




Smallshaw-Hurst  
Children's Community

STRATEGY 2024 – 27

Katie, 8, plays in a local park  
in Smallshaw-Hurst, Greater  
Manchester.  
Credit: Kate Stanworth/Save  
the Children.

# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
OUR VISION	3
KEY STATISTICS	4
OUR JOURNEY, IDENTITY AND COMMITMENTS	5
OUR APPROACH AND THEORY OF CHANGE	6
HOW WE OPERATE	9
KEY IMPACT AREAS	9
Community Engagement and Support Education and Youth Development Partnership Building and Collaboration Empowerment and Capacity Building	
FUTURE DIRECTION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	11
CONCLUSION	14



Mural painted inside a local building used to run children's activities, as part of the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community in Greater Manchester.  
Credit: Percy Dean/Save the Children.

## FOREWORD

The Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community Strategy for 2024 – 2027 embodies our collective commitment to fostering positive change and empowering every individual within our community to thrive. Situated in Ashton-Under-Lyne, Greater Manchester, Smallshaw-Hurst faces significant challenges stemming from high poverty rates, limited job opportunities and health disparities. However, amid these obstacles, we recognise the resilient spirit and dedication of our community members.

Our vision is clear: to empower every child, young person and family in Smallshaw-Hurst to fulfil their potential. To achieve this vision, we have developed a comprehensive strategy grounded in our core values of resilience, collaboration and innovation. Through our 'cradle to career' approach, we aim to address the root causes of poverty and inequality by harnessing community strengths, fostering partnerships and advocating for essential reforms.

Central to this strategy is our Theory of Change, which underpins our efforts to create meaningful and sustainable outcomes for the community. We aim to encourage collaboration, empower individuals and communities and promote systemic change. We strive to break the cycle of poverty and build a more equitable society where every child and family has the opportunity to thrive.

Our strategic priorities, outlined across nine key objectives, encompass a range of initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable community development, promoting equitable access to opportunities and prioritising health and wellbeing. Additionally, we are committed to promoting diversity and inclusion, ensuring that all community members feel valued, respected and represented.

Through our partnership with Save The Children UK (SCUK) and our active engagement in advocacy and campaigning initiatives, we amplify our collective voice for systemic change, advocating for the rights and wellbeing of children and families at both local and national levels.

As we embark on the next three years, guided by community feedback and emerging needs, we remain steadfast in our commitment to strengthening connections, sharing learning and supporting empowerment within the community. Together, we will continue to drive positive change and build a more resilient, inclusive and thriving community for generations to come.

**Anton McGrath**  
**Chair of Trustees, Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community**

## OUR VISION

Is centered on the empowerment of every child, young person and family in Smallshaw-Hurst to fulfil their potential.

Situated in Ashton-Under-Lyne, Greater Manchester, Smallshaw-Hurst (SSH) once thrived as one of the centres of the textile industry but now grapples with significant challenges.

Comprising neighbourhoods known locally as Broadoak & Smallshaw, Hurst and Hazel Hurst, Smallshaw-Hurst faces high poverty rates, reduced job opportunities and limited access to resources.

Health issues, including prevalent heart problems and shorter life expectancies, further compound the difficulties. Educational outcomes for those aged 16+ are well below the national average, with many children coming from families experiencing low income. Despite these obstacles, there is a resilient spirit in SSH, with community efforts aimed at improving education, health and overall wellbeing.

### ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE WITHIN GREATER MANCHESTER



## KEY STATISTICS

These statistics collectively paint a picture of socio-economic deprivation and its impact on various aspects of life within the Smallshaw-Hurst, particularly affecting the life course and opportunities available to children and young people.

