Children's Communities Programme Evaluation 2018 report

January 2019

Save the Children
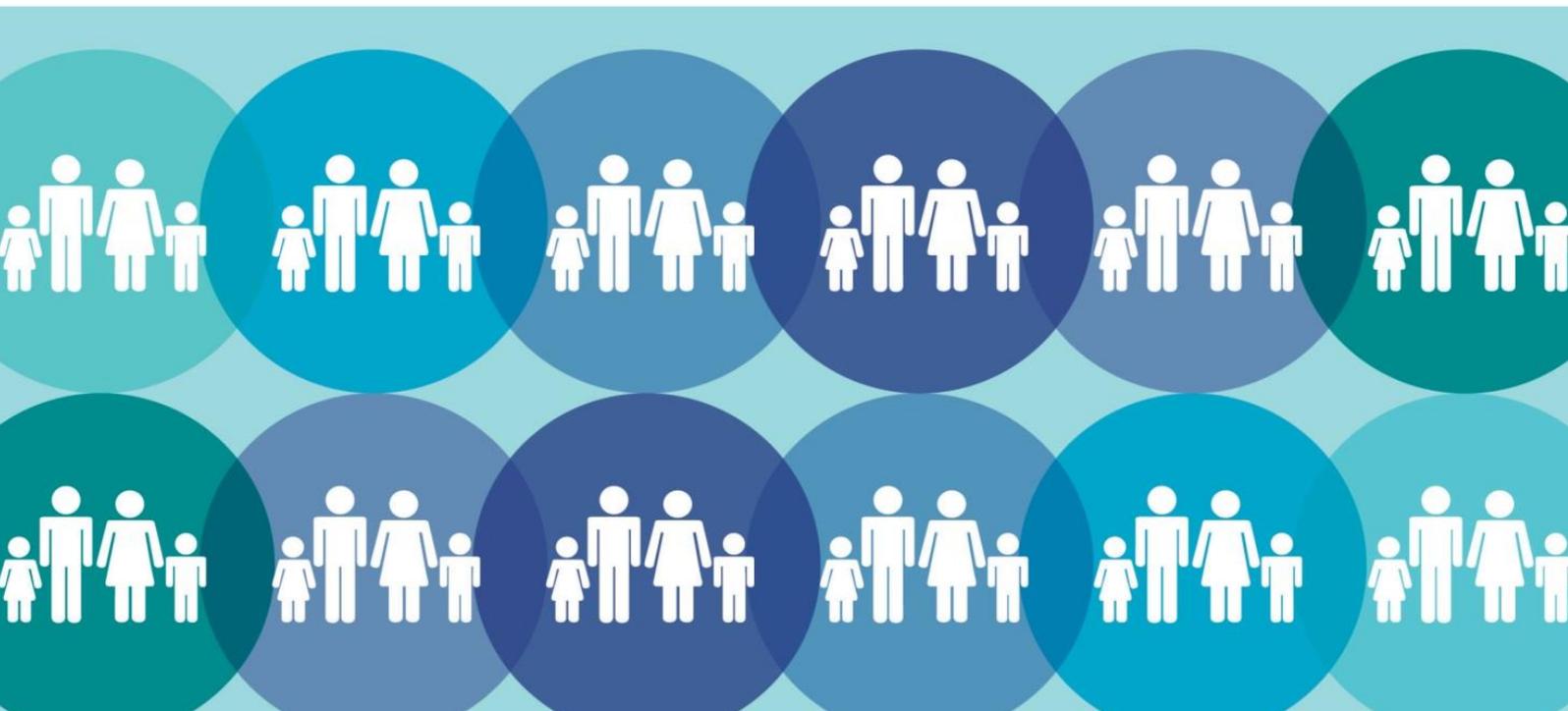
Children's Communities Programme Evaluation
2018 report

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Summary

Introduction

A Children's Community brings together local stakeholders (which include commissioners, funders, service providers and local residents) in an area to work together to bring about changes in local systems to improve outcomes for children and young people. It has a number of features including a long term focus on a specific neighbourhood; a shared vision and Theory of Change based on in-depth understanding of community assets and needs; and all relevant partners working together to ensure co-ordinated interventions from 'cradle to career' and across children's school, home and community lives. Save the Children UK is working with three Children's Communities: Pembury in the London Borough of Hackney, Wallsend in North Tyneside, and Smallshaw-Hurst in Tameside.

The Children's Communities Evaluation

The evaluation of the Children's Communities programme is concerned with both **process**: how and why change in local systems and services is happening in the Children's Communities; and **impact**: what difference does this change make to outcomes for children and young people, at both individual and area levels? The evaluation methodology has two components:

- A Children's Communities Analytical Framework is being used to the chart progress of the Communities at three system levels: strategic direction; operational management; and services and programmes. This framework allows judgements to be made in relation to whether the Children's Community in question is at the initial *building* stage; at the intermediate *developing* stage or at the more developed *sustaining* stage. Data for this framework is gathered through interviews with representatives of Children's Community governance groups (including local resident representatives), partner organisations and core teams, and through observations and documentary analysis.

- The impact and outcomes framework identifies both long term (area level) and progression (individual level) indicators, which are populated respectively with publicly available secondary and administrative data, and data collected through surveys and interviews with service users in each area.

Further details and linked documents can be found on the Save the Children website here.

Children's Communities Findings

Overall, the **Pembury Children's Community** has made strong progress against the Children's Communities Analytical Framework. In particular there has been emphasis on collective approaches to improved service delivery, with the implementation of successful joint initiatives focussing on supporting pre-school children, young people and families. The Children's Community core team in Pembury has had a crucial early role in facilitating collaboration, and identifying and promoting new initiatives. New theme groups have provided a more focussed approach and as the work of these groups develops, it will be

important to ensure that the learning that is emerging is used to inform change across the local system. Although there is a high level of commitment to the Children's Community amongst local leaders, and a widespread recognition of the Community as a positive driver of change, there is not as yet a consistent recognition of accountability for shared outcomes across all service areas.

The work of the Pembury Children's Community has included a focus on early years, and this is likely to have contributed to Pembury early years development outcomes being strong relative to both the borough and national benchmarks. Children's outcomes at Key Stage Two are improving, although they are still behind those for Hackney and England. Key Stage Four outcomes are consistently strong, and above those for the borough and England. Levels of childhood obesity have fallen overall in Pembury, although they remain high at both Reception and Year Six and significantly higher than averages for Hackney and England. This is not an area of focus for the Children's Community at present, but the data suggest that this should be an issue for future consideration.

For Pembury Children's Community, we would anticipate that the implementation of a new three year plan will provide an opportunity to firmly consolidate the progress of the Children's Community thus far, and for the majority of the features of a *sustaining* Community to be present.

A significant amount of work has gone into getting the **Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community** to its current stage, highlighting the time and resources needed to start up a Children's Community in an area that does not have a history of collaborative working. A strategic partnership is emerging, and developing a shared commitment to achieving change through collaborative action. A consensus on the core aims, and the work needed to translate these aims into actions is building amongst local stakeholders and we anticipate that more concrete plans and actions will be evident in the next evaluation period.

Early years outcomes in Smallshaw-Hurst in 2017 were significantly lower than for Tameside and England, indicating that a focus here is appropriate. Levels of childhood obesity at Reception are above the national average but levels of obesity at Year Six have fallen substantially and in 2016/17 were below the national average. Outcomes at Key Stages Two and Four vary across local schools but are improving overall.

Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community has made good progress against the Children's Communities Analytical Framework, and overall has been assessed as being in a *building* stage in relation to strategic direction, operational management and services and programmes.

In the **Wallsend Children's Community**, a new core team has provided a more focussed approach to collaboration, built around an agreed three year plan developed in tandem with a refreshed governance structure. The work of the core team facing out into services and organisations to explain the Children's Community, and to build engagement and understanding of how this can improve outcomes through partnership working, is beginning to show benefits. The governance group is more purposeful, and the core team is focussed on delivering and monitoring the new plan and its components.

In the Wallsend Children's Community, children's outcomes at Key Stage Two vary according to which school they attend, but outcomes in many local schools are above those for North Tyneside and England and improving over time. Outcomes at Key Stage Four are declining, and in 2017/18 were below North Tyneside and England averages. Obesity levels for children in Wallsend are slightly higher than those in England at Reception (although falling over time) and higher than those for England (and increasing) at Year Six.

Important next steps in the Wallsend Children's Community include engagement with local people, stronger visibility and engagement with local organisations, and the development of

clearer intermediate goals to provide a stronger strategic focus for governance. Overall, we judge the community to be at the intermediate *developing* stage.

Overall programme findings

1. The evidence collected in Year Two of the evaluation confirms that all three areas are embodying the principles of the Children's Community model. All are focussed on a geographical area, with a long term vision for change and working across multiple aspects of children's lives.

2. There are different opportunities (and limitations) associated with the different sizes of the Children's Communities and there may be trade-offs to be made between the size of a Children's Community and breadth of focus looking across multiple aspects of children's lives.

3. Communities are at different stages in the development of collective system leadership, although all have made efforts over the past twelve months to develop or refine governance arrangements to help embed a sense of shared accountability amongst local stakeholders.

4. There are ongoing questions across all three Children's Communities around representation and how the voice of local communities is heard and responded to in the context of local systems change.

5. The Theory of Change documents developed by the Communities in the early stages of the programme are being used now as a reminder of the broad direction each Community is taking and their long term objectives. In the two established Children's Communities, more specific three year plans have been developed. These are acting to fill the gap by focussing on shorter term action requirements, and have re-energised stakeholders and given a renewed sense of purpose. In Wallsend, there is a recognised need for a bridge between the two: a set of clearer intermediate Children's Community goals or staging points. Identifying a set of such outcomes for the Children's Community over and above the outcomes for any specific project associated with it is a necessary next step.

6. There is evidence that the work of the core teams has been instrumental in facilitating improved co-operation and collaboration between services. In the more developed Communities the projects funded by seed corn grants (from Save the Children UK) are positively received by beneficiaries and are providing exemplars of models of improved service delivery.

7. Overall, in all three areas, it is not yet possible to demonstrate robust evidence of impacts on children, young people and families. Whilst the underlying model is evidence-based its implementation varies, and difficulties in collecting and sharing impact data have hampered further evidence-informed decision-making.

Conclusions and recommendations

Drawing on the above, a set of recommendations can be made, for the Children's Communities, Save the Children UK and others. Key conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

1. Delivering change in large geographical areas across multiple aspects of children's lives may require a greater level of resource than is currently available to the Children's Communities.

    Recommendations: **Save the Children UK should work with the larger Children's Communities and key partners to consider whether a narrower focus is more appropriate in larger geographical areas.**

2. Developing a model for local systems change is useful in understanding the development of the Children's Communities but change is a long-term and complex process which is subject to multiple factors which may help or hinder and so bridging short-term and long-term goals is important.

   Recommendation: **Children's Communities should develop clear sets of intermediate goals.**

   Recommendation: **The Analytical Framework should continue to be used to monitor Children's Communities' progress and could be adapted for other similar initiatives.**

3. 'Test and learn' approaches to new models of service delivery are an effective tool for demonstrating and achieving change. The seed corn funded projects have acted as a focus for stakeholder engagement and allowed Children's Communities to build credibility and trust with local partners.

   *Recommendation***: Save the Children UK should continue to provide access to seed corn funding.**

4. Children's Communities need consistent individual-level data.

   Recommendation: **Communities need to work to put in place a robust data infrastructure to provide consistent individual-level data for evaluation and decision-making purposes.**

5. Children's Communities need to ensure that the voices of local children, young people and families are informing their work.

   Recommendation: **The Children's Communities review their community engagement with a view to establishing clear protocols and expectations in relation to how the voices of children, young people and families are expected to influence the programme.**

Introduction

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1.1. Children's Communities

A Children's Community brings together local stakeholders (including commissioners, funders, service providers and local residents) in an area to work together to bring about changes in local systems to improve outcomes for children and young people. It has a number of features:

- A long term focus on a specific neighbourhood

- A shared vision and Theory of Change (ToC), based on in-depth understanding of community assets and needs

- All relevant partners work together to ensure a co-ordinated approach from 'cradle to career', working across children's school, home and community lives.

Save the Children UK is working with three Children's Communities: Pembury in the London Borough of Hackney, Wallsend in North Tyneside, and Smallshaw-Hurst in Greater Manchester.

> The **Pembury** Children's Community is focussed on the Pembury estate which houses approximately 4,000 residents. The Children's Community is led and staffed by Peabody Housing Association and Hackney Council. Other partners include early years providers, schools, health services and the voluntary sector. Between 2016 and 2019 the Children's Community has focused on three priority areas: enabling Pembury children to be more ready for school; enabling young people to achieve their ambitions; routes out of poverty for Pembury families.

> The **Smallshaw-Hurst** Children's Community is a former local authority regeneration area in Tameside and comprises 15,000 residents. A core team is employed by Save the Children UK. Partners include JIGSAW housing group, the local authority, schools and health services. The Children's Community is focussing on three strands of activity: parents, early years and learning; aspirations, education and employability; and being healthy, safe and supported.

The **Wallsend** Children's Community is the NE28 postcode area which includes almost 45,000 residents. A core team is employed by Save the Children UK. The Children's Community is built on a history of collaboration between schools in the area. Other partners include the local authority, health and early years providers. The Children's Community is focussing on three strands of activity: early intervention (getting things right early), health (fit for life) and children's futures (realising aspirations).

More information about the Children's Communities can be found here: http://www.childrenscommunitynetwork.org.uk/

The Children's Communities Year One evaluation report can be read here: https://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/childrens-community-eval-2017-report.pdf

1.2. Children's Communities Evaluation

The Children's Communities evaluation is concerned with the **process** of developing Children's Communities and their **impact** on children's and young people's outcomes, as well as a **capacity building** stream which is supporting the Children's Communities in their own local evaluation activities (not reported on here).

The overall approach to the evaluation is summarised in Figure 1.1:

Figure 1.1: Children's Communities Evaluation

Evaluation strand	Process evaluation: documenting and analysing the implementation of the initiative	Impact evaluation: assessing the impact of the initiative for beneficiaries	Support for Children's Communities to develop systems for research, monitoring, evaluation activities, and using learning from the evidence generated
Aims	The aim of the process evaluation is to have a clear understanding of the set-up and ongoing development of Children's Communities, identifying what has worked well, and what has not, on the basis of learning and progress to date.	The aim of the impact evaluation is to test the hypothesis that 'a better system leads to better outcomes for children', by identifying any early impacts on children's outcomes and the relationship between the process of developing Children's Communities and these impacts.	The aim of the capacity-building strand is to have put in place systems and structures to collect data for the Children's Communities for long-term monitoring and measurement, and to have supported additional local activity in relation to evaluating specific Children's Community interventions.
How is this being achieved?	Use of the Children's Communities Analytical Framework which brings together a Children's Communities development model and a Local Systems Change framework (developed by Save the Children UK) to provide a basis for analysis of the progress of Children's Communities. The framework enables the identification of progress to date, what is working well, what is not and what is unknown, through a set of research topics and questions, measures and indicators.	Identification of a set of core indicators which speak to Children's Communities' theory of change priorities, which can be populated through available reliable datasets. Development of a set of progress measures which are indicative of progress towards core indicators. These will be populated through a range of data-gathering activities: a template Children's Community survey will be used across Communities; evaluations of seed corn and similar activities carried out by the Children's Communities, and interviews with children, young people and parents.	Development of capacity-building 'systems' to support the programme evaluation and local data and evaluation activities in line with each Children's Community's local data & evaluation strategy. This includes development of data dashboards, evaluation protocols, templates for project and evaluation design and information-sharing.

A set of key questions and data sources has been developed for the process and impact evaluation strands. These are detailed in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2: Key questions and data sources for the evaluation

Process evaluation: Children's Communities Analytical Framework		
Evaluation questions	**Themes**	**Data Sources**
How and to what extent are Communities embodying the key principles of the Children's Communities model? Is there evidence of the Children's Communities working towards long-term systems change? How effective are leadership and governance arrangements? How are the Communities progressing with developing and operationalising the local strategic vision and Theory of Change? What evidence is there of impacts within services and systems?	Evidence of development at 3 system levels (see Figure 1.3 below): *Strategic Direction* *Operational Management* *Services and programmes*	Interviews with • Strategic leaders in the Children's Communities - often members of Children's Community boards and governance groups • Representatives of local organisations and service providers (public and third sectors) involved in delivery of services to children, young people and families • Representatives of resident and community groups working in partnership with, or informing, the Children's Community • Children's Community core team members • Save the Children UK Local Systems Change team members • Children, young people and parents living in the Children's Communities Attendance and observations at Children's Community board meetings and other relevant meetings Documentary analysis: minutes of meetings, Children's Community annual reports, local evaluation reports
Impact evaluation: Impact and outcomes framework		
Evaluation question	**Indicators**	**Data sources**
What evidence is there of impacts for children, young people and families?	*Core indicators:* • Early Years • Health • Post-18 Outcomes • Progression and Attainment School engagement	Secondary and administrative data (core indicators)

	Progress Indicators:	Interviews with children, young people and parents
	• being ready for school	Surveys of service users
	• doing well at school	
	• general health	
	• having the skills and competencies to be ready for work	
	• overall wellbeing/life satisfaction	
	• provision of support for schooling, education and employment that is available	
	• relationships with family and friends	
	• satisfaction with school/education establishments	
	• satisfaction with the neighbourhood	
	the provision of leisure and social activities that are available.	

The themes in the Children's Communities Analytical Framework are broken down further into sub-themes as indicated in Figure 1.3 below.

Figure 1.3: Children's Communities Analytical framework: system level categories

People		
Strategic Direction	**Operational Management**	**Services and programmes**
• Governance • Culture • Power • Outcomes and accountability • Place-based strategies and plans • People and workforce • Shared measurement	• System capacity and capacity building • Communications and engagement • Place-based Strategies and plans • Shared measurement • People and workforce	• People and workforce • Programmes • Services • Culture

Under each heading we utilise a three-stage categorisation of maturity (**'building', 'developing', 'sustaining'**) to capture the processes through which a newly formed Children's Community becomes an established agent of local change. The associated assumption is that moving through the maturity phases, from building to sustaining will have positive longer term outcomes for families, children and young people in the area.

Figure A1.6 in Appendix 1 presents a series of indicators of how a Children's Community would be expected to operate and be structured at the relevant maturity

level for each top level heading, and a set of associated questions which informed data gathering activities.

The Analytical Framework is based on assumptions around the causal process underlying the programme. Figure 1.4 below shows the **Children's Community as an agent of change in a local system** with an associated set of structures, processes and functions, and the relationships between the Children's Communities and the wider systems within which they are working. The figure also hypothesises the relationship between Children's Communities and outcomes for both local systems and children and young people.

Figure 1.4: How the work of the Children's Communities is hypothesised to influence long-term outcomes for children and young people
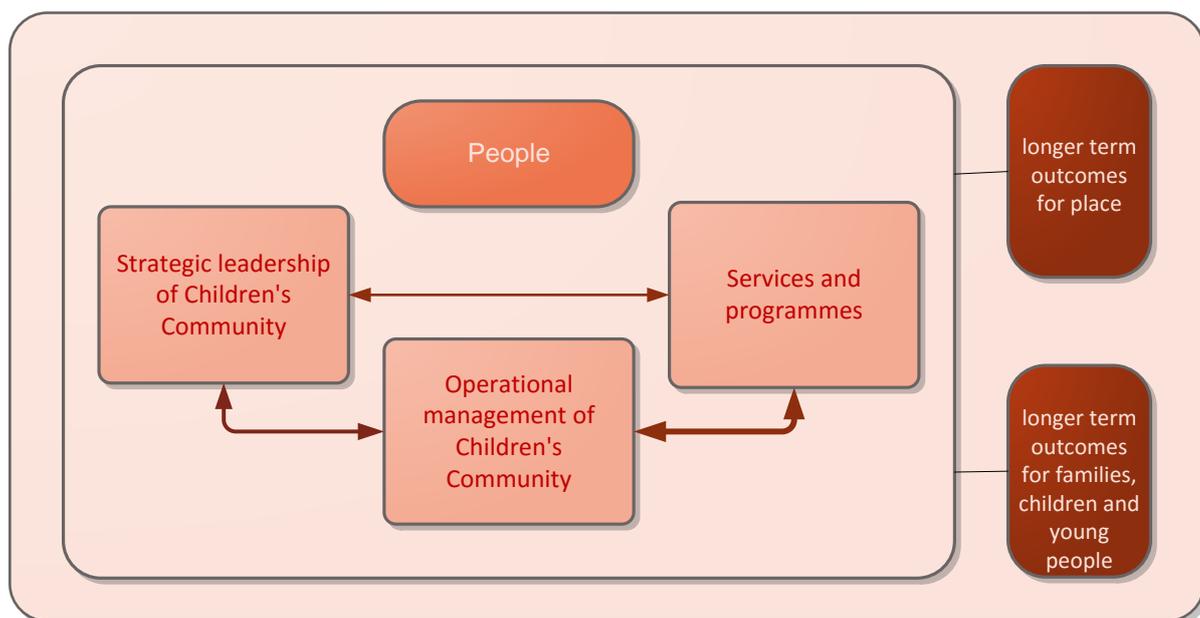
A full explanation of the evaluation frameworks, and the data gathering activities informing this report is contained at Appendix 1.

