



North Birkenhead Cradle to Career

Annual Progress Report - Year 3

1 September 2022—31 August 2023

Contents

About Cradle to Career	3
Our Theory of Change	4
Year 3 in Numbers	5
Cradle to Career Beneficiaries 22/23	6
Part 1: Progress in Education	7
Part 2: Progress in Community & Family Services	15
Part 3: Year 3 & Beyond	26

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.

EDUCATION

Schools becoming world class in identifying and meeting the needs of their learners.

COMMUNITY

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

FAMILY & SERVICES

Improve the engagement and support of the most vulnerable families, and give them the opportunities they need to be healthy and happy. Services completely re-designed in partnership with the local community, driving collaboration through the system.



Bidston Avenue Primary School, Creative Workshop

In this report, we highlight the key activities and progress made in Year 3.

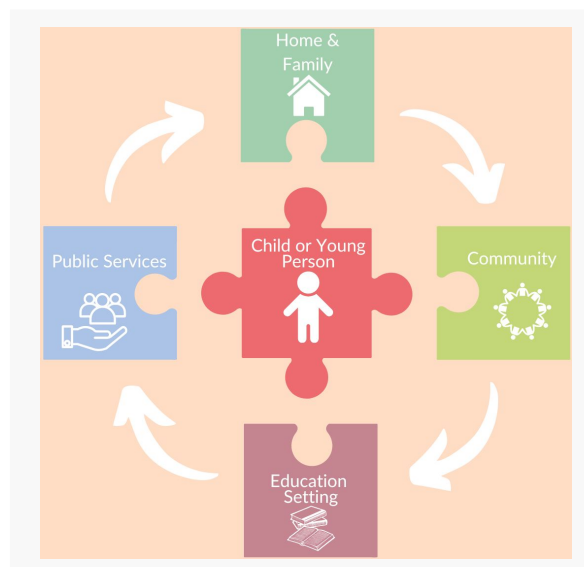
Our Theory of Change

Cradle to Career is:

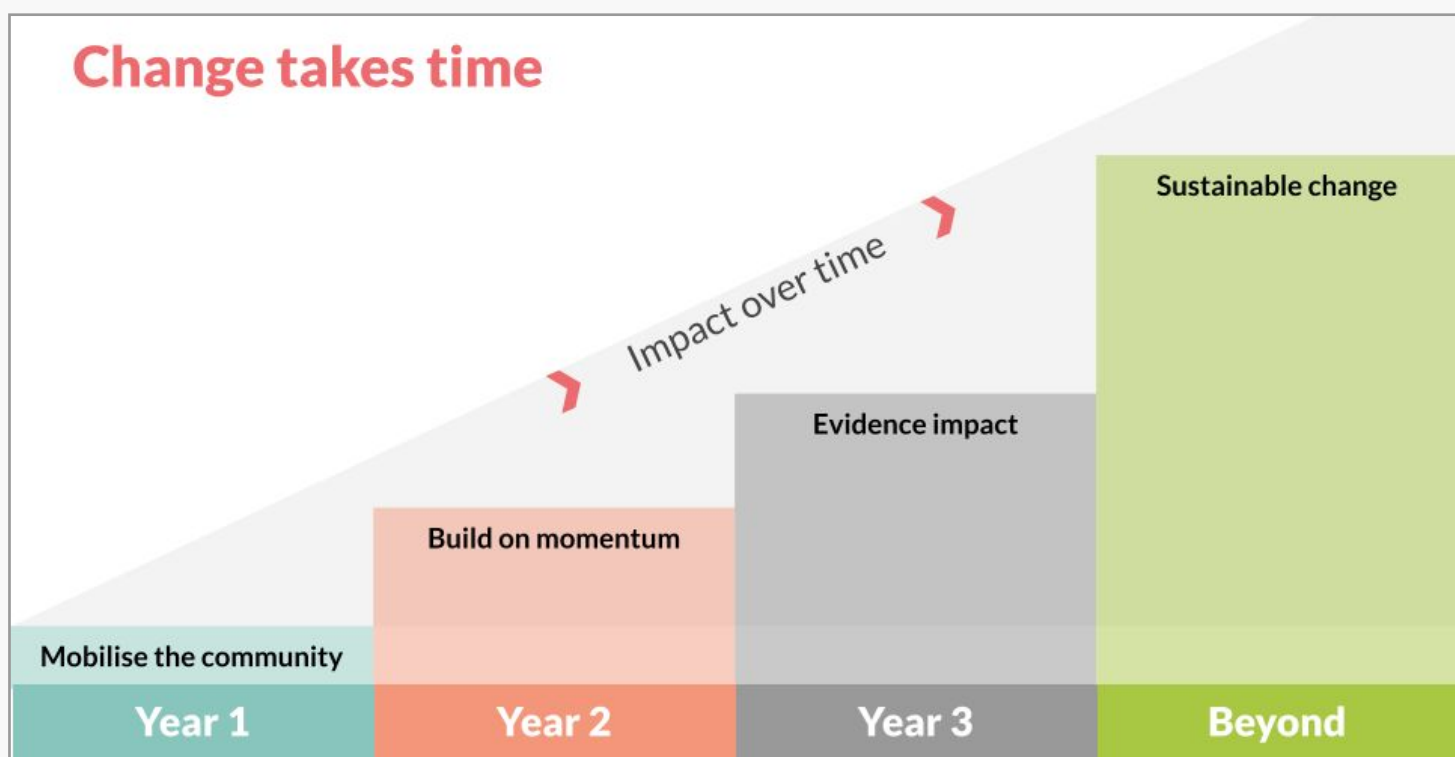
- Informed by a wide range of experiences and perspectives;
- Co-designed by residents, local stakeholders and funders;
- Delivered through a collective approach to ensure maximum impact and sustainability.

