



# North Birkenhead Cradle to Career

## Annual Progress Report - Year 2

1 Sept 2021—31 August 2022



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# Cradle to Career puts the people of North Birkenhead at the heart of education, services and local decision-making.

It aims to significantly improve literacy standards among children, give families easy access to the support they need, improve the quality of life for all and create new opportunities for local children and young people.

**Our Vision** is that every child in North Birkenhead thrives, from cradle to career.

**Our Mission** is to support North Birkenhead to develop as a strong, thriving community where every child and young person has all the help and opportunity they will need to succeed.

**"The most amazing thing is the shift and change of organisations and collaboration in a really meaningful way. I think it is incredible - for the first time in a long, long time, people are finally starting to work together."**

**Sharon, Equilibrium**

**In this report, we highlight the key activities and progress made in Year 2.**



**Watch the Year 2 Evaluation video and hear from partners involved in the work on the ground in North Birkenhead**

# Year 2 in numbers

**8**

schools worked with

**3,527**

children and young people  
benefitted

**50%**

increase in the number of  
high-ability readers

**+8 months**

above national expected progress in  
reading

**154**

practitioners trained

**34**

residents trained or participated in  
decision making panels

**35**

new families signed up to Family  
Connectors

**1,494**

Residents, parents and carers  
trained and supported

**33**

partner organisations worked with

**18**

community initiatives awarded  
funding

**“We've seen considerable changes in our school through working with C2C, particularly with our early years team. The training that Helen Bibby has done has given them massive confidence in addressing a huge issue across North Birkenhead.”**