1.3. The report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter Two summarises the findings of the process and impact evaluations in each of the Children's Communities in the twelve months to December 2018

- Chapter Three discusses the evaluation findings and draws out learning for the Children's Community Programme

- Chapter Four presents conclusions and recommendations.

- Appendix 1 contains a full description of the approach that is being taken to evaluating the Children's Communities

- Appendix 2 summarises the data gathering activities informing this report

- Appendix 3 contains a detailed report for each Children's Community

- Appendix 4 contains outcomes data for each Children's Community.

Findings

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This chapter presents our findings from the second year of the Children's Community evaluation. The analysis draws on all data sources and is presented in three sections, each of which focuses on one of the current Children's Communities. Each subsection contains three elements:

- Process evaluation - drawing on qualitative data to assess the progress of each Children's Community against the Children's Communities Analytical Framework

- Impact evaluation - initial beneficiary data and evidence from interviews with service users to assess progression outcomes, including their experiences of living in Children's Community areas; core indicator trend data

- Overall assessment - a short summary drawing together process and impact evaluation data for each community.

The fuller, more detailed analysis of progress for each Children's Community, and data for the core indicators is provided at Appendices 3 and 4.

2.1. Pembury

Overall, The Pembury Children's Community has made a great deal of progress. In particular there has been a strong emphasis on collective approaches to improved service delivery; capitalising on opportunities within Pembury and more widely across Hackney. The implementation of successful joint initiatives focussing on supporting pre-school children, young people and families provide examples of new approaches to meeting local needs, and there is a strong commitment to the application of learning from these initiatives across the Children's Community and borough. The Children's Community team have had a crucial early role in facilitating collaboration, and identifying and promoting new initiatives. The theme groups have provided a focussed approach to taking this work forward and as the work of the theme groups develops, it will be important to ensure that the learning that is emerging is used to inform change across the system. There is a high level of commitment to the Children's Community amongst local leaders, and a widespread recognition of the Community as a positive driver of change. There is also a developing sense of shared accountability for outcomes, although a small number of stakeholders interviewed did not feel that this had yet been achieved. The role of the board will be critical in ensuring that collective leadership is focussed on embedding system-wide change. We judge the Community, overall, to be at the *developing* stage, with potential to move in the next period to become *sustaining.*

Process evaluation

Strategic Direction

- There has been further review and consolidation of governance structures with a view to a more focussed and purposeful approach at the thematic level in the current evaluation period. This is providing a good platform for shared learning, leading to the implementation of new approaches across the local system.

- There is widespread recognition of the Children's Community as a driver of change and a high level of 'buy-in' from key local agencies. The coming 12 months provide opportunities to engage partners working in outcome areas not previously addressed, including children's health. Not all strategic partners are able to identify how shared accountability might be achieved.

- There is a clear focus on evidence and data driven approaches, although the sharing of data has been slow, partly due to technical and data governance challenges, but also because there has not been a dedicated data, evaluation and impact role in the core team.

- The three year plan has provided a strong focus on action for the Children's Community, and there are clear links to the Community's Theory of Change. It will be important that the new three year plan (from March 2019) sets out clear delivery milestones and targets which link to the achievement of longer term goals.

- Overall, in relation to the strategic direction of the Children's Community we assess the Pembury Children's Community to be at the *developing* stage and moving towards *sustaining*.

Operational Management

- The core team is widely seen to have been very effective at facilitating coalition and partnership building and engaging with the local community. Recent changes to the composition of the team provide opportunities to review community engagement.

- A multi-layered approach to communications makes good use of strong community links and benefits from the location of the Children's Community in a widely recognised and accessible location on the estate. The visibility of the Children's Community is considerably enhanced by its presence in the Pembury Community Centre.

- At the time of writing, a new three year plan (from March 2019) is to be developed on the basis of a review of progress against the first three year plan and in the context of the overall Theory of Change.

- There is some progress on data sharing, albeit slow. As the data dashboard is populated with more data it will be used by the Children's Community to inform new work and in due course to assess progress in improving outcomes.

- Overall, in relation to the operational management of the Children's Community we assess the Pembury Children's Community to be at the *developing* stage with some elements moving towards *sustaining*.

- There is widespread recognition of the Children's Community amongst local services and agencies, which is facilitated by the neighbourhood focus of the Community and visible local presence. Awareness is evident amongst organisations and services not actively engaged.

- The Community is building examples of collaborative working in key areas: early years and pre-school; supporting young people; supporting families. Evaluation and learning from these initiatives is informing development of new approaches within the Children's Community and more widely across the borough.

- Overall, in relation to services and programmes, we assess the Pembury Children's Community to be at the *developing* stage.

Impact evaluation

Progression outcomes

In Pembury, data was gathered via a pilot beneficiary survey, qualitative research with children and families and evaluation of a seed corn funded intervention. There were small numbers of survey responses (n=57); the key finding was that positive outcomes were reported from participants in the three local services (youth club, fashion project and the 16+ social group), especially in relation to the development of skills (fashion project) and confidence and knowledge (16+ social group).

Qualitative research carried out with children, young people and parents indicated in summary that:

- Interviewees experienced Pembury as a positive place to live with a strong sense of community. Although these interviewees had not been spoken to before, they expressed the view that the area is improving as a place to live

- The Pembury Community centre, Pembury Pathways and the Pembury youth club were experienced positively, and the Ready for School seed corn project suggested positive outcomes for young children.

Seed corn projects

Pembury Ready for School

The Pembury Ready for School project is supported by seed corn funding from Save the Children UK, supplemented with funding from the academy involved. It supports children living on the estate to make a successful transition to school and throughout their first year at primary school. The project works with Mossbourne Parkside Academy, and supported a first cohort of children in 2017-18. A second cohort of Pembury children at the Academy is receiving support in the 2018-19 academic year.

The project provides an estate-based teacher working across home and school, and in partnership with a parent advisor. Parents and children are invited to events during the summer term before they enter Reception and over the school holidays, and home visits are carried out for each child in the cohort. Repeated and frequent engagement through home visits and community events is designed to develop relationships and build trust and engagement with staff to support improved engagement with school. In their Reception year, the children take part in in-school sessions and an after school group. Parent workshops are held during the autumn

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term, and families with children with the highest levels of need also receive home learning sessions.

The first cohort of Pembury children were behind their peers at baseline assessment on entry into Reception. Analysis of progress for these children suggests that the Ready for School cohort made more progress on average than their peers, and that within the project, those receiving targeted support made the most progress. At the end of their Reception year, outcomes for the Ready for School children were comparable with those of their peers.

Core Indicators

In **Early Years**, in Pembury[1], 73% of children achieved a good level of development (GLD) in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, compared with 71% in both Hackney and England. The figure for Pembury has increased over the past three years, broadly in line with local and national improvements.

Looking at **Progress and attainment**, at Key Stage Two (KS2), 59% of pupils achieved the 'expected standard', compared with 71% in Hackney. Attainment at KS2 in Pembury has improved by an increase of 26 percentage points in the last three years, compared with seven points in Hackney and 11 points in England, thus outperforming both local and national benchmarks. At Key Stage Four (KS4), 86% of pupils at Mossbourne Community Academy (the local secondary school) achieved five or more GCSEs (A* to C/9-4) or equivalent in 2017/18, a figure that has been fairly stable over the past five years. This is well above the national average (currently 60%).

Turning to **Post-16 outcomes**, in Pembury, 97% of pupils Mossbourne Community Academy stay on for at least two terms after KS4 (a figure that increased by one percentage point over the past three years). This is above the averages for Hackney and England. Turning to unemployment, in Pembury, around 4% of the young people aged 18-24 are unemployed[2], compared with 3% in Hackney. In both Pembury and Hackney there has been a fall of four percentage points in youth unemployment in the period since February 2018.

In relation to **Health**, in Pembury, 14% of Reception age children are obese, compared with 12% in Hackney. This has been a decrease of three percentage points in Pembury since the 2008/09-10/11 period, compared with a two percentage point fall in Hackney, although the number remains high compared to the 9% of obese children in that age group in England. Thirty per cent of Year Six children are obese, compared with 27% in Hackney and 20% in England. Obesity levels amongst Year Six children have increased by four percentage points since the 2008/09-10/11, compared with a two percentage point increase in Hackney and one point in England.

School engagement as measured by overall absence rates indicates lower rates of both absence and persistent absence in the two local schools compared with Hackney and England. There is little change over time, indicating school absence is not a significant issue in local schools.

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[1] Data for outcomes at EYFS, KS2 and KS4 is based on local schools, not specifically children living in the Children's Community. Note that school-based outcome measures at EYFS and KS2 in Pembury are for a single school, the Mossbourne Parkside Academy, as this is the primary school accepting the largest number of children living on the Pembury estate. Other local schools contain very small numbers of pupils.
[2] Unemployment in this instance is calculated using the number of Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit (out-of-work) claimants, as a proportion of the population aged 18 to 24 years.

Overall

In Pembury there has been ongoing delivery of interventions which are building collaboration and demonstrating new ways of working. An important next step for the Children's Community is to roll-out learning from these initiatives both across partners in Pembury and more widely in Hackney. The governance structure continues to develop and the shift to a more focussed and action-oriented approach through theme groups is providing a framework for a targeted and data-driven approach to address local needs. There is an ongoing emphasis on community engagement, in both local activities and in informing the work of the Community, and considerable effort and resource is directed toward this. Whilst it is clear that the priorities of Pembury residents are influencing the work of the Community, there may be an opportunity to improve feedback mechanisms (particularly to the residents group) both to influence the Children's Community operations and management, and to help the residents group understand how it has influenced change.

Factors that have contributed to sustained progress in this Children's Community include continuity in staffing; senior level support and significant resources from the two lead organisations; a small area focus which facilitates close collaboration and joint working; a community presence and a hub for community engagement; and a supportive local political and policy context.

At the time of writing, a small amount of beneficiary data has been collected through a pilot survey in the Pembury Children's Community. Although the sample size means that caution is needed in drawing any conclusions from the data it does indicate that participants identify benefits associated with initiatives supported by the Children's Community, which aligns with the positive developments identified above. Qualitative data provides evidence on people's experiences of living in Children's Communities and participating in activities and services. The data from interviews, with children, young people and parents in Pembury is generally positive, with a strong sense of a vibrant and engaged community, an improving area and parents feeling that local service providers are responsive to their needs.

The work of the Community has focussed on early years, and this focus is likely to have contributed to Pembury early years development outcomes being strong relative to both the borough and national benchmarks. Children's outcomes at Key Stage Two are behind those for Hackney and England, although they have improved in the three years 2015/16 to 2017/18 which indicates that the focus on school transition is appropriate. Levels of childhood obesity in Pembury are the highest in all of the Children's Communities at both Reception and Year Six and significantly higher than averages for Hackney and England. Furthermore, although levels of obesity amongst Reception age children in Pembury have fallen between 2008/9 and 2016/17 they have increased for Year Six children in the same period. This is not an area of focus for the Children's Community at present, but the data trends suggest that this should be an issue for future consideration.

For Pembury, we would anticipate that the implementation of a new three year plan will provide an opportunity to firmly consolidate the progress of the Children's Community thus far, and for the majority of the features of a 'sustaining' Community to be present. In particular the following would be expected to be seen over the next six to twelve months (drawing on the Children's Communities Analytical framework categories, see Table 1.3, above):

Governance:

- Consolidation of the theme groups.

- A greater level of shared accountability amongst a wider range of strategic stakeholders.
- Consultation with the residents' steering group to review their understanding of the remit and purpose of the group.

Outcomes and accountability, place-based strategies and plans:

- Development of a new three year plan, based on robust evaluation of progress against the first three year plan, and clear identification of success measures for the next three years.

Shared measurement:

- Finalise a systematic approach to capturing data and reporting to the governance group.
- Continue to build impact data to measure impact, including in the dashboard.

Communications and engagement:

- Ongoing community engagement with a focus on children and young people.

2.2. Smallshaw-Hurst

Consideration of the process and impact evaluation findings for the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community needs to take into account the stage of development of the Community relative to Pembury and Wallsend. The Children's Community staff team was only established in early June 2017, which can be taken as the inception of the Children's Community. Another consideration is that the Children's Community did not emerge out of an existing partnership rooted in the area. As a result, most of the core team's first 18 months of operation has been spent establishing relationships and gaining knowledge about the area, including its assets and strengths and the challenges to address. The Children's Community is now in the process of establishing its governance structure and focussing its attentions to bring about systems change to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

As a new Children's Community, Smallshaw-Hurst has made good progress against the Children's Communities Analytical Framework. Notably over the past 12 months the Children's Community has further embedded itself in the area and gained the buy in of many local stakeholders; progressed in establishing its governance structure; created working groups around its Theory of Change theme areas (where previously services operated more in silos); promoted systems thinking amongst local services which has led to joint activity; and coordinated projects that will commence in early 2019. Overall the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community has been assessed as being in a *building* stage of strategic direction, operational management and services and programmes. However there are aspects of the Children's Community progress that we would judge to be at the *developing* stage, evidenced for example by collaborative work with partners around smoking cessation and mental health support in schools. The next 12 months are crucial for the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community as a period in which to build on this base and to maintain the participation of local stakeholders. Particular areas to progress are: securing the involvement of senior directors within local stakeholder organisations; implementing projects and activity to demonstrate the benefits of the Children's Community approach; and formalising the governance structure.

Process evaluation

Strategic Direction

- Bringing stakeholders together to break down barriers to collaborative working has been a key success for the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community in this period. Evaluation interviews undertaken in Year One of the evaluation identified that the area does not have a strong tradition of collaboration across different services and therefore the building of relationships and coalitions across the local system has been an important early focus.

- A governance structure is being established, comprising managers and leaders in local organisations and service areas. The building of relationships with those at the service manager/leader level has been a deliberate strategy of the Children's Community, viewed by the core team as an appropriate approach while they build momentum and implement early activity. The next stage will be to engage system leaders: for instance senior directors in key local organisations who oversee broad portfolios.

- There is a broad agreement for an ambition to develop mutual responsibility for outcomes. Data gathered through observation at meetings of the emergent governance groups identified a high degree of commitment to a shared accountability approach. An important next step for this Community is to identify how this can be achieved, taking into account the need for shared measurement.

- The Children's Community themes (parents, early years and learning; aspirations, education and employability; and being healthy, safe and supported) align with those identified in relevant Neighbourhood Plans and organisational targets. The next stage of development is to integrate, and align the Children's Community into local place-based strategies adopted by partner organisations including housing providers and the local authority.

- The core team has established a detailed understanding of the area, built on extensive data analysis and early consultation with the local community which we reported on in the Year One evaluation report. The next steps identified by the core team are to work with partners to develop a vision for the area, be strategic in making the case for the Children's Community approach to other agencies which are not yet engaged and to identify how they can add capacity to support local systems change to improve outcomes for children, young people and families.

- Overall, the strategic direction of the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community was assessed to be at the *building* stage, but with some elements of *developing* also in evidence.

Operational Management

- To date, the agenda (in terms of the pace and focus for change, and in relation to specific meeting agendas) has mainly been set by the Children's Community core team. However, theme working groups have been set up and a governance structure is forming which is beginning to see some of the momentum for the Children's Community pass to wider stakeholders.

- There is a developing recognition amongst local stakeholders of the Children's Community and what it aims to achieve. Engagement is strong in most key service areas. There is no formal communication strategy in place currently; this will be developed once the governance structure is in place.

- Detailed mapping work and engagement with local stakeholders has led to the identification of three priority theme areas. Thematic working groups have been

set up to develop these and lead on implementation. The (systems change related) activity in the Children's Community has brought people together, broken down barriers and facilitated the identification of shared priorities.

- The team have developed links with data controllers as part of data and asset mapping. Analysis of local data has identified issues within the area and informed possible responses. The next stage is to finalise local indicators of change (additional to the core indicators set out in this report) and develop local evaluation strategies.

- There has been some turnover in the core staff team. Continuity of the lead has been important to maintain stakeholder relationships and local knowledge. The core operational team anticipates that it will act as a bridge between the community and leaders of services and organisations; a .key aspect of this role is to bring evidence, make recommendations and influence the actions and activities of services and programmes.

- Overall, the operational management of the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community was assessed to be at the building stage, but with some elements of *developing* also in evidence.

Services and programmes

- Due to the early development stage of the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community, the fieldwork did not include interviews focussing on service delivery. This is because, although there is a growing recognition of the Children's Community amongst local stakeholders, at this stage there has been very limited action which can be identified as leading to change in local services and programmes.

- The following key points emerged from the interviews with strategic stakeholders and the core team and contribute to an understanding of the baseline situation against which any future change in services and programmes can be assessed:

    - Smallshaw-Hurst is a community where residents have limited or poor access to many universal services for example primary care, dentists and early years provision. Challenges to service access which the Children's Community aims to address include the time, resources and (lack of) confidence that service users associate with the need to travel to access services outside of the area.

    - In terms of the organisations and services operating in the Smallshaw-Hurst area the view was expressed by interviewees that 'the skills are all there' but there is a need to 'join the dots up' so that they are maximised. The co-ordinated and collaborative approach emphasised through the Children's Community is seen to offer an opportunity to maximise the impact of local services.

    - Leadership and power were viewed as being strong within organisations operating across the wider local authority area. A key challenge in Smallshaw-Hurst is to harness, and maximise, strong local leadership to the benefit of the Community.

- Overall, the baseline situation for organisations and services in Smallshaw-Hurst has been assessed as being at the *building* stage.

Impact evaluation

Progression outcomes

- The Children's Community has undertaken early mapping work to identify community needs but is yet to implement any data gathering through local surveys (or equivalent) to assess progress towards progression outcomes. This will be a priority for the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community in the coming year.

- There has also been concern that the Community's developing approach to community engagement should not be affected by extensive external evaluation work with local children, young people and parents. As such, the evaluation has gathered only very limited early data in this period through two interviews with parents living in Smallshaw-Hurst. Headline findings were that they felt positive and safe in their communities; but they felt the need to travel to access a range services. This is consistent with the views of strategic stakeholders and the Children's Community core staff team. Further interviews with local residents will be carried out in the next evaluation period.

- At this stage there has not been any delivery of seed corn projects in Smallshaw-Hurst.

Core indicators

Regarding **Early Years**, 63% of children in schools in Smallshaw-Hurst attained a good level of development (GLD) in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile in 2017, compared with 66% in Tameside and 71% in England as a whole.

In relation to **Progression and attainment**, KS2 data for the primary schools in Smallshaw-Hurst varied, with all schools above the 2017 national average of 64% but most just below the Tameside average of 70%, with general upward trends (see Appendix 4 for more detail). The two secondary schools located in Smallshaw-Hurst had very different KS4 profiles, with above Tameside and England averages in St Damien's RC College and below average for Great Academy Ashton, although with broadly similar trend data.

Turning to **Post-16 outcomes**, 90% of pupils at Great Academy Ashton stay on for two terms past KS4, compared with 92% at St Damian's RC Science College and Tameside as a whole, below the 94% average for England. St Damian's RC Science College experienced an increase of three percentage points during the period in question, whilst Tameside saw the figure fall by four percentage points and Great Academy Ashton by three percentage points. The England average stayed steady during this period. Eight per cent of 18-24 year olds in Smallshaw-Hurst are unemployed[3], in comparison with Tameside, where the figure is 6%. Smallshaw-Hurst has seen a considerable decline in youth unemployment, from as high as 18% in February 2013, to the current figure, representing a fall of 10 percentage points. The figure in Tameside, by comparison, fell by six percentage points during the same period.

