

Improving Futures

New projects to transform the lives of children



Improving Futures

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Introduction



“These fantastic projects are all about improving the lives and life chances of children growing up in difficult circumstances.

But the power of Improving Futures will stretch much further, changing expectations and pioneering new approaches with the potential to transform the lives of children right across the UK”

Peter Wanless
Chief Executive

The Big Lottery Fund is providing up to £26 million to transform outcomes for children living in families with multiple and complex needs. Today we are announcing the first wave of 17 projects, each of which have been awarded up to £900,000 to deliver their projects over 3–5 years.

The Improving Futures programme was launched in March 2011. Voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations from across the UK were invited to submit partnership proposals for how they would achieve the following outcomes:

- improved outcomes for children in families with multiple and complex needs
- new approaches to local delivery, demonstrating replicable models which lead to more effective, tailored and joined up support for families with multiple and complex needs
- improved learning and sharing of best practice between public services and VCS organisations.

Applications were expected to build upon existing best practice, for example many are using a ‘key worker’ to enable trusted and coherent interactions with families. A particular emphasis was also placed on applications that could demonstrate effective early intervention for families on the ‘cusp’ of acute need.

Improving Futures will trial a range of new approaches to ‘early intervention and support’ over the next five years. The VCS-led partnerships are working closely with local public services, aiming to maximise value from sharing cross-sector expertise and capacity. Several are evolving the next generation of integrated services, building on learning from Sure Start and other family interventions. Many will implement proven approaches from abroad that have not yet been widely adopted in the UK, such as the Community Group Programme, Roots of Empathy and Incredible Years. Others will innovate around new approaches to outreach, personal budgets, data-sharing, asset-based community development, or using mentors and peer support.

BIG have commissioned Ecorys to undertake an independent evaluation of the Improving Futures programme to assess the impact our investment has on children’s lives and identify models of best practice to inform the future work of voluntary and public sector practitioners.

We expect to announce a second wave of Improving Futures projects later in 2012. Through this programme BIG will make a significant contribution to the development of better services for families with multiple and complex needs.

For further information or to sign-up to our regular e-newsletter, please contact adam.lang@biglotteryfund.org.uk

Evaluating and sharing learning from Improving Futures

Big Lottery Fund has commissioned a partnership led by Ecorys with the University of Nottingham, Parenting UK and IPSOS Mori to undertake an independent evaluation of the Improving Futures programme over five years from 2011 to 2016. The partners bring complementary expertise from across research, academia and the voluntary sector. Together they will ensure that the evaluation is robust and maximise its relevance for policymakers and practitioners. The evaluation aims to assess the outcomes, impact and cost-effectiveness of each of the 17 projects.

Methodology

The evaluation will include qualitative and quantitative research tasks, as follows.

- ▶ Literature review and typologies – a review and critique of previous research and evaluation reports, to consider the range and effectiveness of ‘whole family’ approaches, and select a range of suitable outcomes measures for this programme that will be measurable, robust and comparable.
- ▶ Measuring outcomes and impact for children and families – each project will have its own evaluation plan. Findings will be reported twice a year.
- ▶ Case studies – six longitudinal case studies and 14 snapshot case studies will be completed, involving 200-250 in-depth qualitative interviews with children, families and project staff.
- ▶ Participatory Action Research – an evaluation toolkit and training for the projects will be available to help them involve families themselves in the evaluation and reflect their perspectives.
- ▶ A longitudinal quantitative survey of 650 families – tracked over time to measure outcomes and distance travelled.
- ▶ Cost-benefit analysis – of the projects and programme as a whole.
- ▶ Telephone surveys of 340 local stakeholders (about 20 for each project) – to help measure and attribute local impacts.

Sharing learning

Alongside the research activities a number of dissemination activities will share learning from the programme:

- a website to be launched in March 2012
- learning events and workshops for projects
- policy briefings, seminars and webinars
- publications, reports, think pieces
- wider dissemination, press and publicity.

There will be a strong emphasis on ‘formative’ evaluation. Findings will be shared on a continuous basis alongside reports for the 17 individual projects and for the programme as a whole at the end of each year. This will ensure that the evaluation is beneficial and supports local delivery, during the lifetime of the programme.