To collectively achieve this vision it takes time to build:

- Relationships
- Infrastructure
- and Capacity within the community.



Change takes time



Real change takes time and we continue to manage the complexity of these projects as a backbone team.

Year 3 in numbers

2,439

children and young people assessed or supported through whole-school training

1,488

children and young people received or accessed interventions

42%

increase in the number of high-ability readers

100%

of schools made progress

13

practitioners trained

8

schools worked with

89%

families with significant increase in wellbeing scores from pre to post support

560

adult Residents engaged

28

partner organisations worked with

16

community initiatives awarded funding

Cradle to Career beneficiaries 2022/23



In Cradle to Careers third year of delivery we have successfully continued to develop the great work in partner schools and community organisations.

Building on the impact made in years 1 and 2 and growing the amount of beneficiaries in North Birkenhead, changing the lives of Children and Young People.

1,052

Children and Young People directly supported through training and intervention within education

99

Dependants supported through Family Connectors

200*

Children and Young people attended the Summer Celebration event

*approx via workshops and on the day

23

Young people engaged via the Youth Hub

114

Young people engaged by Youth Outreach



Part 1: Progress in Education

Bidston Avenue Primary School, Flag making Workshop

Progress in Education

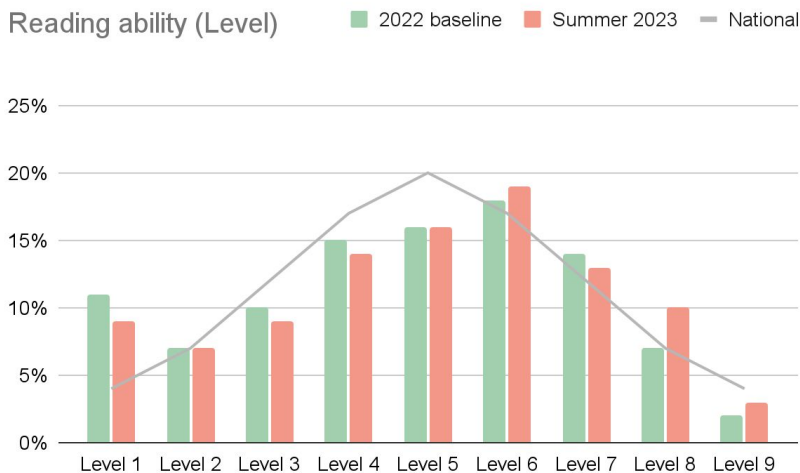
Our aim: Schools becoming world class in identifying and meeting the needs of their learners

100% of the eight schools worked with made progress, with four making above expected progress and the remaining four making expected progress.

1,670

pupils assessed for progress

There was a considerable shift from low to high reading ability.



+42%

increase in the number of high-ability readers

-5%

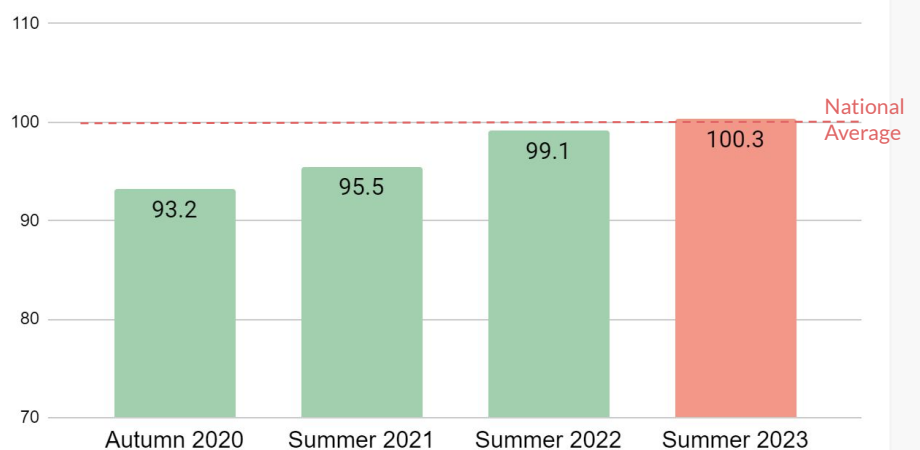
decrease in those with the highest reading support needs