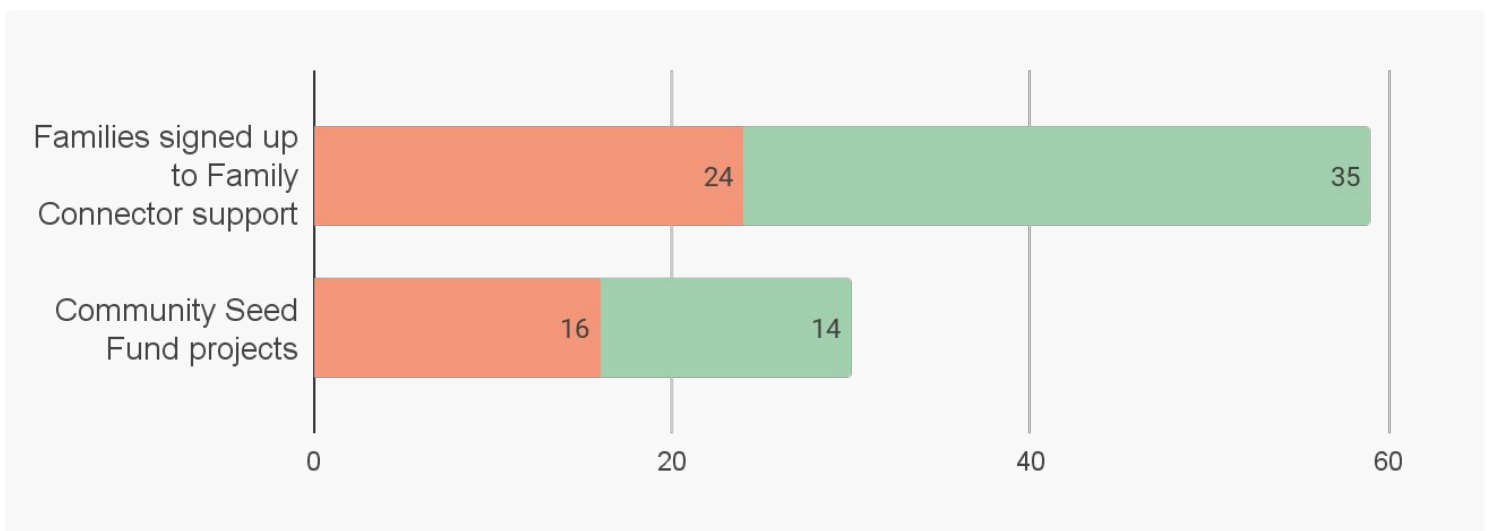
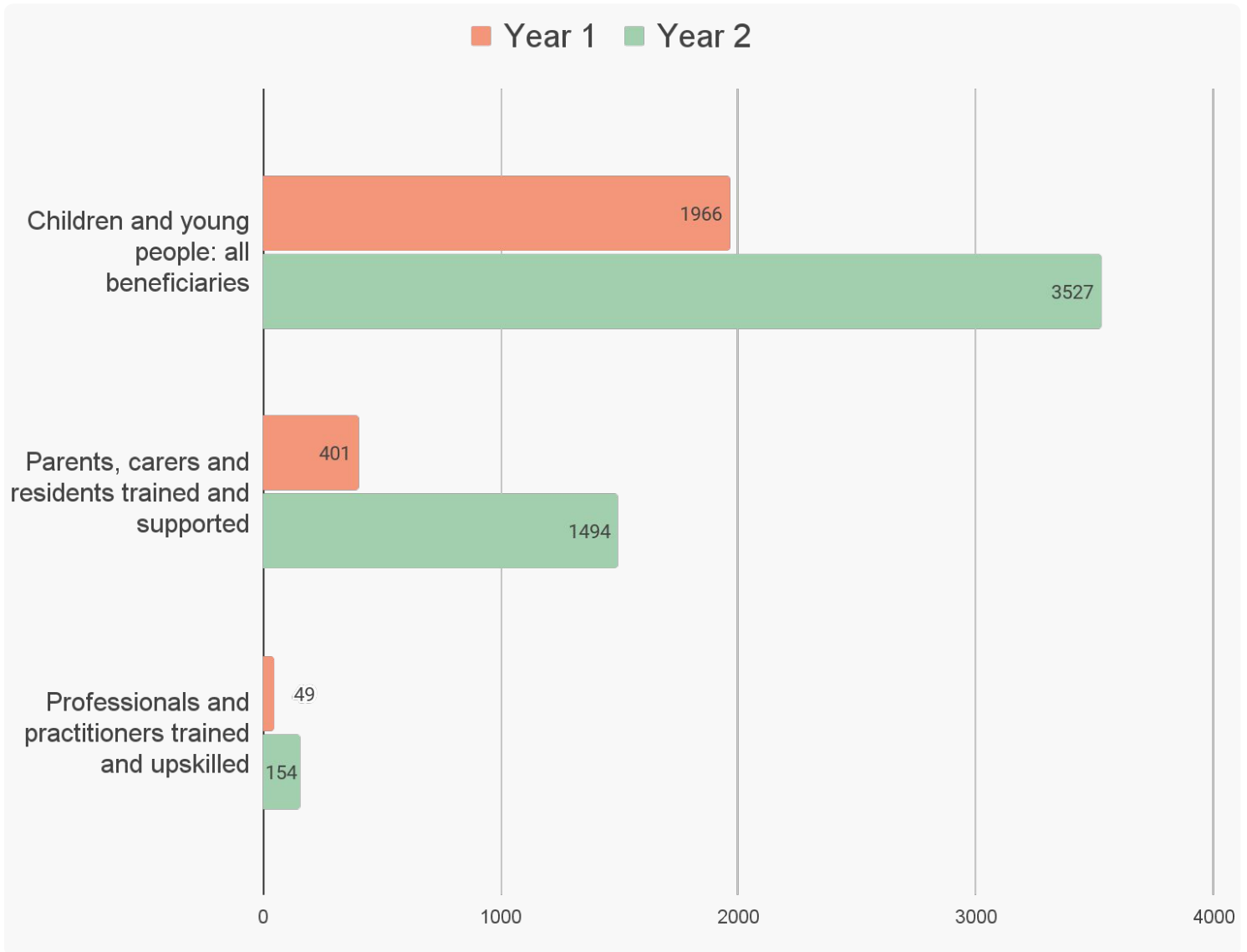
**Greg Edwards, Headteacher, The Priory Parish Primary School**



**“Cradle to Career has brought people together that wouldn't have necessarily come together. Working together we achieve a stronger goal, and for me that is the heart of Cradle to Career.”**

**Justine Molyneux  
Steering Group Chair**

# Cradle to Career beneficiaries



# Progress in Education

**Our aim:** Schools becoming world class in identifying and meeting the needs of their learners

**On average, pupils in North Birkenhead gained 8 months above expected reading progress last year.**

**1,193**

pupils assessed for progress

Progress was positive for all year groups, and was statistically significant in three year groups.