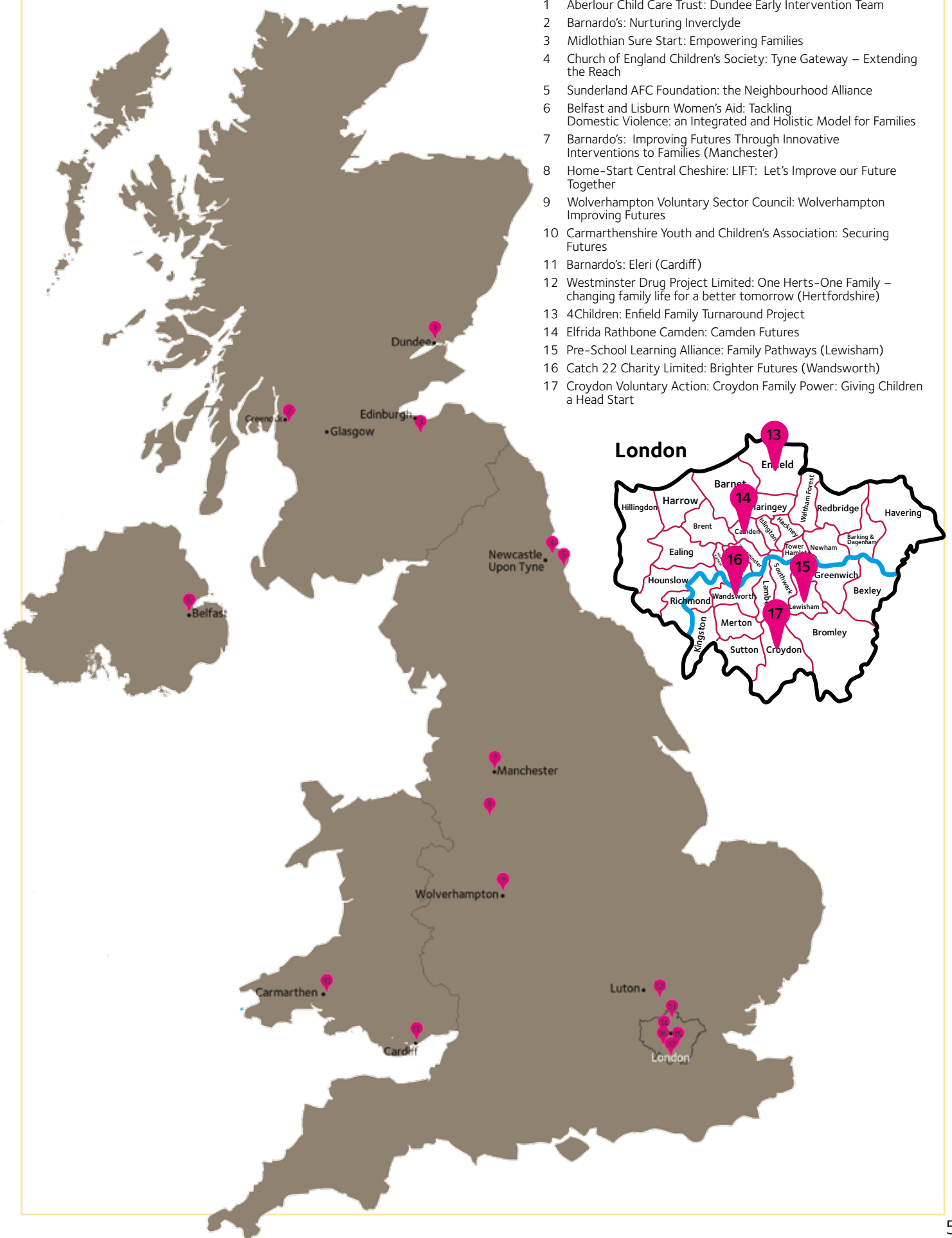
The evaluation website will be the focal point for sharing learning for internal and external stakeholders, with regular news updates and good practice. Each project will have an evaluation webpage to showcase their work, and will be supported to update this with a range of evaluation evidence as the programme develops.

For more information about the evaluation, contact: Laurie Day, Ecorys (laurie.day@uk.ecorys.com)

Map of funding

Lead organisation and project name

- 1 Aberlour Child Care Trust: Dundee Early Intervention Team
- 2 Barnardo's: Nurturing Inverclyde
- 3 Midlothian Sure Start: Empowering Families
- 4 Church of England Children's Society: Tyne Gateway – Extending the Reach
- 5 Sunderland AFC Foundation: the Neighbourhood Alliance
- 6 Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid: Tackling Domestic Violence: an Integrated and Holistic Model for Families
- 7 Barnardo's: Improving Futures Through Innovative Interventions to Families (Manchester)
- 8 Home-Start Central Cheshire: LIFT: Let's Improve our Future Together
- 9 Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council: Wolverhampton Improving Futures
- 10 Carmarthenshire Youth and Children's Association: Securing Futures
- 11 Barnardo's: Eleri (Cardiff)
- 12 Westminster Drug Project Limited: One Herts-One Family – changing family life for a better tomorrow (Hertfordshire)
- 13 4Children: Enfield Family Turnaround Project
- 14 Elfrida Rathbone Camden: Camden Futures
- 15 Pre-School Learning Alliance: Family Pathways (Lewisham)
- 16 Catch 22 Charity Limited: Brighter Futures (Wandsworth)
- 17 Croydon Voluntary Action: Croydon Family Power: Giving Children a Head Start