467 Pupils on the programme in years 1, 2 & 3 improved reading ability by over half a GCSE grade to meet the national average

+7.1

Increase in average Standard Age Score (significant change)

Three-year reading progress (standardised age score)



This year, we supported six **Cradle to Career schools** to use additional assessments and processes to better identify the individual needs of pupils. **Professor Jessie Ricketts, University of London, and Sarah Minton, Blackpool Ks3 Literacy Project**, provided in depth training to schools on how to identify reading needs and aligning these to interventions and support available.

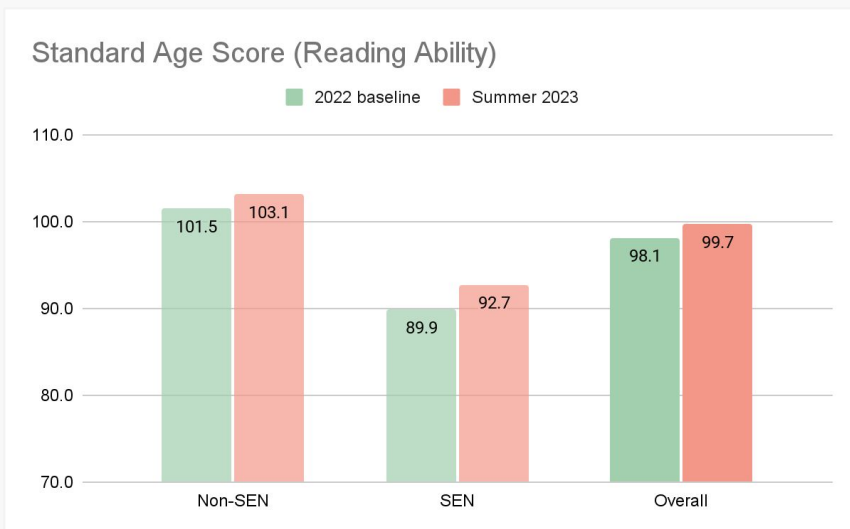
Prof. Ricketts delivered individual follow up consultation sessions with schools to apply the learning for their specific contexts. Each school was provided with **two additional reading assessments** which can be used to deep dive into reading problems highlighted by the **GL New Group Reading Test**.

"I found it really useful to have both Jessie and Sarah speaking, delivering the research-side and the real life scenario side of administering assessments and interventions." Literacy School lead

Embedding learning from the Early Language Project

We identified with schools that the **Early Years Foundation Stage** assessment framework didn't capture the smaller steps of progress pupils were making in language and development.

The focus of the **Early Language Project** this year was to support schools to better monitor the progress of pupils on a more "granular" level, and to continue to monitor how learning from the project was being embedded in early years settings.



-1.2

The gap in reading attainment between SEN and non-SEN pupils narrowed. Combined all pupils made positive progress.

All schools conducted **SEN** reviews, 4 full reviews and 4 light touch, which supported them to improve in-school practice and processes for pupils with **SEND**

"The consultation process around a child is really beneficial as you can gain a holistic view of the child, as all staff have snippets of information which proved insightful. Going forward we aim to adopt this approach."

SENco Transition Advisor, Co-op Academy Portland

Case study: Harry's Story

Harry is a very creative little boy who loves to construct, paint and draw he takes great interest in nature and the world around him.

However, he was negative about his own abilities upon entry into Foundation 2, and struggled with turn-taking, and sharing. Finding it very difficult to sit still, listen and focus beyond a couple of minutes, this was having a huge impact on his progress, especially in areas such as his phonics development.

His attendance was sporadic during the autumn term, punctuality was poor and he demonstrated separation anxiety from his Mum. He also had very poor attendance during his time in Foundation 1.

The Intervention

WellComm baseline screening returned a mild delay (amber score) and baseline on entry data across most Early Years Foundation Stage areas was below the expected age and stage of development. His baseline screen for Phase 3 of the Early Language Project scored poorly. We decided to focus Phase 3 around self-regulation and working memory, while embedding our previous work on total communication strategies.

The Foundation 2 team were involved in deciding on the programme of activities for each target group. This ensured that all staff understood and knew which activities were most suitable for meeting Harry's needs.

