



Save the Children

CHILDREN'S COMMUNITIES YEAR 2 INTERIM REPORT FEBRUARY 2017 - JULY 2017

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Funders Alliance**

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Thanks to your ongoing support, Save the Children's ambitious Children's Communities initiative is continuing to operate across England. Launched in February 2016, we believe that Children's Communities could help to break the enduring link between social disadvantage and children's learning and development outcomes.

Wallsend and Pembury are continuing to make good progress in their second year, with their local projects generating fantastic support and opportunities for children and beginning to stimulate wider systems change. The Smallshaw-Hurst local team is now in place, and have started to work with strategic partners and community residents to support the development of an ambitious shared vision for children and theory of change.

Sheffield Hallam are making good progress with the evaluation, working with Pembury and Wallsend to finalise and document their theories of change, setting up the data dashboards, and supporting evaluations of local projects. We are building up our central team, having appointed a new Head of Local Systems Change at Save the Children and recruiting now for a Portfolio Officer to support them, and are working with a range of partners across the UK to share our learning from the Children's Communities model.

CHILDREN'S COMMUNITIES: VISION, CORE PRINCIPLES AND MODEL

A Children's Community is an innovative place-based local systems change approach to improving children's outcomes and tackling the cycle of generational poverty. Based on a shared vision for children and a shared area analysis, it aims to catalyse a neighbourhood-wide, integrated support system for children that is both holistic and sustained. There are four reasons **why Children's Communities** are necessary and ground-breaking:

1. **Children's lives and outcomes are shaped by a very wide-range of complex factors.**
2. **To substantially and sustainably change children's outcomes in the poorest neighbourhoods, tackling issues one-at-a-time and in isolation may not be sufficient.**
3. **Different places create different dynamics, pose different challenges and offer different opportunities.**
4. **Now more than ever, there is a need to get the maximum value from every last pound invested in local neighbourhoods so that all children get the support and opportunities they need.**

The Children's Community model has the following key components:

- **Based on a defined neighbourhood.** Children's Communities are located in disadvantaged places with a history of partnership working for children and a collective commitment to take partnership and asset based working to the next level.
- **Driven by a shared area analysis and theory of change.** Local services and wider stakeholders together develop and implement a coordinated plan for helping children thrive, based on a shared vision for children and a shared analysis of children's needs.
- **Creating a local integrated and holistic system of support.** Children's Communities work across the different parts of children's lives, helping them to transition between family, school and community and into, through, and out of, education.
- **Aimed at generational change.** Children's Communities aim to work over the long-term. This presents an opportunity that is distinct from conventional public service initiatives rooted in short-term goals, and the inevitable resulting focus on presenting symptoms rather than tackling the root causes of problems.
- **Powered by local voices.** Children's Communities are locally-led and owned and resolutely focused on local needs, assets and priorities. They aim to surface community assets and strengths, to harness the power of local networks and relationships, to support communities to find their own solutions and be self-reliant, and to build capacity in local systems.

Our key aims and ambitions for Children's Communities are:

- **We want to help change the odds for the poorest children.** Growing up in a Children's Community area should be a source of pride, and a widely-understood signal to the outside world that this is a person who has benefited from the best possible start.
- **We want to gather rich learning and evidence about the impact made by the Children's Community project.** Crucially, we want to demonstrate that the approach can work and show how it has made a difference for children and families. Ultimately, we want to see this approach scaled to many more neighbourhoods. As part of this, we want to sustain and expand work in existing project areas and to grow a national movement of Children's Communities.

WALLSEND CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Administratively, Wallsend forms part of North Tyneside local authority, whilst geographically it lies between Newcastle upon Tyne and the coast. Before being swallowed up in the Tyneside conurbation, Wallsend was a distinct town, and it retains a strong identity. For much of its modern history, it made its living from industry. However, as a result of national and global economic changes, the last three decades have seen the decline of local shipbuilding and other heavy engineering and the reconfiguring of labour markets towards low-skilled, low-paid work. These trends have a powerful and continuing influence on the area, and even where new economic opportunities have been created (such as in advanced manufacturing or subsea and offshore engineering), these typically require specialised knowledge and large numbers of local people do not hold the requisite qualifications.

Today's Wallsend has high levels of child and family poverty. These social conditions underlie a wide range of presenting problems for children and young people, including low school readiness at age five; some children not realising their educational potential; poor health; and youth unemployment.

Strategic approach

In response to the area's challenges, the local leaders have a collective mission to create a fully-fledged Children's Community in Wallsend. They are putting in place an interconnected network of services for children that cuts across their home, school and community contexts in order to both address multiple problems simultaneously and maximise positive experiences, and that connects phases of childhood so that no child falls through the gaps between stages or institutions. New partnerships and alliances, new ways of working and new relationships with the local community will support and emerge from this. Wallsend's three early implementation priorities are:

1. *Getting things right early* - Despite improvements in recent years, too many local children are behind with their learning early in their lives, including even before they start primary school. This priority incorporates work to support parenting, improve both access to and the quality of pre-school, and give vulnerable children additional help at key transition points and where they are falling behind.
2. *Being fit for life* - There are persistent local concerns regarding some children's health and the impact this has or may have on their life chances. In particular, there are issues around children's mental health and general fitness and examples of undiagnosed or untreated medical problems (eyesight, hearing etc).
3. *Supporting young people to realise their aspirations* - There is a strong belief that more needs to be done to help Wallsend's young people realise their aspirations. It is widely-acknowledged that local young people are ambitious, but it is thought these ambitions can sometimes be frustrated by lack of knowledge about how to achieve them.