**Progress in Reading by Year Group**

**Year 5: +12 months\***

Year 6: +4 months

**Year 7: +9 months\***

Year 8: +7 months

**Year 9: +8 months\***

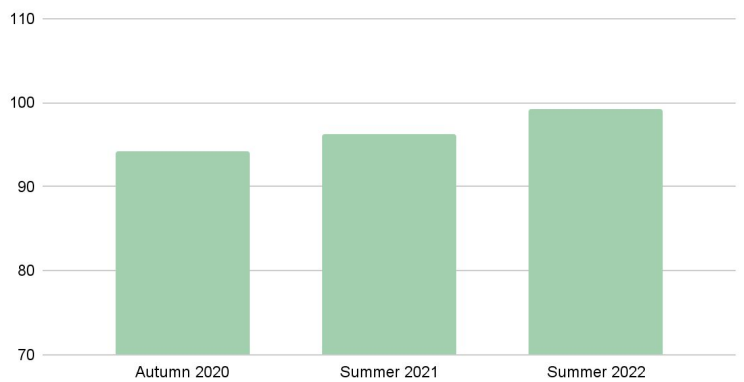
\*Statistically significant progress

**Pupils have gained 11 months above expected reading progress since the start of Cradle to Career.**

For the 728 pupils that have been assessed for two years, the average reading score has increased by 5 points.

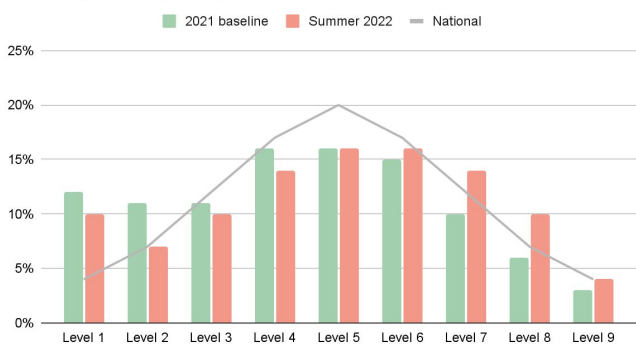
This is equivalent to 11 months above and beyond expected progress.

Two year progress (Standard Age Score)



**There has been a significant shift from low to high reading ability.**

Reading ability (Level)



**+50%**

increase in the number of high-ability readers

**-26%**

decrease in those with the highest reading support needs



# Education projects

Cradle to Career has facilitated a number of collective projects to support pupils' progress.

## The Early Language Project

All six primary schools took part in the Early Language Project with Dr Helen Bibby and reported improved aspects of speech, language, listening and attention.



Watch the Early Language Project video.

**"I watched Helen modelling an activity which was a lightbulb moment where I thought 'this is what our children need and this is what we should be doing'."**

**Paula Bras, Deputy Headteacher, Coop Academy Portland**

**"This [Early Language] project is a never-ending journey of learning and development where we are reflecting on what's working, seeking advice and then implementing solutions for our pupils."**

**Gemma McMahon, Teacher, Coop Academy Portland**

## School-based literacy projects

Schools have invested in implementing reading-for-pleasure projects, and literacy interventions for children with the highest need. Staff training has been provided to improve confidence.



Watch the Big Read Project video.

