



# A Better Start Southend Stories of Impact

**Systems and Ecosystems:**  
A Better Start Together



# Executive Summary

Creating effective and long-lasting change in systems requires organisations and services to work in partnership, alongside the communities and families they serve. Ownership of systems change needs to be shared, with collaboration, co-production and distribution of leadership taking place at all levels and across organisations and stakeholders.

The ABSS programme created an ecosystem of support for families, based around a shared ethos of partnership working that built connections between organisations and put family voices at the centre of service design and delivery. This ethos shaped the changes that ABSS made, from systems-level integration of services and the adoption of co-production through to services' common focus on relationship building, improving soft skills to support hard outcomes, and continual improvement of services.

This report explores the changes that the ABSS programme and its partners made to systems of services and support. Through examples drawn from ABSS services, it demonstrates how ABSS addressed five domains of systems change:

- Shifting resources towards prevention
- Upskilling the workforce and sharing learning
- Integration across sectors
- Parent and community-led services
- Putting the family at the centre of services

## **These are some key insights from the ABSS programme:**

- Understanding partners' priorities is an important precursor to changing systems. However, collaboration and integration at service level may still be possible and effective, even where partners' priorities are not identical.
- Understanding and mapping needs, assets and services is vital to underpin systems change, but should be an ongoing process, regularly reviewed and renewed.
- Practical steps such as creating a directory of support can facilitate signposting of families and cross-referrals.
- Creating formal and informal opportunities for practitioners to share learning increases collaboration, cross-referrals and sharing of expertise and best practice.
- Understanding how families access services can surface opportunities for integration or collaboration, such as hosting partner organisations, sharing premises or cross-referring to services. A partnership approach can build relationships between organisations that make processes such as sharing data easier to put into place.

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# Introduction

When A Better Start Southend (ABSS) was launched as a ten-year test-and-learn programme in 2015, it set out to improve the lives and opportunities of children and families in Southend-on-Sea. This involved five areas of focus: the workstreams of Diet and Nutrition, Communication and Language, and Social and Emotional Development, and alongside these, the strategic areas of Community Resilience and Systems Change. It was recognised that achieving fundamental improvements in the lives and life chances of early years children in Southend would require organisations and services to work together, in partnership, alongside the communities and families they served. For any impact to be effective and long-lasting, however, fundamental changes in how services, organisations and the systems they operated within would also be required.

This report sets out learning from the ABSS programme about how working together with common purpose can change systems and fundamentally shift not only the delivery of services, but how organisations interact with each other and with the communities and individuals they serve.

## What is Systems Change?

Services are delivered within contexts that have geographic, socioeconomic, political and practice-focused aspects. The way that services and organisations operate within these contexts, and how they interact with each other and the individuals and communities they serve, creates a system of interconnecting networks and mechanisms. These systems can become very complex and interdependent, making them difficult to change.

Understanding systems is important when looking to improve outcomes for children and families, because families' access to services and support depends upon the nature of those systems and how easy they are to navigate. An Insight Report produced by the National Children's Bureau (NCB) as part of the national A Better Start programme (NCB, 2019) reviewed some of the literature around systems and systems change, including a number of programmes and interventions that sought to change systems of services which provide support to children and families. The Insights Report identified that positive systems change can focus on improving pathways (by increasing the capacity of services, the quality of delivery, or the connections between services) or on improving institutional structures (such as policies, resources or operating procedures).

New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) and Lankelly Chase produced a useful guide (Abercrombie et al, 2015) which identified six principles for systems change, divided between planning for systems change and implementing systems change (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Six key principles for systems change**

Planning for Systems Change	Implementing Systems Change
<b>Principle 1:</b> Understand needs and assets	<b>Principle 4:</b> Doing it together
<b>Principle 2:</b> Engage multiple actors	<b>Principle 5:</b> Distribute leadership
<b>Principle 3:</b> Map the system	<b>Principle 6:</b> Foster a learning culture

Source: Abercrombie et al, 2015.

These principles identify that understanding the components of the system is critical, but also that this process cannot be done in isolation. The guide outlines the importance of engaging a wide range of stakeholders including service users, delivery organisations and policy makers from the outset. It also emphasises the importance of shared ownership of systems change, with collaboration, co-production and distribution of leadership taking place at all levels and across organisations and stakeholders.