1. **31% of children live in income-deprived homes:** this reality directly affects a child's quality of life, access to resources and opportunities for development.
2. **39% of children in Year 6 are obese or overweight:** this suggests potential health issues and lifestyle challenges that children in the area may face, impacting their wellbeing and future health outcomes.
3. **Only 27% are achieving Grade 5 or above in English & Maths KS4:** academic achievement rates are crucial for future opportunities and socio-economic mobility. A lower percentage indicates potential challenges in accessing quality education or support for academic success.
4. **9% of pupils are not staying in education or employment after KS4:** this statistic reflects potential issues with educational attainment, vocational training, or employment opportunities for young people which then impacts their transition into adulthood.
5. **12% of 18 - 24 year-olds are unemployed:** high youth unemployment rates suggest challenges in accessing employment opportunities, which can have long-term implications for financial stability and social integration.
6. **Female life expectancy is 81 years and male life expectancy is 77 years:** lower life expectancies compared to the national average may indicate health disparities, socio-economic challenges and healthcare access issues within the community.
7. **Deaths from coronary heart disease are 74% higher than the national average:** health outcomes such as this indicate potential challenges with access to healthcare, lifestyle factors and overall community wellbeing.
8. **36.4% of households with dependent children are lone parent households:** this highlights potential family structure challenges that could impact child development and wellbeing, as well as economic stability within households.

## OUR JOURNEY

Over six years in Smallshaw-Hurst, we've witnessed a remarkable truth. This community is defined not by statistics, but by the extraordinary resilience and dedication of its people. From early years educators to dedicated school staff, individuals in this community confront significant challenges with unwavering determination.

## OUR IDENTITY

We are a coalition of community members, leaders and strategists, supported by a dedicated local [systems change](#) team, committed to understanding and addressing the root causes of poverty.

We recognise concerns around outcomes for children and young people, including poor qualifications and low aspirations. These outcomes not only limit immediate opportunities but have a long-term impact on future prospects. Through the SSH Children's Community, we embrace innovation and refine existing practices to support local families and children.

## OUR KEY COMMITMENTS

- Recognising the importance of lived experience and building trusted relationships.
- Emphasising long-term change and sustainability, distinguishing our approach from other initiatives.
- Co-creating community-led groups to shift power to the local community, ensuring lasting impact and involvement from the start.



"People are a bit scared of organisations and don't want to voice their opinions but they can with SSH Children's Community because they know they'll be listened to."

- Christine, Chair of Cedar Park & Hurst Community Group

"[The Children's Community] gives people more say in their community and more control over what happens so they feel that sense of ownership."

- Jamie Leigh, Parent Champion

"I can't believe someone like that wanted to listen to what I had to say about my experiences."

- Louise, Parent Champion, after a roundtable event in Westminster



## OUR APPROACH

With our 'cradle to career' model, we harness community strengths through alliances and collaborations, ensuring local systems effectively meet the needs of children, young people and families. We unite stakeholders to confront root causes head-on and drive lasting change, advocating for essential reforms and empowering communities to make tangible differences.

## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

The SSH Theory of Change is structured around three key themes that drive our efforts to nurture the development and wellbeing of children.

1. **Nurturing Early Learning and Parental Engagement:** we acknowledge parents as primary educators and influencers in children's lives. Through empowering parents to actively participate in their children's learning journey, we aim to positively shape their long-term outcomes. Our initiatives focus on enhancing parenting quality, increasing parental involvement with community services, and ensuring children reach development goals and are prepared for school.

The Nurturing Early Learning and Parental Engagement theme is designed to empower parents and carers, create supportive environments, and provide children with the foundation they need to thrive academically, socially and emotionally. By investing in this area, we can drive positive outcomes for children and families, leading to healthier, happier and more resilient communities.