### Feedback from teachers on their literacy projects

**"It is the most fantastic project I have ever worked on."**

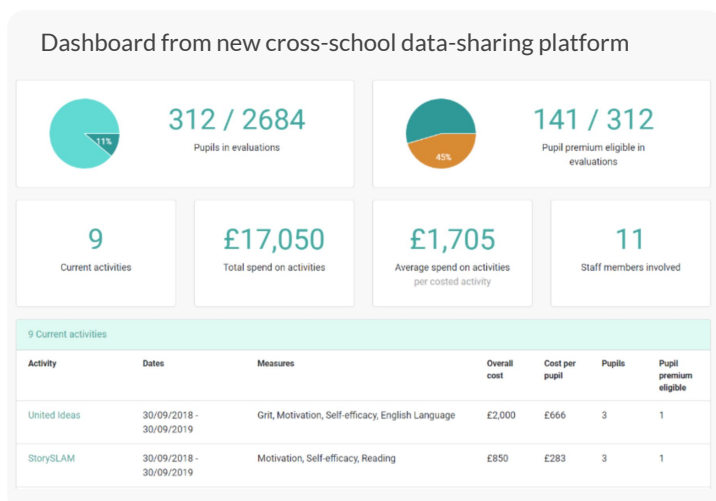
**"I believe it has had a huge impact on the confidence of our students written and vocal skills."**

**"[I've] seen direct academic improvement amongst children around literacy and reading for pleasure."**

**Greg Edwards, Headteacher, The Priory Parish Primary School**

## Cross-school data sharing platform

The new platform where schools are sharing data on demographics, attendance, behaviour, attainment and assessments, which enables them to target support where it's needed most (see below).



## Shared Educational Psychologists

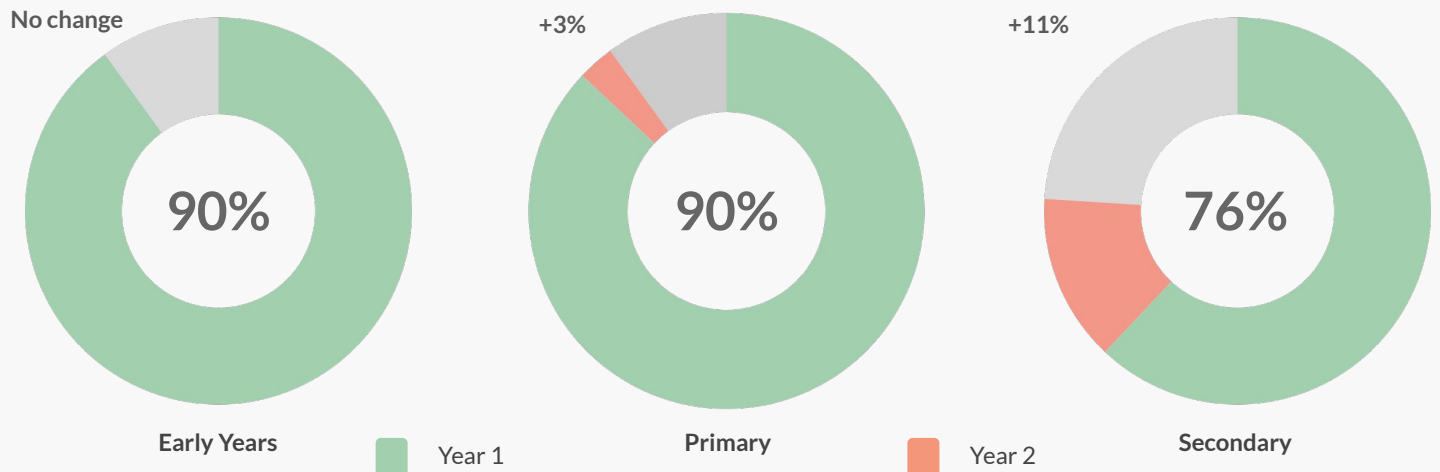
The schools are employing two shared Educational Psychologists, who provide consultancy and training for SENCOs to support pupils with additional needs transitioning between primary and secondary education.

The schools have invested time in this collective approach to supporting their pupils, and there is significant buy-in for the value these two roles provide.

# Investing in teachers

**Teachers are more confident in their ability to meet the needs of learners.**

Progress in teacher confidence in ability to deliver literacy interventions to support their pupils



**Cradle to Career has supported this increase in confidence through training, and enabling learning and best practice to be shared.**

## Staff training

Teacher training on how to research, identify and implement effective literacy interventions.