The Impact

- Harry is now able to sit among larger groups of children and remained focused on the adult for longer periods of time. He has shown the most progress in significant in self-regulation.
- Harry makes regular contributions to his directed teaching sessions and his parents have completed extra work with him at home to help him catch up.
- Harry demonstrates turn-taking regularly during Continuous Provision time and will now seek support from an adult if he is unable to resolve conflict with his own attempts.
- Auditory and visual memory skills are much improved; when following instructions and remembering/using new vocabulary in context.
- Target group are now working from activities in the 'Moving On' level of the programme and Harry is progressing.



Equilibrium Centre, Costume Making Workshop

Best Practice & Scaling up

Our aim this year was to continue to invest in improving school literacy and support schools to implement larger-scale projects and focus on how these could be made sustainable.

Six of our eight schools received funding at the start of the year to implement or scale a literacy improvement project that addressed a need identified through the Cradle to Career work in Years 1 and 2:

The Birkenhead Park School continued to deliver the Lexia programme from year 2.

Bidston Avenue began their 3-year journey to become a Voice-21 school after reviewing its impact and success in partner school Bidston Village

The Priory Parish delivered a series of writing workshops, supported by high quality vocab teaching and learning for KS2

St Mary's Catholic College worked with The Birkenhead Park School to adapt and implement The Big Read project, a reading for pleasure programme.

Our Lady & St Edwards developed their own comprehension teaching model which they trained and implemented across all staff to meet the needs of KS2.

Holy Cross continued with the Early Years Hub implemented in year 2, supporting pupils who weren't ready for the mainstream curriculum.



Birkenhead Park School, The Big Read

[Watch 'The Big Read' video](#)

Creating a community of practice for schools in North Birkenhead

There's a wealth of research and evidence on how to improve students' reading and academic skills - but there's no *one-size fits all* intervention.

Putting evidence into practice requires school leaders to know their schools and communities well, understand the challenges that students face and take a test-and-learn approach to adapting good practice to best suit their own context.

Communities of practice, built around a specific theme or focus, are the forum where research and evidence meet context and experience: they connect professionals who might not otherwise interact, they capture and share learning and challenges "from the field" and enable members to explore innovative solutions to shared problems.

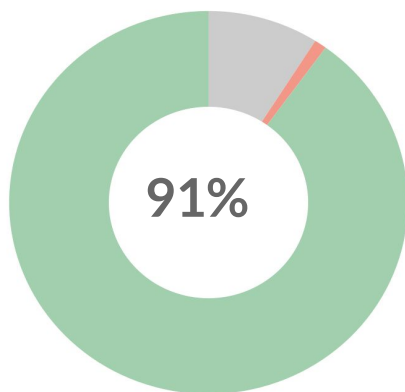
Through Cradle to Career, schools in North Birkenhead have:

- Built new or deeper connections between leaders and middle leaders
- Better understood each other's strengths and contexts, leading to a deepening of respect
- Identified common challenges and trialled new, shared solutions
- Shared good practice from their own contexts, which has been adapted by other schools

The most effective shared activities in Cradle to Career (the Early Language Project, the Educational Psychologist consortium, the shared focus on transition) have been led by and developed through the working group as they have discussed data, learning and challenges collaboratively. The backbone team's role is to coordinate these activities and monitor their impact.

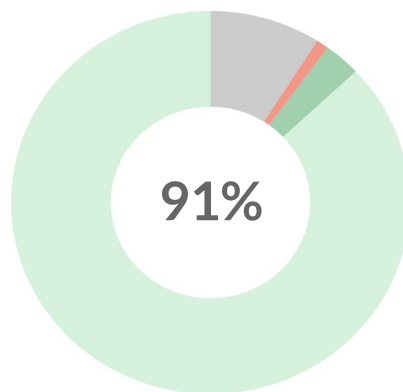
Year 3 literacy audit shows the progress in teacher confidence in ability to deliver literacy interventions to support their pupils with significant increases from years 1 to 3.

+1ppt in year 3
+1ppt since year 1



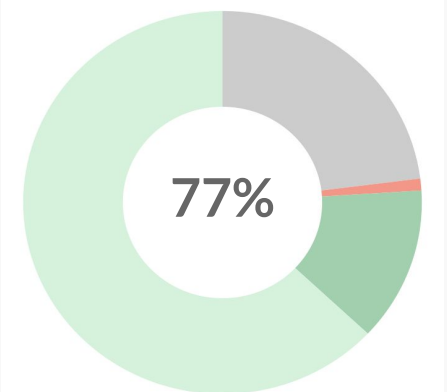
Early Years teacher confidence in ability to deliver literacy interventions and support the literacy needs of their pupils

+1ppt in year 3
+4ppt since year 1



Primary teacher confidence in ability to deliver literacy interventions and support the literacy needs of their pupils

+1ppt in year 3
+14ppt since year 1



Secondary teacher confidence in ability to deliver literacy interventions and support the literacy needs of their pupils

Improving attendance

The attendance panel continued in Year 3 for one Cradle to Career secondary school. The panel discussed 29 complex attendance cases, resulting in better advice for the school, referral to other support services, improved communication between school and social care leading to innovative solutions to shared problems.