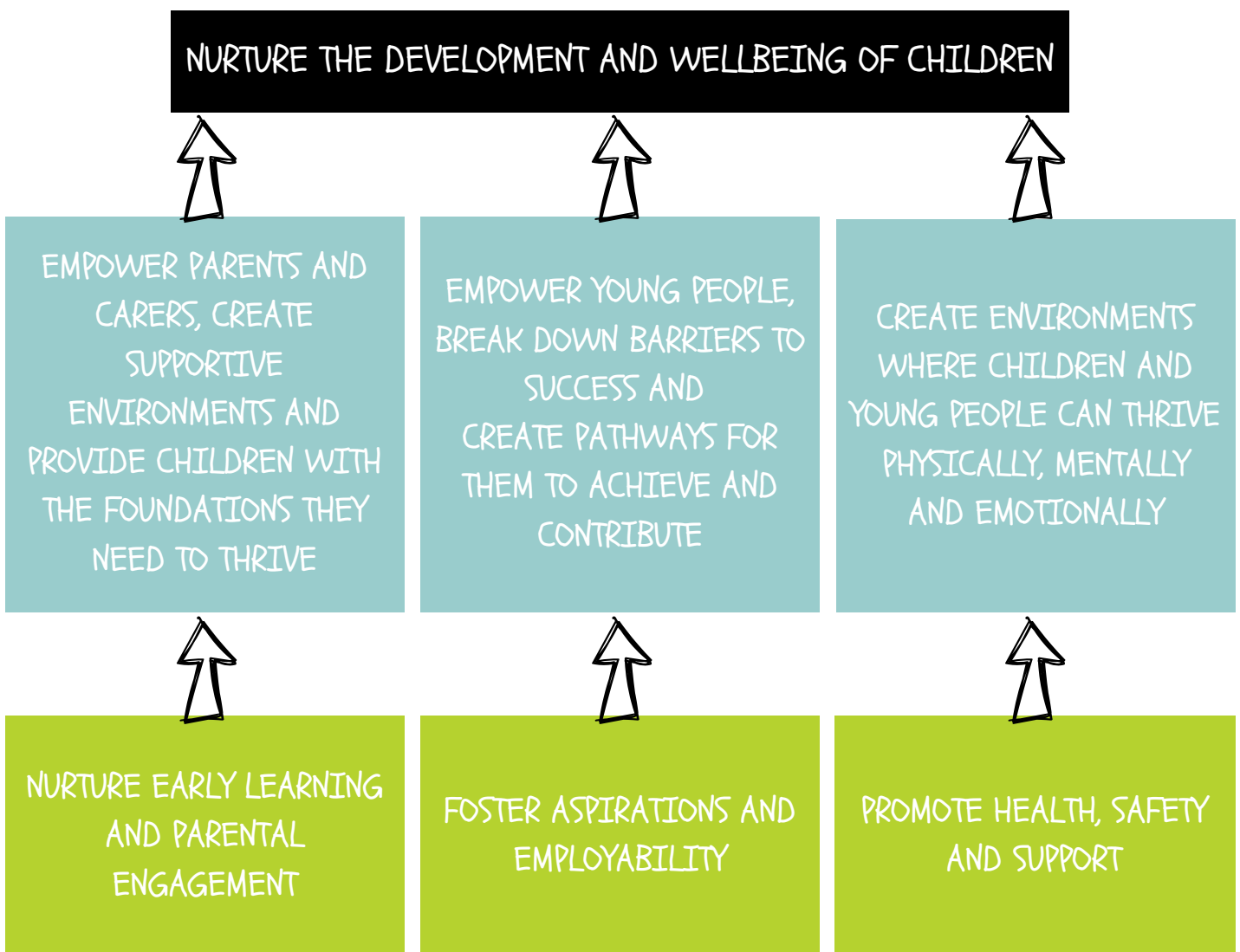
2. **Fostering Aspirations and Employability:** our commitment lies in enabling every young person, regardless of their background, to realise their full potential. We strive to equip them with the necessary skills and opportunities to pursue their aspirations, be it academic or practical. We aim to address challenges related to education quality, skill development; facilitating access to suitable opportunities are central to our efforts around preventing unemployment and disengagement.

The Fostering Aspirations and Employability theme is designed to empower young people, break down barriers to success, and create pathways for them to achieve their goals and contribute meaningfully to society. Through targeted interventions and collaborative efforts, we can drive positive outcomes and impact, ensuring that every young person can thrive and realise their full potential.

3. **Nurture the Development and Wellbeing of Children and Young People:** the wellbeing of children and young people is paramount to us. That's why we prioritise access to nutritious food, safe environments and supportive communities. By tackling issues like preventable illnesses, mental health concerns and inadequate support systems, we aim to create an environment where children can thrive physically, mentally and emotionally.

The Nurture the Development and Wellbeing of Children and Young People theme aims to create environments where children and young people can thrive physically, mentally and emotionally. Through targeted interventions and collaborative efforts, we can address underlying issues and create conditions that support the wellbeing and development of all children and young people in the community.