Local projects

Wallsend's portfolio of projects continues to expand with new play initiatives and new work to understand and engage the local community. Additionally, promising progress has been made in existing projects across the Community's three priorities:

Priority	Project	Project Progress
<i>Getting things right early</i>	<i>Parent Behaviour Change</i> Save the Children are launching an ambitious and ground-breaking behaviour change campaign in partnership with the National Literacy Trust. Titled 'Wonder Words', our campaign will transform the early language experience for children growing up in	Using some of the latest insights in behavioural sciences and working with behaviour change experts Claremont Communications, Save the Children have developed a set of prototype interventions including: "motivational memes" that tests if prompt messages printed on products including babygrows and changing mats can be used to prompt parents to 'tune in and talk' to their baby; an intervention that tests whether reaching parents at the time of their 12 and 20 week scans can get them to start thinking and finding out about the importance of talking to their baby; and an intervention that tests whether parents can be prompted to use more contingent and expansive talk with their children, by sharing fun parent-

<p>poverty across the UK so that they arrive at school meeting age-related expectations in language and communication skills.</p>	<p>child activity ideas via mobile phones.</p> <p>The alpha testing phase of these prototypes with families across the UK, including families in the Wallsend Children Children’s Community, was completed in June 2017. The findings from this testing is being used to refine the prototypes for follow-up beta testing UK-wide (taking place between July and September 2017).</p>
<p><i>Pre-School Network</i></p> <p>An Early Language Best Practice Network has been set up to train staff to deliver the “Early Talk Boost” programme, and host regular best practice days.</p>	<p>Five local pre-school settings with high numbers of disadvantaged children (and spanning the statutory, voluntary and private sectors) will sign up to an Early Language Best Practice Network. Staff trained in the “Early Talk Boost” programme will deliver the intervention to eight children per term (120 children across the five settings per year). Delivery is due to start in September 2017.</p> <p>The strategic purpose here is twofold. First, most local settings are already high quality, but the network will help them do more to identify and address early language delay. Second, given increasing diversity in the local pre-school market, the network will create a forum for establishing common standards and information sharing.</p>
<p><i>Early years transition</i></p> <p>Supported by Save the Children’s seedcorn fund, the new multi-agency, early years transition service works with 50 children annually in their final months of nursery, over the summer (including a “Ready for School” holiday club in the local children’s centre) and during their first few months of reception. Additionally, where there are particular challenges, a trained family support worker will at the same time work with a child’s parents.</p>	<p>The project launched in February 2017, and the approach has been adapted and improved to reflect ongoing evaluation and feedback from partners. There is a more streamlined approach to identifying those children and families in need of support. Family Gateway, the project’s delivery partner, now have a clear pathway to work with the family group and this links seamlessly into the “at school” support provided by the Early Years Teacher Mentor. The team are currently working to identify the cohort for September 2017. The team meet the project’s delivery partner on a fortnightly basis to case conference the work being done, which is then fed into the evaluation process with Sheffield Hallam University.</p>
<p><i>Intervention and transition tutors</i></p> <p>Funded through pooled resources from the Schools Partnership, the Children’s Community team oversees a team of six Intervention and Transition tutors. These tutors work with children falling behind at the end of Key Stage One and those at risk of struggling with the transition from primary to secondary school. The aim is early intervention and prevention.</p>	<p>In total, the transition tutors work with 200 children per year. The latest initiative is a “postcard buddy” between primary and secondary schools, which is helping to break down the fear and concerns about moving to the “big school”.”</p>
<p><i>Play Days – a new intervention in the Community.</i></p>	<p>Wallsend Children’s Community commissioned a report “State of Play in Wallsend”, which presented a series of findings based on interviews with parents, carers, professionals and children. One of the actions from this has been to provide a series of summer play days using a park which was identified as being the least attractive in the area. There has been a great response,</p>

		with 209 children aged between 0 to 12 years and 79 parents attending the events. The learning from this initiative will be used to develop further themed offers in the Wallsend area.
<i>Being fit for life</i>	<p><i>Health Needs Assessment</i></p> <p>The Children's Community partnership has collectively commissioned a Health Needs Assessment of the Wallsend area. This is in response to concerns about local children's health and the impact this has on their life chances.</p>	Published in February 2017, the report reaffirmed many things the Children's Community partnership team knew, but also focussed on dental decay and the massive impact on NHS A&E admissions for 0-5-year olds in the area. As a result of this, Wallsend Children's Community are now developing a strand of work which will involve primary and secondary school pupils plus the local Director of Public Health in raising awareness of dental hygiene.
	<p><i>Child mental health</i></p> <p>In response to concerns from schools about child mental health, the Community is running school-based early intervention mental health sessions.</p>	The mental health sessions have supported 50 children across the Wallsend area to date. 15 members of school staff have received training. Seven local schools have nominated a mental health champion who will each attend new termly conferences. At each conference, up to two case studies (anonymised) will be presented which will raise issues for discussion. The council's Educational Psychology and Child Mental Health services will also attend the conferences.
<i>Realising Aspirations</i>	<p><i>Out-of-school activities: the 'Young in Wallsend' project</i></p> <p>A consortium of local youth groups and churches, led by the Children's Community staffing team, is together designing and delivering a coordinated package of out-of-school activities for Wallsend children. The work is funded through a £350k grant from the Big Lottery Fund. This collaborative project enables core area priorities to drive the development of local activities. It also means that service providers can be held to common standards around quality provision, data collection and evaluation.</p>	<p>A consortium of local youth groups and churches, led by the Children's Community staffing team, continues to deliver a wide range of afterschool, evening and weekend interventions for young people. All delivery partners focus their work on one or more of the three core themes of the Children's Community. The programme is evaluated by Newcastle University and also links into the national evaluation being conducted by Sheffield Hallam.</p> <p>Wallsend Children's Community have been approached by the Big Lottery Fund to consider applying for a further two years of funding. This will build on new learning from the current activities, and will again be framed by the themes of the Children's Community.</p> <p>This 'Young in Wallsend' project reaches around 400 children per year.</p>
	<p><i>Post-16 mentoring</i></p> <p>This project tests the impact of intensive, personalised and sustained mentoring for vulnerable young people.</p>	<p>Wallsend has a low rate of young people not in education, employment or training but local intelligence suggests that a number of young people quickly drop-out of these positive destinations.</p> <p>Run by Barnardo's, and overseen by the Children's Community core staffing team, the project will have worked with 30 young people by the end of 2017.</p>
	<p><i>Community Survey – a new project in the Community.</i></p>	Wallsend Children's Community commissioned a survey of the NE28 postal code area - the area of the Wallsend Children's Community. Over 5,000 forms were issued, including online questionnaires. The replies received demonstrated the desire for some local people to offer their time to help others. The local team will utilise these contacts to frame a Volunteering Strand within the Wallsend Children's Community.