Alongside this, Cradle to Career offered funding for school attendance projects. Schools used the funding to implement a range of schemes alongside their normal attendance management approaches such as phone calls, letters and home visits. The additional support in place across schools included:

- Parent engagement and support groups for students with persistent absence
- Reward schemes such as termly prizes, tea parties and prize-giving for improved attendance and punctuality
- Focused attendance support targeted to students and families with poor attendance

Each school took a different approach that built on their existing processes, incentives and monitoring systems. Whilst challenges remain ongoing - especially in supporting students where there is low engagement or poor mental health at home, all schools reported the value of small amounts of targeted attendance funding in being able to add in further, often creative solutions to their strategies.

The Impact

13 out of 19

School attendance project participants improved attendance

7.76


percentage points average improvement

6

pupils improved by 15 or more percentage points

“I was thoroughly amazed at how much the children enjoyed my 100% (attendance) tea parties. In the autumn term I had 36 children with 100%, this increased to 73 children in spring and 84 children in summer! Conversations with children confirm that they are trying really hard to get 100% as they desperately want to come to my end of term party.”

School headteacher



“The project has allowed the school to move towards a more supportive approach focused on finding the reasons that lie behind pupil absence, rather than just using standard systems such as Education penalty notices etc.”

School attendance lead

Celebration Event, Birkenhead Park 14

03

Mutually reinforcing activities

04

Continuous communication

05

Backbone support organisation



Part 2: Progress in Community & Family Services

Celebration Event, Birkenhead Park

Family Connectors

Our aims: To provide support to families via a single point of contact, building strong relationships between families and a trusted family connector improving access to services.

In Year 3 the Family Connectors continued to sign up local families to support them to achieve their goals, as well as supporting others not signed up to the service via signposting.

116

Total number of families the Family Connectors have signed-up and supported 116 families, across the first 3 years of delivery.

260

Children and Young people received support from Family Connectors

The **Family Connectors** are now embedded within the **MDT team**, and are a key part of the support package offered to families in the **Cradle to Career North Birkenhead** area. Furthermore, the Family Connectors have supported families identified for support via the Attendance pilot with **Birkenhead Park School** and **The Hive**.

Working with **Wirral Council's** data team, C2C has supported **InvolveNW** to ensure Family Connector data is included in the overall impact measurements of the MDT.

The Impact

104 Service users signposted to Family Connectors

86% of service users made significant progress in wellbeing

1/3 of service users exited the service as they had achieved their goal

“When I signpost a family to the family connectors, I always feel they are getting the best possible support available. I feel like the families who work with the family connectors very often become more confident and have a very positive outlook after the intervention by the family connectors.”

Bharathi Inbaraj, School Readiness Worker (C2C MDT)

C2C has also supported the **Family Connectors** with evaluating the service this year. Including an analysis of the data collected across years 1 and 2 delivery, and an evaluation video.



[Watch ‘Family Connectors Evaluation’ video](#)

Progress in Social Care 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 reducing referral rates to social care by improving support for vulnerable families.

Oct 22 - Mar 23	Cradle to Career	Wirral-wide
Social care step-down rate	23 per 10,000	22 per 10,000
Social care case closure rate	380 per 10,000	248 per 10,000
Social care referrals	361 per 10,000	259 per 10,000

The Community Support Team continued to provide an embedded, multidisciplinary approach to supporting families in social care and Level 3 outcomes overall. Our evaluation report this year highlighted the transformative practice of the team, including:

- All members of the team felt that they had improved their understanding of each others' roles, knowledge and skills, simultaneously helping them to widen their own knowledge.
- Level 4 social workers particularly have found value in the non-statutory preventative work done by Level 2 and 3 staff in the team, and the wrap-around support it has enabled.



"I feel happier as a social worker, which means I'm more effective."
Andrew, Social worker

- Time and persistent reflection and relationship-building with local community organisations and services has led to better relationships and activities are now delivered in partnership with community groups.
- Lower caseloads for the majority of team members has enabled them to do more preventative work, and to support families for longer, which has led to improved

"We have ownership over our roles. Our managers give us that freedom and that trust." Karen, Family Connector

Progress in the Community

Our aim: The community owning the development of local culture and the local offer, addressing key issues affecting them such as anti-social behaviour and giving young leaders a voice in the community.

North Birkenhead Youth Hubs

In year 3 **The Hive** and the **Right to Succeed backbone team** have been working closely with youth offer delivery partners to build skills and capacity around youth work within the local area, to ensure **sustainability of the offer**.