Tackling Domestic Violence: an Integrated and Holistic Model for Families

Location:

Belfast, Northern Ireland

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:

1,060

Partners:

Belfast and Lisburn Women's Aid (Lead), Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

This project tackling domestic violence is the first of its kind in Northern Ireland. It will promote an innovative inter-agency approach, enabling earlier intervention and prevention. A new women's aid team will work alongside social workers in seven gateway teams, the single point of contact and entry for all new family and childcare referrals to social services in and beyond Belfast. The team will enable a co-ordinated early intervention response across all levels of risk, in particular focussing on children and mothers whose needs have been assessed as low risk by social services and requiring no further statutory intervention. The team will include a health visitor who will assist in providing a pathway to holistic and specialised services for the family.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ For the first time, women's aid workers will be co-located with Health and Social Care Trust professionals at a range of locations, covering a significant urban and rural population and geographical area.
- ▶ Children and mothers will have immediate access to tailored support and safety services at the point of referral and assessment to mitigate the impact of domestic violence.
- ▶ Through one-to-one support, counselling and specialised domestic violence groupwork programmes, mothers will build their capacity to safeguard their children by understanding of the dynamics of the abuse and the effects on their children. This intervention increases women's confidence, self-esteem and resilience, enabling them to make good decisions for themselves and their children.
- ▶ In parallel, specialist services will meet children's needs and help them feel safe and supported.
- ▶ The need for multiple agency contact and support with families will be reduced.
- ▶ In the long term, the project will explore developing a sustainable comprehensive multi-agency team as an integrated model of practice across all of the Trust areas.

Securing Futures

This integrated and holistic project will target the needs of families where parents have learning disabilities or are experiencing low to moderate mental health problems. The project draws on research, including by Learning Disability Wales, and has been designed to complement Welsh Government's child poverty strategy and other initiatives aimed at supporting people experiencing mental health and/or learning difficulties.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ Children will be provided with a range of support to address emotional health, cognitive and social skills, and learning support needs. These will be addressed through a holistic range of interventions including mentoring, play, therapy, and in- and extra-school support.
- ▶ A continuing support service will help children successfully make the transition from primary to secondary education via the use of volunteer mentors.
- ▶ Work with other family members to address the underlying factors that inhibit child and family development, including parenting, strengthening family ties and improving communication within the family.
- ▶ Support packages for families will be brokered by their key worker. These will include access to a range of psychological and cognitive therapies, as well as support around employment, skills development, debt, financial management, poor housing, domestic violence and substance misuse.
- ▶ Participants will be invited to sit on the project steering group and their feedback will also be sought in a range of ways to inform ongoing project delivery. This is important to address particular barriers that may be experienced by these target families, such as communication needs, that may for example require assistive technology, advocacy, signing or translation to represent the interests of participants.
- ▶ An interactive 'virtual support gateway' and toolkit will help facilitate replication of the project in other areas in the future.

Location: Carmarthenshire, Wales

Length of project:
4 years

Number of families supported by the project:
260

Partners: Carmarthenshire Youth and Children's Association (Lead), Carmarthenshire County Council, Families First, Hywel Dda Local Health Board, Chamber for Business and Social Action, Coleg Sir Gar

Location:

Camden, England

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:

600

Partners:

Elfrida Rathbone (Lead),
Coram, Camden's Citizen
Advice Bureau, Haverstock
Healthcare, and London
Borough of Camden
(Children, Schools and
Families Commissioning
Team)

The Camden Futures partnership will offer a range of early intervention services. The project will be linked with GP practices and schools within Camden's most deprived wards to encourage access by families who are not engaged with supportive services.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ The project will include a range of interventions including direct parenting support and advice, support with behavioural issues, help accessing community resources, support for parents to work more closely with schools, therapeutic arts services and advice around financial inclusion.
- ▶ Financial inclusion work will also include early assessment to identify problems and provide specialist support including debt, housing and welfare benefit advice.
- ▶ Activities have been designed around these services to address the unmet needs of families before their needs escalate.
- ▶ The project will work closely with professionals such as GPs and teachers or other community workers to improve engagement with parents that have already built up a relationship. This professional will work to link them with additional support and improved engagement.
- ▶ To encourage access by families who are not currently engaged in other services, the partnership is linked to local GP practices and schools within Camden's most deprived wards. The core delivery partners are also building a wider network of referral partners which includes specialist provision from domestic violence, counselling, educational and psychotherapy agencies.
- ▶ A shortened version of the eCAF has been developed to support professionals in assessment, referral and review processes. The family star tool will also be utilised. Camden Futures keyworkers will be able to act as budget-holding lead professionals.



