



Update from the A Better Start National Evaluation: Podcast outlining progress with the evaluation and sharing emerging findings

21st October 2022

Update from the A Better Start national evaluation: podcast

This is the first in a series of five podcasts from the [A Better Start](#) (ABS) National Evaluation Team. In this first podcast, members of the ABS national evaluation team talk about different elements of the evaluation, what work has taken place so far and next steps. Emerging evaluation findings are also discussed. The podcast can be accessed here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dirUD_ICWiE

The remainder of this document provides some detail about the ABS programme and the national evaluation, alongside providing how to find out more about the the ABS programme and evaluation.

ABS

ABS is a £215 million programme funded by The National Lottery Community Fund (The Fund), the largest funder of community activity in the UK. ABS works with families so they can play an active part in deciding upon, and designing, the ABS services and support they receive so that they can give their babies and very young children the best possible start in life.

There are five ABS partnerships in Blackpool, Bradford, Lambeth, Nottingham and Southend-on-Sea. These partnerships are working with parents to improve babies and young children's diet and nutrition, social and emotional development and speech, language and communication.

ABS is place-based and aims to create approaches, relationships and services that better support people can communities to thrive. A key element of ABS is to bring about systems change; that is to change, for the better, the way local health, public services and the voluntary and community services work together with parents and communities to improve outcomes for children.

The ABS national evaluation

The ABS national evaluation is being undertaken by the ABS national evaluation team led by the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) with the following partners: University of Sussex, Research in Practice, the National Children's Bureau and RSM UK. The national evaluation runs from April 2021 until March 2026. The national evaluation

aims to: support ABS partnerships to improve delivery outcomes throughout the lifetime of the program; work with local ABS evaluation teams to avoid duplication of evidence and enable collation of local evidence; and enable The Fund to confidently present evidence to inform policy and practice initiative addressing early childhood development. The ABS national evaluation has four objectives:

- 1) To identify the contribution made by ABS to the life chances of children.
- 2) To identify the factors that contribute to improving children's life diet and nutrition, social and emotional skills, and language and communication skills.
- 3) To evidence the experience of families through ABS systems.
- 4) To evidence the contribution made by ABS to reducing costs to the public purse relating to primary school aged children.

Further information

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