11 professionals from local community organisations registered for youth work training, which will continue to be delivered into **year 4**.

18

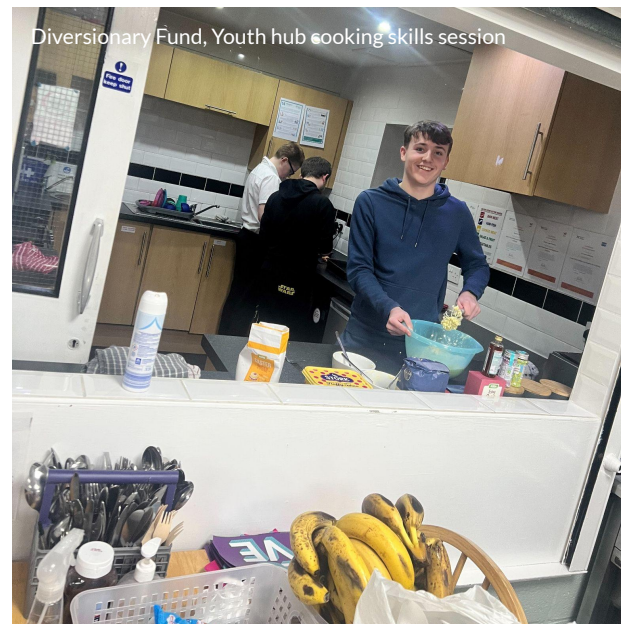
Monthly attendees

114

young people engaged through outreach

A diversionary activity fund was made available to encourage organisations to work with CYPs to gain an understanding of the activities they wanted to see delivered in the local area. This year activities have included:

- Supporting the set up of a new, North Birkenhead football team
- Residentials to Colomendy and London to improve group dynamics and team building between CYPs
- Wellbeing and mental health sessions
- Cooking skills sessions
- Visit to LFC



Case Study: Youth Voice & Young Leaders Group

The Young Leaders group has grown. The group have built strong relationships and a strong team dynamic as a result of activities and residential.

They have grown in confidence as a group, and started to take an interest in their local community, and decisions being made locally that impact provision for young people.

When the local authority announced proposals to potentially cut funding for youth provision locally, the Young Leaders group campaigned and protested to highlight the importance of ongoing preventative youth work.

The group have also been gaining skills around volunteering, as they support Gautby Road in delivering activities for younger children.

Implementing the Child Criminal Exploitation Campaign

Cradle to Career has continued to work with partners to raise awareness of and prevent young people becoming involved in crime.

In year 3, the final strand of CCE training was delivered and The Youth Voice/Young Leaders worked with The Guide Liverpool to design and deliver a CCE campaign aimed at parents and young people in North Birkenhead.

This included designing two posters, and developing a short video, which the young people scripted and performed in themselves, to raise awareness about the risks of CCE.

In year 4 Gautby Road will focus on developing the skills of the group through training, to engage them in more decision making.

Impact

15-20

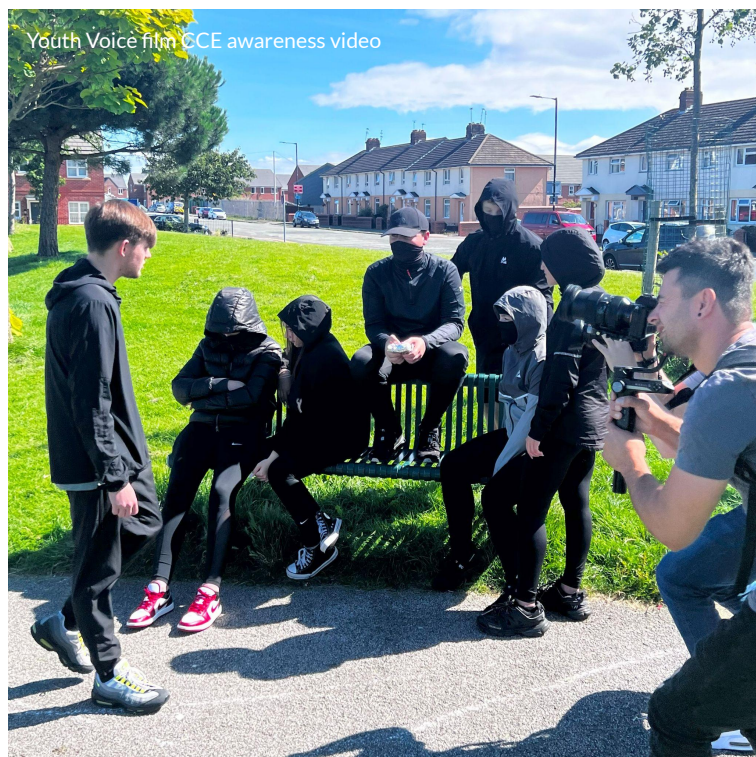
Regular members of the Young Leaders group

10

Parents had Child Criminal Exploitation training

14

practitioners had Child Criminal Exploitation training



The Service Collaboration Fund is enabling the expansion of community-led projects to meet identified gaps in local provision. Cradle to Career has continued to support existing projects with a share of the **£120,000** fund

Standing Together free educational workshops on sports, healthy lifestyle, & diversity.