**SSH CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY THEORY OF CHANGE**





**At the heart of our approach is the recognition that children’s readiness to learn throughout their childhood is crucial.** This readiness is fostered by maintaining good physical and mental health, as well as cultivating a supportive ecosystem that includes families and caregivers. Advocating for and supporting the wellbeing of families and caregivers is fundamental to our mission to allow children to thrive.

Our Theory of Change serves as the blueprint for our strategic approach, outlining the pathways through which our initiatives generate meaningful and sustainable outcomes for the community. By addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality through targeted interventions, we aim to create positive ripple effects throughout the community. Through collaboration, empowerment and systemic change, we strive to break the cycle of poverty and build a more equitable society where every child, young person and family has the opportunity to flourish.

By integrating the Theory of Change into our strategic framework, we ensure that our guiding principles and strategic objectives are aligned with our overarching vision and approach, reinforcing our commitment to driving positive change in SSH.



Hasanana, four, and Sorella, six, make art during school holiday activities, supported by the Smallshaw-Hurst Children’s Community in Greater Manchester. Credit: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children.

## HOW WE OPERATE

Our approach includes network and capacity building, fundraising, research and data collection, knowledge sharing, pooling resources, direct community activity, co-creation of safe space and peer support, the sharing of lived experience and policy advocacy.

Everything the Children's Community does is focused on learning and supporting our community to address the root causes of inequality.

## KEY IMPACT AREAS

1. **Community Engagement and Support:** addressing socio-economic challenges and actively engaging with the local community through initiatives like the food pantry and community events.
2. **Education and Youth Development:** promoting education, addressing issues like readiness to learn, social and emotional wellbeing and fostering positive youth development outcomes through collaborative programmes.
3. **Partnership Building and Collaboration:** forging strong partnerships with various organisations and agencies to leverage resources, expertise and support for the community.
4. **Empowerment and Capacity Building:** empowering individuals and communities, enabling them to take ownership of initiatives and build capacity for sustainable solutions.



"I am most appreciative of all the wonderful support you provide."

- Assistant Principal, Great Academy Ashton

"The Food Pantry feels more like a community, like you're part of something."

- Cedar Park Pantry Store member



DJ, 9, in the garden of his home in Greater Manchester. DJ's GG (grandma) attends the Pantry Store in Smallshaw-Hurst where he and his siblings receive activity packs.  
Credit: Hanna Adcock/Save the Children.



## FUTURE DIRECTION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

As we chart our course for the next three years, our strategic priorities are shaped not only by our experience working within the Local Systems Change framework and our relationships with SCUK and the locality, but also by independent consultation with community members and stakeholders.

By incorporating this feedback, the strategy reflects their priorities and needs, thereby enhancing its relevance and effectiveness. While our overarching aim remains steadfast, to strengthen connections, share learning, and support empowerment within the community to drive positive change – we have identified nine key objectives for focused action, building upon the transformative impact of our initiative.

### OBJECTIVE ONE

#### **Empowering Sustainable Community Development and Resilience**

We are committed to empowering our community by co-creating initiatives that address social, economic and environmental challenges while fostering resilience and self-sufficiency. Through capacity building programmes focused on leadership, project management and advocacy, we equip community members with skills to increase aspirations, confidence and socio-economic mobility. By promoting social inclusion and support networks, we cultivate a cohesive and resilient community. Through continuous learning opportunities, we ensure individuals have the tools to overcome adversity and thrive.

### OBJECTIVE TWO

#### **Ensuring Equitable Access, Diversity and Inclusion**

Dedicated to fostering an environment where all community members have equitable access to opportunities, we actively eliminate barriers and disparities that hinder full participation, particularly for marginalised and underserved populations. Additionally, we are committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our programmes, policies and practices. By creating safe and welcoming spaces that embrace the richness of our community's diversity, we aim to foster cross-cultural understanding and promote social cohesion, ensuring that all individuals feel valued, respected and represented.

## OBJECTIVE THREE

### **Enhancing Holistic Health and Wellbeing**

We prioritise the holistic health and wellbeing of our community by implementing initiatives that promote physical, mental and emotional wellness at every stage of life. Recognising the crucial role of good health in readiness to learn, we ensure that children are supported socially and emotionally. By fostering healthy lifestyles and creating supportive environments, we aim to nurture individual and collective wellbeing. Additionally, we emphasise the importance of family and support networks' mental health to effectively support children. This in turn leads to positive outcomes and reduced involvement in risky behaviours.

