



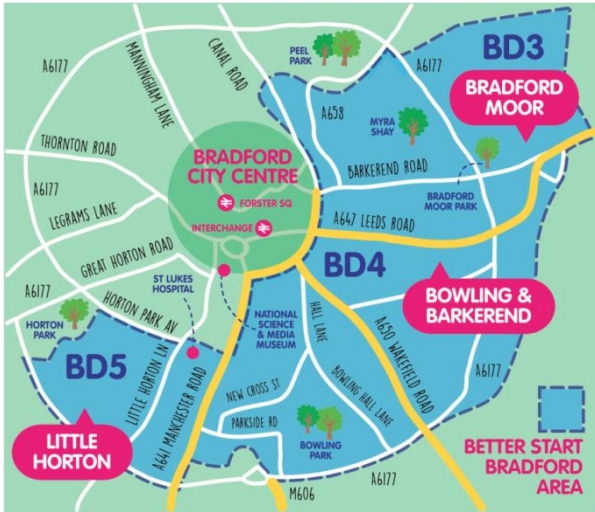
Systems Change and Children's Health: Experiences from Bradford

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What is Better Start Bradford?



- National Lottery Community Fund: £49 million over 10 years
- Community partnership
- Funding interventions for pregnant women and families with children aged 0-3 years to improve children's outcomes



Health & nutrition



Social & emotional



Language & Communication



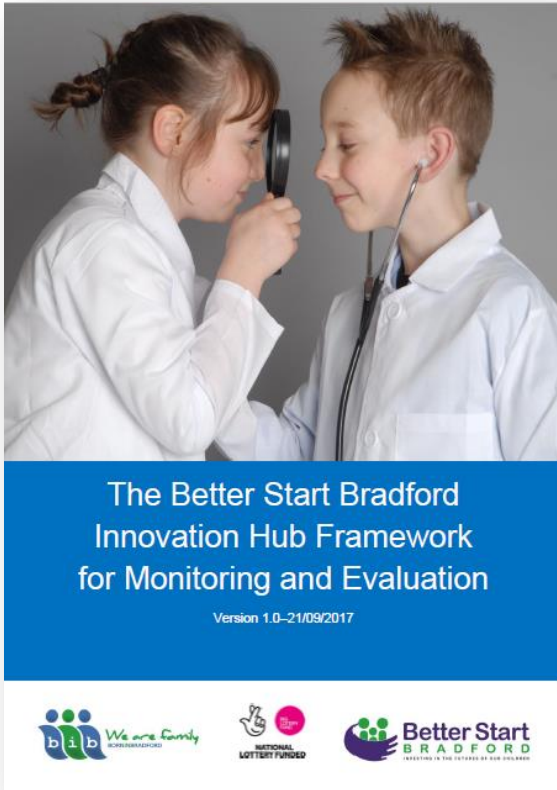
Access to green space



Systems Change



The Better Start Bradford Innovation Hub



- Evaluation partner
- Collaboration of leading academics
- Born in Bradford's Better Start (BiBBS) Cohort
- Evaluating BSB projects
- Increasing the evidence base for early interventions



How has the programme influenced the system?

- Building partnership working
- Integrating evaluation into practice
- Enhancing the validity and impact of routine data
- Enhancing data linkage and data quality
- Working with partners to make prevention a priority for future planning, policy and commissioning
- COVID research with families and services



How has the system influenced the programme?

Theory of Change

Preconditions:

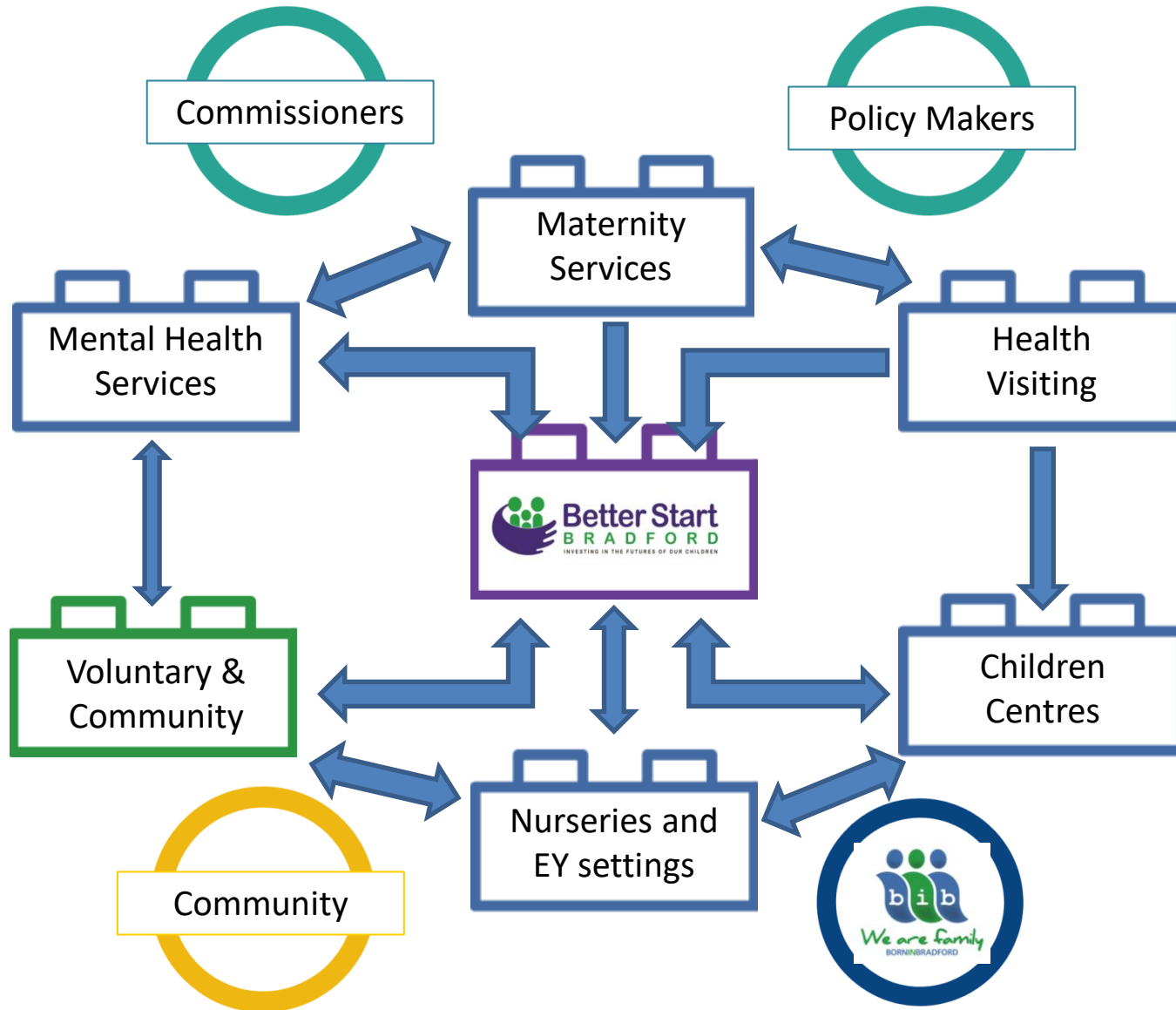
- local partnerships are formed and remain actively engaged
- local system leaders are committed to the strategy and approach and willing to engage and support success practically/financially and actively seek to scale/replicate those aspects shown to work
- local policy environment is one that recognises children thrive when parents get the support they need

Assumptions:

- Commitments made by partners remain in place
- Key existing services remain in place and stable enough to be enhanced/willing to engage with new integrated pathways
- Key existing workforce remain in place with capacity for training and willing to engage with new ways of working
- Level of family transience remains low enough to allow them to access enough support over enough time to make a difference
- Birth rate remains stable
- National and Local policy changes do not undermine the aims of the programme



Better Start Bradford projects sit on top of and supplement a foundation of existing services



Commissioners

Policy Makers

Maternity
Services

Mental Health
Services

Health
Visiting

 Better Start
BRADFORD
INVESTING IN THE FUTURES OF OUR CHILDREN

Voluntary &
Community

Family Hubs

Nurseries and
EY settings

Community



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So how do we make sense of this?

- Working with system partners to understand the system, these changes, and if and how impact for the programme and families has been mitigated
- Continuing COVID research
- Focussing on stacked interventions (as well as individual)
 - Impact of combinations of projects/services on outcomes
 - Understanding pathways through projects and services and patterns in engagement
- Exploring the unintended impact of the programme on the wider system

What is ActEarly?

- Funded by the UK Prevention Research Partnership 2019-2024/5
- Aims to create healthier and fairer environments for children growing up in Bradford and Tower Hamlets
- 3 Themes: Healthy Places, Healthy Livelihoods, Healthy Learning
- Cross cutting Food and Healthy Weight theme
- Supported by the Evaluation Group and the Co-production and Citizen Science Group
- Partnership between NHS, 6 universities, Local Authorities, as well as voluntary and private sector organisations



Whole Systems: Bradford and Tower Hamlets

- Using a complex systems approach which requires bringing together all stakeholders from across the system to understand how, when and where to intervene.
- Creating City Collaboratory testbeds to support the identification, implementation and evaluation of upstream interventions within a whole system city setting
- We are testing their collective impact across multiple outcomes with the goal of achieving a tipping point for better child health and long term outcomes