1,450 children reached

56 activities completed

Diversity+ support for families including emotional wellbeing support, coping strategies & fun activities.

328 children reached

100% of parents reported reduced isolation, improved mental health & wellbeing and children enjoyed fun stimulating activities.

Builder Book workshops on literacy, creativity, storytelling and wellbeing.

500 children reached

PODFUN free weekly events, training & support for children and young people with additional needs.

1,159 beneficiaries

100% reported tutors workshop delivery as excellent'

93% agreed strategies discussed would inform future parenting

92% of parents felt more confident dealing with issues at home



“My overall experience is excellent, they got me out of the house when I was suffering terrible anxiety and panic attacks, I’ll be forever thankful.” PodFun Participant

Case Study: Diversity +

Our aims: To support Families with a child with a Special Educational Need and Disability (SEND) who live in North Birkenhead and/or go to school there. Reduce isolation and feeling of loneliness, improve parental mental health and wellbeing, and provide fun stimulating activities for children aged 0-11 years

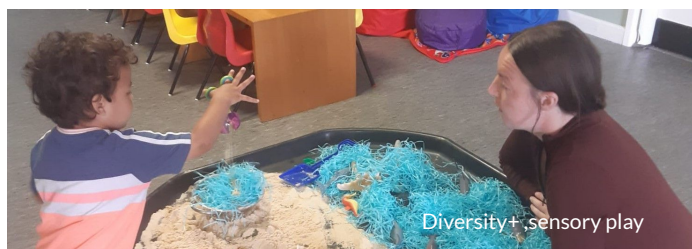
Helping Parents in the community: Carly's Story

Carly has two children, her eldest child has been diagnosed with Autism and her youngest is on the pathway for ADHD.

Carly has issues with both boys fighting in the morning and was finding it really hard to get them both ready for school. By the time they were in the car she would be shouting at them and then the boys would be having a meltdown.

The Diversity+ team discussed that she would need to keep calm and to be aware of her facial expressions, tone of voice and body language and try not to react to the boys as this will be making the boys worse (visual learners thrive of the way we act).

They suggested using visual supports for both children. Carly received an envelope full of visuals that would start from getting up in the morning, eating breakfast, brushing teeth, getting dressed etc and then using visuals in the car on the way to school. This improved communication with both boys and improved Carly's morning routine.



“Diversity+ has supported me and my family to help me connect with my child. I now have positive ways to deal with his behaviour. The support is amazing, they make you feel so comfortable and it is brilliant that there are people in the same position or have been in this position like myself. So much understanding, being able to relate to my situation it makes you feel less alone.”

Parent beneficiary, Diversity+



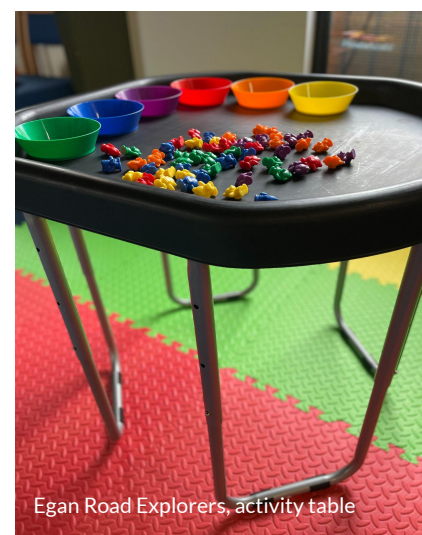
The Community Seed Fund has helped to kick-start more community-led projects

Seed Fund **3.0** > £28,717 awarded to
14 projects this year

In year 3 we have continued to support resident/small organisation led projects that benefit the local community through the Seed Fund 3.0

Our aim this year was to support the sustainability of projects by making grant funding of between £1,500 and £2,500 available to previously successful projects, to expand their work.

The remaining funds were then offered out for new projects, some of the existing projects expanding their work included:



'Working with local and specialist partners, the projects built up relationships with local families and schools to such an extent that by the end of the year, both services were at capacity and had waiting lists of families looking for support.' Wirral Ofsted Report 2022

- Bringing People Together:**
Members of **Voices are Us** resident group living with additional needs will be supported to improve their skills and put on an inclusive, community-wide summer event.
- St. James Community Garden:**
Residents who led on the reconstruction and redesign of **St James Allotments** for the community will add new spaces, equipment and activities to engage the wider community.
- Egan Explorers:**
Egan Road Church team continue to grow and develop sensory groups for families with children living with **SEND** and introduce sophisticated equipment and spaces for the children.
- Summer of Space:**
Wirral Unplugged team aim to provide up to **120 families** with cooking, crafting, family-inclusive activities during the summer holidays designed to encourage children to stay active and explore new interests.