Five schools participated in a collaborative audit of current practice, supporting teachers to identify classroom issues and research solutions collectively.

Twilight sessions were attended by 52 staff from all partner schools:

- Self-Efficacy
- Reading Fluency
- Reading for Pleasure

Early Language Project training for six schools and Peep training with four schools. Peep training helps practitioners to engage and support parents with their children's learning.

## Facilitated shared learning

Six schools participated in two cross-school visits to see how partner schools were implementing the Big Read and Accelerated Reading. They also learnt more about Voice21, a charity that works in partnership with schools to ensure every child receives a high-quality oracy education.

## Why literacy matters

Children and young people with greater literacy capability are **better able to access the curriculum** and **more likely to be engaged** in lessons.

This means **they are at less risk of exclusion**, as persistently disruptive behaviour is the main cause of both fixed-term and permanent exclusion.

These children and young people are **more likely to leave school with key qualifications**, like GCSE English and maths, which **increases their chances of reaching a positive destination in education, employment or training** when they leave school.



## Culture Change Survey Results

# All

Education respondents (12) felt positive about matching intervention to need, and able to measure the impact of interventions and use literature to keep up to date with what works.

# Progress in Family & Services

**Our aims:** Improve the engagement and support of the most vulnerable families, and give them the opportunities they need to be healthy and happy. Completely redesign services in partnership with the local community, driving collaboration through the system.

**The Community Support Team is improving support for vulnerable families, building strong relationships, and driving collaboration between services.**

Apr 21 - Sep 21 (Y1)	Cradle to Career	Wirral-wide	Oct 21 - Mar 22 (Y2)	Cradle to Career	Wirral-wide
Social care step-down rate*	62 per 10,000	20 per 10,000	Social care step-down rate	43 per 10,000	24 per 10,000
Social care case closure rate*	307 per 10,000	225 per 10,000	Social care case closure rate	206 per 10,000	253 per 10,000
Social care referrals*	224 per 10,000	239 per 10,000	Social care referrals	264 per 10,000	243 per 10,000
Social care repeat referrals	78 per 10,000	48 per 10,000	Social care repeat referrals	50 per 10,000	56 per 10,000

\*NB: Some of the figures from Year 1 have been recalculated by Wirral Council due to changes in methodology relating to the date on which a referral is counted as part of the C2C cohort.

## The Community Support Team is improving support for vulnerable families, in the context of unprecedented rising living costs.

In a challenging year, we have seen some positive trends. We saw a high rate of social care case closures in C2C in Year 1. Building on this progress, while the rate of case closures has fallen in Year 2, C2C continues to outperform the Wirral in stepping down cases from a higher to a lower level of support need. And while overall social care referrals have risen over the past year, it is positive to see repeat referrals drop significantly, to below the Wirral average.

The concentration of poverty and deprivation in North Birkenhead means families are deeply affected by the cost-of-living crisis, requiring an increase in support from the Community Support Team.

The second evaluation (Nov 2022 - Jan 2023) of the Community Support Team will further help us dissect the root of the challenges facing families.

**"People have been a lot more open to work together, and not work in silos."**

Hannah Keyworth, School Readiness Worker, C2C Community Support Team



**“I think C2C is the start of the changes for Wirral. I think they recognise that we need hubs in areas and for me, one of the key factors is that we’re accessible for families.”**

**Nicole Bailey, Social Worker, C2C Community Support Team**

**“People get to know us because we’re in the community, we’re walking the streets or driving the streets. People see us and we wave to them.”**

**Hannah Keyworth, School Readiness Worker, C2C Community Support Team**

**“When we started we were told the families don’t like social workers - you’re going to really struggle for engagement. In the second year, we’re starting to break that down.”**

**“We had one family, a single mum with a young child who’d gone through a difficult upbringing herself. We were heavily involved from a social care point of view. We were able to provide employment and training support for her and now her case is closed from social care. Her confidence has grown, she sees a future now.”**

**“We’ve got really good relationships now with schools in the area. That’s moved a lot from when we started. We’re getting in there now before they feel they have to contact social care.”**