Location:

Cardiff, Wales

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:

500

Partners:

Barnardo's (Lead), Action for Children, Cardiff local authority, primary schools

The Eleri project will build on the strengths of existing services across Cardiff, while seeking to improve coherence and delivery for families with multiple problems. The governance arrangements for Eleri will ensure strategic and on-the-ground coherence with the new Integrated Family Support Services and Families First initiative in Cardiff. Implemented in parallel, these initiatives offer potential for transformative impact at a city-wide level as a result of greater multi-agency collaboration and improved provision.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ Four primary schools will lead on identifying pupils whose families are experiencing the 'revolving door' of referrals and uncoordinated services, and would benefit from a more holistic model of support.
- ▶ Through implementation of the Joint Assessment Families Framework, Eleri will place a stronger emphasis on multi-agency coordination and delivery, ensuring that families are not 'signposted into the abyss'.
- ▶ Learning from the LIFE programme in Swindon, Eleri will enable children to select their own lead professional who is a trusted adult. This is because the relationship between this individual and the family is seen as key to the likelihood of achieving successful outcomes.
- ▶ Interventions that will be available for children will include: the 'Bright Young Things' child development programme, residential school holiday breaks, 'Circle Time', a peer-support programme, advocacy and 1-2-1 play therapy.
- ▶ Parents will have access to advice and advocacy, parenting programmes Triple P/Nurturing, or more individual support. A drop-in centre will also provide opportunities for parents to get to know the project staff better.

LIFT (Let's Improve our Future Together)

The LIFT project will utilise a community development approach to supporting families, aiming to lever and increase social capital in four contrasting localities across Cheshire. As the voluntary, community and faith sector in Cheshire has been experiencing an increase in families turning to them for support, there will be an ambition to reach families who are not currently engaging with or known to local statutory partners.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ The LIFT partnership will engage families in two urban and two rural localities across Cheshire.
- ▶ A 'family pathways' approach will be adopted, with key workers supporting families to identify desired outcomes for children. They will reach collective agreement about which services to 'purchase' using a personalised family budget.
- ▶ Where possible, services will be 'purchased' from local voluntary, community and faith organisations. Spot purchasing will also be possible where specific needs cannot be met from existing services, and this will be closely tracked to build evidence of local need and inform longer-term development of new services.
- ▶ An innovative element of the programme sees families enhancing their skills and employment prospects by getting involved in the development of new social enterprises. It is envisaged that these enterprises will generate some income, for example through the sale of items grown or made and new skills that adults have developed, to put back into the project.
- ▶ Taking a 'whole systems' approach, the partnership involves a wide range of voluntary and public sector agencies, and strategic alignment will be achieved through representation on local Children's Trusts.
- ▶ The two Children's Trusts will monitor the progress of the LIFT project, cascade learning and facilitate the rollout of the model, if successful.

Location:

Cheshire West and Chester, and Cheshire East, England

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:

181

Partners:

Home-Start Central Cheshire (Lead); Cheshire East Borough Council; Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council; Chester Lodgings and Support Providers; Visyon; Friends for Leisure; Community Action Vale Royal; Youth Federation; Children's Trusts (East and West); Health representatives from East and West; Cheshire JETs Foundation; Dial House, Chester; Macclesfield Disability Information Bureau; Catch 22; Cheshire Community Action; Citizens Advice Bureaux (Cheshire East, North East and West); Crossroads Care, CE, Manchester and Tameside; the Welcome, Knutsford; the Children's Society; Learning Together Cheshire and Warrington; Home-Start East Cheshire; Home-Start West Cheshire; Pathways Counselling Service; Deafness Support Network; Proof Matters; Barnardos; Cheshire Centre for Independent Living; Action for Children; LIVE!; Adoption Matters NW; Vale Royal Women's Aid; Blacon Community Trust; the Cheshire Children, Young People and Families' Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector HUB Schools and Families Commissioning Team)

Croydon Family Power: Giving Children a Head Start

Location:
Croydon, England

Length of project:
3 years

Number of family members supported by the project:
3031

Partners:
Croydon Voluntary Action (Lead), Cabrini Children's Society, Croydon Council, Croydon Drop In, Croydon Mencap, Croydon Supplementary Education Project, Disability Croydon, Gingerbread Corner, Home-Start Croydon, MIND in Croydon, Nurture Development, Off the Record – Youth Counselling, Place2Be, Pre-School Learning Alliance (Croydon and Lewisham), Roots of Empathy, Wave Trust, Welcare in Croydon