In relation to **Health** in Smallshaw-Hurst, obesity in Reception age children is 12% compared with 10% in Tameside and 9% in England. Obesity amongst Reception aged children has increased by two percentage points in Smallshaw-Hurst from 2008/9-10/11 to 2014/15-16/17 compared with no change in Tameside and England. In Year Six children, obesity is 19% compared with 20% in Tameside and England. Obesity rates at Year Six have fallen by five percentage points in Smallshaw-Hurst

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[3] Unemployment in this instance is calculated using the number of Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit (out-of-work) claimants, as a proportion of the total working age population (16 to 64 years old).

during the period in question, but increased by one percentage point in Tameside and in England.

School engagement, measured by overall and persistent absence, was mixed in Smallshaw-Hurst, with no clear patterns. Primary schools were distributed both above and below the Tameside and England averages. Great Ashton secondary had poorer absence rates than the Tameside average, whereas St Damien's RC Science College had lower levels of absence. Persistent absence worsened in almost all Smallshaw-Hurst schools between 2015 and 2017.

Overall

A significant amount of work has gone into getting the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community to its current stage. This highlights the time and resources that are needed to start up a Children's Community, especially in the absence of a previous longstanding partnership(s). In this and previous phases of evaluation the core staff team have talked about the importance of a year zero where the focus is to: map the area in terms of data, strengths, barriers and provision of assets and services, establishing and building relationships.

A strategic partnership is emerging in Smallshaw-Hurst, developing a shared commitment to achieving change for young people and children in the area through collaborative action. A consensus on the core aims and work needed to translate these into actions in the next period are building amongst local stakeholders and we anticipate that more concrete plans and actions to start to put these plans into action will be evident in the next evaluation period.

In relation to impact evaluation, at this point data should be seen as baselines to build on. Early years outcomes are significantly lower than for Tameside and England, indicating that a focus here is appropriate. At Key Stage Two there is a mixed picture amongst local schools with some schools performing very well, and others being closer to the national average. However, the picture is improving over time and all schools performed at or above the national average in 2017/18. Outcomes at Key Stage Four are also varied, with one local school consistently performing significantly below Tameside and national benchmarks and another performing consistently above. Levels of childhood obesity at Reception stage are above the national average and have increased slightly between 2008/9 and 2016/17. However, over the same period levels of obesity at Year Six have fallen substantially and in 2016/17 were below the national average.

For Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community, the following would be expected to be seen over the next six to twelve months:

Governance:

- Formalised governance structures in place.

Culture and Power:

- Engagement of a wider group of organisations in the Children's Community, including community leaders and strategic leaders in local government.

Outcomes and accountability, place-based strategies and plans:

- Development of a plan to align the Children's Community outcomes across organisations to encourage mutual accountability.
- Integrating the Children's Community into local area plans.

Shared measurement:

- Finalise local indicators, with a systematic approach to capture and report to the governance group.

System capacity and system building:

- Engage stakeholders who oversee a broad strategic remit.

Communications and engagement:

- Develop a communication plan following the enactment of a formal governance structure.

2.3. Wallsend

Wallsend Children's Community has made significant progress overall in the past twelve months in relation to capacity building for local systems change. This is especially the case in relation to strategic direction and operational management, driven by the leadership of the strategic lead and the recently appointed members of the core team. The three year plan and associated changes in governance have been important drivers. Strategic leadership is more focussed, and there is greater oversight and challenge in relation to activity and outcomes linked to the Children's Community. There is increasing visibility of the Children's Community amongst service providers, although this is variable. The engagement of families, children and young people in setting the agenda for the Children's Community is an area of focus for the next stage. In addition to this, further engagement with services and partner stakeholders is a focus for the next twelve months. A crucial next stage of planning is to develop clearer medium term goals, to enable strategic oversight to focus on these, with less emphasis on the operational development of specific activities in the three year plan.

Process evaluation

Strategic Direction

- There is now a more action-focussed governance group which is building on a new three year strategic plan. The development of this governance structure is seen as positive amongst interviewees. However, the Children's Community is building on a long-standing educational partnership and there is a recognised need to continue building on outcomes beyond education.

- Leadership of the Children's Community was felt to be strong, with good alignment with local and national policy agendas (e.g. devolution). Interviewees recognised that partners need to proactively share leadership more in the future. Different attitudes towards accountability were expressed, with partners identifying themselves as accountable, variously, to their home organisation, local children and families, and sometimes the Children's Community group. A charter was proposed to clarify the aims, objectives and mechanisms for shared accountability.

- The three year plan has provided a strong focus on action for the Children's Community. Clear shorter term milestones linking the plan to the Theory of Change are needed. The work of the core team in driving this forward is valued by stakeholders and there is now a much stronger expectation of the Children's Community providing the impetus for change across the local system.

- Further work on building commitment to the Children's Community and building capacity for systems change is a next step in the plan, as is developing a communication plan and approaches to shared measurement of outcomes.

However, there has been a degree of turnover in the core team at Wallsend, and this has inevitably limited what has been achieved.

- Overall, in relation to strategic direction, we assess Wallsend Children's Community to be at the *developing* stage.

Operational Management

- The previous two years could be characterised by a focus on coalition and partnership building; for the past twelve months, the focus has been building a smaller more tightly focussed governance group linked to a new a three year plan looking to focus on systems change.

- Although recognised as an issue for the past two years, communications and engagement have been prioritised recently in the three-year plan. Also recognised for some time, engagement of children and families is now being prioritised via a small scale ethnographic study and a cross-Wallsend survey of children and young people in all schools. The core team intends to develop a response to emerging needs as data feeds through from these pieces of work.

- The focus of the three year plan has created tangible energy and this is apparent in relation to evaluation. The current prioritisation of evaluating existing projects will lead to a stronger approach for future work with evaluation being built in at the start.

- Overall, in relation to operational management, we assess the Wallsend Children's Community to be at the *developing* stage.

Services and programmes

- Some service interviewees were more aware of the Children's Community and their role within it, but this was mixed, and in some cases there was no change from earlier evaluation phases. The increased oversight of the new core team demonstrated how this is beginning to change.

- The core team and especially the strategic lead were seen very positively by interviewees, particularly in relation to facilitating cross-service working.

- Overall, in relation to services and programmes, we assess the Wallsend Children's Community to be at the *building* stage, with elements of developing.

Impact evaluation

Progression outcomes

As in Smallshaw-Hurst, the Children's Community has undertaken mapping work to identify community needs but has not as yet been able to implement any data gathering through local surveys (or equivalent) to assess progress towards progression outcomes. The experiences of parents and families in Wallsend were gathered through seven interviews conducted with mothers who had attended community play days sessions[4]. Full details are available in Appendix 4. Summary findings are as follows.

- Interviewees felt that the areas they lived in were not safe and subject to problems around anti-social behaviour, and poor physical environment (derelict housing, poorly maintained roads etc.) all of which was felt to have worsened in recent

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[4] These interviews by their nature were not based on representative samples, so no conclusions can be drawn as to whether these perceptions were shared more broadly.

years. Both availability of out of school activity and prospects for employment were felt to be poor, with anxiety expressed about children's future lives. Cuts to services and benefits were seen as worsening.

- Parents had no awareness of Wallsend Children's Community. The local children's centre and schools were broadly seen positively. Parents did not feel they had any influence over local change, but many had views on improvements that could be made.

- Parents had engaged in local play days, which were positively seen, although barriers to attendance (timing, other siblings, work commitments) were mentioned.

- There were differing experiences based on ability to access services, with more affluent families in a better position, and some areas seen by some as poor relations compared with other areas of Wallsend.

- Evidence from evaluation of seed corn projects is not yet available in the Wallsend Children's Community.

Core indicators

In relation to **Early Years** data is not yet available for Wallsend. With regards to **Progression and attainment**, at KS2 there was wide variation, in both overall attainment and patterns of change over time; schools were distributed around the averages for North Tyneside and England. At KS4, both secondary schools in the area had declining KS4 performance (measured by percentage of pupils who achieved 5 or more GCSEs (A* to C/9-4) or equivalent results, including both maths and English), with both below both North Tyneside and England as a whole (in both of which KS4 performance on this measure was broadly stable).

Turning to **Post-16 outcomes**, 86% of pupils at Burnside Business and Enterprise College remain for at least two terms after KS4, a fall of two percentage points over the last three years. 90% of pupils remain at Churchill Community College, an increase of one percentage point. The figure is 93% in North Tyneside as a whole (an increase of one percentage point over this period) and 94% in England (no change over the period). Unemployment[5] amongst 18-24 year olds in Wallsend is 6%, compared with 5% in North Tyneside. Both areas have experienced a fall of seven percentage points since 2013.

Obesity in Reception age children - the **Health** measure used here - is at 10%, a fall of one percentage point between 2008/9-10/11and 2014/15-16/17, compared with 9% in North Tyneside (a fall of 1 point) and also 9% in England (no change).By Year six, 23% of children in Wallsend were obese at the time of data collection (an increase of two percentage points), compared with 20% in North Tyneside (no change) and 20% in England (an increase of two points over the period).

School engagement measured by overall absence rates shows a very mixed picture in Wallsend primary schools, as with the school attainment figures, with a small majority of schools with higher absence rates compared with North Tyneside (4%) and England (4%). The two secondary schools had higher absence rates than North Tyneside and England averages. Persistent absence again varies widely, with more significant issues in some schools, and a majority of schools having higher rates than North Tyneside and England.

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[5] Calculated using the number of Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit (out-of-work) claimants, as a proportion of the total working age population (16 to 64 years old).

Overall

The new core team has provided more focussed collaboration, which is built around an agreed three year plan, developed in tandem with a refreshed governance structure. There has been more systematic engagement with local services and organisations. This engagement has focussed on communicating the aims of the Children's Community, and understanding of how services can improve outcomes by partnership working. This is beginning to show benefits. The governance group is more purposeful, and the core team is focussed on its aims of delivering and effectively monitoring the new plan and its components. Engagement with the needs of the local community, and stronger visibility and engagement of local sectors and organisations are important next steps alongside the development of clearer intermediate goals to provide a stronger strategic focus for governance. Overall, we judge the community to be at the *developing* stage.

In Wallsend, the qualitative data suggests the parents' perceptions are of an area that is deteriorating, both in terms of their experiences of the community and environment and in the withdrawal of public services. However, the views on the play days, a Children's Community initiative, were positive, indicating potential to move forward. This relatively early stage in relation to positive change at a system level is reflected in some of the wider outcomes data and it has not been possible, at this stage, to obtain early years data from the Wallsend Children's Community. Children's outcomes at Key Stage 2 vary considerably depending on which school they are attending, although the majority of primary schools in Wallsend were at or above the national average in 2017/18. However, Key Stage Four outcomes are below North Tyneside and national averages and falling between 2013/14 and 2017/18. Obesity levels for children in Wallsend are slightly higher than those in England at Reception stage (although falling over time) and higher than nationally (and increasing) at Year 6. The proportion of unemployed people in Wallsend is above that for North Tyneside and England. This indicates a continuing need to address these issues which form the focus of several Children's Community initiatives, and associated more established programmes.

For Wallsend, in the next phases of the evaluation, we would expect to see the following over the next six to twelve months.

Governance:

- Working to meaningfully engage the local community in setting the direction for the Children's Community (see also operational management section).
- Creating space in governance group meetings for higher level, purposeful strategic discussion.

These require changes to strategic planning (see below).

Culture and power:

- Working with third sector organisations to build trust and common purpose.
- Actively move towards the Community becoming focussed beyond education; working across service and outcome areas.
- Developing the roles of governance group members as active leaders of the Children Community.

Accountability and place-based strategy and plans:

- Build a Theory of Change with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for all partners and associated milestones that can be considered strategically.

System capacity and system building:

- Clear understanding of role of the Children's Community amongst stakeholders, and an ability to articulate this in relation to their role in the strategy.

Communications and engagement:

- A communications plan, with tangible changes visible and linked to it. Consideration should be given to developing a set of specific principles.
- Delivery of key engagement activities (Story of Place, Perceptions Survey), plans in place for responses to findings from these activities and some implementation of these.

Shared measurement:

- Data sharing agreements in place, progress in accessing and utilising shared data.
- Agreed evaluation plans for legacy projects, plans implemented.

People and workforce:

- Core team undertaking more strategically planned work, based on the new three year plan. Intense short term pressures demonstrably relieved.

Services and programmes:

Work with local organisations and services to help staff understand the goals and strategic aims of the Children's Community.

This chapter has summarised the findings of the process and impact evaluation strands for each Children's Community in this period. It has also outlined a specific set of recommendations for each Community for the coming twelve months, designed to support the continued progress in each area. The next chapter discusses the implications of the findings for the Children's Community programme.

Discussion

3

In this chapter we reflect on the specific findings from each Children's Community, and the more detailed analysis presented in the appendices to address the broad evaluation questions that were set for the evaluation at the outset. We consider learning that is accruing to inform the development of the programme and the individual Communities, and in relation to future related change initiatives. In the final chapter, we provide a set of conclusions and recommended actions associated with this learning.

How and to what extent are Communities embodying the key principles of the Children's Communities model?

The evidence collected in Year Two confirms that all three areas are embodying the principles of the Children's Community model. All are focussed on a geographical area, with a long term vision for change and working across multiple aspects of children's lives. The Children's Communities have a very broad remit, which means they are subject to shifting contexts in relation to local and national economic, political and social environments, and associated changes in the key local partners and the needs of the changing local communities – and these contextual shifts are occurring on a wide range of fronts, from early years and health, through mainstream schooling and further and higher education, to community safety, employment opportunities and other social policy areas.

One issue that has emerged is that there are different opportunities and limitations associated with the different sizes of the Children's Communities and there may be trade-offs to be made between size (in terms of both geography and population) and breadth of focus. All three Communities address a wide range of aspects of children's lives, including education (from the early years to post-16); transitions to, within and out of compulsory education; and aspects of children's health and wider wellbeing. Evidence thus far suggests that it is harder to manage a multi-focus strategic partnership in a larger area than <u>either</u> a tightly focussed partnership in a larger area <u>or</u> a multi-focus partnership in a smaller area. In the context of Children's Communities this may mean that the capacity to drive systemic change across multiple, shifting competing pressures, policy agendas, partners and coalitions in a broad geographical area requires a greater level of resource than is currently available to the Children's Community teams.

Is there evidence of the Children's Communities working towards long-term systems change?

The activities and impacts of each Children's Community have necessarily been different, reflecting the strengths and weaknesses of working within and across multiple local systems. The Children's Communities Analytical Framework demonstrates that each of the Children's Communities has made progress in relation to building, developing and/or sustaining their Community. The Framework will

continue to be used to monitor change in the Children's Communities in the future, but it is important to note that the change process will not be linear, or universally progressive. Each of the Children's Community teams has experienced staff change in this year (to a greater or lesser extent). Inevitably this has affected the momentum for change, which is also influenced by changes in the capacity and priorities of local agencies. Whilst we have no evidence that progress would be more rapid if Children's Communities had a more limited focus, there are reasons to think this may be the case. For example, it may be that the effects of staff turnover would be reduced with a narrower remit (and a smaller number of stakeholders to engage with); and the effects of shifting contexts would be lessened due to the narrower range.

How effective are leadership and governance arrangements?

The Children's Communities are at different stages in the development of collective leadership, although all have made efforts over the past twelve months to develop or refine governance arrangements to help embed a sense of shared accountability amongst local stakeholders. There are ongoing questions across all three Children's Communities around representation and how the voice of local communities is heard and responded to in the context of the work. This may involve representation on governance groups, and the Communities have acknowledged the importance of involving local residents, but it is not universally clear how resident (and children's) voices are driving the work of all the Communities. There are sound principled reasons for limiting engagement (including not wishing to over-promise what cannot be delivered, and a lack of capacity or focus for the engagement) but nevertheless this is an ongoing issue, and one that has been continually noted during the evaluation period.

How are the Communities progressing with developing and operationalising the local strategic vision and Theory of Change?

The use of the Theory of Change (ToC) documents developed by the Children's Communities in the early stages of their implementation has varied across the Children's Communities. Whilst they are in all seen as a useful record of an overarching approach there is less systematic use of the ToCs as drivers for implementation or as a tool for reflecting on progress. Their use now is more as a reminder of the broad direction each Community is taking and their espoused end points. In Wallsend, a more specific three year plan have been developed. These are focussing on shorter term actions, which have re-energised stakeholders and given a renewed sense of purpose. There is a need for a set of clearer intermediate Community goals or staging points. Identifying a set of such outcomes for the Communities over and above the outcomes for any specific project associated with it is a necessary next step to allow the strategic partnerships to move beyond assessing whether any particular seed corn funded project or other aspect of the Community's work is successful in relation to the specific aims of that project. More importantly, having such a set of intermediate goals will allow the Communities to assess whether any specific project is helping move towards longer term aims as laid out in the Theory of Change documents.

What evidence is there of impacts within services and systems?

There is, as in Year One, evidence that in Pembury and Wallsend the work of the core teams has been instrumental in facilitating improved co-operation and collaboration between services. There is less evidence of movement forward in this regard in Wallsend than in Pembury, due to staff turnover in Wallsend and possibly the larger geographical remit in this area. Evidence from one seed corn project in Pembury is that it has been positively received by beneficiaries and is providing an exemplar model of improved service delivery. More consistent evaluation across all seed corn funded interventions (in all the Children's Communities) is necessary to build understanding around the factors that contribute to success. The visibility of the Pembury Children's

Community is strong amongst local services and organisations, and this is reflected in the clear alignment of wider initiatives in the area with the aims of the Community. This can be traced in part to the importance of strategic leadership of the Children's Community from within key organisations, particularly the local authority and Peabody Housing Association. The new operational team in Wallsend is prioritising building similar recognition in the coming period as part of a wider communications plan, and Smallshaw-Hurst is building this into its initial development plan.

These positive outcomes are particularly important in the context of widespread cuts to local services. It is not clear yet, however, how learning from these 'test' projects will be widely applied across each area. The Pembury Children's Community is closest to this approach and there is encouraging evidence here that the Children's Community model is informing the development of new services, for instance around financial inclusion. But it is also important to note that it is central to the Children's Community model that these are long-term processes, and it is clear that the partnership building process is necessarily lengthy and needs constant attention as the environment and partners change.

What evidence is there of impacts for children, young people and families?

In all three areas, it is not yet possible to demonstrate robust evidence of impacts on children, young people and families. At this stage – two thirds of the way through the external evaluation period – it is important to reflect on the reasons why this is the case.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that there is some evidence of positive impacts from seed corn project evaluation especially in Pembury, and these have the potential to lead to wider potentially population-wide impacts within the Children's Community.

Secondly, the Children's Community programme is a long term change process, and significant, demonstrable impacts at this stage would not be expected in what is still a relatively early stage.

However, it is important to reflect at this point on whether there are other factors at play, which need to be addressed. To do so, we draw on a distinction made in the evaluation field (Lipsey, 1993; Coldwell and Maxwell, 2018) between three forms of explanation for negative outcomes from programme evaluation:

- Theory deficiency: the causal theory underlying the programme is faulty: the rationale, however plausible, is incorrect.

- Implementation deficiency: the problem is not the causal theory, rather the implementation of the programme building on this theory, in the contextual circumstances within which it is implemented.

- Methodological deficiency: the research and evaluation approach and methods are inadequate to effectively judge the success of the programme.

Taking each of these in turn:

In relation to theory deficiency, as indicated in the introductory sections of this report and earlier work tracing the genesis of the Children's Communities, there is strong evidence from other work for the potential of local system change initiatives to create significant positive change. Examples from the Community Change Initiatives literature and the work of Harlem Children' s Zone in the US; local systems change literature and enterprise system literature in the UK provide such evidence. However, such initiatives do tend to have a narrower focus and where they have failed in the past (such as the New Deal for Communities) they have suffered from too broad a remit.

In relation to implementation deficiency, the key data on implementation derives from an evidence-based Children's Communities Analytical Framework, focussing on a series of categories of implementation activity with associated indicators of progress (see Appendix 1). Drawing on the evaluation team's analysis of findings against this Framework, a set of specific issues to address in each Community is identified. Key areas of learning from the evaluation in relation to overcoming implementation deficiency are as follows:

- Governance and shared partnership working takes time and effort. Structured, sequenced planning from project leads is essential, and is being increasingly well-developed.

