily recruited locally giving them deep understanding of the needs and culture of the people they work with. They are able to design and deliver activities that are suited to the population, meaning more people should attend. They are also able to collaborate in equal ways with families.

FOCUS

Neighbourhoods workers specific purpose is outreach and contact with families, so their time is dedicated to this. Unlike other BSB project staff, Neighbourhood workers have time to dedicate to being innovative, responsive, and proactive in reaching families.

The Neighbourhood Workers have regular training giving them a deep knowledge of the full range of BSB projects, VCS organisations and statutory services, enabling them to talk in detail about what involvement with projects may be able to offer and whether families are eligible for this support.

What will be seen if it is working?

REFERRALS TO BSB PROJECTS

Number of referrals directly from Neighbourhoods Project/Workers

That those referrals are more representatative of the BSB community

That a high proportion of those referrals convert to participants

That a high proportion of those participants complete the projects

KNOWLEDGE OF BSB

An increase in awareness of both BSB projects and key BSB messages within the community

Increase in trust/confidence in the value of BSB projects in the community including amongst people who may not use them

ACTIVITIES

Number of regular and one-off activities to meet the needs of pregnant women and families of infants and young children within the BSB area

OTHER SERVICES

An increase in use of other projects and services available to families within the BSB area. With that use being sustained until the families needs are met.

bib We are family BORNINBRADFORD
bibbs BORN IN BRADFORD'S BETTER START
Better Start BRADFORD
COMMUNITY FUND

Logic Model – Neighbourhoods Project – Better Start Bradford: Summer 2023

NEED	INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
CONTEXT: The Better Start Bradford Area is one of the most deprived in the country. Children in this area have lower levels of school readiness, social and emotional development, and speech and language development. Children and their parents within BSB area are at greater risk of poor mental and physical wellbeing. Better Start Bradford projects provide support and information with the goal of improving these outcomes for children and families within the BSB area. **FAMILIES:** Families are not always aware of the available support and how to access it, or are not ready to access that support and information. Barriers to accessing support include, but are not limited to: mistrust of services, language and cultural barriers, practical barriers such as travel options and care responsibilities. **BETTER START BRADFORD:** The Better Start Bradford Projects are involved in evaluation to variously explore feasibility and efficacy of different interventions and they need to reach a specific range and number of families to provide useful results; this is not always easy for the projects to achieve as they may not be trusted services and it is hard to dedicate staff time to recruitment.	Budget for 9 worker posts BSB identified staff time to co-ordinate the hub function Management support from community organisations Budget for range of engagement activities and materials Venue costs for activities Training for staff Office space and equipment	Regular universal community engagement activities, such as stay and plays, to increase reach. Targeted or one-off engagement activities. Relationship building with families attending activities and events. Regular staff meetings with BSB. Neighbourhoods workers attend regular training related to BSB projects to maintain up-to-date knowledge. Collaborative events between Neighbourhoods and other VCS or statutory services. Neighbourhood workers attend events hosted by other organisations to promote and recruit to BSB. Work with families to develop new sessions, including supporting community members to make *parents in the lead/HAY fund* applications. Referring families to BSB, VCS organisations, and statutory services. Promoting BSB messages events to families through specific campaigns or ongoing discussions.	Number of families accessing community activities. Number of new families reached aware of BSB. Information shared between BSB, Neighbourhoods Project, and the community. Number of new activities designed by or with community members. Number of referrals to BSB projects. Number of referrals to VCS organisations and statutory services. Number of families who have engaged with BSB events, projects, and campaigns.	Increased trust in BSB projects amongst families a Increased knowledge of the BSB messages and projects among local families Increased knowledge of BSB messages and projects among local organisations Increased referrals to BSB projects Increased referrals to other services within Bradford Increase in availability of activities for parents of 0-3 year olds Increased recruitment to BiBBS cohort study	Reduced social isolation Improved mental health for parents and children within the BSB area Improved infant social emotional development Improved health and fitness among children in the BSB area Increased in research participation and associated outputs Improved access to physical and emotional support services within the BSB area Improved social networks within the BSB area Increase in responsive parenting Increase in activity and outdoor play for children with BSB area

Selecting the level of data capture by contact type