The Croydon Family Power project is asset-based and has 'universal' and 'targeted' elements. It includes rolling out several evidence-based programmes in Croydon, to build child empathy, enhance parental capabilities, and strengthen family resilience. The project focuses on strengthening families who are 'just coping', before their problems escalate.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ The universal elements of this project will include rollout of an evidence-based programme called Roots of Empathy in schools. The Roots of Empathy programme originated in Canada and involves facilitated sessions that help children to explore their feelings and the feelings of others, resulting in greater empathy and a long term positive impact. This activity will be jointly launched with the Improving Futures project in neighbouring Lewisham.
- ▶ As part of Croydon's Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, the project will train 60 adult and child family connectors. These connectors will develop new peer-led projects and social networks, as part of a 'community asset mapping' process that identifies and enhances local resources for more families.
- ▶ More targeted elements are delivered by a pool of six trained family navigators. Targeting harder to reach families, they will enable parents to navigate local services, brokering intensive support where needed.
- ▶ 50 'just coping' parents will be invited to access the Incredible Years programme. Incredible Years focuses on strengthening parenting competencies (monitoring, positive discipline, confidence) and fostering parents' involvement in children's school experiences, in order to promote children's academic, social and emotional competencies.
- ▶ The Just What We Need Parent Pods programme will also be made available to 50 parents and its impact evaluated. This programme will be facilitated by a psychotherapist and aims to promote mental and emotional wellbeing.
- ▶ In consultation with the Improving Futures evaluation team, the project will aim to utilise family and communities Outcomes Stars to help demonstrate the change that each element of the Croydon Family Power project achieves.

Dundee Early Intervention Team

These four major children's charities in Scotland will be working together for the first time, pooling their considerable expertise and resources. Utilising evidence-based approaches, the Team will work with families to find effective and sustainable solutions to social, health, relationship or parenting difficulties, both at and before the point of crisis.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ The Team's Early Intervention family workers will act as key workers, taking an assertive and persistent approach to outreach.
- ▶ Informed by international evidence, they will adopt a 'social pedagogy' approach. This combines education and care, emphasising that bringing up children is the shared responsibility of parents and society. The project characterises their expectations of family workers as taking 'a head, hearts and hands' approach to living out social pedagogy in practice, and will provide training for family workers around this.
- ▶ Referrals to the Team will be made by a wide range of services, with particularly strong and seamless collaboration with the Health Visiting Service.
- ▶ The Team around the Child and Family approach is adopted to deliver a tailored programme of interventions, that are supportive and based on strength while at times challenging to families.
- ▶ The service will provide support 7am to 10pm Monday to Friday and at weekends where necessary, as these are times when families often experience stresses. In addition 24/7 telephone support will be provided.
- ▶ This project will aim to provide a model suitable for replication across all 32 Scottish local authority areas, which will deliver on the principles of the Scottish Government's 'Getting it right for every child framework'. Central to this model will be a strong evidence base and demonstrating the tangible benefits for children and families that can be achieved through greater collaboration.

Location:

Dundee, Scotland

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:
200

Partners:

Aberlour Child Care Trust (Lead),
Action for Children, Barnardo's
Scotland, CHILDREN 1st in
partnership with Dundee City
Council and NHS Tayside

Enfield Family Turnaround Project

Location:

Enfield, England

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:

150

Partners:

4Children (Lead), Enfield Parents & Children, Enfield Council, Home Start, Samafal (Somali and BME populations), Enfield Turkish Cypriot Association, Enfield Voluntary Action

The Enfield Family Turnaround project will reach out to children experiencing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties at primary school, and particularly aim to support those from Somali and Turkish families who may experience barriers in accessing existing services. A 'whole family' support model will be promoted through the project.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ A family outreach worker will be aligned with each of four primary school cluster groups, and schools will help identify children who could benefit from the project.
- ▶ A Family Passport will be used with families to plan their support and recognise progress.
- ▶ Budgets will be held by frontline staff to commission the services agreed with families, such as specialist parenting courses, workshops on the UK education system, support groups around domestic violence and other issues, counselling, parent and child learning opportunities.
- ▶ Local parents and carers will be engaged as volunteer mentors. They will receive volunteer training and undertake outreach to their peers using 'appreciative enquiry' approaches.
- ▶ Every effort will be made to overcome potential barriers for Somali, Turkish and other BME families including: all information in a range of community languages, recruitment of workforce and volunteers that reflect the local community, representative focus groups, positive outreach, services that are sensitive to cultural and religious beliefs, close working with Somali and Turkish community and voluntary sector representatives, and learning from other Improving Futures projects in similar contexts.