**Angela Heatley, Team Manager, C2C Community Support Team**

**“I am absolutely loving being part of this team, it helps me do my job much better. I had a family who required support (with multiple and complex needs). It took me 10 minutes to walk round the office because all the services are in one room. They had a support package just like that.”**

**Christine Meek, Family Support Worker, C2C Community Support Team**

# Progress in Family & Services (cont.)

840

additional individuals received support from Family Connectors

35

new families signed up for support from Family Connectors in Year 2 (+11 from Year 1)

## Culture Change Survey Results

All

Services respondents (13) agreed that the quality of support available for children, young people and their families had improved as a result of more partnership working in North Birkenhead.

## Why a multidisciplinary approach matters

By taking a **multidisciplinary approach**, all of the available support within the community is joined together in an overall **early intervention offer across the local area**, meaning that more families and professionals are aware of what is available and how to access support.

It means team members can get to know local families and provide the **right support at the right time**.

This **holistic, family-centred approach** impacts positively on the families and the children and young people and leads to **long-term and sustainable change**.



# Investing in services

The Service Collaboration Fund is enabling community-led projects to meet identified gaps in local provision.



Cradle to Career has awarded four projects a share of the £110,000 fund:

**Standing Together:** free educational workshops in schools for pupils and their families on sports and a healthy lifestyle, helping them to engage with a diverse range of people within their community.

**Diversity+:** a range of support for families including emotional and wellbeing support, coping strategies and fun activities.

**Builder Book:** workshops in schools and community centres with take-home activity packs and imagination boxes covering literacy, creativity, storytelling and wellbeing.

**POD FUN Birkenhead:** free weekly events, training and support for families with children and young people living with additional needs.

## Building capacity through training

19

residents attended  
volunteer training

16

practitioners attended  
trauma-informed  
training

Cradle to Career has further supported service improvements by providing trauma-informed skills and practice training to staff from the Community Support Team and community partners.

"I don't think I can put into words how beneficial [the trauma-informed training] has really been. It has definitely given us an understanding of where families are and how that trauma has affected them and given us a personal understanding to be able to empathise with them as well as [find] what support is going to be best to help."

Sophie Court, Family Support Coordinator, Koala North West

# Progress in Community

**Our aim:** The community owning the development of local culture and the local offer, addressing key issues affecting them.

**The new youth offer is improving the lives of young people in North Birkenhead.**

**17 sessions**

of the youth hub since launch in June 2022

**195**

young people reached through outreach sessions

**32**

young people attended youth hub sessions

**23**

young people took part in youth voice consultations

## Culture Change Survey Results

# All

Community respondents (5) agreed that the quality of support available for children, young people and their families had improved as a result of more partnership working in North Birkenhead.

**The community are working with the police to tackle anti-social behaviour through preventative measures.**

**19**

practitioners had Child Criminal Exploitation training

**150**

children took part in the Pathfinders programme



**"C2C has had an impact on what is available to children and young people. What I see now is that there is a youth hub running and it is running well." Adam Neo/NBDT**

**Cradle to Career has funded a programme that promotes relationships between the police, organisations that work in crime prevention and local schools.**

**Child Criminal Exploitation training** has been delivered to school teachers, governors and other professionals and follow-up sessions for parents are planned.

The **Pathfinders Programme** has been delivered in primary schools. It arms young people with the knowledge to make positive choices when they transition to secondary school by improving their understanding of criminal responsibility and issues such as county lines and gang-related crimes.



# Investing in local people

The Community Seed Fund has helped to kick-start more community-led projects.

Seed Fund **2.0** > **£23,000** awarded to  
**14** community projects

"We've seen the confidence of some of our community members who have come forward for the Seed Fund. It's been quite humbling to see the difference it has made to these people's confidence and their personal development across the board." **Adam Neo/NBDT**



## Why community matters

**Communities play a fundamental role** in our sense of belonging, identity, pride and wellbeing.

This all **impacts the aspirations of children and young people.**

By harnessing the **desire of the community to participate in decision making** and develop initiatives to address the issues facing them, we're supporting them to **participate in building a positive future for North Birkenhead** and therefore helping to **create more opportunities** for children and young people.