Poster advertising the play days in Wallsend Children's Community.



Resources from the new 'postcard buddy' initiative to support the transition of children between primary and secondary school.

Wallsend Children's Community systems leadership

As part of the **Children's Community project**, systems leaders from across the locality are coming together to provide the best possible support for children.



Sub-board 1: Wallsend Partnership of Schools

David Baldwin, Headteacher – Churchill Community College
Charlotte Jenkins – Deputy Head, Burnside Enterprise College
Paula Richardson, Headteacher – Carville Primary
Louise Guthrie, Headteacher – Denbigh Community Primary
Louise Wells, Headteacher – Battle Hill Primary
Andrew James, Headteacher – Holy Cross RC Primary
Angi Gibson, Headteacher – Hadrian Park Primary
Ann Thornton, Headteacher – Wallsend Jubilee Primary
Claire Jordan, Headteacher – St Columba's RC Primary
Emma Overton, Headteacher – Stephenson Memorial Primary
Laura Fallon – Headteacher, St Bernadette's RC Primary
Joanne Camsell – Headteacher, Wallsend St Peter's Primary
Justina Terretta – Headteacher, Beacon Hill Primary
Katherine Hill – Headteacher, Western Community Primary
Susan Winter – Headteacher, Richardson Dees Primary
Tracy Flannaghan – Headteacher – Redesdale Primary

Sub-board 2: Wallsend Youth Provision Group

Steve Ramshaw, St Paul's Community Centre
Carla Franchi, Barnardos
Dot Ownston, Prometheus Youth Group
Louise Clark, NE Youth
Don Irving, YMCA North Tyneside
Emma Duff, Willington Team Ministry
Brian Hill, Willington Quay Club
Dan Convey, Wallsend Boys Club
Matthew Mahoney, Hot Chocolate Project

The Governance Group met in May 2017, and reviewed the progress made in the local projects, discussed a recent fact-finding meeting with the **Children's Commissioner Ann Longford** linked to her 'Living in the North' report, and received an update from **Chris Wellings** on the work of the National Children's Communities team.

At the next meeting in September 2017, the Governance Group will discuss and confirm a revised governance structure which will operate on three levels: the overarching Governance Group; three sub-groups focussing on the **Community's** three early implementation priorities; and individual project leadership.

Wallsend Children's Community secretariat

In March 2017, Dr Caroline Whitaker was appointed as **the Community's** Data, Evaluation and Impact Adviser. Caroline has previously worked in public health and she has a wide-range of experience in research, data collection and evaluation. In her role, Caroline will establish Wallsend as a centre of best practice for the sharing of data across local agencies, for the use of data to drive strategic decisions, and for monitoring and evaluation. She will lead on developing protocols for agency **data sharing organisations** and oversee the **Community's** data collection and tracking. Caroline joins Alan Strachan and Wayne Daley to complete the Community local team:



Alan Strachan, Executive Lead for the Wallsend Children's Community, will be leaving us at the end of this year to embark on his well-earned retirement. Since joining the Children's Communities team in 2015, Alan has provided strong leadership to the establishment and embedding of the Wallsend Children's Community, and has been integral to building the profile and influence of the programme locally. We are advertising now for his successor, with the interview panel taking place on 22nd September involving David Baldwin (Chair of the Wallsend Children's Community's Governance Group and Headteacher at Churchill Community College) and a Wallsend strategic partner colleague, Jane Lewis and our incoming Head of Local Systems Change Paul Perkins. We anticipate Alan's successor starting in early December to facilitate his induction and handover.

Wallsend Children's Community case studies

Rob Harker, Deputy Head at Carville Primary School



Rob has been Deputy Head at Carville Primary in Wallsend since September 2016. Previously, he worked similar areas of deprivation, including schools in Northumberland and Sunderland:

“What’s notable in Wallsend is that sense of community. I have never worked somewhere where people are so loyal to their community. It’s a community that is broken because of the loss of ship building, loss of the local industries, but there is still a really strong sense of loyalty in Wallsend and there is a real sense of ‘we want better, we want to try and get things moving’.

“Wallsend Children’s Community is a group of like-minded people, businesses, organisations, schools, who are coming together to try to increase chances for the people of Wallsend, and particularly for the children of Wallsend, so it’s very exciting to be on board with that.

“At the end of the day what we’re committed to doing is making sure that there’s as few barriers as possible to the children learning, being successful, and ultimately being happy.”

Sixth Formers at Churchill Community College

From left to right: Michaela, 18; Callum, 18; Luke, 18; Alana, 17; Sam, 18; and Becky, 18.