One Herts – One Family – changing family life for a better tomorrow

This project will focus on providing earlier intervention for children, below statutory thresholds – combining practical and therapeutic support to build family strengths. The locus of the project will be in three areas: Broxbourne, Stevenage and Watford.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ A recent consultation with local families identified the need for more practical support. Benefits include building a sense of ‘normality’ for children living in difficult circumstances, for example creating leisure opportunities for those in temporary housing or refuges, and making it easier for parents to access services and support, for example by providing childcare and transportation.
- ▶ Family support workers will create care packages for families that include a significant focus on practical support. For example, skills development, practical help to access training and employment, housing and benefits support, advocacy, assistance with daily routines and attending appointments, grants for household items.
- ▶ Provision of therapeutic support will be enhanced. Individual, couples and family counselling will be available, while play therapy will be offered for children. Therapeutic play practitioners will help children to communicate their feelings and parents to better understand their children’s experiences.
- ▶ Targeted resilience and behavioural support will also be provided for children experiencing particular issues.

Location:

Hertfordshire, England

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:

240

Partners:

Westminster Drug Project Limited (Lead), Safer Places



Nurturing Inverclyde

The project will create a family resource centre in Inverclyde, providing a range of interventions and supports to prevent or address family problems by strengthening parent-child relationships and providing whatever parents need to better nurture their children. It will be the platform to implement statutory and voluntary agencies working together to become more preventative, responsive, flexible, holistic and family focused.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ Informed by a community development perspective – and wrapped in principles of being open, honest, challenging and empowering – strong relationships with families will deliver effective holistic child-centred support.
- ▶ The project will demonstrate how government policy, research and practice guidance (GIRFEC, Early Years Framework, Hidden Harm Next Steps, Join the Dots) can be applied in an effective and replicable model.
- ▶ The project will enhance families' protective aspects of their behaviour and environment and reduce levels of harmful neglect, aggression and violence.
- ▶ The project location, approach and support available will create a non-stigmatising environment. This in turn will help to identify and engage with those families affected by domestic abuse, mental ill-health, addiction, trauma, abuse and neglect, creating an effective platform for a programme of intense work.
- ▶ The project will offer a range of intensive supports including parenting support, emotional and practical support, advocacy and advice, outreach, learning and employment support and group work.
- ▶ These supports will include access to evidence-based programmes, for example, Triple P, Incredible Years.
- ▶ Interventions will focus on nurture, in partnership with colleagues from statutory and voluntary organisations, including breastfeeding initiatives, parenting groups, outreach support to establish and maintain routines, dads groups, financial maximisation, art therapy, homework clubs, good food groups.

Location:

Inverclyde, Scotland

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:

400

Partners:

Barnardo's, Inverclyde Council

Family Pathways

Location:

Lewisham, England

Length of project:

4 years

Number of families supported by the project:

400

Partners:

Pre-School Learning Alliance Lewisham (Lead), WAVE Trust, Impact Matters, London Borough of Lewisham, Voluntary Action Lewisham, Catherine Rushforth and Associates, Carers Lewisham, Phoenix Community Housing Association, Family Action, School-Home Support, Family Services UK, St. Michael's Community Nursery, St James Family Learning Centre, Clyde Nursery School/ Early Childhood Centre, New Cross and Deptford Partnership, Croydon Voluntary Action, Coopers Lane Primary School, Meliot Road Family Centre, Dr Helen Tattersfield GP, and LEARN School Improvement Team

Family Pathways will provide targeted and holistic support to families, focussing on children demonstrating anti-social or destructive behaviour, or who have witnessed or been part of a domestic violence or other difficult family situation. This project is based on research by the WAVE Trust which supports parents in connecting emotionally to their children.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ Work with 5-10 year old children will take place before they are entrenched in negative and destructive cycles of behaviour.
- ▶ The project will introduce Roots of Empathy programme into England in partnership with Croydon Voluntary Action. The programme will be delivered in local primary schools in order to develop empathy in children as an antidote to aggression and violence, and to develop future positive parenting skills helping to break the inter-generational cycle of disadvantage, begin to change the violence in society and ensure that younger siblings are less likely to follow similar trajectories.
- ▶ Another key feature of the project is a comprehensive training course for practitioners on promoting attachment and attunement between parents and children to create stronger emotional bonds within families.
- ▶ Other services available include: parenting programmes such as Incredible Years, targeted one-to-one support and outreach, counselling and therapeutic activity. These will be navigated by a key worker alongside the family.