- Whilst short term planning is helpful in galvanising shared purpose, there is a need to tie this to longer term goals, by creating a set of intermediate goals against which the progress of the Community can be judged.

- Coalition-building and creating genuine partnership to lead change takes time and energy. In each of the three areas, a core operational team is crucial to this.

- There are differing approaches to community (family and children) engagement. There is no one size fits all, but given the stage of development, it may be that a stronger prioritisation of family engagement should be a prerequisite for any newly formed Communities in the future.

- The importance of strong leadership and active engagement of the core team to developing cross-service working is evident.

Methodological deficiency is also relevant. The continuing lack of good quality quantitative evidence and the difficulty in gathering this at a local level (for both the external evaluation team and the internal evaluation team in each Community) hamper the ability to make strong judgments on prioritisation and progress. There have been very positive recent moves to more rigorous evaluation approaches, but the benefits are taking time to work through. This is partly a reflection of lack of capacity or established processes to collect and share impact data, although work this year to support the Children's Communities to develop and populate outcome measures, as described at Appendix 1, is significant progress in this area.

And, in relation to the external evaluation, the changing direction of the overarching evaluation to become more focussed on systems change whilst beneficial has led to lack of data that can be easily compared over time. This is additional to the design decision at the outset from the evaluation taken by funders not to include comparator areas in the evaluation specification.

This chapter has reflected on evidence from the three Children's Communities to draw out learning across the Programme. The final chapter presents our conclusions and recommendations.

Conclusions and Recommendations

4

The evidence from the year two evaluation leads to a set of conclusions, and associated recommendations as follows:

1. **Delivering systems change in larger geographical areas may require a narrower focus than that currently taken by the Children's Communities.** Whilst we cannot say definitively that a greater level of resource - which might include greater degree of time and input at a local level, as well as or instead of additional external funding - would lead to improved outcomes it is clear (from evidence presented above on the positive impact of strategic and operational leaders in all three communities) that capacity for leadership is critical to delivery. In the Children's Community which we judge to be the furthest developed in terms of influencing local systems change (Pembury) there is a tight geographical focus and a level of resourcing from lead organisations (significant local investment from the local authority and housing association) which is not currently available in either Wallsend or Smallshaw-Hurst. Working across multiple aspects of children's lives appears more manageable at the level of the estate or neighbourhood; achieving the same at the level of change in larger geographical areas is clearly more difficult for a number of reasons articulated above.

Recommendation 1: Save the Children UK should work with the larger Children's Communities and key partners to consider whether a narrower focus is more appropriate in larger geographical areas.

Recommendation 2: The size and scope of future Children's Communities should be carefully considered, with explicit attention paid to the trade-off between the two, as indicated in the schematic diagram below.
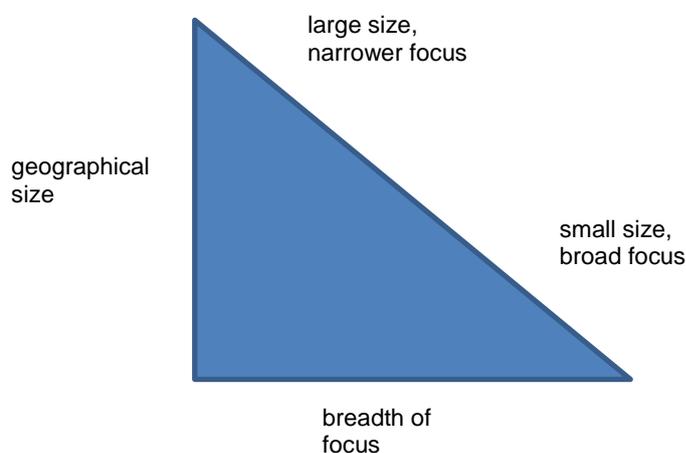
2. **Developing a model for systems change is useful in understanding the development of the Children's Communities but change is a long-term and complex process which is subject to multiple factors which may help or hinder.** Understanding how local contexts and capacities influence change is important. One critical factor emerging is the role of local service cultures and histories. Long histories of service collaboration in Children's Community areas, such as Wallsend and Pembury, can be positive where stakeholders are open to new ways of working; however it may be inhibitive where stakeholders feel strongly that established ways of working are successful and do not need to be refined. Similarly, it is important to recognise the huge amount of time and resource needed to build relationships in Children's Community areas where there is not a tradition of collaboration for collective impact, as indicated in the extensive development work undertaken in Smallshaw-Hurst. Different models of change (and impact) may be needed in these different contexts. The use of the Theory of Change is helpful in building and maintaining these coalitions, and the recent development of shorter three year plans is providing focus and energy in the two more established Children's Community areas, although clearer medium-term goals are needed. Beyond this, the development of the Children's Communities Analytical Framework is proving a useful approach to looking at a more granular level at the progress of each Community.

   Recommendation 3: Children's Communities should develop clear sets of intermediate goals including indicators of system change to allow the community to identify the extent to which its current work is helping it move forward in relation to its ultimate goals, and make changes as appropriate.

   Recommendation 4: Save the Children UK and funders should consider requiring shorter term (e.g. annual) plans to be produced, alongside clear intermediate goals as part of monitoring Community progress.

   Recommendation 5: The Children's Communities Analytical Framework should continue to be used to monitor Children's Community progress. Individual Communities should reflect on the specific recommendations in relation to this in Appendix 3.

   Recommendation 6: The Analytical Framework, including indicators as laid out in Appendix 3, should be considered for use as part of the monitoring and self-evaluation toolkit for the future of Children's Communities, and could be adapted for other similar initiatives.

3. **'Test and learn' approaches to new models of service delivery are an effective tool for demonstrating (and achieving) change**. The seed corn funded projects have acted as a focus for stakeholder engagement and allowed Children's Communities to build credibility and trust with local partners. The early years project in Pembury, for example, drew together a range of stakeholders and addressed a clear area of focus for the local authority supporting buy in. In Wallsend, the Play Days gave greater visibility to the partnership, and the oral health initiative was both visible in local schools and demonstrated the value of the Children's Community in brokering change in the local area. Both these and other seed corn projects have raised the profile of the Children's Community and provided part of the impetus for the governance and leadership work of the strategic partnerships in each area to move forward with the three year plans noted above.

   Recommendation 7: There is a strong case for Save the Children to continue the seed corn funding approach, ensuring that the Children's Communities are supported to:

- ensure they are explicitly based on strong internal and external (research) evidence
- effectively identify and use the learning from these projects to identify opportunities for wider systemic change, and
- create appropriate evaluation plans at the outset.

4. **Children's Communities need consistent individual-level data**. The Children's Communities have not yet been able to demonstrate their impacts on outcomes for children, with the exception of the seed corn Early Years project in Pembury. In this case, the project has been powerful in galvanising continuing support, as indicated earlier in the report and above, which shows importance of being able to show impact (in addition, of course, to being able to judge what to change, continue with or stop doing). This can provide a vital link between the system capacity building and system change focus of the partnerships and the longer term outcomes for children and families that is the purpose of Children's Communities. There are two (linked) issues here: inconsistent capacity to collect outcomes data - there has been a high level of turnover in the Data, Impact and Evaluation Officer posts in two Communities leading to loss of momentum in data collection; and secondly, the time taken to develop a collective understanding of the data needs (and possibilities) at both programme and Community level. The Impact and Outcomes Framework highlights the need for Children's Communities to be able to demonstrate their impact through data which identifies change at the level of individual beneficiaries (children, young people and families) in the Children's Community areas, but this has not yet been given sufficient priority within the context of the overall evaluation activities which have (perhaps rightly) focussed in these early stages on questions of process associated with the establishment and early implementation. This indicates a need for the external evaluator to raise the profile and importance of this area of work to the very top of the agenda in this next period.

   Recommendation 8: In the remaining evaluation period supporting the Children's Communities to obtain this data needs to be a priority. The external evaluation team can progress this by working with the Communities to establish a bank of appropriate research tools through which to identify progression outcomes - these may include existing survey instruments, questions and measures or bespoke outcomes surveys, as well as evaluation frameworks for 'test and learn' seed corn projects.

5. **Children's Communities need to ensure that the voices of children, young people and families are central to their work**. The importance of relationships - between services - but crucially also between services and children, young people and families - in the Children's Communities is central to the local systems change approach. Ensuring that the needs and priorities of local people are reflected in the development of plans, and the evaluation of progress is critical to the success of the overall approach: in both the overarching rationale for the Children's Community initiative and wider system change evidence is clear that stakeholder engagement in setting direction is essential. There is a clear commitment to a co-produced approach in the Children's Communities but there is variable practice in relation to community engagement, and even where engagement is extensive (as in Pembury) there is evidence that local residents are not clear in relation to the extent of their influence, or the role that they play in informing local service developments.

   Recommendation 9: The Children's Communities should review their community engagement activities with a view to establishing clear protocols and expectations in relation to how the voices of children, young people and families are expected

to influence local systems change. A local action plan for each Children's Community may be developed following this review.

Finally, whilst the focus of the evaluation and this study has been on the work of the current Children's Communities and the initiative overall, there is wider learning for both future communities and other local system change initiatives. The Discussion chapter and the conclusions and recommendations above provide opportunities for such learning. We can draw them together, however, with a set of bulleted points distilled from the evidence and analysis above.

Learning from the Children's Communities Evaluation for wider stakeholders

Factors that appear important in starting up a successful local change initiative such as a Children's Community include (evidence from Pembury (P), Smallshaw-Hurst (SSH) and Wallsend (W) is identified):

- Spend time on building coalitions; start small if necessary. (SSH)

- This will take more time if there is no strong history of collaboration; however this has the advantage of starting with a clean slate. (SSH,W)

- Agree a clear focus with longer and medium term goals; in larger areas a narrower focus may be needed (P,W)

- Planning aids, such as a Theory of Change, can be useful here; but need to include a focus on actions facilitating partnership working and system capacity building as well as specific outcomes (P,W)

- Small, focussed projects can cement the partnership and demonstrate impacts which act to build and maintain engagement (P,W)

- Pay attention to operational management - a core team appears important in building and developing change (SSH, W)

Factors that appear associated with moving on after initiation include:

- Spend time building relationships with services and organisations at lower organisational levels to maintain and deepen engagement (W)

- Use of shorter term planning tools (e.g. 3 year plans focussed on specific activities and projects aiming to move towards meeting medium term goals) can renew and maintain commitment (P,W)

- Develop focussed interventions to bring stakeholders together and demonstrate change, and build strong evidence of 'what works' in the local context (P)

Factors that appear to be associated with sustaining progress include:

- Continuity in staffing; (P,W)

- Senior level support and resources from lead organisations; (P, W)

- Clear focus to facilitate close collaboration and joint working; (P)

- Strong focus on local community presence; (P)

- Well regarded local service providers, engendering confidence; (P)

- A supportive local political and policy context. (P,W)

Appendix 1: Evaluation Design

A1

During Year Two a key focus has been on developing two evaluation tools:

- A Children's Communities Analytical Framework
- An Impact and Outcomes Framework.

Each of these is discussed in turn, below.

Children's Communities Analytical framework

The Children's Communities Analytical Framework has been co-produced with Save the Children, the Children's Communities and the evaluation team. It provides a method for evaluating the progress of Children's Communities towards becoming self-sustaining systems which improve the lives of all children and young people in a local area. It will be used to inform the evaluation of Children's Communities in the remainder of the evaluation contract (to December 2019) and potentially beyond by the Children's Communities and Save the Children UK.

Building on the Framework for Local Systems Change

The Analytical Framework has been developed following a recommendation in the Year One evaluation report (February 2018) to build an overarching change model for the Children's Community programme to help articulate what the work of the Communities might look like in different stages of development. It builds on a Local Systems Change Framework (LSCF), commissioned by Save the Children which is intended to inform the work of all local systems change programmes supported by Save the Children UK, including Children's Communities. The LSCF is premised on a set 'logical assumptions' (Figure A1.1) that set the context for a Theory of Change (or roadmap) for Save the Children UK's local systems change programmes that is outlined at Figure A1.2.

Figure A1.1: Overarching logical narrative (Local Systems Change Programmes)

Overarching logical narrative – context for theory of change

1. 'It takes a village to raise a child' – we rely on systems of childhood wellbeing (ecosystems including families, communities, service, institutions, government etc) to create the conditions for early childhood development, thriving, and lay the foundations for safe and fulfilled lives
2. Children are being failed by poorly functioning local systems of childhood wellbeing
3. Well-functioning local systems of childhood wellbeing are required
4. We at Save the Children have the capability and capacity to intervene to shape these local systems
5. We do this through intervening to change the system positively
6. This requires the capabilities of:
   - inquiry into the local system *as* a system
   - planning and undertaking systems interventions
   - ensuring that the system learns from the interventions
   - ensuring that we learn from the interventions

Basis.   Save the Children – framework for local system change 3   RedQuadrant
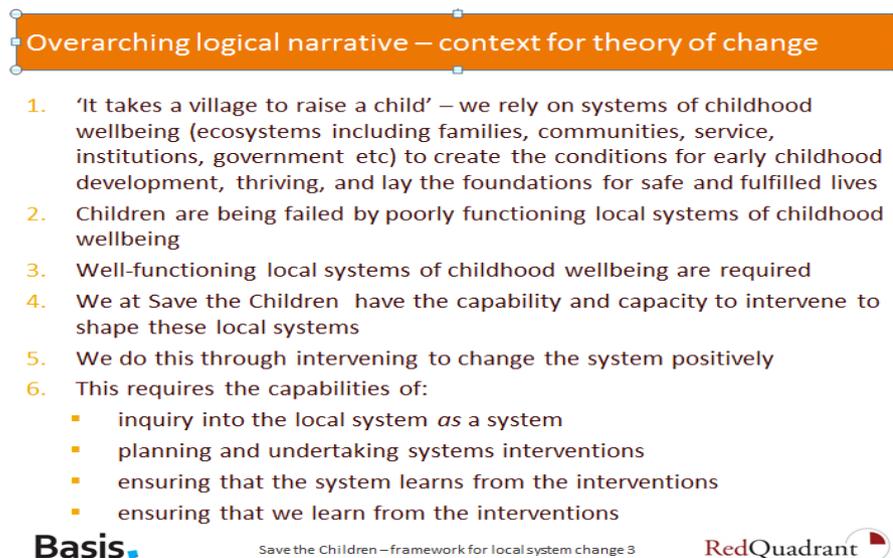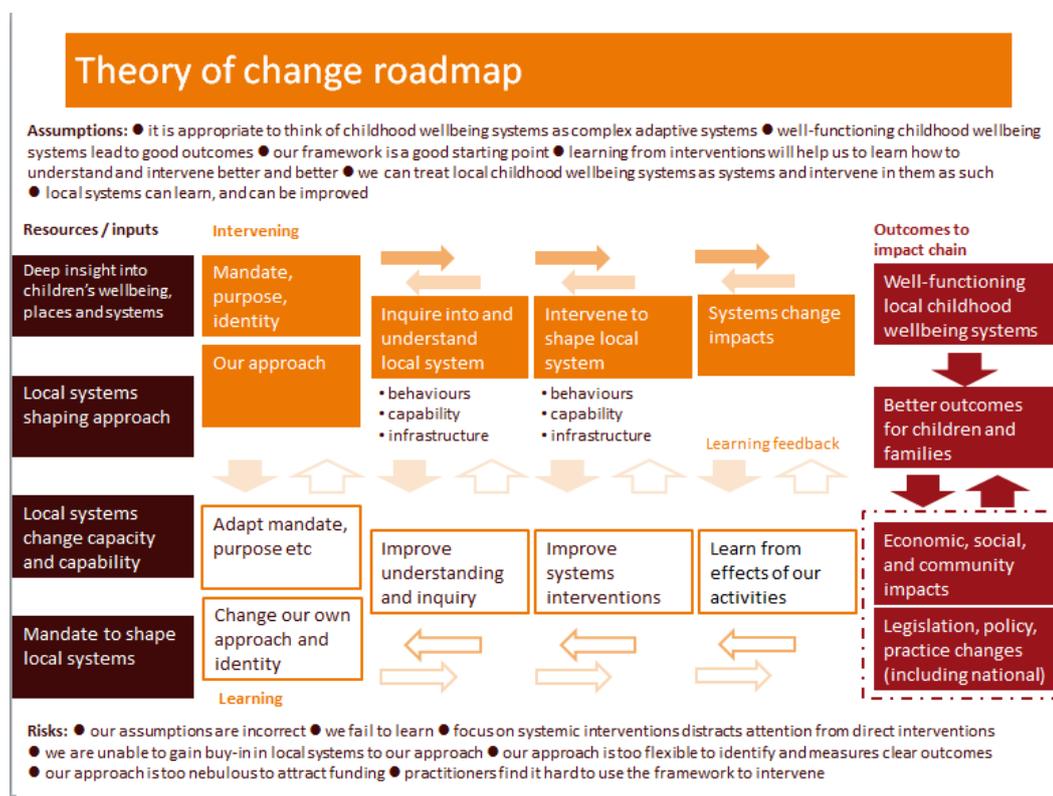
Figure A1.2: Local Systems Change Programmes Theory of Change

The Local Systems Change Programmes Theory of Change focuses on three defining aspects of local systems: behaviours, capability and infrastructure; and two processes: seeing the system (enquire into and understand the local system) and intervening (intervene to shape the local system) (Figure A1.3). The core of the Theory of Change then is the hypothesis that it is possible to 'intervene' in local systems to deliver systems change impacts which will in turn lead to improved outcomes for children and families.

Figure A1.3: Theory of Change - systems change
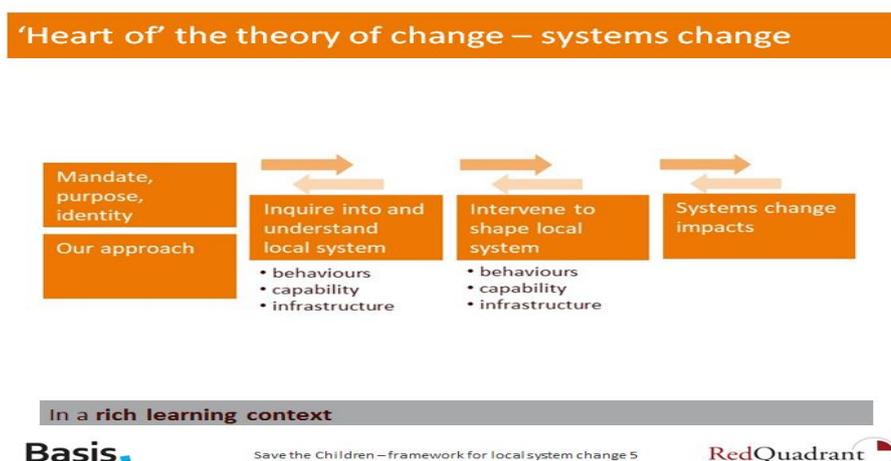
Developing an Analytical Framework

The LSCF thus focuses on the **processes** of local systems change, as well as the impacts that are anticipated as a result of the changes to systems. This is important because it allows us to understand how change has happened in the Children's Community areas. In the context of the Children's Communities evaluation we can utilise the Local Systems Change Framework to build a set of indicators of process change which are associated with differing levels of the development of the Children's Community, and which allow us to understand the progress of Children's Communities at different stages, and ultimately to test relationships between observable system level changes and outcomes for children and families. It is important to note that, for the evaluation, we treat the **Children's Community as an agent of change in a local system**, with an associated set of structures, processes and functions: the relationships between the Children's Communities and the wider systems within which they are working are of critical importance to the evaluation.

Top level headings

Adopting this approach leads to evaluation activities which focus on the processes through which Children's Communities seek to understand and intervene in local systems. We have organised indicators into three sets of categories: strategic leadership, operational management and services and programmes (Figure A.1.4). The rationale for this is that the Children's Community, as an agent of system change - not the entire local system - operates at these three levels. It is important to note that we have not identified children, young people and families as distinct change agents in this framework, although they are central to change in the Children's Communities. This is because we see the inclusion of needs and involvement of children, young people and families as crucial to the progress of the Children's Communities across all three system levels and as such, their role is reflected in the progression indicators outlined in figure A1.5.