While the five A Better Start sites around England (Blackpool, Bradford, Lambeth, Nottingham and Southend) were organised and operated differently, all five placed systems change at the centre of their ambitions. In 2016, the five sites came together to review ongoing work around systems change and identify common areas of focus. They identified five overarching domains within which systems change could take place (NCB, 2019):

- **A shift of resources towards prevention:** necessitating a change in culture and spending towards preventative services and models of working, with a commitment to evidence-based and need-informed service development.
- **Upskilling the workforce and sharing learning:** a supported and knowledgeable workforce would provide a better service for families, and the skills and knowledge learned would be applicable beyond A Better Start.
- **Integration across sectors:** true partnership working, sharing of information and data, and joining up of services to provide a 'pathway of support' for children and families.
- **Parent and community-led services:** with a focus on empowering parents and communities so that, beyond A Better Start, they had the skills, confidence and experience to continue.
- **Putting the family at the centre of services:** including a commitment to co-production, ensuring that the voices of parents, families and young children contributed to service design and delivery, and that services met the needs of children and families.

The progress ABSS made across these domains is explored in this report.



# Mapping the System

The NPC principles for systems change described above (Figure 1) begin with planning for systems change by understanding needs and assets, engaging multiple actors, and mapping the system. ABSS recognised that these were not one-off activities, but needed to underpin ongoing work and be regularly reviewed and renewed in order to respond to changing circumstances. ABSS conducted several service mapping activities, sometimes looking specifically at particular areas (such as the components of an infant feeding pathway) and sometimes looking at the bigger picture of services for children and families in Southend.

The most recent mapping exercise, conducted in 2024 by The Round Window, an independent consultancy based in Southend, looked at systems of services for pre-school children and their families across the whole of Southend. Based on desk research and interviews with practitioners and parents, this work mapped existing service provision and identified need (based on factors such as multiple markers of deprivation and geographical access to services) across the four localities of West, West Central, East Central and East Southend. Summaries of services were produced for support available universally for the early stages of a family's life (Figure 2), and for targeted support for vulnerable families with ongoing needs (Figure 3).

Universal services were grouped by themes: Pre-birth and Maternity; First 100 Days; Parenting and Connection; Child Development; and School Readiness. Targeted services were grouped by more specific needs: Domestic Abuse; Making Ends Meet; Employment; Childcare; and Safeguarding. It is notable that, working independently, The Round Window identified similar overarching themes to those that have emerged from the ABSS Research, Evaluation and Impact (REI) team's Mosaic Synthesis of evidence arising from the ABSS programme, as set out in the ABSS Stories of Impact reports.

Based on this mapping of services and additional work adding other useful information, The Round Window created a directory of services that could be accessed by families looking for support, or by service providers looking to signpost families to additional support. This simple, practical step reinforced the 'system' nature of services for families with young children by bringing the information together in one place and one format that could be easily accessed, shared and searched, ensuring that families could be given consistent and up-to-date advice about services available to them. The ABSS legacy organisation, City Family Community Interest Company (City Family CIC), agreed to host a searchable version of this directory on their website and took responsibility for maintaining and updating the information. This can be seen at <https://cityfamily.org.uk/search/> and forms an important part of the City Family CIC offer to parents/carers and the legacy of the ABSS programme.