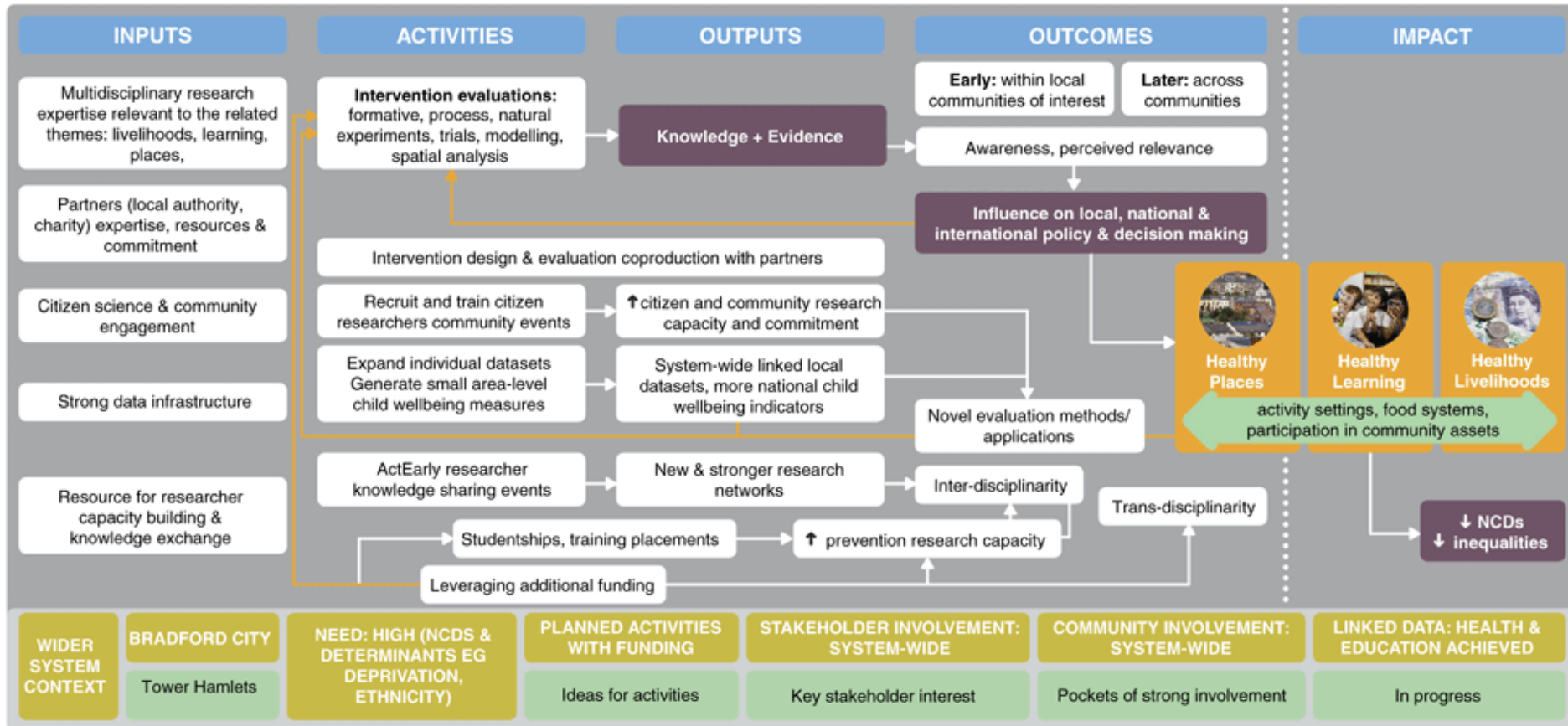
Different ways we are evaluating ActEarly

- Ground evaluations in theories of change
- Implementation evaluations (single and in combination)
- Natural experiments and quasi-experimental designs
- Study process as well as outcomes
- Capture distributional effects
- Citizen Science
- Complex system mapping
- Using ActEarly data platforms
- Qualitative methods
- Life course analysis, policy and economic modelling
- Meta-evaluation of the City Collaboratories including 'Research on Research'

All underpinned by public consultation, dialogue and participatory research



Figure 2. ActEarly logic model.



Wright J, Hayward A, West J et al. ActEarly: a City Collaboratory approach to early promotion of good health and wellbeing [version 1]. Wellcome Open Res 2019, 4:156 (doi: 10.12688/wellcomeopenres.15443.1)



The theoretical and practical challenges of systems approaches

- Complex systems interact with one another and are composed of other complex systems (Shiell et al., 2008).
- Each system is **more than just the sum of its parts**. This effect will be difficult to predict.
- There will be actors operating within the system with no overt interest and objectives referring to public health, so the boundaries of a system will be broad and messy.



A qualitative systems perspective

- We are not asking “does this intervention work?” (or even a group of interventions)
- Rather, we want to know, “what is the impact of this intervention (or group of interventions) on the system itself?”
- Using a whole systems approach as an impetus identify and record change over time within systems
- “How do these interventions interact with the system?”





THANKS!

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