The Local System Change Framework categories have been mapped on to the three system levels (Figure A1.4). This enables us to produce a rationalised, limited set of categories, with a set of associated indicators and then a set of methods and tools to gather data. We have drawn on the elements of local systems outlined in the LSCF (behaviours, capability and systems), adapted for use in an evaluative context. For example, the LSCF identifies one of the behaviours of a well-functioning local system as 'trust'. But 'trust' has to be operationalised as trust in some context, and with some outcome. We have therefore treated this, and other behavioural aspects as indicators to look for within the other elements of the framework. For example, trust may be

located within the *culture and power heading* - bearing in mind the widely used definition of culture as *the way we do things round here.*[6] In addition to the behaviours, some other key themes - using a place-focussed approach, engaging children and families, taking an asset-based approach - are embedded in the indicators for the different sub-headings, for the purposes of generating a simple and usable framework.

Figure A1.4: Children's Communities Analytical framework: system level categories

People		
Strategic Direction	**Operational Management**	**Services and programmes**
- Governance - Culture - Power - Outcomes and accountability - Place-based strategies and plans - People and workforce - Shared measurement	- System capacity and capacity building - Communications and engagement - Place-based Strategies and plans - Shared measurement - People and workforce	- People and workforce - Programmes - Services - Culture

Under each heading we have utilised three-stage categorisation of maturity ('building', 'developing', 'sustaining') to capture the processes through which a newly formed Children's Community becomes an established agent of local change with an assumption that moving through the maturity phases, from building to sustaining will have positive longer term outcomes for families, children and young people in the area. But clearly there is in reality a continuum, and progress may be variable across different aspects of systems change. It is also important to acknowledge systems change as dynamic, and non-linear, and for the evaluation to capture and understand backwards, as well as forwards, movement.

Figure A1.5 presents a series of indicators of how a Children's Community would be expected to operate and be structured at the relevant maturity level for that top level heading. The fifth column represents data collection methods and questions and the final column represents data sources

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[6] Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1983). Culture: A new look through old lenses. *The journal of applied behavioral science, 19*(4), 498-505.

Figure A1.5: Children's Communities Analytical Framework

Strategic Direction

Category	Indicators - Building	Indicators - Developing	Indicators - Sustaining	Measures/ Questions	Data Sources
Governance	Focus on engagement: building relationships with key stakeholders There is evidence of 'buy-in' but shared understanding in relation to the system amongst key strategic stakeholders has not yet been developed Directive leadership from the Children's Community core stakeholder group where this is in existence	Focus on embedding: developing governance structures Some understanding and engagement amongst core stakeholders on the nature of the system, priorities for change, and barriers/enablers to progress in the system; conflict or disagreement may hinder progress Some directive leadership from the core stakeholder group, with an increasing focus on nudging change across the system	Focus on evolving: governance is responsive to and is influencing change in the local system Shared understanding amongst core stakeholders of the nature of the system, priorities for change, and barriers/enablers to progress in the system; conflict or disagreement does not hinder progress The role of governance has moved from directive to shared change leadership	Who are the strategic stakeholders for the Children's Community? How have they been engaged? Where does influence lie? How do influencers support or promote the Children's Community? Do key stakeholders hold a shared view of the local system for children and families? What do stakeholders understand to be the key priorities of the Children's Community? To what extent are these views shared? What are the key enablers/barriers to change? Is there agreement on the priorities, barriers and enablers? Why/why not? How would you describe the governance style in the Children's Community?	Interviews with strategic stakeholders. Observation of governance groups, focussing on governance style and culture, partnership style Analysis of minutes of Board/ Partnership meetings and terms of reference Attendance at meetings
Culture	Limited understanding of the Children's Community approach amongst core stakeholders Communication or cooperation partnership style enacted There is limited use of evidence to inform strategic approaches, or of a learning culture within the Children's Community, or these	Cooperation or coordination partnership style enacted There is some use of evidence to inform strategic approaches, and the beginnings of a learning culture within the Children's Community. Some evidence of self-reflection and focus on how the system meets the needs of children	Collaboration or integration partnership style enacted There is effective use of evidence and learning. Continuous self-reflection and focus on how the system meets the needs of children		

Category	Indicators - Building	Indicators - Developing	Indicators - Sustaining	Measures/ Questions	Data Sources
	have not yet been developed. Limited evidence of self-reflection and focus on how the system meets the needs of children, or these have not yet been developed			Who is missing from governance structures? What difference does that make? How do governance structures facilitate local systems change? How do the needs of children and families influence the governance of the Children's Community? How can the culture in the Children's Community be described? How does local political culture influence the Children's Community? What is the partnership style? (Questions on partnership style drawn from the Tamarack Collaboration Spectrum tool, questions of strategic leaders) Who are strategic stakeholders accountable to? How are place-based strategies and plans developed and used at this level? How is data shared and used at the strategic	
Power	Children's Community champions in some service areas have been identified Core team have developed partnerships with 'motivated champions' in some key services and community groups. The needs of children and families are not routinely shaping the strategic direction of Children's Communities: focus remains on organisational priorities. Local political context does not support or hinders local systems change	Engagement of most key services and community groups The needs of children and families sometimes inform the strategic direction of Children's Communities Some aspects of local political context support systems change to improve outcomes for children	Engagement across all key services and community groups The needs of children and families inform the strategic oversight of all core service areas and clear community engagement in the governance structure. Local political context prioritises outcomes for children		
Outcomes and accountability	Aspiration for a shared, mutually accountable culture but limited understanding of what it	An understanding across strategic partners of what a shared, mutually accountable culture	An understanding across all partners and staff of what a shared, mutually accountable culture		

Category	Indicators - Building	Indicators - Developing	Indicators - Sustaining	Measures/ Questions	Data Sources
	would look like in the area and no demonstration of it in practice. Strategic stakeholder representatives solely or mainly accountable to their organisations and associated national or local systems [e.g. Ofsted/league tables; NHS targets]. Beginning to develop some joint accountability for some aspects of the Children's Community's work.	would look like in the area, but limited genuine demonstration of it in practice Strategic stakeholder representatives are accountable to their service organisations and associated national or local systems, and for some shared goals, around the key outcomes for the Children's Community in the Theory of Change.	would look like in the area, with substantial genuine demonstration of it in practice Strategic stakeholder representatives accountable to their service organisations and associated national or local systems. Additionally, there is shared accountability for meeting all of the key outcomes for the Children's Community in the Theory of Change	level? What are the barriers to data sharing and how are these being addressed?	
Place-based strategies and plans	Little or no connection between Children's Community and other place-based strategies and plans	Some connection between Children's Community and other place-based strategies and plans	Children's Community is integrated with other place-based strategies and plans, and/or has integrated others within it		
People and workforce	The Children's Community is understood locally as associated with the core team and a small number of leaders who drive the work forward	In addition to the core team there are individuals across some programmes and services who identify with the Children's Community and shape their own work and seek to influence that of others accordingly	There are individuals across a wide range of programmes and services who are driving forward the Children's Community; their work is supported by the core team		
Shared measurement	No commitment to data sharing amongst core	Commitment to data sharing and some shared	Centralised shared data is driving the Children's		

Category	Indicators - Building	Indicators - Developing	Indicators - Sustaining	Measures/ Questions	Data Sources
	stakeholders and/or limited capacity (or will) to overcome barriers to shared measurement	measurement across some programmes and services	Community, which acts as a data hub		

Operational management

Category	Indicators - Building	Indicators - Developing	Indicators - Sustaining	Measures/ Questions	Data Sources
System capacity and system building	Core team is providing capacity for the system to operate more effectively, and delivering capacity-building activity. Core team setting the agenda with a wider partnership supporting; some significant partners not engaged. Convening, managing, delivery role of core team supported by Save the Children funding, some seed corn funding. Largely reactive to available funding sources beyond core Children's Community. Limited involvement from Children and families in service	Core team and some wider stakeholders provide capacity for the system to operate more effectively, and capacity-building activity Core team driving with engagement and some steer from a wide range of stakeholders. Convening, managing, facilitating roles of core team supported by Save the Children funding, some continuing seed corn funding. Plan developed to reduce reliance on these sources. More proactive in seeking funding sources beyond core Children's Community. Some involvement from Children and families in service evaluation and/ or	Collective commitment to system improvement, and widespread capacity across multiple stakeholders. Core team clearly steered and held to account by a representative accountable and active partnership Convening, managing, support roles of core team sustained by range of funding sources. Coherent, proactive approach to seeking funding sources beyond core Children's Community. Service evaluation and/ or development co-produced with children and families; leadership across all stakeholders	What is the role of the core Children's Community team? How does the core team work with partners in driving forward the work of the Children's Community? What role does Save the Children have in the Children's Community? What difference does that make to the approach in this area? What evidence is there that the Children's Community has attracted new resources or that existing resources have been used differently to improve outcomes for children? How has the Children's Community increased	Interviews with Children's Community core teams and Save the Children Interviews with resident representatives (where relevant) Analysis of documentation: minutes of meetings; terms of reference, ToC documentation; evaluation plans Observations of meetings Analysis of plans

Category	Indicators - Building	Indicators - Developing	Indicators - Sustaining	Measures/ Questions	Data Sources
	evaluation and/ or development	development; core team leading on this		or improved system capacity?	
Communications and engagement	The Children's Community known only to a few deeply involved in the project; even some of those involved in service delivery don't recognise the Children's Community. Emergent communications strategy, focussing on key stakeholders.	Children's Community patchily recognised in both services/organisations and by limited numbers of children and families and wider stakeholders. Communications strategy is developing, focussing on key stakeholders and some wider stakeholders.	Children's Community well known in the area across all stakeholders, including residents and local businesses. Families and children recognise and understand what it means to live in a Children's Community. Broad communications strategy encompassing all stakeholders including services, residents and service users, voluntary and community sector and local businesses.	Is the Children's Community recognised beyond the core team? By who? How has the theory of change for the Children's Community been developed and used to inform the ongoing implementation of the Children's Community? How does this relate to other place-based strategies in the locality? How is the Children's Community monitored and evaluated at the local level? What indicators are used to identify impact? How are these used to inform the strategic and operational development of the Children's Community? What are the workforce development needs for the Children's	
Place-based strategies and plans	ToC being developed with core group of stakeholders, establishing clear endpoint and intermediate goals with associated metrics in relation to outcomes for children, young people and families. Initial activities and approaches designed, and causal chains to achieving intermediate	ToC is being implemented. Activities are monitored and adjusted/added to/replaced as needed. Wider place-based plans and strategies developing	ToC implemented. activities monitored and adjusted/added to/replaced as needed; ToC developed [in relation to activities and linked casual chains - long term goals stay the same] Wider place-based plans embedding and sustaining		

Category	Indicators - Building	Indicators - Developing	Indicators - Sustaining	Measures/ Questions	Data Sources
	and longer term outcomes identified Wider place-based plans and strategies building			Community? How are these being met?	
Shared measurement	Initial understanding of available indicators and measures in the local area, and nationally. Recognising gaps in available indicators. Early reporting of measures to governing body and use of measures to identify interventions. Beginning to develop local evaluation strategies for early interventions.	Developing understanding of available indicators and measures in the local area, and nationally; developing strategies to fill evidence gaps. Systematic reporting of measures to governing body and use of measures to identify interventions [including operational/partnership interventions. Use of local evaluation strategies for early interventions, learning from these to inform intervention implementation and choice of further interventions. Building local evaluation strategy.	Ongoing monitoring of indicators and measures in the local area, and nationally; and continuing collection of evidence to meet gaps as needed. Systematic reporting of measures to governing body and use of measures to identify interventions: largely operational/partnership interventions. Use of overarching local evaluation strategy for all interventions, speedy responses from partners.		
People and workforce	Workforce development and capacity not a priority.	Some recognition of workforce needs but limited activity to increase capacity or skills	Workforce needs recognised and addressed		

Organisations and Services

Category	Indicators - Building	Indicators - Developing	Indicators - Sustaining	Measures/ Questions	Data Sources
People and workforce	Operational and service staff articulate accountability to organisational goals defined by their core work	Operational and service staff articulate accountability to organisational goals defined by their core work and see how this fits within the goals of the Children's Community	Staff at all levels understand the place of themselves, their organisation and other pre-existing or separate partnerships and collaborations in relation to the Children's Community further, they can see the contribution of the Children's Community to these other partnerships Organisations have a strong sense of commitment to the whole child and the organisation's place in meeting these needs • commitment to engaging with others to meet these needs • engage with activities as part of the Children's Community clearly linking them together as part of a coherent response to meeting the needs of all children and young people	What do staff in services and organisations understand in relation to the Children's Community? What is their understanding of the goals and objectives of the Children's Community? How do they see their service or organisation in the context of the Children's Community? How does their service or organisation contribute to meeting the needs of the whole child? (How) has the Children's Community changed the way that the service is delivered? What has been the impact on service collaboration and/or co-ordination? How is the need for new or different approaches	Interviews with representatives of partner organisations and services Analysis of documentation: minutes of meetings; Observations of meetings Analysis of plans

Category	Indicators - Building	Indicators - Developing	Indicators - Sustaining	Measures/ Questions	Data Sources
Programmes	Staff mainly at senior levels understand the place of themselves, their organisation and other pre-existing or separate partnerships and collaborations in relation to the Children's Community Further they can see the contribution of the Children's Community to these other partnerships	Pockets of staff at all levels understand the place of themselves, their organisation and other pre-existing or separate partnerships and collaborations in relation to the Children's Community further, they can see the contribution of the Children's Community to these other partnerships	Staff at all levels understand the place of themselves, their organisation and other pre-existing or separate partnerships and collaborations in relation to the Children's Community further, they can see the contribution of the Children's Community to these other partnerships	identified? And operationalised? How do the needs of children, young people and families inform new approaches? What role does data and evidence play in the identification of new services and/or approaches? How are new approaches evaluated? How is learning used to inform service development? What evidence is there that that the Children's Community has attracted new resources to the area, or that existing resources have been used more effectively or efficiently to meet the needs of children and young people?	
Services	Organisations - e.g. schools, health providers - engage with activities as part of the Children's Community, often not clearly linking them together even where an organisation engages with more than one Children's Community activity [e.g. a school supporting both a mental health and a careers intervention].	Core governance group set and understand goals. Operational respondents typically engage with some elements of the lives of children and young people. Organisations engage with activities as part of the Children's Community increasingly linking them together as part of a coherent response to meeting the needs of children and young people.	Core governance group set and understand goals. Operational respondents typically engage by understanding their role alongside others across all aspects of children's lives.		
Culture	Communication or cooperation partnership style enacted	Cooperation or coordination partnership style enacted	Collaboration or integration partnership style enacted		

Category	Indicators - Building	Indicators - Developing	Indicators - Sustaining	Measures/ Questions	Data Sources
	There is limited use of evidence to inform approaches, or of a learning culture within the Children's Community.	There is some use of evidence to inform approaches, and the beginnings of a learning culture within the Children's Community.	There is effective use of evidence and learning.		
Interventions	Selection of new programmes [seed corn funded or otherwise] largely reactive and based on availability, limited data to support their selection Reliant on seed corn funding from Save the Children or application of existing interventions which may have occurred without the Children's Community being present Aims of interventions unclear, limited evaluation	Selection of new programmes based on strategic needs, based on data and selected with wider purposes, for examples to demonstrate impact of the community to engage more partners Some programmes or interventions funded from Save the Children, leveraging of external funding, possibly some funded from internal Community partners Aims of interventions generally clear, some evaluation	Selection of programmes based on strategic needs, based on data Few programmes or interventions funded from Save the Children, significant leveraging of external funding, and others funded from internal Community partners Aims of interventions clear, robust evaluation in place		

Children's Communities Impact and Outcomes Framework

The Impact and Outcomes Framework is intended to evidence outcomes for children and young people. Because Children's Communities are long-term change initiatives it is important that the evaluation identifies beneficiary outcomes that are likely to emerge in the short and medium term as well as the longer term impacts.

This is being done in two ways in the context of this evaluation:

- A set of **core indicators** for the Children's Community programme has been identified to evidence area-level change over time. These indicators are populated with secondary and administrative data which is available at the small area level

- In addition a set of **progression indicators** is being used to assess outcomes for beneficiaries of Children's Community interventions which may indicate progress towards the core indicators. These include indicators of 'perception' and 'satisfaction' change in the Children's Communities for which data is collected through surveys and interviews with children, young people and families.

Core indicators

The first stage of developing the core indicators sought to identify commonalities in the three Children's Community's Theory of Changes.

The following common themes emerged:

- Ready for school

- Provision and access to services

- Progression and attainment

- Post-16 destinations and employment

- Wellbeing

- Health

- Safe and secure

- Poverty/deprivation

A range of potential indicators under each theme were identified, paying particular attention to the degree to which each indicator meets a set of criteria aimed at ensuring the chosen indicators are relevant and that data is accessible:

- strongly correlated with improved outcomes for children and young people (evidence-based)

- relevant to the work of Children's Communities working in different areas and contexts

- sensitive to change over the lifetime of the programme (10 years plus), with a reasonable degree of confidence that data will continue to be available over the duration of the intervention

- amenable to analysis at small area level (LSOA) or available for individuals

- available to Children's Communities and partners.

The emergent **potential** indicators are outlined at Table A1.6

Table A1.6: Potential core Indicators

Theme	Indicator	Source
Ready for School	EYFS 'good level of development'	National Pupil Database
Progression and Attainment	KS4 Attainment	National Pupil Database
Post-16 outcomes	18-24 unemployment/UC rate (or NEETs)	DWP benefit data
Health	Obesity at Reception and Year 6	The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)
School engagement	School attendance	National Pupil Database
Safe and secure	First time entrants to the Criminal Justice System	Police National Computer
Wellbeing; Mental health, depression and anxiety	Mental health services referrals and care contacts for children and young people aged 0-18	NHS digital
Provision and access to preschool services	Number of Childcare and Early year providers in the area	Ofsted and NPD
Household poverty/deprivation	Income deprivation affecting children or eligible for Free school Meals	DWP benefits data or NPD
Safe and secure	Troubled Families	Local Authority
Safe and secure	Children in Need	NPD/Local Authority

The four indicators shaded in grey were identified by the Children's Communities, but it is questionable the degree to which their activities will affect these indicators in the face of wider external and structural factors. The likely low base size may also affect the meaningfulness of change.

Further discussion and refinement resulted in a final set of seven core indicators, across five themes, for which data can be collected across the programme. It should be noted that limitations in each of these indicators was acknowledged.

Table A1.7: Children's Community Core Indicators

Theme	Indicator	Rationale
Early Years	Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 'good level of development' (GLD)	Best available indicator of early development and school readiness. Whilst there is an acknowledged challenge associated with differences in practitioner-led assessment prior to and following transition to primary school the measure is consistent across different contexts.
Progression and Attainment	KS2 Attainment KS4 Attainment	KS2 attainment as an indicator of middle-childhood development and progress towards KS4 outcomes Strong correlation between KS4 outcomes and later life opportunities
Post-16 outcomes	School retention post KS4 18-24 Unemployment (Job Seekers Allowance/ Universal Credit claimants)	School retention as an indicator of post-16 educational outcomes Unemployment rate 18-24 years as an indicator of young people's labour market attachment
Health	Obesity at Reception and Year 6	Widely available measure of children's health
School engagement	Unauthorised absence	Reliable proxy for other outcomes including attainment, wellbeing and safety.

Data for each of these indicators is provided at Appendix 4.

Progression outcomes

Progression outcomes are those which we might take as indicators of short to medium term impacts of the Children's Communities but also as indicators of progress towards the core indicator outlines above. A set of theme areas has been derived from the Children's Community Theories of Change and reviews of children and/or young person wellbeing frameworks[7]. The impact and outcomes framework draws on these multiple sources because none of those reviewed fully reflected the Theories of Change underpinning the Children's Communities. The themes are

- overall wellbeing/life satisfaction

- general health

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[7] These include: the Education Endowment Foundation's measuring essential skills framework; the Every Child Matters framework; the Measuring National Wellbeing database; the Good Childhood index; and the OECD Child Well-Being Data Portal.

- relationships with family and friends

- satisfaction with the neighbourhood

- being ready for school

- doing well at school

- satisfaction with school/education establishments

- having the skills and competencies to be ready for work

- provision of support for schooling, education and employment that is available

- the provision of leisure and social activities that are available.