Michaela: **“There’s a really good sense of community here in Wallsend, that’s what I love about it. I do voluntary work in the community, at the Laine Gallery”.**

Callum: **“Wallsend is great, it’s really close to the centre of Newcastle. It might have a reputation for being rough, but I love it here.”**



Susan Meikle, Early Years Transition Mentor



As one of the six Early Years Transition Mentors in Wallsend **Children’s Community, Susan** works with children in the nursery class at school that have been identified as needing additional support to get them ready to start primary school:

“We’re working with the schools, with the parents, so there’s a lot of interaction as a whole, working with the whole community so that we’re sharing information and being consistent in our approach with the families and the children. It means that whatever is being done at school can be replicated at home. The families are happier, the children are happier, and it’ll be a smoother transition into Reception.

“Children’s Community to me, it means making families aware of all the facilities that are on offer to benefit their families and their children. I’m seeing the difference my role is having already. To start at the roots of their education, I think that is beneficial to everyone. I don’t think there are any other Early Years Transitional workers in the UK, I think I’m the only one!”

PEMBURY CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Pembury, home to 1,000 children and young people, is a disadvantaged estate in a thriving borough and global city. The local landscape is rich with high-quality services and economic opportunities but some local children are not fully benefiting from them. The estate has one of the highest rates of child poverty in London, with 46% of children living in low-income households.

Nonetheless, estate population turnover is low and in recent years local investment has contributed to growing community pride (consistently evidenced by resident surveys and consultations). Indeed, professionals working on the estate regularly describe the talent and resourcefulness of residents. **Half of the estate's population is made up of first generation migrants.** As such, the community is home to a rich tapestry of culture and knowledge but some families are also relatively unfamiliar with local public services and structures.

Strategic approach

The Pembury Children's Community's overarching mission is to create coordinated and holistic support for children across their home, school and community lives and at critical points throughout childhood. The Children's Community has identified two early operational priorities:

- Improving the connectivity of local services i.e. strengthening connections between individual services, and also between services and the Pembury estate.
- Harnessing local relationships so that residents can do more to help themselves, therefore building a self-supporting, self-sustaining community.

The work in Pembury is being delivered via three workstreams:

1. *Early years and primary* given that local **children's early learning scores are lower than in neighbouring, more advantaged areas.**
2. *Secondary school and transition to adulthood* because despite some children doing very well at school, others still struggle to access positive pathways.
3. *Support for parents* as many local mums and dads, particularly those from migrant communities, struggle to gain maximum benefit from mainstream services and local job opportunities.

Local projects

Pembury's Children's Community has made significant progress in its portfolio of projects, including the establishment of a new intervention supporting Pembury children in Year 6 at Mossbourne Academy at risk of exclusion:

Workstream	Project	Project Progress
<i>Early years and primary</i>	Children's Centre services This work reflects a local desire to improve children's early experiences and development, and is focused on the new Pembury Community Centre. The Centre is now a base for the co-location of services.	Linden Children's Centre and Peabody staff and volunteers conducted joint outreach to nearly all of the parents on the estate with children under five (a cohort of approximately 200 children) to promote higher engagement with Children's Centre services and gain feedback about the current service offer. This has led to changes in the timetable to make services more accessible for parents as well as a more targeted offer e.g. Hackney Learning Trust delivered a seven-week course on 'Supporting your child with reading' to ten Pembury families earlier in the year.
	<i>Estate-based teacher: the</i> 'Ready for School' project Pembury Children's Community - in a partnership between Mossbourne	The Ready for School project has got off to a great start. Led by an excellent teacher employed by Linden Children's Centre , the entire cohort of 22 families have now signed up to the project. These are all the families on estate with four-year olds due to start at Mossbourne Primary School in September 2017.

	<p>Parkside Primary School, Brook Children's Centre and Peabody Housing – has recruited an estate-based early years teacher to support a cohort of children (those moving into Mossbourne Parkside Primary) for one year through home visits focused on early language development.</p>	<p>Two well-attended events have been held at Mossbourne and in the Pembury Community Centre to begin to prepare parents for school, and all the families have been visited in their homes and are receiving 'ready for school packs' with resources for them and their children. Crucially, relationships between the Children's Centre, Mossbourne and Peabody staff are growing, enabling increasing information sharing, referrals and 'joining up' of support for children across their school, home and community lives.</p> <p>Sheffield Hallam are evaluating this project and have begun stakeholder interviews and observations of sessions.</p>
	<p><i>Reading and homework clubs: weekly "Reading from the Start" sessions</i></p> <p>A collaboration between Peabody Housing and Mossbourne Parkside, these sessions delivered by volunteers are for parents of children between two and five years of age, and aim to empower parents to support their child's literacy skills.</p>	<p>Volunteer-led 'Reading from the Start' reading group sessions on the estate continue to be popular with parents, followed up with monthly books sent to all children's homes. Tutors United, who run the pilot homework clubs, have now provided 62 hours of tutoring to 17 pupils, and their evaluation report indicates that children who attended regularly have progressed in both Maths and English, however attendance overall has been lower than anticipated at 57%. Peabody are now reviewing their strategies for parental engagement as well as the targeting of the clubs, working with Tutors United and Mossbourne, to see if the impact of the sessions can be increased further.</p>
<p><i>Secondary and post-16</i></p>	<p><i>Youth Groups</i></p> <p>The youth groups are run in partnership by Peabody and the local authority's Young Hackney service, aiming to give local young people the confidence and support they need to thrive.</p>	<p>Peabody's youth groups on the estate, including a twice weekly youth club, Saturday 'Threads' project for girls, a football club and a new social group for 16 to 24-year olds are thriving, reaching 108 young people from March to July 2017. Led by young people's priorities and interests, they enable young people to relax and have fun, as well as gaining accredited skills and confidence. Holiday programmes have included trips across London, drama and art workshops, a football tournament (won by the Pembury team!) and residential.</p>
	<p><i>The Pembury Pass</i></p> <p>The Pembury Pass is a personalised, multi-agency, mentoring programme to ease young people's transition into adulthood and to give them the support they need to access training and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Since March, Peabody's caseworker has worked with 35 Pembury young people aged 16 to 24 who need support to get into education, training or work. Increasingly this project is supporting highly vulnerable young people known to a range of services, but who are not getting the help they need. Peabody is now exploring with a range of partners what lessons can be learnt from the project to date.</p>
	<p><i>Supporting Pembury students at Mossbourne Academy – a new project in the Community.</i></p>	<p>The partnership between Mossbourne, Young Hackney (the Council youth service) and Peabody has been building over the past six months. All Pembury children in the 'alternative provision' group in Year 6 at risk of exclusion have received co-ordinated packages of support, including pre-apprenticeships and work experience. Although initially focused on a small cohort, the team are aiming to extend this joint working with Pembury students in other years.</p>
<p><i>Support for parents</i></p>	<p><i>Parent Advice service</i></p> <p>The estate's parent advice service, run by Peabody in partnership with Hackney Council, provided employment and skills supporting over 30 parents.</p>	<p>In 2016, 20 families in arrears were given advice and benefits support. This support is critical given high local levels of child poverty.</p>