Figure 2: Service Mapping for Universal Family Support

## Support through the early stages of family life - mapped by funding stream

Prebirth & Maternity	First 100 Days	Parenting and Social Connection	Child Development	School Readiness
MSEHFT 1-2-1 Breastfeeding Support, antenatal, in ward support	MSEHFT 1-2-1 Breastfeeding Support, in ward, home visit, post-natal group support	Trust Links Families Growing Together	EPUT Let's Talk supporting language skills	EPUT Let's Talk
YMCA Bump to Breast group support	EPUT Specialist Health Visitors for Perinatal Mental Health (0-2)	Trust Links Dads Group	Early Years Alliance Peer Support Workers for Social and Communication Needs	City Family Talking Transitions
EPUT Specialist Health Visitors for Perinatal Mental Health (0-2)	YMCA Bump to Breast Group Support	City Family DadsConnect	Chaos & Calm group and home visiting support	SCC Health Visiting Service (0-5)
Southend Supports Breastfeeding initiative	SCC 3 to 5 Month Contact	City Family YourFamily child development skills	SAVS Storysacks storytelling and activity packs (0-3)	Family Centres Information workshops and parental support
City Family Journey to Parenthood antenatal classes	SCC Infant Feeding Supervisor Lead	City Family Explorers childcare/crèche	SCC Vision and Hearing Support Service	
SCC Public Health Midwife	SCC Public Health Midwife	City Family Community Hub	SCC Early Years SEND Support Service inc. Play & Development Group	
SCC Little Steps Health Visiting Service (0-5) - support for young parents (including dads)	City Family Baby Massage	Welcome to the UK Family events and outings	SCC Health Visiting Service (0-5)	ABSS Service
MSEHFT Maternity Services	SCC Health Visiting Service (0-5)	Cake Club groups for multiples, and queer families	SCC Autism and Speech and Language Resource Bases	ABSS Part Funded
SCC Infant Feeding Supervisor Lead	Family Centres play sessions and family support	Cake Club parent & child groups	EPUT Lighthouse Child Development Centre inc. Jigsaws	City Family
Family Centres Information workshops and parental support	Cake Club Infant Feeding Support and Sling library	Volunteering Matters Family Mentor	Send the Right Message SEND Information, support, and drop-ins	Statutory Service
	Mum Knows Best Southend website	Get the Kids Out fun activities for families	SENDIASS Impartial information, advise, and support	VCFSE Sector
			Little Heroes ASD Support Group	

Figure 3: Service Mapping for Targeted support to Families

## Support for vulnerable families with ongoing needs - mapped by funding stream

Domestic Abuse	Making Ends Meet	Employment	Childcare	Safeguarding
<b>ABSS</b> Early Years Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA)	Family Action FOOD Club	ABSS Work Skills courses (with free City Explorers creche)	City Family Explorers	City Family - YourFamily
<b>Safe Steps</b> Fledglings recovery support for children	City Family Little Love Baby Bank	SAVS ABSS Parent Champions	City Family Community Hub	SCC Supporting Families Team
<b>Safe Steps</b> Dove crisis centre	Family Centres Bits and Bobs	Welcome to the UK English classes	Welcome to the UK friendship group with free playschool	SCC Children's Social Care
<b>Safe Steps</b> recovery, support and advocacy	Citizen's Advice on benefits, employment, legal, housing and debt	Citizen's Advice on benefits, employment, legal, housing and debt	Various 30 hours free or tax-free childcare (means tested)	
<b>Essex COMPASS</b> regional single point of access for domestic abuse support	Welcome to the UK drop in with SCC Early Help team			
	<b>Southend Care Bank</b> drop-ins			ABSS Service
	Various foodbanks across the City			ABSS Part Funded
				City Family
				Statutory Service
				VCFSE sector

The mapping of support available shows those areas which are more exposed to a lack of alternative provision and/or unstable funding. Only statutory services are guaranteed funding beyond March 2026.



## ABSS as an Ecosystem

As part of the evaluation of the ABSS programme, two elements of evaluation were conducted by external agencies. The Formative Evaluation by researchers at the University of Essex (UoE) looked at the delivery of projects and services and the experiences of those who participated in them. The independent Summative Evaluation conducted by researchers at RSM UK Ltd examined the ABSS programme as a whole and the impact it had on families, communities and systems. Both evaluations independently drew out similar insights about the systemic nature of ABSS.

The Summative Evaluation identified that ABSS was able to build stronger networks between services and service providers, with improvements in coordination to meet community needs and better sharing of information and best practice (RSM, 2025). One service manager interviewed by RSM described this as:

**“The value that’s added is more than the sum of its parts, because we’re able to work together.”**

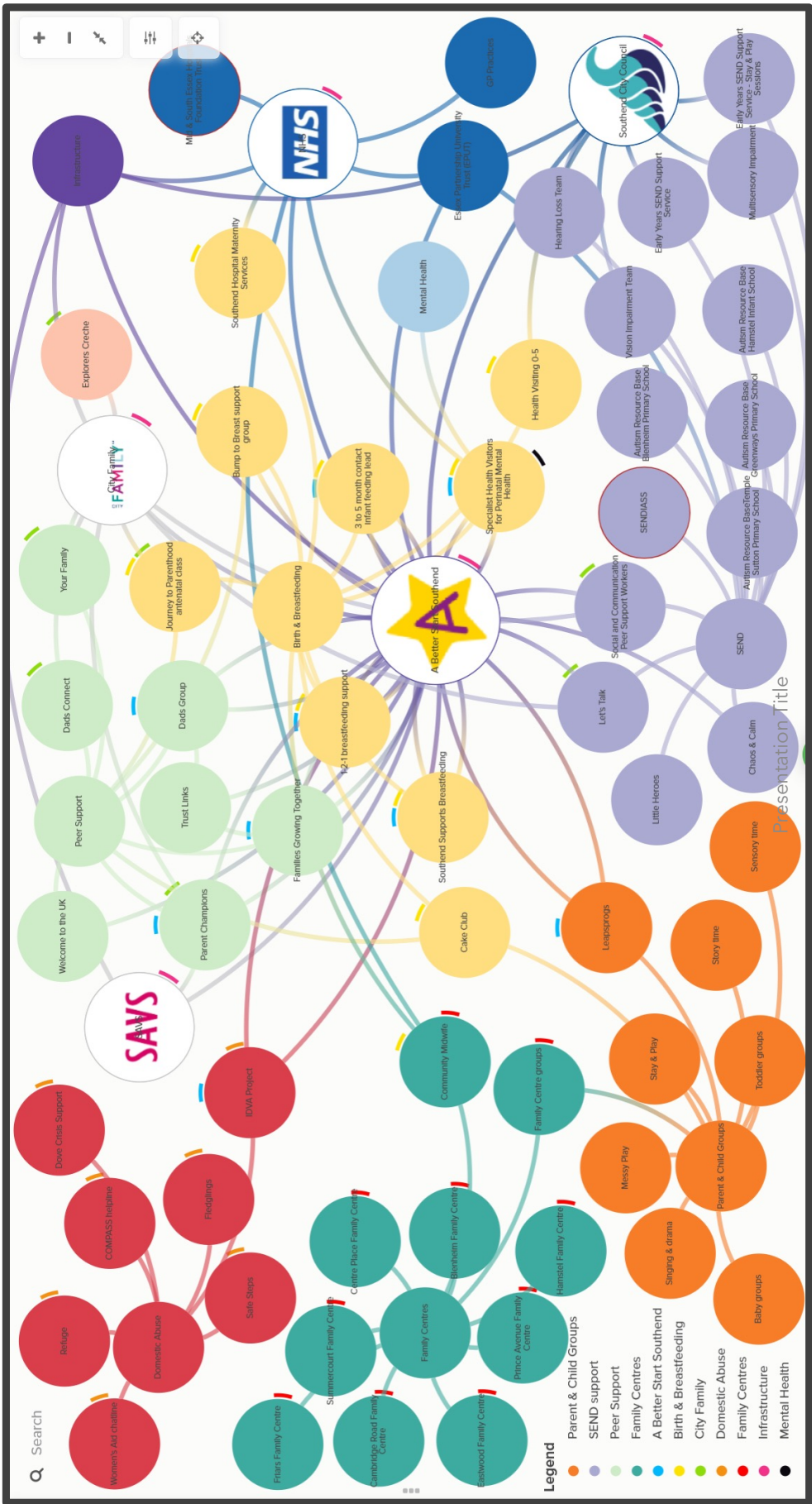
While the Formative Evaluation primarily focused on services at an individual level, the UoE researchers also conducted thematic analysis across all of the services to understand more about how ABSS operated as a system (Wyllie et al, 2024). Like the Summative Evaluation, the Formative Evaluation also recognised the success of ABSS at building and strengthening networks, identifying a high degree of fertilisation of networks and referrals across and between ABSS services. The researchers described ABSS as ‘an identifiable entity as much as being a collection of individual projects’ and went on to characterise ABSS as an ‘ecosystem’.

The service mapping conducted by The Round Window also identified that services for families in Southend formed an ecosystem, and placed ABSS firmly within it, describing ABSS as ‘the glue holding the ecosystem together’. Figure 4 is a screenshot of an interactive visualisation of the ecosystem developed by The Round Window which enabled users to explore the links between services and themes, illustrating the extent of interaction between organisations and services. The conclusion drawn by this analysis is that the ABSS focus on partnership working and cross-organisational collaboration was a major influence on the level of interaction seen.