Measuring progression outcomes for beneficiaries

The data for progression outcomes is intended to be collected via primary surveys because they (or similar equivalent measures) are not available via routinely collected secondary and administrative data collections. Additional data will also be gathered through qualitative work with residents and service users in the Children's Community areas.

Data gathered through a pilot survey in Pembury, and through qualitative work with children, young people and residents is contained at Appendix 4.

Appendix 2: Evaluation activities and data collection

The evaluation is guided by a set of research questions:

- How and to what extend are Communities embodying the key principles of the Children's Communities model?

- Is there evidence of the Children's Communities working towards long-term systems change?

- How effective are leadership and governance arrangements?

- How are the Communities progressing with developing and operationalising the local strategic vision and Theory of Change?

- What evidence is there of impacts within services and systems?

- What evidence is there of impacts for children, young people and families?

Data gathering in Year Two

Process evaluation data has been gathered through semi-structured interviews (carried out face to face and over the telephone) and a small number of focus groups with strategic stakeholders, service providers and residents in the Children's Community areas.

In addition, the evaluation team have worked with the three Children's Communities to support them to gather data to inform the impact evaluation. This has involved two strands of activity:

- Working with the Children's Communities to design and administer a beneficiary survey.

- Interviews and focus groups with children and families.

Interviews and focus groups

Interviews and focus groups have involved research participants in a number of stakeholder groups:

- those involved in the strategic governance of Children's Communities (through representation on the Children's Community's boards or partnership groups);

- representatives of organisations delivering services to children and young people in the Children's Community areas;

- residents and service users (including children and young people) in the Children's Community areas;

- local Children's Community core teams;

- members of the Save the Children UK Local Systems Change team.

A purposive sampling approach has been taken to the conduct of fieldwork. This approach prioritises inclusion of individuals who are likely to be in a position to provide information that is most relevant to the research questions, as opposed to random or stratified approaches which aim to test a set of research hypotheses. In this context, this has involved working with Children's Communities to identify information rich cases, and focussing primarily on interviews with individuals who are involved in governance of the Children's Communities, or in the delivery or use of associated interventions. Residents, children and young people were accessed through participation in events or services supported by the Children's Communities.

Table A2.1: Interviews and observations

Pembury		
Date	**Role**	**Data collection method**
10/11/18	Local community members	Focus group
12/11/18	Strategic: housing	Face to Face
12/11/18	Service: family support	Face to Face
12/11/18	Strategic: young people	Face to Face
12/11/18	Strategic: school	Face to Face
12/11/18	Strategic: early years	Face to Face
13/11/18	Strategic: local authority	Face to Face
13/11/18	Core team: local authority	Face to Face
13/11/18	Service: early years	Face to Face
29/11/18	Strategic: local authority	Telephone
15/11/18	Core team: housing (x2)	Telephone
26/11/18	Service: school	Telephone
28/11/18	Service: local authority	Telephone
27/11/18	Service: young people	Telephone
27/11/18	Service: school	Telephone

Smallshaw-Hurst

Date	Role	Data collection method
20/11/18	Strategic: school	Face to Face
20/11/18	Core team: Executive Lead	Face to Face
20/11/18	Service: project worker	Face to Face
20/11/18	Strategic: partnership lead	Face to Face
20/11/18	Strategic: third sector representative	Face to Face
23/11/18	Strategic: public health	Telephone
23/11/18	Strategic: third sector representative	Telephone
7/12/18	Strategic: public health	Telephone
7/12/18	Strategic: third sector representative	Telephone

Wallsend

Date	Role	Data collection method
19/11/18	Local community member	Face to face
19/11/18	Local community member	Face to face
19/11/18	Local community member	Face to face
19/11/18	Local community member	Face to face
19/11/18	Local community member	Face to face
19/11/18	Local community member	Face to face
20/11/18	Local community member	Telephone
20/11/18	Core team: Community Coordinator	Face to face
20/11/18	Core team: Data, Impact & Evaluation Advisor	Face to face
20/11/18	Strategic: third sector representative	Face to face
20/11/18	Governance group meeting	Observation
21/11/18	Strategic: school leader	Telephone
22/11/18	Service: school head of career/PSHE	Telephone
22/11/18	Service: project worker	Joint telephone interview
22/11/18	Service: project worker	Joint telephone interview
23/11/18	Strategic: partnership lead	Telephone
23/11/18	Service: school senior leader	Telephone
23/11/18	Service: consultant	Telephone
30/11/18	Strategic: public health	Telephone
30/11/18	Strategic: school leader	Telephone
30/11/18	Core team: Executive Lead	Telephone
30/11/18	Strategic: third sector	Telephone
30/11/18	Service: service provider	Telephone

Beneficiary Survey

The evaluation team worked with the Pembury Children's Community to develop a survey through which to capture quantitative evidence on the impact of Children's Community interventions from beneficiaries of services.

A pilot survey was carried out between January and March 2018 in Pembury. The survey was designed to capture evidence of impact for evaluation purposes, but also attempted to capture evidence on experiences and service improvements which would be of use to the Children's Community in developing and refining local service provision.

Separate survey instruments were designed for children, young people and parents, although each aimed to capture outcomes across a range of well-being domains. The pilot survey was administered by project workers to a range of groups participating in Children's Community initiatives. A total of 57 responses were collected between January and March 2018, from participants across a range of Children's Community services. Initial analysis suggested that there were positive outcomes for some individuals associated with participation in initiatives supported by the Children's Community in Pembury.

Piloting, and feedback on the survey from the core team in Pembury, suggested that there were some limitations in design, particularly in relation to the attempt at designing a survey which captured both outcome change and provided feedback to service providers.

During the latter part of 2018, the evaluation team worked with the Children's Community teams to develop a common survey tool for use across the Children's Communities. This will be further refined in 2019 and used as appropriate by the Children's Community teams, to provide impact data alongside other local impact data gathering activities for the remainder of the evaluation period.

Capacity Building

Data Dashboards

Finally, the evaluation team has been working with the Children's Communities to develop a data dashboard for each Children's Community area. The purpose of the data dashboards is to provide an ongoing and accessible picture of change in each Children's Community. They are intended to be used by the Children's Communities to:

- identify issues to address through their work;
- monitor activity and progress toward outcomes;
- provide a mechanism to demonstrate change to wider stakeholder groups, including boards and local residents.

The data dashboards simplify a range of information collected from multiple sources - by both the evaluation team and the Children's Communities. The evaluation team has taken ownership of setting up the first iterations of the data dashboards. However the three Children's Communities will begin to take over their ownership and responsibility for updating with new data over the timescale of the evaluation.

Appendix 3: Process evaluation reports for each Children's Community

A3

Pembury Children's Community

Strategic direction

Category	Assessment [Building/Developing/Sustaining]
Governance	Developing - Sustaining
Culture	Developing - Sustaining
Power	Developing
Outcomes and accountability	Building
Place-based strategies and plans	Developing
People and workforce	Building - Developing
Shared measurement	Developing
OVERALL	DEVELOPING

Governance

The Pembury Children's Community Governance structures have been reviewed over the past twelve months with a view to making the best use of stakeholder time and input, adopting a more focussed approach and strengthening shared ownership and accountability for outcomes across a range of stakeholders. The change is also informed by recognition that there is no 'single' system for children, young people and families and that whilst the Children's Community Board can have oversight, there is a need to acknowledge that the priorities, barriers and enablers to systems change differ for different groups. The governance structures now comprise

- The Children's Community Board, which involves local leaders in services for children and families and has responsibility for strategic oversight of the programme.

- Three thematic groups aligned to the priority strands in the Children's Community Theory of Change: early years; young people; routes out of poverty.

Each of these groups brings together a small number of key stakeholders (described by one interviewee as a combination of managers and doers) in the theme to review the Theory of Change, and to plan and deliver interventions or activities focussed on improving outcomes. These groups replaced the former operational group which had a wide membership and was felt by interviewees to have lacked focus and purpose.

- A residents steering group which is an open forum for the community which aims to give voice to local residents and to ensure that the priorities of the local community inform the work of the Children's Community. Members of the residents steering group attend Pembury Children's Community board meetings.

Interviewees at the strategic level were broadly in agreement about the purpose and role of the Children's Community in improving outcomes for children and young people in Pembury, although not all were able to identify how their contribution could support local systems change.

Nevertheless, there is recognition across the board that going forward there is a need to consider how ownership for the Children's Community is shared across a range of stakeholders. One interviewee reflected that board members could do more in terms of bringing their experience and expertise to the table, and thinking about the links between their day-to-day roles and the Children's Community, and considering the potential to transfer good practice.

There is also a sense that, to date, the momentum for the Children's Community in Pembury has been driven very much by Peabody and the London Borough of Hackney. This creates a risk: it is not clear how progress would be sustained if key individuals or organisations withdrew. These considerations are reflected in the desire on the part of the Children's Community to keep governance structures under review.

Culture

The Children's Community in Pembury has been in place for a number of years and over time has developed a culture of collaborative working. Interviewees reflected that this builds on an existing culture of working together in Hackney. There are examples of services being very well-connected and collaborative in relation to specific projects (such as the Ready for School project or partnership working around young black men) but less evidence of working laterally across different types of services, and as such some potential connections may be missed and there is potential for duplication or missed opportunity for early intervention.

There is some use of evidence and learning, particularly in relation to the seed corn projects which have acted as demonstrators to inform systems change and to build confidence in the Children's Community amongst local stakeholders. A next step is to embed the learning from the seed corn projects and from other collaborative interventions in Pembury, to systems change more widely. Interviewees acknowledge the potential for this, but also recognise the challenges given that a lot of investment and resource has come from Peabody, and that it requires a cultural shift from a prescribed approach of delivering outputs to one where the focus is on innovative ways to achieve outcomes.

Power

Interviewees concur that, generally, the 'right' people are involved in the Children's Community, and that there is 'buy-in' at senior levels. However, recent analysis of area-level data (through the data dashboards) has highlighted issues which are not fully reflected in the engagement of stakeholders (including high levels of childhood obesity and in-work poverty on the estate). There has not thus far been any significant

involvement from community health service commissioners or providers (although public heath are involved), or private sector representatives. Restructuring of primary and community provision in the locality to neighbourhood levels may provide an opportunity to engage the CCG. CVS involvement could also benefit the Children's Community by bringing knowledge of community groups and capacity, although stakeholders there identified (lack of) capacity as a barrier to engagement.

There is a strongly articulated commitment to the needs of children and families informing the Children's Community and a range of mechanisms are employed to capture the views of local people including the residents steering group, informal consultation and surveys. Representatives of the residents steering group who were interviewed in this phase of the evaluation were very positive about the Children's Community ambitions (which they understood well) and the opportunity that the group provided for involvement. But they were not universally clear about its purpose, or the role that it had in influencing local provision. Whilst the group members were very supportive of, and positive about, the Children's Community team they did not feel that there was a clear link, or chain of communication, between them and wider governance structure. Comments included

> *"I think [our voice is] listened to but whether it filters up to the top, or it gets to the top and doesn't filter back down, that is the issue."*

> *"I think basically they sort of need to get their house in order and start listening. There's no point having all those groups and getting our opinions and not acting on it, so I think they should, within the next year or so, start taking on board what the steering committee is putting forward. And as well feeding back to the committee what actions are being taken."*

There was also some frustration articulated around the timescales for change, and in particular that there were sometimes delays before action was taken, and which had negative impacts on the community. An example given was in relation to the closure of after school provision. Whilst these decisions may have been taken by organisations external to the Children's Community and it may not always be possible to respond to every priority articulated by the community, there are some implications here for communication:

> *"Sometimes we just need honesty. They know what they can and can't do. They should just say that they can't do it."*

Finally, there were some concerns expressed around wider engagement, and an acknowledgement that community engagement needs to extend beyond the residents steering group:

> *"The people coming to the steering group are not those people hiding, but the schools have access to a lot of those families so they need to work collaboratively with the people in the schools. If you think of how many parents come in every morning to most schools to leave their children - [they should] stand there, talk to them, do a little questionnaire with the parents at the gate."*

Some interviewees also reflected that the governance structures could be more inclusive. In particular the voices of children and young people were not felt to be heard by the board (although it is important to note that consultation with children and young people does inform the operation of the Children's Communities) and that despite a majority BAME population in the Pembury Children's Community this is not reflected in board composition.

> *"I don't know that it felt representative of the Pembury community. We're talking about the Pembury community being majority BAME, and I'm not saying that everyone round the table needs to be from a BAME background but…it didn't feel diverse enough."*

The local political context was seen to be supportive of the Children's Community, and well aligned to the Children's Community vision. One of the notable strengths in Pembury is the close involvement of the London Borough of Hackney. This is facilitating many opportunities for aligning the activities of the Children's Community with those of the local authority.

Outcomes and accountability

The aspiration for a shared mutually accountable culture is articulated by Children's Community stakeholders but there is as yet limited evidence of a shared understanding of how this might be achieved or what form it might take. Some stakeholders were very clear that there is a shared commitment to working differently to achieve improved outcomes for children and young people, and there are examples of how the Children's Community has changed the delivery of mainstream services. One example is the delivery of Children's Centre services:

> *"So we could either step back and allow them to take the lead or we could use our resources and our skills to work with them to plan and deliver together and that's what we have done. So a lot of the services that we previously provided, we don't any more it now takes place at the Pembury Community - where we might have targeted wanting more of those families to come into the Children's Centres then we will go to where the families are."*

There is clear accountability in some parts of the local authority (and reflected in the performance targets of individuals). This has been very important in maintaining progress and linking the Children's Community to other initiatives in the Borough.

For other services, shared accountability is more challenging and there is recognition that the opportunities and barriers are different for different service areas:

> *"I think it's different in different places and even within one service or one system, different parts of the hierarchy or different parts get it to a greater or lesser extent and you can hit a blockage at any point in that. You can have quite a lot of buy in at the top but actually that doesn't always drive through change through the organisation."*

Place based strategies and plans

The Children's Community in Pembury is reflected in place-based strategies and plans to some extent, and particularly where there are opportunities to use the Children's Community as a test-bed, or to draw learning from the Children's Community to help achieve Borough-wide aspirations. There are examples of strategic pieces of work in the local authority which are seen to offer opportunities for alignment to the Children's Community including work on contextual safeguarding, inclusive growth and financial inclusion.

The allocation of job roles within the local authority to liaison with the Children's Community has been vital in making these links.

People and workforce

We reported in the Year One evaluation report that there was a very strong association between the Children's Community and Peabody and the London Borough of Hackney.

This has been beneficial, particularly in providing leadership in the early days of the Children's Community and in ensuring that the Community has been resourced in the context of wider cuts to public services:

> *"I do think that clear leadership has been absolutely necessary in Pembury - that does create problems re thinking about resources for scaling up - but I suppose with the level of reductions in public sector finance you would be challenged to get support through the system if leadership wasn't at very senior levels."*

Moving forward, and as identified above, there is a need for a wider sense of ownership, not least because it leaves the Children's Community potentially vulnerable to changes in priorities in those organisations.

Recent changes in the staff team at Peabody may also have the potential to affect progress as a Children's Community lead widely seen to be very instrumental in driving forward the Children's Community is scaling back activities in Pembury to focus on work in other areas. Managing the transition will be crucial to ensure that momentum is maintained and the confidence and buy-in of strategic stakeholders sustained.

Stakeholders did not feel that there were skills gaps at the strategic level and that, if a skills gap were identified, they would be confident in knowing how to fill it. However, there is a need for a stronger connection between the Children's Community and strategic stakeholder's 'day jobs', although recognition of the demands on people's time means that infrastructure (in the form of a core team) is needed to maintain progress in the foreseeable future. One interviewee commented:

> *"Ultimately it should just be about this is the way that children's services work locally. But because of the demands on individuals' time - we would have to be really confident that there would be a continuation of the approach - so I think that really we are looking at having some infrastructure in place long-term."*

Shared measurement

There is a cultural commitment to data sharing in the Pembury Children's Community although, in common with other areas there have been technical and resource barriers to data sharing which have hampered progress.

The data dashboard offers a mechanism to improve access to shared data and its use in informing the work of the Community. At the time of writing the data dashboards had only recently been rolled out to the Communities, but in Pembury there is already evidence that it is informing thinking around the development of the delivery plan for the next three years.

One stakeholder reflected that given the length of time it has taken for data sharing agreement and GDPR requirements to be met it was perhaps not realistic to think of the Children's Community becoming a data hub at this point, although it might be a good long term ambition.

Operational management

Category	Judgment [Building/Developing/Sustaining]
System capacity and system building	Developing
Communications and engagement	Developing - Sustaining
Place-based strategies and plans	Developing - Sustaining
Shared measurement	Developing
People and workforce	Developing
OVERALL	**DEVELOPING**

System capacity and system building

The Children's Community team in Pembury is not directly funded by Save the Children and so has a different format to that in Wallsend and Smallshaw-Hurst. For the purposes of this report we are assuming the Children's Community team to be the Head of Pembury Children's Community, Children's Community Programme Manager (both employed by Peabody) and a Strategic Investment Manager at the London Borough of Hackney who has part of his role aligned to the Children's Community. It is important to note however, that a wide range of other individuals working in Peabody and LB Hackney support the operational management of the Children's Community. These include Peabody staff based at the Pembury Community Centre (e.g. family support worker, youth worker). A Community Development worker role at Peabody which was in the past also been aligned to the Children's Community has recently been re-filled.

The Children's Community team in Pembury is therefore working with some wider stakeholders to provide capacity for the system to both operate more effectively and to build local capacity. There has been a good amount of progress, and as outlined above there are good governance structures in place to guide the direction of the Children's Community. Ensuring progress in delivery is still very much reliant on the core team however, and the roles that the Children's Community team has taken in facilitating and promoting collaboration and joint working have been vital in establishing relationship with services and setting up the seed corn projects. There is consensus that the team have been very effective within the resources available to them, but there are inevitably limitations on what a small team can deliver, and that has meant that progress in some areas has not been as quick as the team would have liked.

There is some emerging evidence that the Children's Community is impacting on system capacity: is it changing relationships between services and, as outlined above, Pembury has benefited from resources from both the local authority and Peabody. Furthermore, the opportunity that the Children's Community brings to connect Pembury to borough-wide initiatives means that resources are directed to the area.

There is some evaluation linked to the seed corn projects, and learning from these is shared at Board and thematic group levels so that there is a shared understanding

around what has worked in relation to the delivery and outcomes of these initiatives. In relation one project, Ready for School, there is thinking around ways in which learning could be enhanced by delivering the project in a different context, so that transferable evidence is obtained. Residents and young people are regularly canvassed for their views on local activities and services, and invited to suggest ways in which these could be improved. Evaluation could be strengthened going forward by co-producing evaluation approaches and activities with parents, children and young people thereby ensuring that the priorities of children and families in Pembury are shaping the learning to emerge from the Children's Community.

Communications and engagement

The Pembury Children's Community does not have a formal communications and engagement strategy, although the team is able to draw on communications support from Peabody and the local authority.

A range of communications and engagement activities take place. At the community level these include the residents' steering group, surveys and fun days.

> *"I think we do make an effort to engage and work with the community across the age ranges to ensure that they have a voice in what we offer here. And what I say to them is that this is their space, this is their place, and we should be offering what they want, and the only way we can do that is if we have their input and their voices coming through."*

There is also a newsletter, which is delivered three times a year, and a web presence for the Children's Community on the Peabody site. The Children's Community team is also a visible presence in the Pembury Community Centre and at local events and there are links to Peabody case workers who are working with local families. Using a variety to channels to connect with the local community ensures that the Children's Community has a high profile locally.

> *"(We have) come to an agreement that for comms with residents there is no one-size fits all. We use various methods and tools to make sure that it is picked up by as many people as possible."*

The compact geography of the Pembury Children's Community also supports engagement with services and organisations and the Children's Community is well known amongst providers working in and around the estate. As with residents, the multiplicity of stakeholders has led to an approach which seeks to engage in many ways. Board meeting updates, impact reports and evaluation reports are shared with stakeholders. It is not known at this stage to what extent the Children's Community is recognised outside of Pembury, but its high profile within Peabody and the local authority suggests that there is wider traction for the approach.

Place-based strategies and plans

There is an overarching Theory of Change (ToC), and one for each priority (thematic) area. These have been developed over time and have been through multiple iterations. The ToCs are actively used by the Children's Community team and the theme groups as a framework to monitor the development and delivery of interventions. As the Children's Community is thinking about developing plans for the coming three years, reflecting on progress against the ToCs will help to shape future approaches.