## Cradle to Career is gaining attention in the local and national press.

Cradle to Career is being recognised for the positive impact it is having on children, young people and families living in North Birkenhead.

Positive stories such as the investment into the Service Collaboration and Seed Funds, and the new youth offer have contributed to the local and national interest in the programme.

**73** pieces of press coverage

**31.5m** reach

**Cradle to Career has generated significant coverage in Year 2**, with highlights including ITV News, BBC news, the Liverpool Echo and The Guide.



**“Working with C2C has definitely opened my eyes to what a community it is in North Birkenhead. The people who live and work in NB genuinely feel like they are just salt of the earth and it’s been a pleasure to be part of that.”**  
 Sophie Court, Family Support Coordinator, Koala North West

**The Charlie Landsborough Mural at Birkenhead North Station celebrates one of the North End’s local heroes.**

Charlie has had a long-lasting country music career, leaving a legacy through his music across the world. Raised in the North End, Charlie has had an enormous impact on many in Birkenhead, having also taught at Portland Road Primary (now Coop Academy Portland).

The completion of this mural by local artist Paul Curtis is a fitting tribute to Charlie’s legacy and all of the local heroes in our wonderful North End community.





Seed fund 1.0 recipient, Natalie Reeves-Billing, Builder Book



St James' Community Garden book

A celebration event was held in the St. James Centre to mark the successful outcomes of the Round One projects, hear from community members who had delivered the projects, and announce the winners of Round Two.

#### Round Two projects include:

- Life coaching sessions
- Baby yoga and massage
- Domestic violence support group
- Men's mental health group
- Local genealogy group
- Subsidised swimming for 0-4 year olds
- Equipment and uniforms for Birkenhead Girlguiding
- Hampers with essentials for expectant mothers
- Recycled goods market in St James Centre

## Seed Fund celebration at the St James Centre



Our Seed Fund 2.0 winners left to right: Jess & Audrey, Egan Road Sensory; Joanne, Own It; Mark, Dare to Dream; Elizabeth's partner Mike, Mums & Baby Baskets; Carrie-Anne, St James Swimmers.

# Solving challenges in Year 2

Challenges arise in any community project. What is important is how we respond to them, and support the community to move forward.

Challenge	Solution
<b>INCREASING CAPACITY</b>	
<p>Partners have struggled with capacity constraints that hinder their ability to engage fully in the programme and deliver high-quality projects within the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives are co-designed with partners to ensure that they are realistic and achievable.</li> <li>• Progress against objectives is regularly monitored.</li> <li>• Personal and professional development training for our partners.</li> </ul>
<b>BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS</b>	
<p>The time it takes to build partnerships and trust with and within the community, and between sectors, has an impact on the pace of progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear and transparent tendering and contracting processes.</li> <li>• Clear communication and defined roles.</li> <li>• A working group model that maximises communication and information sharing between organisations.</li> <li>• Creating opportunities for collaborative partnerships.</li> </ul>
<b>RESPONDING TO ECONOMIC FACTORS</b>	
<p>COVID-19 impacted community engagement in Year 1 and in Year 3, the cost-of-living crisis may continue to threaten engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexibility built into the model to respond to the ever-changing economic and political climate.</li> </ul>
<b>IMPROVING DECISION MAKING</b>	
<p>Decision-making autonomy is a challenge within the context of co-commissioned work with statutory partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommendations for Community Support Team based on evaluation of Year 1.</li> <li>• Clear roles and responsibilities for each partner.</li> <li>• Regular meetings and strong working relationships with key partners in the local authority.</li> </ul>

# The role of Right to Succeed in supporting place-based change



**Cross-organisational relationships and informal connections are the foundations of place-based change.**

**Our role is to build strong, supportive relationships with, and between, local partners, using our proven approach to partner management**

**The local partners are the ones driving change and long-term impact for children and young people.**

**Our role is ensuring they have the skills and knowledge to identify and plug the service gaps and champion their roles within the community.**

**It takes time to discover the underlying issues and priorities, and for partners to decide how to work together to develop solutions.**

**Our role is to ensure those solutions are evidence-based, and we invest in small-scale projects, examine the data and impact, and support our partners to pivot or adjust quickly.**

# Looking ahead to Year 3

Our focus for Year 3 is to strengthen and scale the successful projects developed in Year 2 and continue to evidence the impact Cradle to Career is having within the community.