This view of ABSS as an ecosystem that can be greater than the sum of its parts because of the way organisations and individuals work together, is reflected in all of the reports produced as part of the ABSS Stories of Impact. They identify a shared ethos across ABSS partners and services, built around the central aim of improving outcomes for early years children in Southend, with common focus on elements such as relationship building, improving confidence and continual improvement of services.

### Figure 4: Visualising ABSS Links to Services for Families in Southend

# ABSS – the glue that holds the ecosystem together



# Changing Systems and Services

Mapping the system and identifying areas of need are only the first part of the NPC principles for systems change described earlier in this report (Figure 1). The principles for creating change are based around implementing it together, distributed leadership, and fostering a learning culture – approaches that ABSS built into its operations through partnership working, co-production and a focus on sharing learning and evidence about ‘what works’ across the partnership.

The changes that ABSS introduced can be mapped against the five overarching domains identified by the programme within which systems change can take place, as follows:

## Shifting resources towards prevention

A change in culture and spending towards preventative services and models of working, with a commitment to evidence-based and need-informed service development, was seen across the ABSS partnership. ABSS services were designed with this ethos in mind, and discussions in governance forums were based on presented evidence and data. Some organisations were able to respond with more agility to this approach because prevention could be a larger part of their agenda (for example, Public Health at Southend City Council). For other organisations, such as NHS providers, prevention in the early years was only a small part of their wider agenda, with other services such as emergency and elective care demanding their focus, making it more difficult for these organisations to shift priority and spending into early intervention in the early years.

One area that saw evidence of the positive impact of early intervention was speech, language and communication. As outlined in the Stories of Impact report ‘From Birth to School: Supporting Social, Emotional and Communication Development in Southend’, the Let’s Talk service, a universal service offering early intervention support around speech and language development for children aged under four, led to a reduction in demand for more intensive clinical support. Furthermore, applying the learning from Let’s Talk to wider service provision in Non-ABSS areas subsequently led to reductions in demand for more intensive support in those other areas. This highlighted the importance not only of shifting the focus to early intervention, but of fostering that learning culture that enables successes in one area to be shared and replicated in other areas.

However, the strength of evidence of impact was insufficient to see funding redirected to continue the service. Despite the evidence that the service reduced demand for more intensive clinical support, financial backing could not be found to continue the Let’s Talk service beyond the lifespan of the programme.

## Upskilling the workforce and sharing learning

ABSS recognised that a supported and knowledgeable workforce would provide a better service for families, and the skills and knowledge learned would be applicable beyond the end of the programme. Learning could come through formal professional and skills development, reviews of evaluations and feedback on service delivery, and networking opportunities allowing practitioners to share best practice. As the end of the ABSS programme approached, ABSS supported the workforce and help to position organisations for their next steps. This included delivering a series of in-person and webinar-based training sessions covering topics as diverse as developing a funding strategy, reporting on impact, active listening, engaging African communities, compassion-led practice, and preparing children to start school. Specialist training such as Five to Thrive, covering children's neurological development and responses to trauma, or Elklan training supporting the assessment of children's language and communication development, offered a consistency of approach and understanding across organisational boundaries. Specific support was given to organisations looking to develop their service offers, for example to deliver Forest Schools approaches or to develop expertise in breastfeeding support.

Changing systems through shared learning is about more than training opportunities. It also requires a shared ethos around which different organisations, services and types of practitioners can collaborate. For ABSS, this was a shared commitment to putting children and their families at the centre of thinking to identify how best a system of services could support them. One example of this working well for ABSS was the Talking Transitions service, discussed in more detail in the Stories of Impact report 'From Birth to School: Supporting Social, Emotional and Communication Development in Southend'. Talking Transitions brought together staff from early years settings and primary schools to share knowledge and develop expertise about language development and about the children due to start school. Creating opportunities for them to develop their skills and work together provided a smoother transition into school for children and introduced new opportunities to enable parents/carers to support their children's language and communication development. Creating stronger links between an upskilled workforce in early years settings and schools was a transformative example of systems change in Southend.





## Integration across sectors

Achieving integration across sectors to provide a 'pathway of support' requires true partnership working, sharing of information and data, and joining up of services. Work conducted under the ABSS Diet and Nutrition workstream provides the clearest examples of progress made by ABSS towards such integration.

