Save the Children — SHEFFIELD'S EARLY LEARNING COMMUNITY

REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

GEOGRAPHIC REACH

Sheffield's Early Learning Community (SELC) works in Sheffield - Locality B.

This area consists of Firvale and Firthpark, Shirecliffe and Burngreave, Shiregreen and Brightside

CHILDREN AND FAMILILES DIRECTLY ENGAGED

The project directly engages with 300 children.

The work focuses specifically on Early Years, families living in areas of disadvantage, and families with no recourse to public funds.



KEY AMBITIONS AND OUTCOMES

The partnership of the Sheffield Early Learning Community, focuses on mainly three foundational principles for effective systems change:

- Trusted collaborative relationships
- Shared vision and purpose
- Shifting power to families

These three principles are from the building blocks for building sustainably stronger, more resilient communities and have been developed from the Systems Change Maturity Model, developed by Collaborate and NPC with Sheffield Early Learning Community. The project uses the Matrix, an extract of which is shown below, to jointly assess with partners, on at least an annual basis, how effectively the the principles are being applied and where improvements can be made.

Maturity / System condition	Emerging *Basic elements of the condition are understood and being developed in at least some parts of the system*	Developing *Early progress has been made, and there is a commitment across the system to building the condition, with further planning underway*	Maturing *Substantial progress has been made to develop the condition, with all key partners in the system participating*	Thriving *The condition is embedded, and measures are in place or being developed to ensure future sustainability*
Shared vision and purpose *There is a shared understanding and articulation of the vision for the system and long-term strategic planning of how to achieve that*	• A clear strategy, developed in partnership by different actors in the system, sets out the vision, purpose and outcomes the ELC is working towards • A shared understanding is developing of what current work in the local area relates to the outcomes in the ELC strategy	• Partners understand and articulate the shared vision and purpose of the ELC • Partners begin to identify strategies to create the long-term shifts required to deliver long-term change, not just short-term interventions • Partners can clearly explain how the work of the ELC fits with their other organisational strategies, and have secured appropriate buy-in from internal stakeholders to the ELC approach • Opportunities are identified to adapt and build on existing work and short-term projects / interventions to better align them with the ELC's longer term plans and vision for change	• Partners understand and can articulate their role and contribution to the vision – what they are best placed to do, and what others are better placed to do • Connections are made between the vision and strategy for the ELC and other place-based visions and strategies • Planning for the future sustainability of the ELC is underway with a focus on building capability • Short-term projects and that the ELC undertakes are aligned to a longer-term vision for change	• The ELC's strategy is integrated within other place-based plans, or they are integrated within it • The ELC influences the planning of projects and interventions outside of its direct sphere of control, to ensure where possible that they are aligned with the ELC's vision for change • The ELC has developed clear plans for future sustainability and is making progress on delivering on these

NPC collaborate for social change

Source: Adapted extract from A Systems Change Maturity Model for Early Learning Communities

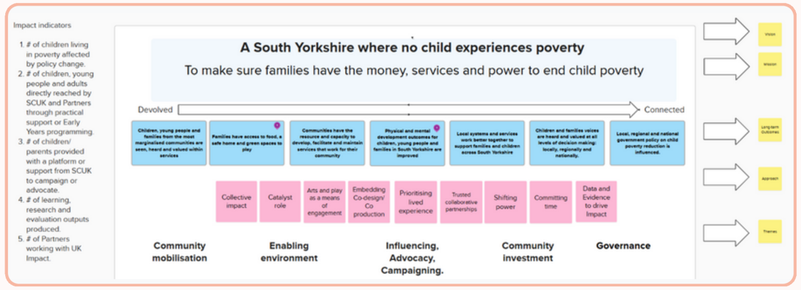
THEORY OF CHANGE

Their Theory of Change works towards a UK where no child experiences poverty and where:

- Children are happy, healthy and safe in their home and community: This is done by investing capacity and resource to build communities that care about children.
- Children live in places that allow them to thrive: The project influences at a local, regional and national level to prioritise children
- Children have a say in things that affect them: The voices of children and families voices are embedded within the initiatives work and priorities

To enable this, SELC focuses on five core themes:

- Community mobilisation: co-design, upskilling, training, work with parents, voice and power
- Enabling environment: sharing learning, convening, communities of practice, working groups
- Influencing, advocacy & campaigning: local and regional campaigning, voice and power, national influencing
- Community investment: innovation, fundraising
- Governance: Sustainability, systems change, governance board