BIG Manchester

(Improving Futures Through Innovative Interventions to Families)

BIG Manchester represents a commitment from a range of partners within the city to improve outcomes and life chances for children, young people and families by working together to manage a co-ordinated approach to effectively meet need, mitigate risk and build strength and resilience. The BIG Manchester initiative is targeted towards families with children aged 5-10 in north Manchester who are affected by complex issues including parental substance misuse, parental mental ill health and domestic abuse. These criteria have been agreed by all partners and by the Local Authority as being relevant and responsive to local need and as being aligned to local priorities to improve the futures of children, families and communities within the city.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ Key workers will have budget holding responsibility, enabling packages of support to be tailored as closely as possible for families.
- ▶ Interventions will be identified in partnership with families and using a Family Wellbeing Assessment Tool. Support will include advice and information, through to treatment, counselling, family group conferencing and therapy. Particular evidence-based interventions will include: the Strengthening Families Programme, Protective Parenting, and the Health Household Programme.
- ▶ Training packages across the partnership will encompass a range of evidence-based interventions. This will include an assessment tool and accessible resources to empower families.
- ▶ Inclusion of families at every level from design of the model, to strategic governance to developing a follow-on peer support network.
- ▶ Parent and carer peer-support and mentoring network to continue post intervention.

Location:

Manchester, England

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:

180

Partners:

Barnardo's (Lead), Lifeline-Eclipse, Manchester Mind, Women's Aid, Music Stuff, Community Service Volunteers, Young Enterprise, Wai Yin, Manchester Settlement, Family Action, Body Positive North West, Wythenshawe Community Radio, Water Adventure Centre, Manchester Alliance for Community Care

Empowering Families

Location:

Midlothian, Scotland

Length of project:

5 years

Number of families supported by the project:

300

Partners:

Midlothian Sure Start (Lead),
Bright Sparks, Children 1st,
Home Link Family Support, Mid
and East Lothian Drugs,
Midlothian Community Health
Partnership/Lothian Health,
Midlothian Council, Midlothian
Parent Carers Support Group,
Midlothian Women's Aid, Play
Therapy Base, The Action
Group, Volunteer Centre
Midlothian

Midlothian Sure Start's Empowering Families project will take an asset-based approach, enabling families with multiple risk factors to take control of their situation and make positive changes. The programme will focus on families that have not yet been referred for child protection, and will particularly look to reach out to disabled children and those whose families are affected by unemployment and substance misuse.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ Asset-based approach builds on Midlothian's Parenting and Family Support Strategy, ensuring parents and carers are at the heart of decision-making and solutions for their families.
- ▶ Using Family Group Conferencing, families will be supported to discuss issues affecting their children's development and develop a plan for their future, identifying their needs and possible solutions.
- ▶ Incredible Years parenting programmes will strengthen parents' skills, such as positive discipline, confidence, and involvement in school activities.
- ▶ Support workers, who will help families engage with statutory agencies, will have therapeutic backgrounds and also purchase additional therapeutic support where this could strengthen families.
- ▶ Peer support will be encouraged from families who have been through the project or who are in a stronger position being supported to help new entrants.
- ▶ The work will be based out of local Sure Start centres, but also involve 1-2-1 work with families in their homes. Community transport will also be offered to facilitate families' participation, in this rural context.

Tyne Gateway – Extending the Reach

This project will expand the award-winning Tyne Gateway initiative that has been tackling child poverty across North and South Tyneside since 2009. With Improving Futures funding, the project will look to engage additional families and focus on raising children’s behavioural and educational abilities.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ Family Entrepreneurs will be recruited from the local community, and lead on non-judgemental outreach to other local families. This ‘barefoot professional’ model will help families influence and access services they need, instead of being simply signposted to services.
- ▶ The FEs will help reach out to families whose needs may be ‘off radar’ of existing services. These families will be able to self-refer, as well as being engaged through traditional routes such as local primary schools.
- ▶ Activities being undertaken by families will be based on the continuous needs assessment by the FEs for both the child and their family.
- ▶ The FEs will work closely with the voluntary sector locally to map existing services and anticipate future needs. They might also employ their entrepreneurial skills to help develop new services in the area.
- ▶ Training of the FEs will also aim to create pathways into paid employment, where those recruited may not currently be in work.

Location:

North and South Tyneside, England

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:

270

Partners:

Church of England Children’s Society, Tyne Gateway Trust, North Tyneside Council, South Tyneside MBC. Additional delivery partners: Pathways 4 All, Universal Youth and Connexions Service, Escape Intervention Services, Family Lives, Impact Family Services, Children North East, Job Centre Plus, Barnardo’s, YMCA North Tyneside, Taking Part Workshops CIC, Helix Arts

The Neighbourhood Alliance

Location:

Sunderland, England

Length of project:

4 years

Number of families supported by the project:

160

Partners:

Sunderland Association Football Club Foundation (Lead), Sunderland City Council, Local Primary Schools, Gentoo Group (Housing), Sunderland North Community Business Centre, Sunderland Voluntary and Community Centre Network