Summer Celebration



Stealing Sheep drummer leads procession, Birkenhead Park



Community morris dancers, Birkenhead Park



Music and performance, Birkenhead Park

The **Magic Sheep Precession** at Birkenhead Park celebrated the creativity and diversity of children and young people in Birkenhead's North End.

Dubbed as a 'North Birkenhead Celebration' and featuring Liverpool-based electric pop trio, Stealing Sheep, the event welcomed 200+ community members to join in with the festivities.

The celebration included a walking procession with the Glam-A-Ram-Bam Marching Band, showcasing performances from local artists and residents.

"We have collaborated with Cradle to Career to create an inspirational project that we hope inspires young people to engage with the arts and explore the therapeutic and unifying spirit of music in the community."

Nicki - Stealing Sheep band

Summer Celebration Workshops

The event that took place on July 15th 2023, was a culmination of community activities facilitated by local artists **Stealing Sheep**.

In the weeks prior to the event, workshops were held in the community including costume and flag making with local children and families and the community choir based out of the St James' Centre were joined in their practice by **Jennifer Johns**, celebrity vocal coach, where they learnt a piece to be performed along the procession route.

The theme of the event was **collectivity** to mark how people and organisations of **North Birkenhead** have collaborated to deliver sustainable change that has positively impacted their community.

That spirit of collectivity was evident on a day of celebration culminating with a vibrant procession, full of colour and music support.

“It’s been really fun making the costumes for the parade at the Livvy, I can’t wait to see the band at the park”
Ted, aged 9, North Birkenhead resident



Flag making workshop, Bidston Avenue Primary



Choir practice, St. James centre



Flag making, Bidston Avenue Primary



Community celebrations, Birkenhead Park



Procession, Birkenhead Park



Part 3: Year 3 & Beyond

Celebration Event, Birkenhead Park

25

03

Mutually reinforcing activities

04

Continuous communication

05

Backbone support organisation

Our approach to sustainability

Building on our work to date, we've set out what we expect to achieve during the 4-6 years of our programme and how this builds towards achieving the 10-year ambition, embedding the principles of collective working and locally-led decision making

Overarching plans

Continuing the momentum and energy of the programme to grow impact	Embedding place-based change principles of collective ambition	Increasing the capacity of individuals and organisations	Continue to learn and evaluate and share that knowledge for continuous improvement	Creating the blueprint and conditions for long-term legacy and sustainability
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Education	Community	Family and services
Assessments for pupils in Years 4-10	Build capacity in the community to ensure sustainable delivery of a quality local Youth Offer	Expansion of SEND collaboration project
Embed the Early Language Project in schools	Implement a Community SEND Fund	Mobilisation of the SEND multi-disciplinary teams around schools/community
Embed the Literacy programmes in schools	Continue to engage the wider community via the Working Group, community activities and events	Implement a new Mental Health worker role
Design and deliver effective solutions to prepare students to transition between settings successfully	Design and deliver community-led organisational development projects	Embed Family Connector Model
Continued focus on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities		
Educational Psychologist consultancy and SENCo network to continue		
Embed School Attendance interventions and continue to improve parental and pupil engagement		



Expanding the vision: Launching Cradle to Career Liverpool City Region

Cradle to Career has been a pioneering programme demonstrating how place-based change can transform a community, its success has been a catalyst for a significant expansion of the approach across the **Liverpool City Region**.

The **Cradle to Career: LCR** roll out began at the House of Lords, on the same day that parliament would discuss Leveling-up. The aims of the programme, aligned with national policy, highlighted the importance of place-based change. Following up with local launches in North Birkenhead and Liverpool John Moores University.



The expansion into Northwood, Knowsley and Halton Lea, Halton has started successfully.

Halton Lea, Halton: Year 1 Impact

9 Practitioners trained

22 Partner Organisations worked with

209 Practitioners engaged in other ways

1,661 Children and Young people assessed or supported through whole school training



Northwood, Knowsley: Year 1 Impact

9 Practitioners trained

26 Partner Organisations worked with

215 Practitioners engaged in other ways

2,576 Children and Young people assessed or supported through whole school training



[Watch 'LCR Launch' video](#)

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:



Our work ultimately benefits children and young people by creating:



Inclusive, safe and healthy environments



More joined up support



Better access to education



Greater participation in decision making



RIGHT TO
SUCCEED