POWER AND AGENCY OF PARENTS AND COMMUNITIES

The Sheffield Early Learning Community works with children, families and professionals, acting as 'system stewards' to nurture healthier local early years systems, guided by a "listen, partner, evidence, influence" framework, new and innovative approaches are tested for families' most immediate challenges whether that is social isolation, mental health, poverty, or housing:

1. The co-design of services has provided families with the starting point to make significant changes in their lives
2. Innovation funding then enables the families to test out ideas and solutions for change
3. Parents have now established a CIC, to sustain change in their community
4. Parents have been trained as Community Researchers to empower them to be leaders and advocates in their community.

This model has seen parents go on to engage in training courses, access volunteering opportunities and take up paid employment.

GOVERNANCE AND COLLABORATIONS

COLLABORATION PARTNERS WHICH SHARE OUTCOME ACCOUNTABILITY

Since 2019, Save the Children has worked with founding partners Watercliffe Meadow Primary School, Sheffield City Council (Family Hubs), Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust and Sheffield Hallam University's Early Years Community Research Centre in Burngreave, Brightside, Firth Park and Shiregreen to improve local support for families and children age 0-5.

There is not have formal shared accountability but progress is tracked against the Systems Change Maturity Model.

COLLABORATION GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Save the Children UK lead a Sheffield Early Learning Community Project Board, made up of a representative of each of the partners outlined above. The current project board is composed of members who collectively bring a robust blend of knowledge, skills, and experience essential for strategic leadership in Sheffield, have extensive backgrounds in overseeing services for children and families, and have influence within various systems and networks. Recently, a parent has been on-boarded as well as the Meadows Nursery Manager and SEND lead for Sheffield Council.

STRUCTURE AND ROLE OF THE BACKBONE FUNCTION

Save the Children UK bring extra capacity, resource, expertise and energy as the backbone function. There isn't one simple solution that addresses the challenge of ending child poverty, therefore the project works to advance children's rights by working alongside and building the power of children, communities, and local partners.

Save the Children UK act as the backbone in the Sheffield Early Learning Community. At the early stages of the Early Learning Community the organisation delivered the services, however it is now in Sustainability Phase and no longer delivers but supports local organisations to do the delivery.

- ☑ Coordinate shared vision and strategy
- ☑ Collaboration/Partnership management
- ☑ Engage, empower and connect communities
- ☑ Data gathering and analysis
- ☐ Deliver services for Children/Families
- ☑ Support delivery of services
- ☑ Facilitate learning
- ☐ External Communications
- ☐ Fundraising

BACKBONE DELIVERY MODEL

NUMBER OF STAFF

3.5 members of staff

SOURCES OF INCOME

65% - unrestricted funding
35% restricted donor funding

ANNUAL BUDGET

Circa £200,000

Staffing (with ICE/ICR) £150,000
Innovation and delivery - £45,000
Participation - £5000



AMBITIONS TO SCALE

Sheffield Early Learning Community aims to continue working in local areas and to deepen its relationships, whilst sharing learning nationally, and exploring the connections between the communities they've been working within. They aim to ensure that insights / voice from work in place are used to support policy influencing where there is opportunity to strengthen services at a regional & national level

Additionally, Save the Children UK are exploring strategic partnerships in new areas, with a focus on lighter touch resourcing, but more focus upon specific areas e.g. fundraising, influencing, networking or safeguarding. They are also defining a role in regional governance, especially at Mayoral Combined Authority level.

Barriers include resource constraints and navigating complex system structures

WORK WITH FAMILY HUBS

The Family Hub is one of Sheffield Early Learning Community's partners. Information is shared and used to coordinate activities where this makes sense.

Some examples of ways they work together are:

- Partnering on innovation test and learn projects around Immunisation strategies to improve vaccination rates in the Firvale area of Sheffield
- Jointly run some 0-5 activities, parent-infant relationships, early language and home learning environment activities with Family Hubs and work alongside them to introduce new activity ideas
- Host Family Hub professionals and services such as health visitors, tooth brushing, debt and welfare advice, housing advice in the nursery
- Recently funded 'Family Link Worker' within nursery actively works with Family Hubs to connect families to services
- Actively refer families to Family Hub teams eg for domestic abuse support