Like all ABSS services, the services in the Diet and Nutrition workstream would identify opportunities to signpost or refer families to other services that could meet their needs. However, integration around an infant feeding pathway took referring between services a step further. A collaborative approach, supported by data sharing agreements between organisations, saw Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust's Maternity Department at Southend hospital booking expectant parents onto antenatal services provided jointly by Southend City Council Family Centres and City Family CIC. Additionally, new mothers/parents who received support from the One-to-One Breastfeeding Service provided by the Maternity Department were then referred on to the Group Breastfeeding Service (Bump to Breast) delivered in the community by Southend YMCA. This ensured that expectant and new parents were seamlessly offered support and increased the likelihood that parents who initiated breastfeeding would be able to sustain it.

Two specialist strategic roles were also created under the umbrella of the Diet and Nutrition workstream that added a further element of integration to this pathway. The Infant Feeding Lead Advisor acted as a link between ABSS, Specialist Feeding Advisors in the Maternity Department and Public Health at Southend City Council, with the aim of embedding positive feeding practices consistently across both health and community settings, increasing uptake of ABSS services, and sharing learning between partners and stakeholders. The Public Health Midwife role was jointly commissioned by Public Health and the Maternity Department to facilitate cross-agency collaboration with a focus on antenatal education and infant feeding.

While this pathway of support was the most formal and most extensive system of collaboration and integration introduced by ABSS, other ABSS services identified opportunities for cross-referral and collaboration. The Food On Our Doorstep (FOOD) Club delivered by Family Action provided good quality food at low cost, alleviating food poverty and reducing food waste, but also signposted to ABSS services and provided wraparound support that included bringing other services such as ABSS Work Skills, Southend Energy Service and the Citizens Advice Bureau to FOOD Club sessions. Services such as YourFamily, delivered by City Family CIC, provided targeted support to families that included identifying other services that could support them as well as working directly with those families. The Early Years Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (EYIDVA) delivered services from premises used by other service providers including Family Centres and GPs surgeries, increasing the opportunities for parents/carers to access their services discreetly. The Work Skills service was able to build connections with the Anchor Programme, led by Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust, to boost economic and employment opportunities across the region in order to reduce health inequalities and support local communities.



## Parent and community-led services

One of the defining features of ABSS was its commitment to centring the voices of parents/carers and families and ensuring that they were at the forefront of ABSS planning and service design and development. Through co-production, community members, partners and practitioners worked together as equal partners to design and deliver ABSS services. Co-production was more than consulting or co-designing services with parents/carers – it was about recognising parents'/carers' voices as equal to those of professionals and placing insights from lived experience alongside professional, technical and clinical knowledge to ensure that decision-making included all information and all stakeholders. By respecting and valuing the views and experiences of people engaged in ABSS services, ABSS was able to design services that met the needs of children and families and empowered them to support themselves and each other.

The ABSS Parent Champions programme, commissioned by ABSS and delivered by Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS), provided an opportunity for parents/carers to be formally involved in the development and governance of ABSS and its services. Parent Champions were parents/carers of children aged 0-4 living in an ABSS wards who received training and support from SAVS to share parents'/carers' experiences and insights in ABSS governance meetings, and to develop parent/carer-led activities within local communities. ABSS decision-making required the involvement of parents/carers, with ABSS governance meetings only being quorate when at least two Parent Champions were present. This ensured that the needs and experiences of families were always at the centre of ABSS thinking.

Alongside the visible success of this approach for ABSS, a shift in the Southend area as a whole has seen a greater willingness to embrace co-production and value the voices of lived experience within other services. Southend City Council involved ABSS when they developed their own co-production approach to provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Essex County Council drew on ABSS expertise in their own thinking around co-production. Co-production is one of the principles that City Family CIC has taken forward as a legacy of ABSS, with co-production used successfully to develop their Dads Connect programme. Most visibly, however, the ABSS Parent Champion model has been adapted and extended by Southend City Council and SAVS into a trial of a new scheme covering the whole of Southend. The Parent Voice Ambassadors (PVAs) will see parents/carers of children aged up to eleven from across Southend offering their expertise to inform Council decision-making across a range of policy areas. PVA – the glue that connects lived experience to service success!

The positive impact of community voices and co-production on service design and delivery demonstrated by ABSS has shifted systems in Southend, placing greater value on the insights and ideas that can come from families and the wider community.