Pembury Children's Community systems leadership

As part of the Children's Community project, systems leaders are tackling issues collectively.



Pembury Children's Community's Operational Group (comprising local professionals and leaders from the local nursery, children's centre, church, GP surgery, as the police) met in May 2017, and provided the local team with advice on its workplan, particularly on the 'routes out of poverty for Pembury families' logic model.

The Pembury Children's Community Board also held its bi-annual meeting in May 2017 and presented their published impact report for 2015-17. Residents from the Community's steering group, including Pembury's 'Dad's Zone' group joined the Board to discuss how services could engage fathers better, and there were a lot of practical ideas which have been drawn together into an action plan for the group to take forward.

Pembury have a very active Children's Community resident steering group, attended by both young people and parents. As well as shaping the Community's workplan for the year and its theories of change, the group have also run community events on the estate and led consultations with other residents.

Pembury Children's Community secretariat

The Pembury Children's Community secretariat is made up of staff from Peabody Housing Association and Hackney Council.

- Head of the Pembury Children's Community: Claire Reindorp (Peabody)
- Project Manager: Jason Davis (Hackney Council)
- Community Coordinator: Rachel Wicks (Peabody)

Rachel Wicks has been internally promoted within Peabody, and has been given responsibilities for community development, partnership development and communications to other Pembury team members.

Pembury Children's Community case studies

Flakie (Mum), Azariah (2)

Flakie has lived on the Pembury estate for 12 years, and attends a variety of sessions at the community centre, including Stay n Play and **the parents'** coffee morning:

“Pembury has changed. I **love the fact it's changed**, I feel much safer now than I did 12 years ago. The community now - especially here - **it's lovely**. I come here all the time with the kids, even just to **have lunch sometimes, myself and the kids**. It's really nice now, feels safe, friendly staff. Pembury is a changing community, a better community, a place where you can feel relaxed, make new friends, find **out what's going on not just in Pembury but in Hackney in general.**”



Photo credit: Elena Heatherwick/ Save the Children

Elvis (Dad), Sienna (8), Paris (5)

The family live near the Pembury, where they attend sessions at the community centre. Elvis helped to start up the **Dad's Zone** group, which provides support for fathers on the estate. Elvis told us:



Photo credit: Elena Heatherwick/ Save the Children

“I think Pembury is unique. When I got here four and a half years ago, it wasn't my first choice of a place to live. It had such a bad name, but then I quickly realised that a lot of changes had been made by the time I moved on to the estate and it's just getting better. **With the amount of things they've got going at the community centre, and the amount of support given to parents on the estate, I believe the next generation coming up are going to be even better than the ones we have currently.**”

Ilham, Crèche Coordinator

Ilham has been the Crèche Coordinator at Pembury since September 2016 and lives close to the Pembury estate:

“It's really useful for the community because more than gaining for the parents, also for the children to feel part of the community - it makes a difference. When I used to attend Stay n Plays and I **didn't have anywhere to go, it made me feel like I have a family**, so I would like to give them that **feeling like they're coming to a family**. I really give them one to one, to the parents and the children, so if anyone is feeling isolated or feeling down when they come here, I wanna make them feel they belong. As much as giving them educational information and signposting them to different places which is vital, I also wanna make them feel good and be part of the community. **That's my main aim.**”



Photo credit: Elena Heatherwick/ Save the Children

SMALLSHAW-HURST CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Smallshaw-Hurst lies in the Tameside local authority area, approximately two miles from Ashton under Lyne town centre and part of the Greater Manchester conurbation. The two Lower Super Output Areas (small areas with an average population of 1,500 people) with the highest levels of child poverty in Tameside are both in Smallshaw-Hurst and these fall within the five per cent most deprived places nationally according to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

Disillusionment and a lack of jobs have resulted in family stress, crime and health and wellbeing problems which impact on the 3,500 children that live there.