Based out of the Stadium of Light, SAFC Foundation has a track record of using 'the power of football' to engage local children and families in positive learning activities. Through this new Neighbourhood Alliance Project, their partnership will reach out to disadvantaged neighbourhoods and collaborate with families to re-design services. Innovative use of technology will unlock potential for better information sharing and user experiences.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ A neighbourhood mapping process will engage families in identifying community and personal needs. Each family will develop a 'pen portrait' and these will be layered to create a better understanding of local needs and priorities.
- ▶ The family will be asked to identify a 'neighbourhood friend' who will receive training and supervision to become a supportive advocate for the family. The neighbourhood friend will come alongside the family's Lead Partner, to support them in achieving goals set out in an agreed action plan. The neighbourhood friend will also be the point of contact for out of hour's queries and the resolution of minor issues.
- ▶ Specific tools will be utilised such as a 'neighbourhood pathway' – which shows relationships between the family, Lead Partner, their neighbourhood friend – and a new 'family star' – will be used as a monitoring tool to engage families that are ready to pursue a pathway out of poverty, helping track their issues and progress.
- ▶ An innovative secure 'Information Space' is being developed by Sunderland Council and is supported by new user-permissioned data-sharing protocols. These new systems will be piloted through this project, with the aim of enabling families to be in control of the data they share with agencies, therefore increasing information-sharing between all partners and families themselves. This will in turn improve coordinated delivery of services and communication between all parties.
- ▶ A significant and strategic emphasis on 'unblocking' barriers, including better tracking and coordination of services at the most local level through Neighbourhood Alliance Community Meetings.
- ▶ Bespoke interventions, spot purchasing and commissioning will be used on a case-by-case basis. A new resource allocation process will be established to support this, putting the needs of the family first and enabling them to choose which agency/provider interacts with them.

The Brighter Futures project in Wandsworth supports children and their families who are recovering from the experience of domestic violence. The project has an emphasis on accessing support programmes that will help families promote a healthy and safe living environment for children. The project aims to develop a replicable, sustainable model of multi-agency working and shared learning.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ At the heart of the project is the 12 week Community Group Programme (CGP) practiced for over 20 years in Canada and recently piloted across London. The CGP provides a safe environment for mothers and children to explore their options, goals and next steps with professional facilitators.
- ▶ Fathers may be referred to other specialist provision, such as the Caring Dads programme offered by the probation service.
- ▶ Families will have access to tailored parenting and children's programmes, buddy/peer support network and support and advice from ancillary services (for example housing, health, probation, debt, employment and education). These project elements are essential, as to reap full advantage of the CGP and parenting programmes, families need support to manage complex living situations which create barriers to learning such as poor housing, mental health issues and debt.
- ▶ A lead professional will be allocated to adults and children separately and a buddying network will enable parents to support one another during and post-project.
- ▶ The project will build assets in the community through sharing of practice between larger and smaller partners – including reaching out to additional local grassroots organisations – and training of volunteers.
- ▶ Families are likely to be on the programme for 6 to 12 months although needs will differ.

Location:

Wandsworth, England

Length of project:

3 years

Number of families supported by the project:

120

Partners:

Catch 22 (Lead), London Borough of Wandsworth, Extended Schools Clusters, Family Action, Welcare, NHS Substance Misuse Team, AVA (Against Violence and Abuse), Citizen's Advice Bureaux

Location:

Wolverhampton, England

Length of project:

4 years

Number of families supported by the project:

200

Partners:

Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (Lead), Chance UK, Wolverhampton City Council, The Haven, Platform 51, Hope Community Project, Youth Organisations Wolverhampton. A number of aligned partners will also deliver work as part of the project

The Wolverhampton Improving Futures project will contribute to a city-wide continuum of support for children aged 0–18. In consultation with families, this project moves away from an ‘intervention’ ethos, to focus on helping parents become more effective in their roles. The project will pilot the approach in three areas of the city. In addition, two priority groups for the project have been identified by the local Safeguarding Board as: children growing up in families where the adults have learning disabilities, and families affected by domestic violence. These priority groups will be supported on a city-wide basis.

Key features of the project:

- ▶ National charity Chance UK will roll out their child mentoring programme in Wolverhampton. The mentoring programme builds children’s self-esteem and personal strengths. Volunteer mentors will be recruited by local partner organisations.
- ▶ Referrals will be made by local primary schools and Neighbourhood Boards. Children will then be assessed using the Goodman’s Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire to consider suitability for the mentoring programme.
- ▶ Regular ‘graduation ceremonies’ for all children finishing the programme.
- ▶ In parallel, a project worker will come alongside families, creating a bespoke plan, and purchasing support to help them address issues such as employment, debt, housing and domestic violence.
- ▶ Multi-Agency Support Teams will also provide in-kind strategic and practical support for the project.