> *"(We) did a thousand iterations in the past - this year they have stayed quite steady. Not because we think they are perfect documents but that we have been using them in the working groups. The value is to provide a framework for thinking.*

Reflecting now would be a good time to revisit in the working groups - coming towards the end of a three year plan - now is a good time with theme groups and the board to reflect on those and think what next."

Shared measurement

The Children's Community has been working with the evaluation team to develop local indicators of progress, and has acknowledged the need to identify clear measures of change.

As outlined above, there are issues around data access which have delayed this aspect of the Community's work. The complexity of the Children's Community, in that it is working across many providers and service areas means that data sharing can be challenging, and progress has been slow.

Progress is being made, but will inevitably take time to establish systematic data sharing across multiple organisations and service providers

"It's all in different places and I'm relying on others in other areas who aren't in my service area and it's not their priority, those sorts of things. The thing is as well you ask favours and it gets harder and harder and actually what we need is to move to a much more systemic way of, systematic way of getting the data on a regular basis, knowing what the really important data sets are and stuff like that. That's been difficult cos we've done so much work across different areas."

The Community has however utilised qualitative evidence, both to develop a good understanding of priorities and needs of the local community, and in the context of difficulties around accessing outcomes data. This has been a valuable resource which has influenced the approach in Pembury.

The Board, theme groups and Children's Community team use data and local evaluation evidence to support understanding around the impact of their work and decision making around future activities. There is an opportunity now to use the data dashboards as a tool for decision making support.

People and workforce

There is a stable Children's Community team, although has outlined above the Head of Pembury Children's Community has reduced her time on the Pembury initiative over the past year and it is yet to be seen how this will impact on progress, or on the engagement of wider stakeholders.

No specific workforce needs were identified although there is a recognised challenge for the team in that being a small team, based on the estate and in their employing organisations, can lead to competing demands on time, and a pull towards 'delivery' to the detriment of capacity for reflection and learning. This is acknowledged by the team, and the support of Save the Children UK has been important in providing opportunity to reflect in the context of the wider Children's Community network.

Going forward, one consideration is building more flexibility into roles for the Children's Community and wider team, to allow the Children's Community to respond to the changing needs of residents without changing roles.

Services and programmes

Category	Judgment [Building/Developing/Sustaining]
People and workforce	Developing/ Sustaining
Programmes	Developing
Services	Developing
Culture	Developing
Interventions	Developing
OVERALL	DEVELOPING

People and workforce

In interviews service and operational staff identify that the Children's Community could provide opportunities for collaboration and improved service delivery. All had a clear understanding of the Children's Community aims and objectives, but not all were able to identify relationships between the Children's Community and their organisational goals or how the Children's Community might impact on their core work. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these connections were made most strongly by those interviewees working in the Pembury Children's Community 'lead' organisations: Peabody and the London Borough of Hackney, but those in early years and youth services also recognised how their work related to the aims of the Children's Communities and were able to point to experience of successful collaborations through seed corn projects (e.g. Ready for School and Playbox) and other initiatives (for instance joint working to support vulnerable young people).

An interesting point of reflection was raised around how far it matters whether organisations and service providers identify with the Children's Community if the services that they provide are meeting the needs of local families. As one interviewee remarked:

> "I don't think it matters that Children's Community is not seen as the delivery mechanism as long as families get a service. What matters is they [families] get a service and make a choice."

Services and Programmes

There is evidence of partnerships and collaborations established through the Children's Community. One example is partnership between Young Hackney, Hackney Learning Trust and a local school to support vulnerable young people. Operational and service respondents were generally able to see the contribution of the Children's Community to pre-existing and new partnerships and to locate their own service or organisation within them.

This was seen as both positive, and helpful:

> "I think [the relationships are] quite positive at the moment. I think everyone's able to work quite cohesively but come from a different viewpoint as well, and that seems to be quite helpful. For me personally it might be helpful to become a little bit more involved in some of the things that are actually put on to have a bit of a clearer perspective on what exactly is delivered."

The Children's Community is improving services in specific areas and there has been a particular emphasis on early years, school transition and young people (linked to the ToCs in these themes). Small-scale interventions and seed corn projects have helped to build relationships and to demonstrate new ways of working. Interviewees felt that this had been important in developing a culture in which services were more responsive to the needs of children, young people and families. The Pembury Ready for School project is an exemplar. Learning from the project thus far includes:

- The project has helped to settle children into school and has supported home-school engagement by providing parents with a known and accessible contact at the school.

- Having extra input helps children to make better progress.

- For some children with high levels of need, personal, social and emotional development and wellbeing was enhanced by the opportunity for focussed input and support from an adult working between home and school.

- Transition to primary school offers an opportunity to contact families and provide a wide range of non-educational support, leading to outcomes which include improved home and financial circumstances and participation in education and volunteering.

- The provision of wraparound, holistic and family-centred support is valued by families and may be especially beneficial to families with the highest levels of need. For instance, support given through the project to the families of children with SEND has helped to overcome gaps in local provision caused by turnover of staff in crucial roles (e.g. speech and language therapists and the school SENCO).

- In-school activities have helped the children to make progress. The children have appreciated time out of the classroom with the teacher and this has provided an opportunity for focussed activity.

- The after school groups were popular with children and parents, and contributed to children's increased confidence, feelings of belonging and building relationships. However, the children were often tired after school and this led the staff to reflect that increased engagement with the families in the summer term prior to entering Reception might be preferable to the children having extra-long days in their first term at primary school.

- The home-based activities also impacted on children's confidence and ability to settle into school as they have provided opportunities for the children and parents to build closer relationships with the estate-based teacher and to address any questions or issues arising.

- Although the first cohort of children as a whole were slightly behind their peers when entering school, living on the Pembury estate alone is not a reliable proxy for additional need and there were other children in the year group who would also benefit from additional support. Early evidence suggests that the second cohort of children were not significantly more disadvantaged than their peers on entry to Reception.

- The project has had an important impact in developing relationships between local organisations working with young children. For instance, prior to the Ready for School project, there was little regular communication or collaboration between the school, two local nurseries, the housing provider and local children's centre services. Through collaboration on the project these organisations now participate regularly in meetings of the Pembury Children's Community Early Years group, one outcome of which is developing collaborative work on children's transition to pre-school settings.

- Improved communication and data sharing between nurseries and schools in the summer term can support better transition. For example, it may be useful for summary information on individual children's strengths, needs and interests to be made available by nurseries (subject to consents) to teachers making home visits. Similarly, visits to nurseries by school teachers to discuss children's needs, and particularly those with SEND, could help to ensure that schools are best prepared to support those children through transition.

The sharing of information and data was seen to be important, and has helped to develop new initiatives (for instance the Playbox project) although different organisations and service partners were more or less comfortable with this and there are ongoing issues around permissions. Ongoing review of data and evidence (including feedback from the local community) was recognised to be important in ensuring that the offer to children and parents is evolving.

Culture

Interviewees in services and organisations highlighted how at the operational level, the Children's Community is facilitating joined-up approaches to meeting the needs of children and families:

> *"It has been good because everyone gets together and talks about what is needed for the Children's Community and if we all say 'well actually I think we really need something on budgeting, that seems to be an issue at the moment' then it's a matter of having a chat with the local authority or whoever in the community to say 'look, can we develop some kind of partnership?' so I think it's good in that sense."*

Having a range of services working collaboratively to address issues faced by families (not just children) was seen to be unique to, and driven by, the Children's Community.

> *"It's kind of a unique approach that the Children's Community programme has…it's more of a wrap-around approach to address all the issues experienced by the family, and I think that approach is unique."*

Communication and relationship building were identified as key to successful collaboration.

Summary

The Pembury Children's Community has made a great deal of progress against the systems change framework. In particular there has been a strong emphasis on collective approaches to improved service delivery, capitalising on opportunities within Pembury and more widely across Hackney. Successful joint initiatives focussing on supporting pre-school children, young people and families provide examples of new approaches to meeting local needs, and there is a strong commitment to the application of learning from these initiatives across the Children's Community and borough. The Children's Community team have had a crucial early role in facilitating collaboration, and identifying and promoting new initiatives. The theme groups have provided a focussed approach to taking this work forward and as the work of the theme groups develops, it will be important to ensure that the learning that is emerging is used to inform change across the system. The role of the board will be critical in ensuring that collective leadership is focussed on embedding system-wide change. Although there is a high level of commitment to the Children's Communities amongst local leaders, and a widespread recognition of the Community as a positive driver of change there isn't as yet a consistent recognition of accountability for shared outcomes across all service areas.

For Pembury, we would anticipate that the implementation of a new three year plan will provide an opportunity to firmly consolidate the progress of the Children's Community thus far, and for the majority of the features of a 'sustaining' Community to be present. In particular the following would be expected to be seen over the next six to twelve months:

Governance:

- Consolidation of the theme groups.

- A greater level of shared accountability amongst a wider range of strategic stakeholders.

- Consultation with the residents' steering group to review their understanding the remit and purpose of the group.

Outcomes and accountability, place-based strategies and plans:

- Development of a new three year plan, based on robust evaluation of progress against the first three year plan, and clear identification of success measures for the next three years.

Shared measurement:

- Finalise key indicators, with systematic approach to capturing data and reporting to the governance group.

- Continue to build data in the dashboard.

Communications and engagement:

- Ongoing community engagement with a focus on children and young people.

Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community

Strategic direction

Category	Judgment [Building/Developing/Sustaining]
Governance	Building
Culture	Building
Power	Building
Outcomes and accountability	Building
Place-based strategies and plans	Building
People and workforce	Building
Shared measurement	Building
OVERALL	BUILDING

Governance

Although governance has been assessed as being in the building stage, significant progress has been made in laying the foundations for developing and sustaining a successful governance structure. It is important to note that the majority of the interviews with strategic stakeholders took place before the first governance meeting took place on 30th November 2018. The Children's Community team initially cast a wide net when considering the makeup of its governance group. This has been focussed down to key individuals for the first formal governance group meeting.

The strategic interviewees had bought into the broad ideas of the Children's Community and appreciate that it's a long term initiative. They also talked about its future in an energetic and passionate way. However getting to this point has taken time. Challenges lay in communicating the concept, changing mind-sets about what is possible without an injection of money and engaging stakeholders who have their own pressing agendas to deal with.

A key early success for the Children's Community has been in bringing groups together to break down barriers. One interviewee recognised that strategic stakeholders were getting to the point where they are happy to challenge each other, and that their voice is louder collectively.

As would be expected given the stage of development of the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community there remain a number of unknowns and areas for further progress. For example there is a need to formalise governance board and work streams so things get moving. Also each stakeholder was able to identify gaps in the governance group membership which may (seriously) constrain the progress and achievements of the Children's Community. In particular there is a need for the involvement of senior director figures who oversee broad portfolios, such as the Chief Executive of Tameside council (who was identified by two interviewees).

All interviewees also identified the need to engage the community effectively in governance, but there was no consensus on how this could be done meaningfully, to

avoid tokenism or engagement only of the usual suspects (i.e. already highly engaged parents and community members). It should be noted that there is already a member of the community involved in the developing governance structure of the Children's Community.

Culture

Good progress has been made in respect to culture. Overall the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community is in the building phase, although elements of 'developing culture' were evidenced. One interviewee recognised that it is difficult to break certain cultures. They viewed that the team would need to be 'forceful' if it is to successfully achieve culture change.

The Children's Community so far has made good progress in gaining buy-in to the Children's Community approach and building willingness across key strategic stakeholders to work together. All the strategic stakeholders were willing to work together and recognised the benefits that this would bring. Previous practice of collaboration was reported to be mixed and often dependent on the funding that was available.

Several interviewees stated that they had previously mainly worked in silos focussing on what they directly control. Although this was recognised as being short sighted.

> *"I'm meeting people I've not met before, meeting people in my own industry, in education, that I've never met before, working with people from the CCG, from the council, looking at people who are in those private day nurseries that are really on the front line dealing with really small kids who've got a lot of issues and supporting parent with that as well".*

Interviewees discussed how the Children's Community had already changed their mind-set to focus on joint preventative work with other sectors rather than treatment: *"I've never even thought about it but it all builds into the experience that child has growing up in that area and it all has an influence on where they end up."*

The next stage for the Children's Community is to widen its reach and enact interventions to promote further cooperation and coordination between organisations.

Power

Power in the Children's Community is in the building stage reflecting the early stages of the governance structure and development of theme areas of work that the Community will look to drive forward. The current focus has been on getting key people involved in the Children's Community to give it legitimacy and power to make changes. Creating a plan and using power to influence change has not as yet been a key consideration

The proposed makeup of the board comprises operational professionals and leaders within given organisations or service areas. Some of the interviewees reflected that this may be appropriate for the current stage of development of the Children's Community as they are in a position to build momentum behind the initiative and drive forward some early 'wins'. These individuals explained how they had begun to act as motivated champions for the Children's Communities within their organisation's and their working groups.

Conversely there was a view from some of the strategic stakeholders that the Children's Community would ultimately need greater power behind it if decisions were to be made and enacted across a broad portfolio of service areas. This could include having senior director figures who oversee broad portfolios sitting on the governance

group as well as ensuring that key representatives from the Children's Community sit on boards. Several interviewees also identified key organisations missing from the strategic decision making of the Children's Community (such as early years providers) which will constrain what is possible.

The strategic interviewees also raised the importance to include ambassadors, for example a community leader, from the area within the Children's Communities' leadership, who can bring people along with them. This is important if the community is to lead the project and ensure it is sustainable moving forward. The Core Team lead echoed these sentiments.

Outcomes and accountability

The sharing of outcomes and accountability is at a building stage. However there was an explicit will and acceptance amongst those that we spoke to of the need to become more mutually responsible for outcomes.

When interviewees discussed this issue they emphasised the importance of shared outcomes and accountability if the Children's Community is to be successful, as well as where they would like to get to. Because of the early stage of the Children's Community plans have yet to be developed and enacted. Strategic interviewees discussed aspirations for a shared mutually accountable culture. This was seen as integral if the Children's Community is to be successful and sustainable. To achieve this there would need to be a buy-in from everyone: residents through to agencies.

While there was no clear plan how to align outcomes or become more mutually accountable, there was a view that it should be possible. The strategic stakeholders identified how there were commonalities between the aims and remit of their organisations and those being developed by the Children's Community. They recognised the interconnectedness between themes. For example thinking and incorporating how public health has wider implications for and impact on other areas such as education.

> "I think it's integral. I don't want to create a massive document…. but just make sure that there's sympathy and at least it's being considered."

Place-based strategies and plans

The connection between the Children's Community and place-based strategies and plans is at a building stage. There was a strong consensus amongst the strategic stakeholders that the three theme areas were the right ones for the Smallshaw-Hurst. Furthermore the majority were able to identify commonalities between the targets and objectives of the Children's Community and those in Neighbourhood Plans and organisations targets.

The next stage of development will be to integrate the strategies and plans of the Children's Community into other place-based strategies. One strategic stakeholder commented that the core team (or governance group) needed to have representation on every relevant group. This would enable them to challenge preconceptions about Smallshaw-Hurst and draw in strategic innovations into the area.

A key challenge is getting across the concept of Children's Communities and changing the perception that you can't address issues without additional monies.

> "Room for a better articulated explanation of what [the Children's Community is] for…I think we need a bit more of a, almost like an advertising pitch to say this is what it's for…some bullet points, some key phrases to say this is what it's trying

to achieve" - advertising pitch, bullets, key phrases need to get buy-in, needs to be catchy and have a hook.

People and workforce

People and workforce is at a building stage. Strategic stakeholders generally viewed the Children's Community as being associated with the core team. However, progress has been made over the past six months to widen this out to include members of the developing governance group. Working groups have also been set up in the three theme areas of the Children Communities' Theory of Change, with examples identified of how the Children's Communities ideas were already starting to influence the work of others.

The strategic interviewees thought the Save the Children team was appropriately staffed:

"The team I think is right in the way it's set up in that you've got a worker, if you like, out and about, someone who can do the data cos the data's important, and then then to have someone overseeing it. So I think that's probably the right kind of make-up."

Ensuring that the team has a detailed understanding of the area was mentioned. This includes understanding the issues, processes and assets that have contributed to these in Smallshaw-Hurst. A vision for what services in the area should look like and being strategic to make the case to other agencies were noted, alongside sitting on relevant groups to influence plans and bring in test bed projects to create tangible pieces of work to bring this about. Co-design and co-production with young people was seen as very important.

Shared measurement

Shared measurement is at a building stage. The issue of shared measurement was raised in the strategic interviews however, unsurprisingly given the stage of the Children's Community very little progress had been explored or made. In principle there was a will for shared measurement, although GDPR was raised as a common challenge or block to this.

Operational management

Category	Judgment [Building/Developing/Sustaining]
System capacity and system building	Building
Communications and engagement	Developing/Building
Place-based strategies and plans	Building
Shared measurement	Building
People and workforce	Developing
OVERALL	BUILDING

System capacity and system building

The system capacity and system building provided by the core Children's Community team is at the building stage, with elements of developing. Strategic interviewees recognised the progression of the core team in their first 18 months of operation. This included:

- Data and asset mapping to understand and inform discussions about the 'baseline' situation in Smallshaw-Hurst. This has been used to identify key theme areas and inform discussion with stakeholders.

- Working towards a governance structure that would provide legitimacy for the Children's Community as well as driving forward the systems change.

- Holding direct meetings with stakeholders to explain and gain buy-in to the Children's Community.

- Facilitating different groups of stakeholders to meet and break down barriers.

- The early stages of identifying projects to bring into the area.

To date the agenda for the Children's Community has mainly been set by the core team. Alongside the core team, theme working groups have been set up which involve and are led by professionals from relevant organisations. The core team has also worked to establish a governance structure which is beginning to see some of the driving force behind the Children's Community pass over to wider stakeholders.

So far, the focus of engagement has been on professionals. There has been limited involvement of children and families in service evaluation and development, as the core team has not wanted to create unrealistic expectations in relation to the speed at which things will happen.

Communications and engagement

Engagement has reached the developing stage whereas communications is at the building stage. The core team have spent 18 months engaging and developing relationships with services and organisations serving the area. As a result there is a developing recognition of the Children's Community and what it aims to achieve. So far, there has been a good level in involvement in the Children's Community. There is no formal communication strategy in place. However there was an agreement in the core team that this is something to be developed one the governance structure is in place.

Place-based strategies and plans

The core team's involvement in place-based strategies and plans is at a building stage. Interviewees were able to set out a vision for place-based strategies and plans but given the early stage of the Children's Community they were less able to point to implementation and action.

The core team is focussed on the Children's Community adding capacity and strength to the current system in the Smallshaw-Hurst area. In their view it will not duplicate, replace or create dependencies. Key to this is changing mind-sets and promoting collaboration so that capacity and provision in Smallshaw-Hurst is used differently, including working better with the voluntary sector. The aspiration is that organisations will work with each other to address the root causes of issues, rather than dealing with the symptoms, and in the process benefit multiple organisational targets.

In terms of the Theory of Change, the core team have used their detailed mapping work as well as engagements with individual organisations to develop three broad theme areas. The core team has then set up thematic working groups to develop these areas further and lead on implementation. There is a collective agreement across strategic stakeholders that the Theory of Change fits with Tameside Ashton neighbourhood plans and organisational priorities.

The Children's Community's early systems change activity has focussed on bringing people together, breaking down barriers and facilitating stakeholders to reach shared priorities. This is ongoing; however, it is the aim that over next 12 months the Children's Community will produce tangible system change 'activity'. This is seen as vital to maintain interest in the initiative locally and evidence the benefits of the approach.

Shared measurement

Shared measurement has been assessed as being at a building phase. However it is important to acknowledge the progression that the core team has made. The team have undertaken a detailed data and asset mapping of the area. This has involved developing links with data controllers, negotiating access and identifying data gaps. The data obtained has been used with stakeholders in the area to raised issues (that many weren't aware of) and inform possible responses.

The next stage for the core team is to finalise their key indicators framework, put in place systematic ways to capture and report to the governance group and develop local evaluation strategies.

Workforce and people

The workforce and people needs of the core operational team are at a developing stage. Two of the original core team members left the Children's Community in 2018. The roles were quickly filled, with their replacements having been in post from September 2018. Over this period the continuity of the lead was important. Because the Children's Community lead held the majority of the relationships and had been part of communications with the community little momentum was lost. However they did reflect that relationships had not progressed as much as they may have done since summer 2018 due to the staff changes.