## OBJECTIVE FOUR

### **Integrating Youth Voices in Governance and Engagement**

To ensure the perspectives and needs of young people are integral to the governance and initiatives of the SSH Children's Community, we commit to developing innovative strategies for meaningful youth engagement. Recognising the importance of making governance accessible and relevant to young people, we will go beyond traditional methods of participation. Instead of expecting young people to adapt to adult-centric models of engagement, such as formal meetings with agendas, we will explore and implement creative and youth-friendly approaches to involve them in decision-making processes.

## OBJECTIVE FIVE

### **Innovative Solutions and Collaboration**

Aligned with the proverb "it takes a village to raise a child", we are ambitious in that we want every child to realise their fullest potential and achieves the best possible outcomes for their future. This involves nurturing partnerships with various services and stakeholders within our community, spanning education, housing, healthcare and social services. Through collaborative endeavours and shared knowledge, we aim to cultivate an interconnected and responsive support network, empowering each child to thrive within a nurturing and supportive community environment.

## OBJECTIVE SIX

### **Support SCUK, Policy, Advocacy and Campaigning**

We are dedicated to fostering partnerships to address poverty and inequality, particularly through collaboration with SCUK. This partnership involves active engagement in Westminster-focused campaigns and leveraging media platforms to provide crucial support to families in need, empowering them to overcome poverty's challenges and advocating for the rights and wellbeing of children and families.

## OBJECTIVE SEVEN

### **Enhancing Resources and Collaborative Sustainability with SCUK**

We aim to ensure the longevity and impact of our community programmes by leveraging and expanding funding through SCUK and other sources. Diversifying funding with grants, donations and gifts in kind supports community needs. A sustainability plan guides us beyond initial agreements with SCUK, focusing on funding diversification and strategic partnerships. Crucially, SCUK assists in external fundraising efforts, with reciprocal support from us, securing a sustainable future for community initiatives.

## OBJECTIVE EIGHT

### **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment Framework**

Implementing a robust monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment framework, in collaboration with SCUK, will be integral to the success of our strategy. We establish clear indicators and metrics to systematically track progress towards our objectives and assess the impact of our interventions. This data-driven approach enables informed decisions, identifies areas for improvement and demonstrates accountability to stakeholders.

## OBJECTIVE NINE

### **Strengthen Communication and Reputation**

We enhance our communication channels and visibility efforts to raise awareness about our work, successes and impact within the community and beyond. Through a comprehensive strategy leveraging social media, traditional media and community events, we engage stakeholders and supporters to amplify our impact. Additionally, we cultivate a strong reputation at local, regional and national levels to expand our network, influence policy discussions, and garner support for our community-driven initiatives.

## HOW THE COMMUNITY LEVERAGES ITS COLLECTIVE VOICE



### CONCLUSION

Over the next three years, our commitment remains steadfast in strengthening connections, sharing knowledge, and providing support, all under the guidance of community feedback and evolving needs. Our partnership with SCUK has been pivotal in shaping the Children's Communities, ushering them from establishment through incubation, testing, and towards our ongoing pursuit of maturity. These phases, while not strictly linear, underscore our adaptive approach to growth and development.

The Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community serves as trusted space for consultation, repositories of local wisdom, and bridges between stakeholders, ranging from children and families to organisations, strategists, and leaders. Looking ahead, our objectives include facilitating transitions, reshaping power dynamics to empower local voices, involving youth and families in governance, and nurturing the empowerment of every community member.

Central to our mission is overcoming the ramifications of poverty and raising aspirations. We aim to cultivate an environment where every individual, regardless of background, has the opportunity to thrive and achieve their full potential. Our overarching aspiration is to evolve into an organisation led by our community, deeply rooted in lived experiences, committed to effecting meaningful and sustainable change at local, regional, and national levels. Together, we strive to ensure that every child and young person realises their fullest potential, influencing policies that champion their growth, well-being, and aspirations.



Smallshaw-Hurst  
Children's Community

Jack, 3, makes art during school holiday activities, supported by the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community in Greater Manchester. Credit: Jonathan Hyams/Save the Children.