## Putting the family at the centre of services

The work around parent and community-led services described above was all focused on putting the needs of children and their families at the centre of services. This entailed designing services that met the actual needs of families, delivered in places that were open and accessible to all families, with staff who valued parents'/carers' knowledge and worked with them to empower them to support their children. The Formative Evaluation of ABSS services (Wyllie et al, 2024) and the independent Summative Evaluation of the ABSS programme (RSM, 2025) both identified the importance of the focus placed by staff on building trusting relationships with families, and on developing soft skills such as parental self-confidence and peer network building to result in improvements for children.

One example of the focus on families driving successful services was support offered to families of children with SEND. The Sparkles Sensory Story Time delivered by Chaos and Calm and the Peer Support Workers for Social Communication Needs service delivered by the Early Years Alliance (EYA) both recognised that support was needed for the whole family to enable that family to best support a child with SEND. Additionally, the staff delivering both services were themselves parents/carers of children with SEND, and brought their lived experience of caring for their own children into their service delivery. The commitment to centring lived experience in the development of services resulted in services that recognised a wider level of need than if they had focused solely on the child's specific SEND-related needs. Crucially, this also enabled the services to recognise more opportunities to offer wider support to the family. This approach started from an asset-based lens, looking at the wider strengths and abilities of the family to enable them to build the skills, confidence and resilience needed to support their child.



# Learning and Recommendations

## Learning

Systems of services delivered across multiple organisations are complex, and changing those systems is correspondingly complex. The systems change that ABSS achieved came about through its partnership approach, which enabled partners to share ownership, to collaborate, and to distribute leadership across levels and organisations, and among stakeholders. Including parents/carers and community members as equal partners in that process of change was vital. By co-producing services with parents/carers and families, ABSS could bring insights from lived experience alongside professional, technical and clinical knowledge to ensure that decisions were made using the best evidence and the clearest understanding of what would make a difference for children and families.

Achieving integration across sectors to provide a 'pathway of support' requires true partnership working, sharing of information and data, and joining up of services. ABSS partners working together were able to create pathways around infant feeding. However, a similar pathway for early intervention around speech, language and communication needs could not be established long-term, despite evidence of the effectiveness of the approach, due to funding constraints. Some organisations could respond with agility to opportunities to introduce early intervention, while other organisations faced competing priorities that made such shifts more difficult. Recognising the differing priorities among partners and finding ways to collaborate that take account of these differences is one of the major challenges of partnership working.

ABSS services created an ecosystem of support that was strengthened by the ability of partners to work together. The shared ethos of ABSS that put children and families at the centre of thinking helped to shape the changes that ABSS made, from systems-level integration of services and the adoption of coproduction through to services' common focus on relationship building, improving soft skills to support hard outcomes, and continual improvement of services.



## Recommendations

- Systems change in the early years can take place in five domains. By working across these domains, a partnership can identify different opportunities for change, contributing to an ecosystem of support for families.
  - Shifting resources towards prevention
  - Upskilling the workforce and sharing learning
  - Integrating services across sectors
  - Delivering parent and community-led services
  - Putting the family at the centre of service design, development and delivery.
- Understanding how early intervention and support for families fit with partners' strategic priorities is an important precursor to changing systems. A cultural shift across an organisation is needed to drive early intervention. However, collaboration or integration at service level may still be possible and effective, even where organisational or sector-wide priorities are not wholly or solely focused on early intervention.
- Understanding and mapping needs, assets and services is vital to underpinning systems change, but should be seen as an ongoing process of understanding the context that families live within. Mapping should be regularly reviewed and renewed.
- Practical steps such as creating an accessible, searchable and consistently maintained and updated directory of support can build the capacity and confidence of staff and community members to share knowledge and facilitate signposting and cross-referrals.
- Creating formal and informal opportunities for shared learning, bringing together practitioners from different organisations and services who can contribute to a shared topic or challenge, supports increased collaboration, cross-referrals and sharing of expertise and best practice.
- Opportunities for integration of service delivery or collaboration between services can arise from understanding how families access services. Opportunities to host partner organisations, share premises or cross-refer to services can create powerful opportunities for families to access services that they might otherwise have missed out on. A partnership approach can build relationships between organisations that make processes such as sharing data easier to put into place.

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