Smallshaw-Hurst's Children's Community secretariat

In June 2017, we completed recruitment of the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community local team, who are responsible for leading and coordinating delivery of the community's strategy and plans:



This team will provide the dedicated, day-to-day capacity needed to support community engagement, build the shared vision, establish new alliances and new ways of working, initiate multi agency plans and catalyse change to start creating a more interconnected and coherent system of support for Smallshaw-Hurst's children. They will strengthen data sharing and the use of evidence and local data to drive strategic review and decision-making. All members of the team have been recruited from the local area, and have very strong expertise in delivering local change:

- Julie Wilson brings many years' experience of local systems in both the voluntary and public sector. Julie's background is in regeneration and neighbourhood services and public sector transformation.
- Bridget Evans has joined the team from Breakthrough UK, a disabled people's organisation based in Manchester. Bridget's background is in Mathematics and Statistics and she has previously worked as an analyst in the data, information and IT provider for the NHS, NHS Digital.
- Johanna Stone comes to us from a youth project in Trafford, co-ordinating a programme that engaged children and young people into positive activity. Johanna's background is in youth work and Social Sciences. She is very actively involved in volunteering work within her local community.

Initial development of strategic approach

Since the Smallshaw-Hurst **Children's Community local team** staff started work in June 2017, they have begun to build up a picture of the Smallshaw-Hurst area in terms of population, deprivation, education, public safety, health and employment. This information has been drawn from a wide range of sources including Census Data, the Office for National Statistics, the Department for Education, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Ofsted, Job Centre Plus, NHS Digital, and Police Statistics.

Linking with both senior strategic groups and front-line services, the local team have attended senior partnership meetings and workshops with colleagues from the local authority, health, housing, early years, voluntary and private sector groups. Additionally, through meeting with the local MP, Councillors and Community Leaders, the team have started to collate a wealth of information and immerse themselves into the local community dynamics, joining the local police on patrols, engaging local **front-line officers, GP's, community groups, active residents and faith groups**.

As a result, the team have gained invaluable insight into Smallshaw-Hurst, the presenting issues and possible gaps in provision. Alongside this, the team have begun to consult the local community, and parents specifically on their aspirations for their children and the barriers that they feel may prevent their children achieving them. The combination of the statistical evidence, alongside findings from consultations and engagement with stakeholders and professionals in the community will provide the basis for **Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community's** shared vision for children and theory of change.

Next steps

During August and September 2017, the **Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community local team** are engaged in asking the local community about aspirations for children in the area. The team will be consulting with residents at local events that include **Teddy Bear picnics and family fun days, and conducting outreach at 'go to' places** including the local food bank and football matches. During September, the team will be engaging with the local schools and sharing their information on aspirations, **working with them to uncover what the children's aspirations are for themselves**.

Utilising this wealth of information, the team will host a workshop with stakeholders and professionals to work towards an ambitious shared vision for children, and a supporting theory of change and governance structure. Facilitated by Sheffield Hallam University, the workshop is due to take place by October 2017.

NATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

As the strategic leader of the **Children's Community project, Save the Children enables the Communities to be** part of a national movement for change.

We increase the impact of the work of the Communities through employing core local teams (in Wallsend and Smallshaw-Hurst), support and challenge to the local teams, membership of strategic governance groups and leading joint governance work across the three sites, leading learning exchanges and bringing in learning from other local systems change initiatives, funding for core teams, funding for local innovation (via a seedcorn fund), commissioning and managing an external evaluation, and making our programmes available to be delivered locally.

Recruitment of Head of Local Systems Change

Chris Wellings, the originator of the Children's Communities programme at Save the Children and its first lead, moved on after seven years with us, taking up a post as Deputy Director of the Lambeth Early Action Partnership, **part of the Big Lottery Fund's A Better Start initiative. Although we were sorry to see him leave, it's a great opportunity for him and also a chance to develop our strong relationship with A Better Start further.** After a highly competitive recruitment process, we have appointed Paul Perkins as the Head of Local Systems Change for **Save the Children's UK Programmes.** Paul will lead **on sustaining excellence in the Children's Communities** programme, and drawing together our work and learning across our place-based and local systems change initiatives.

Paul will provide strategic leadership to all our local systems change work, ensuring clear strategic vision and

objectives for each area-based programme; developing sustainable fundraising strategies for local systems change approaches; ensure our local systems change programmes are based on participation and co-production; and establish and sustain strong partnerships at senior level with sector organisations and delivery partners. He will also lead our work to improve the capacity of local systems to support children arriving in the UK as a result of international conflict.

Paul brings great experience from his leadership of both a highly innovative and entrepreneurial **children's services** charity, The Winch, and the North Camden Zone, a place-based initiative focused on improving outcomes for young people through local systems change which has many parallels with **the Children's Communities project**. He has a great combination of visionary thought leadership and an orientation to action and impact and will provide excellent insight and learning from his previous roles in place-based initiatives. Paul joins us on 10th October 2017.

Sheffield Hallam University's national evaluation



Photo credit: Elena Heatherwick/ Save the Children

The national evaluation work to date has focussed, in the first part of 2017, on developing the theory of change reports for Wallsend and Pembury, based on analysis of a range of data sources and documents, and on baseline interviews with strategic leaders in the three Children's Communities. Both theory of change reports are in final draft form. Our approach recognises that long term, systemic change is complex and therefore needs to be reviewed and adapted as time moves on, so these documents will be updated as the evaluation continues. An initial half day workshop in Smallshaw Hurst in June helped shape early thinking on its priorities and theory of change, and this will be further developed in Autumn 2017.

Alongside this, the evaluation team has worked with Wallsend and Pembury on developing their 'data dashboards': specially designed data visualisation tools to help analyse and present key Children's Communities data clearly allowing sub analysis to support the development of the Children's Communities as they move forward. This work continues, and in the next stages will bring together Smallshaw Hurst's newly appointed evaluation lead with Wallsend's Data, Evaluation and Impact Advisor in a half day evaluation meeting in early September.