## Overarching plans

Continuing the momentum of projects embedded in Year 2	Monitoring the early impact of pilot projects and adapting where necessary	Sustainability planning for projects demonstrating outcomes	Monitoring and evaluation of collective working between partners	Increasing capacity of community organisations and individuals
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## Education

Build on education interventions to **boost attainment** and **support those with additional needs**

Embed the **Early Language Project** in schools

Recruit a **Cross-school SENCo Advisor** to significantly increase support for vulnerable children in transitions from primary to secondary schools

Create communities of practice for **Early Years and Special Educational Needs**

Develop and test the multi-agency approach to supporting pupils with low **school attendance**

## Community

Deliver the **Pathfinders crime prevention** programme to more primary school children

Implement **Community Seed Fund Round 3**

Deliver a community-wide **Child Criminal Exploitation campaign** with local organisations and the police

Embed the **Youth Offer** pilot

## Family and services

Embed support across the **Community Support Team** and reflect on practice

Extend and embed **trauma-informed practice training** for professionals

Deliver the **Collaboration Fund** projects and monitor their progress



**Cradle to Career**  
NORTH BIRKENHEAD

Every child thrives  
from cradle to career







## A PIONEERING APPROACH

Cradle to Career is one of the most ambitious public-private partnerships of its kind, attempting to tackle disadvantage and inequality for children and young people in North Birkenhead.

It empowers the community to take ownership of the challenges it faces, giving them the tools they need to drive positive and long-lasting change.



**"Since C2C has been working in North Birkenhead, barriers have definitely come down."**

**Nicole Bailey, Social Worker, C2C Community Support Team**

## DEVELOPING THE BLUEPRINT FOR PLACE-BASED CHANGE

The pioneering approach delivered through Cradle to Career continues to attract local and national attention for how to deliver a locally based, long-term approach to levelling up.

This is generating increased interest in its potential to be replicated in other left-behind communities in the UK, and we have hosted events throughout the year to share learning from the programme with key stakeholders from the wider Liverpool City Region, and government departments.

## BEGINNING TO SCALE

In 2023, Right to Succeed is starting three new programmes influenced by the Cradle to Career model, within the Liverpool City Region and Norfolk.

Learning from the Cradle to Career project has given Right to Succeed the practice, experience and insight to extend place-based change to more left-behind communities.

**This approach definitely works for families. I definitely believe this model is the one that is needed across Wirral."**

**Angela Heatley, Team Manager, C2C Community Support Team**

# Working collectively to effect change

Right to Succeed supports communities in areas of high deprivation to work collectively to give children and young people the best start in life.

We do this because we believe every child deserves the right to succeed, no matter where they live. We bring together residents, professionals and decision-makers to co-design a programme that is bespoke to the needs of the local community.

We call this way of working “place-based change”.

## How we work

Together with local residents, professionals and leaders, we:

### Bring together local community and stakeholders



Children & Young People



Adult Residents



Community Organisations



Education Settings



Donors



Business

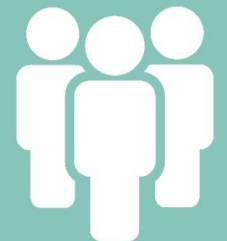


Public Sector

To co-design a development plan that meets the needs of the local community, framed by a shared vision and shared measures of success.



Resulting in strong communities where every child is supported to succeed.



Our work ultimately benefits children and young people by creating:



Inclusive, safe and healthy environments



More joined up support

A+

Better access to education



Greater participation in decision making

# Thank you to our programme partners

## Schools



## Local partner organisations



WIRRAL YOUTH ZONE

Provided by



Sowing seeds of hope in our community



## Funders





RIGHT TO  
SUCCEED