

Neighbourhoods Project

The Neighbourhoods Project created a team of Neighbourhood Workers who were placed at the heart of the Better Start Bradford community, from August 2019 to March 2024.

The project brought together the following grassroots organisations that had existing relationships with the local community, and tasked them with disseminating key messages, engaging families and, where appropriate, referring them into Better Start Bradford projects.

- BD4 Community Trust
- Karmand Centre
- Thornbury Centre
- West Bowling Advice Centre

Why this project was developed

The project was developed as a result of work by Better Start Bradford Community Board members, to improve community involvement in the programme and to have a local presence.

It aimed to:

- Develop a group of Neighbourhood Workers to be a trusted community link between families and projects
- Engage under-represented groups and families not reached by Better Start Bradford projects
- Share Better Start Bradford's key messages at a grassroots level, encouraging local people, organisations and communities to prioritise 0-3s
- Signpost expectant families and families with 0-3s into Better Start Bradford projects
- Encourage local families and expectant parents to take part in Better Start Bradford activities and events
- Encourage local families and expectant parents to take up volunteering opportunities
- Signpost to other local support services

Impact and findings*

- Between 2019 and March 2023, the Neighbourhood Workers reached over 2000 families and made over 1500 referrals into Better Start Bradford projects, exceeding targets.
- The co-designed Neighbourhoods Project model has been shared widely amongst other services such as Community Partnerships Networks, Reducing Inequalities Alliance, Start for Life and with the Localities work. The Family Navigators role, as part of the Start for Life work within the Family Hubs, was developed from the Neighbourhood Workers role and job description.
- Neighbourhood Workers described many ways in which engaging with families with their roles had improved their practice and professional development. It is clear that they valued their experiences and felt positive about their roles.
- The Neighbourhood Workers played a pivotal role in supporting and instilling confidence in parents/carers to run their own Happy Early Years (HEY!) Fund groups. A number even progressed into employment, including one parent who became a Neighbourhood Worker herself.
- The project reacted quickly in the lockdown to ensure families still had support when other services were closed, meaning families stayed connected. The Neighbourhood Workers were perfectly-placed to engage and build trust with families on the doorstep during COVID-19, even delivering wellbeing packs that had been developed in partnership with Better Start Bradford, our Community Board and local organisations.
- All host organisations have put the 'voice' of the child in all aspects of their work.
- The West Bowling Centre has retained two Neighbourhood Workers through alternative funding, whose focus is on wellbeing of the families using the advice centre.
- The two Neighbourhood Workers from BD4 Community Trust are now working alongside Start for Life and running local maternity circles.

*This section includes information from both the evaluation report/s and project

“Ludmila has made a big difference in my life as well as my child as she has made play groups and activities accessible to us. She has enabled us to get to know our local community and other parents.”

“Rachel has been really supportive throughout my time attending sessions with the BD4 Family Community Centre. It's been great and I've genuinely enjoyed every moment - she's been a real inspiration. My children have enjoyed every session they've attended and always looked forward to the next one.”

“I have two boys aged three and one. The activities that the Neighbourhood Workers have put on have been so engaging - not only have my sons come out of their shells, I have too - it's been lovely to meet new parents and make friends. It's been amazing to be part of.”

2000+
families reached

1684
referrals into Better Start Bradford projects

Alongside English, the Neighbourhood Workers could speak Russian, Latvian, Pushto, Urdu, Czech, Polish and Slovak