The first data gathering phase of the evaluation has had two main strands:

1. Firstly, a set of semi-structured interviews are taking place with strategic leaders in Wallsend, Pembury and Smallshaw-Hurst to understand their expectations of how each Children's Community will develop in the next stages and therefore help create a baseline to help plan for the next stage of data gathering.
2. Secondly, the Sheffield Hallam team have been working with Pembury and Wallsend to start to gather data on one key initiative, in both cases with an early years focus. This approach both provides evaluation data on a key local initiative and is an opportunity to build and support local evaluation capacity. In Pembury, this has focussed on the Ready for School initiative with the completion of interviews with staff, the development and implementation of a baseline survey of parents/carers and plans to undertake face to face work in the Autumn. Wallsend is taking a slightly different approach, with the Children's Community working together with the external evaluators on designing the evaluation of the Early Years Transition Service. Sheffield Hallam have been supporting the Data, Evaluation and Impact Advisor to design the evaluation, and will work together on data gathering and analysis in Autumn 2017, and into the next year.

The purpose of these focussed evaluations is both to provide early evidence about progress and impact in relation to a key area of importance in each Children's Community and to help develop tools and approaches that can be used in the evaluation as it develops, in particular survey tools that can be modified for use with children, young people and families supported by the Children's Communities in other ways. In subsequent years, other focuses (for example, initiatives relating to health or moving on from compulsory education) will be examined in a similar way, again with a focus on building local evaluation capacity.

Much of the data gathering work is ongoing, and the bulk of the analysis for the first phase report is taking place in September, so findings at this stage are limited and provisional, drawing on early strategic interviews. Early findings include:

- Significant work has been done on building both appropriate partnerships, and governance structures in both of the more developed Children's Communities, which has helped them develop a shared overarching theory of change and sub-theories which are understood and supported by a range of partners
- Thought is being given to further partnership building - there is a tension between the benefits of a small but agile partnership and the need to engage all key stakeholders
- Engaging parents and the local community is paramount and a continuing focus for both communities (and an early focus for Smallshaw Hurst)
- A combination of new sequenced change processes - working with families and children from an early age, working hard to engage families - and harnessing already active change processes and opportunities is used in both areas
- Leadership is a strength in both areas: key leaders understand the need to both actively push forward and to share and broaden leadership to build ownership across the partnership
- Looking ahead: media representations of the Children's Communities; partnership development; community and family engagement; and early effects of the focus projects will be important to monitor.

The initial report on the first phase of the evaluation will be shared with funders in mid-October.

The Children's Communities Evaluation Advisory Group

We had the first meeting of our Evaluation Advisory Group in April 2017. This group, which brings together academic and policy expert in the evaluation of place-based and other complex programmes and in early years, education and community programmes, will support the national evaluation, providing advice and challenge and helping to support knowledge-sharing and wider influence. The members of the group are:

- Professor Simon Burgess (Professor of Economics and Director of the Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol)
- Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Policy and Research Manager, Joseph Rowntree Foundation)
- Karl Wilding (Director of Public Policy and Volunteering, NCVO)
- John Tizard (Independent strategic advisor)
- Professor Jacqueline Barnes (Birkbeck, University of London)
- Professor Chris Chapman (Director of the Robert Owen Centre for Educational Change, University of Glasgow)
- **Chris Cuthbert (Director of Development for the Big Lottery Fund's A Better Start programme)**
- Jane Lewis (Head of UK Programme Development and Quality, Save the Children UK)
- Professor Sarah Pearson (Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University)
- Professor Mike Coldwell (Sheffield Institute of Education, Sheffield Hallam University)

The first meeting focused on introducing members to the Children's Communities programme and evaluation and was a very stimulating and thought-provoking discussion, which has already helped us to sharpen the programme and the evaluation. Our next meeting will be in November 2017.

Children's Communities Funding Consortium event

On the 2nd March 2017 Save the Children, with **Alan Strachan and Wayne Daley from Wallsend Children's Community** local secretariat, was delighted to host a **Children's Communities Funding Consortium** event at Churchill Community College in Wallsend.

Attended by members of the **Children's Communities Funders Alliance**, representatives from **Save the Children**, our **three Children's Communities, Sheffield Hallam and project partners**, the aim of the event was to:

- Discuss the progress that has been made so far on the project against set targets;
- Showcase the impact we have made in each community with examples of new interventions and activities **designed specifically to boost children's outcomes**;
- Place the programme within the context of other place-based initiatives; and
- **Share the plans and methodology for the Children's Communities national evaluation**

For Wallsend **Children's Community**, the event was an opportunity for the team to showcase the ways they are **bringing services and agencies together to support their community's children**. This was all brought to life with a tour of Wallsend that included visits to a local primary school to learn more about early years transition work, a **Children's Centre** to hear about the **Children's Community's plans to support the multi-disciplinary area Family**

Support Team and a Health Centre where the group learned **about the Children's Community's Health Needs Assessment** and how it is being used to shape new strategic initiatives. Attendees of the event also received an **update on the progress of Pembury and Smallshaw Hurst Children's Communities.**

Along with our Children's Communities and funders, the day also brought together senior policy-makers from the Welsh Government which is leading a 'Children's Zones' initiative based strongly on Children's Communities, the Shankill Children & Young People's Zone in Belfast, and our Stronger Communities programme in Scotland. Bringing these different place-based initiatives together in this way for the first time gave us a great opportunity to demonstrate the work we are doing, to surface and discuss commonalities and differences in our approaches, and enable wider reach and influence for children across the UK.

Joint governance and learning exchanges

We have held two of our regular joint governance days and learning exchanges since our last funding report, in April and August 2017. The joint governance days bring together senior representatives from Save the **Children's central team and from the three Children's Communities to review our progress against targets and to reflect together on how far we are achieving our ambitions and embedding the founding principles of Children's Communities, and to identify ways in which our work together can be strengthened.**

The learning exchange in April 2017 focused on community engagement. Our Sheffield Hallam team provided a rapid review of theoretical perspectives and evidence on community engagement. Jonny Mallinson from the Innovation Unit led a session based on their work in the UK and internationally on co-production and co-delivery, **and we heard from the Stronger Communities programme in Scotland. The three Children's Communities shared learning, successes and challenges from their work so far, and developed plans to take community engagement forward.**

Our learning exchange in August 2017 focused on early years. We were joined by Chris Wellings who presented on the approaches, programmes and work of the A Better Start initiative, and by Paul Perkins and Esther Norman **from the North Camden Zone who set out their approaches. The three Children's Communities shared learning from their work, and we looked in particular at the Greater Manchester Early Years Delivery Model and at how the Smallshaw-Hurst Community can build across from this work. Our next joint governance and learning exchange will be held on 30th November and 1st December 2017.**

Children's Communities logo and website development

In July 2017, our **Children's Communities website - ChildrensCommunityNetwork.org.uk** – went live. The website, developed in partnership with each of the Communities, was created to provide a place where community leaders, policy makers, and prospective **funders could find out about Children's Communities, explaining the chosen project approach and the evidence base behind the programme.** The website also enables each Community to showcase their work, upload key reports, and share updates and learnings. Going forward, the community leads will sustain the website, and have received training on how to edit and update the website.



A Children's Communities logo (pictured left) was also created to establish a common brand to unite **the three Children's Community sites.** We have also created logos for each of the Children's Communities (pictured below):



Making a wider impact: **The Welsh Government's Children First initiative**

We have continued to work closely with the Welsh Government to support the development of **Children's Zones** in Wales – a programme of work that is modelled on the **concept of Children's Communities**. The anti-poverty **intervention, called 'Children First', will initiate change at the local level, enabling local community and organisations to work together to address the specific needs of children and young people in the area and to reduce the inequalities some children and young people face compared with their peers in more socially advantaged places.**

After receiving expressions of interest from 19 local partnerships, the Welsh Government selected the following five areas to become Children First Pioneer Areas to pilot the approach: Cwm Taf; Gwynedd; Newport; Caerphilly; and Carmarthenshire. These partnerships will now begin to establish Children First areas and provide the opportunity to see how the approach works for a range of issues and in different communities across Wales.

Save the Children was a key part **of the Children's First** launch event in June 2017. Jane Lewis, Head of UK Programme Development & Quality, presented **an overview of the Children's Communities model**, key principles and early learning from the programme. Laura Devine presented on our Stronger Communities work, and with our Wales national team we were also very involved in discussions throughout the day. We are currently exploring with the Welsh Government how we can support the ongoing **development of Children's First model and the work of the five Children First Pioneer Areas in the future.**

Wider networking

The Early Intervention Foundation are showcasing the **work of the Children's Communities with case studies of Pembury, and shortly also Wallsend, selected and [shown on their website](#)** as examples of innovative early intervention initiatives which are also supported by rigorous evaluation plans. We were delighted to see the programme profiled in this way.

We've also been networking with other place-based and local systems change initiatives as part of our ongoing work to raise the profile of these approaches, to share approaches and learning with others engaged and to provide thought leadership to this work in the UK. We presented on our innovative early language behaviour change work at an A Better Start learning initiative, and also joined them in a workshop led by the US-based Framework Institute.

We have met with the director and data leads from the West London Zone, a collective impact initiative aimed at supporting children in West London, and discussed the shared ambitions and approaches, and the areas of **divergence, in our programmes. We've shared our evaluation approaches with them and looked at their data systems which provide useful learning for the data dashboards Sheffield Hallam will be developing with our Communities.**

We have also met with NSPCC and shared our learning to support their work to develop place-based systems **focused on the prevention of child abuse, and we've networked with Dorset County Council who are setting up an innovative place-based family partnerships model supporting strategic partnerships and collective action.**



UPCOMING CHILDREN'S COMMUNITIES MILESTONES

Output	Timing	Description
Wallsend Children's Community Governance Meeting	September 2017	The Governance Group provide strategic oversight of the Children's Community .
Smallshaw- Hurt's Community Stakeholder Workshop	September/ October 2017	The local team will host a workshop facilitated by Sheffield Hallam University with stakeholders and professionals to work towards their theory of change and governance structure.
Head of Local Systems joining the National Children's Communities Team	October 2017	Paul Perkins will join Save the Children to lead on sustaining excellence in the Children's Communities programme, and drawing together our place-based and local systems change initiatives.
Evaluation Interim Report	October 2017	Our first Evaluation Report from the team at Sheffield Hallam University.
Pembury Children's Community Governance Meeting	October 2017	The board meet biannually and to provide strategic oversight of the Children's Community .
Children's Communities Evaluation Advisory Group Meeting	November 2017	The Evaluation Advisory Group meet regularly to support the national evaluation, providing advice and challenge and helping to support knowledge-sharing and wider influence.
Joint Governance meeting and Learning Exchange	November/ December 2017	With the aim of facilitating cross-community working, these regular joint meetings and learning exchanges enable the group to reflect on progress so far, share and strengthen the collective understanding of operationalising the Children's Communities model , and set plans for further strategic activity to strengthen learning and practice development.



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