The previous Data, Impact and Evaluation Officer had established good relationships with data providers (particularly with respect to education data) and undertaken a detailed baseline assessment of the area. These will be picked up by the new person in this role.

When discussing the role of the core operational team both the strategic and core team interviewees were consistent in their view that the team needed to act as a bridge between the community and leaders of services and organisations. For this they needed be equally adept at working and communicating with both groups. The role of the core team is to bring evidence, make recommendations and influence actions and activity. However the core team were clear that the 'doing' is down to providers and the community.

A challenge of the core team has been to get the right balance between delivery and personal development. They reported that Save the Children advocates an 80:20 split between delivery and developmental work. The core team felt that this was about right and appropriate for full time staff however created challenges for part time workers, particularly if development activities involved travel.

This split of time was questioned by one strategic stakeholder who felt that more of their time should be spent in the Smallshaw-Hurst areas or engaging with local stakeholders.

Services and programmes

Category	Judgment [Building/Developing/Sustaining]
People and workforce	Building
Programmes	Building
Services	Building
Culture	Building
Interventions	Building
OVERALL	BUILDING

Due to the stage of the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community the fieldwork activity did not include interviews focussing on organisation and service delivery. This is because, although there is a growing recognition of the Children's Community amongst local stakeholders, at this stage there has been very limited action leading to change in local organisations and services.

The following key points emerged from the interviews with strategic stakeholders and the core team:

- Smallshaw-Hurst is an isolated community where residents have limited or poor access to many universal services for example GP, dentist and early years provision. Challenges for the Children's Community to address include the travel distances, expenses and (lack of) confidence that local residents associate with access to services outside of the area.

- In terms of the organisations and services operating in the Smallshaw-Hurst area there was a view that the skills were all there but there was a need to 'join the dots up' so that the impact of local services is maximised.

- Leadership and power were viewed as being strong within organisations operating across the wider local authority area. A key challenge for the Children's Community will be to take advantage of this strength.

Summary

Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community has made good progress against the systems change framework. Notably over the past 12 months the Children's Community has further embedded itself in the area and gained the buy in of many local stakeholders; progressed in establishing its governance structure; created working groups around it's Theory of Change theme areas (where previously services operated more in silos); promoted systems thinking amongst local services which has led to joint activity; and coordinated projects that will commence in early 2019. Overall the Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community has been assessed as being in a building stage in relation to strategic direction, operational management and organisations and services. However aspects of developing progress have been evidenced, for example through joint preventative work around smoking cessation and mental health support in schools. The next 12 months are crucial for the Children's Community as a period in which to build on this base to maintain the participation of local stakeholders. Particular areas to progress are securing the involvement of senior directors within local stakeholder organisations; implementing projects and activity to demonstrate the benefits of systems change approaches; and formalising it's governance structure.

For Smallshaw-Hurst, the following would be expected to be seen over the next six to twelve months:

Governance:

- Demonstrably more formalised governance structures in place.

Culture and Power:

- Engagement of wider group of organisations in the Children's Community, including community leaders and strategic leaders in local government.

Outcomes and accountability, place-based strategies and plans:

- Development of a plan to align the Children's Community outcomes across organisations to encourage mutual accountability.
- Integrating the Children's Community into local area plans.

Shared measurement:

- Finalise their key indicators framework, with a systematic approach to capture and report to the governance group.

System capacity and system building:

- Engage stakeholders who oversee a broad strategic remit.

Communications and engagement:

- Develop a communication strategy following the enactment of a formal governance structure.

Wallsend Children's Community

Strategic direction

Category	Judgment [Building/Developing/Sustaining]
Governance	Developing
Culture	Developing
Power	Developing
Outcomes and accountability	Building (accountability)
Place-based strategies and plans	Developing
People and workforce	Developing
Shared measurement	Developing
OVERALL	DEVELOPING

Governance

There was consensus amongst interviewees that the governance group was more action-focussed, and derived from the 3 year strategic plan (see below). The smaller group was unanimously seen positively as a vehicle to enable the Children's Community to be more effective. With the appointment of the new strategic lead, and the intensive work on planning for the next stages of the Community she has led over the past 12 months, the group has developed from what was described in earlier reports as an intensive period of consensus-building into a focus on activities and meeting the requirements of the new plan. All interviewees saw this positively, with terms like *'clearer focus'*, *'more purposeful'*, *'more transformational, less transactional'* being used. Observation of governance group meetings supported the view that these were purposeful and focussed on progress and problem solving in relation to key elements of the 3 year plan. Whilst all partners were positive about this renewed focus, some noted that in the coming period more strategic conversations rather than focussing on progress on specific projects would enable the group to be more effective in the longer term.

All interviewees identified the need to engage the local community in governance, but there was no consensus on how this could be done meaningfully, to avoid tokenism or engagement only of the usual suspects (i.e. already highly engaged parents and local community members) - see more detail under communications and engagement under operational management below.

Culture

There was consensus - as there had been in early stages of the project - that the service culture in Wallsend was distinguished by willingness to work together - *"there's always been a strong collaborative partnership model"* in the words of one partner. Some specific examples of partners in the governance group working together were cited. Some stakeholders that worked in other areas beyond Wallsend suggested that it compared favourably with cultures in other areas. An issue raised in the last steering group and mentioned by several partners, was the difficulty in managing pressures of

competition between stakeholders for scarce resource to undertake their core work, in a time of severely reduced funding. This was seen to be an issue particularly for third sector organisations, and two partners with third sector responsibilities noted that trust needed to be built - for organisations to see that working together could benefit them all. School and statutory service-based interviewees did not see this issue in relation to other work. The culture of the governance gro*up was* unanimously seen to be positive, for example one representative quotation was *"There is unity and inclusive feel - so if we are going to make a decision, we all go together with total commitment to getting results."*

One interviewee raised a thornier and longer term issue: the partnership is based on longstanding educational partnerships and if it is truly to become a Children's Community then the focus needs to move away from this to encompass all outcomes for children (so, for example, the need to engage head teachers not being seen to be prioritised over other services etc.).

Power

Most informants felt that local and national politics should be taken into account, but not too closely involved in the Community. Efforts had been made to provide key messages about the Children's Community to politicians, for example, but there was no appetite to engage elected members on the governance group; as one group member put it *"the Children's Community should remain apolitical, the local area swings between political parties, and we can't be seen to align with one over another"*. There was however strong support for alignment with wider strategic changes, for example other developments in North Tyneside and the wider North East devolution developments.

Leadership in the community was seen to be important, and strong. Respondents across all groups were unanimously positive about the work of the strategic lead in providing fresh impetus to the Children's Community. Equally, members of the steering group were positive about the strong leadership of the governance group chair. For example, one strategic interviewee on the governance group noted:

> *"We do need direction, and we are getting this more from the chair and the strategic lead… there is much more clarity, so we can concentrate on the key strands."*

An issue for the future is how to move towards leadership being distributed more evenly across the strategic partners. For example, core team members felt that a positive step in the next period would be for partners to come to the core team with proposals, data, and autonomous actions.

Accountability

There were interesting differences expressed here. Some steering group members felt accountable to their organisations, only considering accountability to the community when prompted. Others - the majority - expressed accountability to children and young people in the area. Some spontaneously expressed accountability to other partners unprompted, for example "*we are accountable to each other, to funders, to sponsors and to key staff - but this is moral accountability rather than formal accountability*", whereas others felt this was unsaid or invisible.

In some cases, there was seen to be strong alignment between organisational goals and the goals of the Children's Community. However, tensions were noted in some cases, especially where there may be elements of competition between stakeholders - e.g. in the third sector, where providers had similar missions. Others, working beyond

Wallsend, identified that they must not be seen to be favouring Wallsend over the other locales that their organisation worked in. One member noted that a feature of accountability was to *"take back the Children's Community and its work to my day job"*, connecting the work of the Children's Community to other linked agendas. This was clearly an area of development, as recognised by one core team member: "*we want an accountable body [governing body] but we need them to feel accountable to the system and operating on behalf of the system*". One possible solution to develop this shared accountability was being considered: a joint accountability charter.

Place-based strategies and plans

These have been a major focus of the Children's community, especially since the arrival of the new strategic lead at the end of 2017. The strategic interviewees were almost all very positive about the new, clearer focus provided by the three year plan, which had been developed over the spring and summer by stakeholders, led by the strategic lead.

Strategic interviewees valued this for the direction it provided in relation to the operational work of the Children's Community. However, there was general agreement that, in strategic terms, further work was needed.

Firstly, in relation to the Theory of Change, whilst some partners felt it could be further developed, there was little appetite for further work in this area. One strategic interviewee noted:

> *"it was important to go through the Theory of Change thinking, but pragmatically at some point we have got to park it to put it into effect rather than constantly looking at it. It needs more work, but that's not really where we should put our energy - this is a doing not a theorising project".*

Secondly, partners had begun to see the Community as a vehicle for system change. A helpful quotation that indicates the direction of travel from one strategic partner was "*there was confusion before, was the Children's Community a mechanism for delivery or system improvement? Now, we are clear the Community is a system improvement organisation. The partners that make it up are the deliverers*". However, there was a broad sense that there was a need for work in this area. One indicator of this is that when questioned on what the changes that would be seen at 2, 3, 5 years down the line there was no clear response.

The strategic lead recognised this issue, and saw working on this as the next steps for the community: she noted*:*

> *"We have a strategy, but we don't have clear outcomes determined, and how they feed into the vision… so in a sense we've done things back to front. But to get buy in to do things in relation to the system, to get the governance review, I had to develop the plan."*

Another member of the governance group commented

> *"There are definitely stages missed out in a 3 year plan - so we can't assume we know what we need to do; there are not clear enough aims. So we have a vision statement but we need to break it down more clearly e.g. into attainment, health".*

This led to a specific area of develop for next year: to build a Theory of Change with a Memorandum of Understanding for all partners, and associated milestones that can be considered strategically.

Further planning in relation to communications and engagement with the local community are picked up in the operational management section.

People and workforce

All three of the core team were seen by strategic leaders to be well suited to the posts they were in, and their work was seen to be impacting on the direction of the Community. Beyond this, strategic leaders were taking leading roles in driving the agenda of the Community forward, although as noted above the core team were aiming to see more active leadership from a wider group as the Children's Community developed.

Shared measurement

There was a clear commitment expressed by leaders to shared measurement, and evaluation was a strong focus (see operational management) but organisational responses to GDPR requirements meant there were significant issues in accessing data - in the words of one interviewee *"there is a genuine commitment here to make sure data protection is not a barrier, but GDPR came along and it floored people."* This was acknowledged by all respondents. One interviewee noted that at some stage a pragmatic approach may be needed: *"if data protection issues get in the way then we need to use other measures that are available"*.

Operational management

Category	Judgment [Building/Developing/Sustaining]
System capacity and system building	Developing
Communications and engagement	Developing
Place-based strategies and plans	Building/Developing
Shared measurement	Building/Developing
People and workforce	Developing
OVERALL	DEVELOPING

System capacity and system building

This has been a key focus for the core team, and especially the strategic lead, over the past 12 months. The previous two years could be characterised by a focus on coalition and partnership building, linking together with and fostering work which was undertaken in a way that it was difficult to judge to what extent the Children's Community provided additionality (see Year One report). For the past 12 months, the focus on building a smaller more tightly focussed governance group alongside and linked to a new a three year plan has been explicitly linked to understanding the Children's Community as focussing on system change (see section on strategic leadership above).

The process was fostered by active engagement with partners to move them towards seeing the system differently, as one core team member put it:

"We can see how the partners see the system through their specific lens, e.g. education - the role of the Children's Community is to move beyond lenses and look at the system as a whole."

The new core team understood that process required time:

"People want to work together, but don't know how, so our role [in the core team] is helping them do that we are not starting from zero, but it is taking a while."

Communications and engagement

This area is also a key focus of the Children's Community core team at this point, strongly directed by the chair of the governance group and the strategic lead. There was recognition both from the core team and amongst all strategic partners that a clear communications plan relating both to services and the local community needs to be developed. Comments relating to this have been a feature of previous reports, from the earliest interim report onwards, but this is the first time that a plan has been in active development. A key issue raised here was the need to facilitate communication better. One core team member noted

"We get a lot of information, but we struggle with what to with it - how can we make sure we are putting it back out to partners in a way that will help them make use of it…this is complex and templates available are not suitable for the complexity of this area."

From this perspective the focus on offers of support around marketing from some partners were useful but more was required: a suggestion was *"we need a set of principles or best practice for communication"* as well as or instead of a traditional *'stakeholder communication' plan"*.

Again addressing an issue that has been under discussion for some time, a number of pieces of work were underway to engage the local community in the Children's Community. There was a noticeably nuanced view with regard to this issue. All partners agreed that engagement with local community, parents, children and young people was vital in the next stages, but core team members in particular identified the need to be careful about how this should be done:

"The aim of building the infrastructure is to support local agencies to be able to reflect on the system so that when we do connect with the local community the system is ready to take on the feedback and has capacity to do something with it. If we go to the community too soon and raise expectations that then cannot be fulfilled, that puts everything in jeopardy. In addition, if resources are needed to respond to what comes from this community, because we are not yet in a place where the system can fund for complexity, likelihood is that we might not be able to meet identified needs."

So the key issue at this stage was seen by the core team to be to gather evidence but being very careful not to over promise what cannot be delivered. Two key pieces of work were planned for this period: Story of Place is a two year Ballinger-funded piece of work using an ethnographic approach to understand the experiences of local residents in two areas, about to begin in early 2019. A perceptions survey of children and young people in schools is also being carried out with data collection being completed by the end of 2018.There is an intention to link to other related work on understanding deprivation undertaken by the local authority. Taken together, these

pieces should lead to a greater understanding of local needs and inform the next stages of prioritisation of activities for the Children's Community.

Place-based strategies and plans

This has been a priority: it is an area of huge energy and tangible changes. There has been a strong focus on delivering agreed projects alongside enabling their evaluation (see next section). In one sense the project delivery (Oral Health, Transiting Mentors, Play Strategy) was seen as fulfilment the legacy of the previous core team. But it is very much a carefully considered process, as this extended comment on the developing of the plan indicates:

> *"The current three year plan that we developed took account of all the agencies' plans, purposes and objectives, also the wider perspective of the context we are operating in, in terms of demography and politics - also in North Tyneside and in relation to North of Tyne devolution and BREXIT as all of these will affect the money coming in or not to the area, on housing, services etc. Housing is a major issue for example and can't be forgotten. The process of building the plan narrowed us down on to the core themes, in relation to the governance review and strategy development. We did a piece with the governing body to commit ourselves to these core themes as the right ones, checking they were still fit for purpose. There was agreement, but we still saw a gap - system change, the plan needed this change to deal with data for example, so this was added to the Theory of Change… It's early days, but it is working - we are on the LA's radar, pieces of work are coming through that we are invited to support and contribute to as well as strategic forums and we have a clearer influencing voice."*

Shared measurement and evaluation

This has been a further area of intense activity, since the recent arrival of the new Data, Impact and Evaluation Officer. There were two key issues being addressed in this regard. As noted in the strategy section above, GDPR was causing protracted difficulties in building a shared dataset, and was taking up a lot of the core team member's time, not only in trying to access data but to work with partners to understand the importance of gathering, recording and sharing data, not to mention the key GDPR requirements.

The second issue related to evaluation of local initiatives, which raised particular issues as these legacy projects were already set and running without formal evaluation processes. Ass the evaluation and data lead put it: "*In an ideal world I would be in post, we would come up with an idea of interventions, be given time to develop the means of measurement and only then go live. Whereas actually many things are already in place, and so I'm trying to play catch up.*" Therefore, a lot of intensive work was ongoing to create appropriate evaluation plans as quickly as possible for these projects.

People and workforce

There was unanimous agreement that the current core team had the right skillset and competencies for their roles. Due to lack of capacity for some time prior to the two most recent appointments, the team were clearly under intense pressure. Especially given the high level of turnover experienced in the team, this current pressure needs to be acknowledged and managed by the governance group and Save the Children UK.

Services and programmes

Category	Judgment [Building/Developing/Sustaining]
People and workforce	Building - Developing
Programmes	Building
Services	Building
Culture	Developing
Interventions	Building
OVERALL	BUILDING

People and workforce

Interviewees had only a partial understanding of the Wallsend Children's Community organisational goals. At least one interviewee suggested that the terminology used at times by Save the Children UK did not always lend itself to making goals clear and accessible to understand.

> "I understand the concept but I think and I don't know if this is a Save the Children thing but the words they use…they talk about systems change all of the time and that's just their jargon and they talk that to parents…and that doesn't mean anything to a parent."

Individuals interviewed articulated a strong personal commitment to the Wallsend area with many currently living there or having had close ties to the region historically.

However, interviewees often lapsed into talking about what they thought the Wallsend Children's Community should be about as opposed to being able to confidently describe what the official agreed goals were. This suggested a lack of overall awareness and direct engagement with strategic leads for Wallsend Children's Community. In one instance, an interviewee from an organisation with a North East regional focus confessed that "*apart from the last interview we had* [with SHU] *we're not really very well informed…apart from the work we are involved in I wouldn't be able to tell you anything else that is related to the Children's Community*".

This suggests that certain individuals, particularly those working beyond Wallsend boundaries, struggle to grasp what Wallsend Children's Community aims are and how they and other organisations are supposed to contribute towards achieving them. More encouragingly, there was a strong sense of commitment to the whole child, and a willingness to work with other organisations.

> "I think comparing Wallsend to other local authorities - I feel we do bring an added advantage around our professional awareness about emotional wellbeing and child development."

This was particularly evident in relation to the improved connections and information sharing between schools and health/social care, and to a lesser extent police forces. More than one interviewee from an education setting made positive reference to the principles underpinning the 'Early Health Assessment' that aimed to encourage greater alignment between educational and health/social services. However, interviewees also signalled significant concerns about the viability of delivering this within the timeframes and to the standards expected. They cited in particular frustration about a

lack of access to training, limited staff capacity and a belief that education was being viewed as an 'expandable service'.

I'm a very big fan of the process. I just don't like that we haven't got capacity…having to use education funding to add this provision to the community

Finally, a consistent theme across interviews was that there was a greater challenge, with support, in terms of accountability under the new strategic leads for Wallsend Children's Community than in the past. This was gradually helping to make a difference and there was growing trust about data being shared. Different interviewees referred to working directly with the core team to help improve their own evaluation and data monitoring processes to more effectively evidence impact.

Services and programmes

From the interviews undertaken, the programmes and services connected to the Wallsend Children's Community remained very school-focussed (although this impression may be partly distorted because of the predominance of interviewees from the education sector). However, there were examples of progress where different programmes were connecting more effectively with each other. For instance, a pastoral lead at secondary school described how they now liaised more effectively with transition mentors and this resulted in the most at need pupils following transition to secondary school being worked with, not necessarily just those identified as likely to need extra support when identified at primary.

Two other interviewees also pointed out that services that did exist tended to be heavily focussed upon families and young people identified as disadvantaged or not coping. However, there was an underlying belief that it was dangerous to assume just because parents had not been flagged with issues that they were not struggling to cope or that they were not at risk.

"I think there is a lack of services for those families that are not struggling, or are not identified as struggling."

"Certainly for the low income families there is quite a lot on offer but certainly I've lived here for nearly 12 years and there's always been a Sure Start and facilities there…being a working parent perhaps I'm less likely to draw upon the facilities that are probably on offer, I'm probably not aware of everything that is on offer to be honest."

In general, the strategic lead for Wallsend Children's Community was frequently referred to as being indispensable in networking and facilitating bringing people from across different sectors together. One school based interviewee recalled how in partnership with Wallsend Children's Community strategic lead, a big workshop was organised where the mental health service, the sports development service (the NHS arm of that), local employers and parents were all invited to discuss local issues with the aim of helping to better address the needs of pupils for PSHE.

However, keeping open lines of communication moving forward is clearly crucial, as is ensuring that cross-disciplinarily perspectives continue to inform the future direction of the Wallsend Children's Community. One positive example of this in action, was when an early years consultant to the Wallsend Children's Community identified that there was an absence of early years representation on the Wallsend Children's Community board - something that resulted in the inclusion of an early years representative with the appropriate skills set.

Interviewees indicated there was burgeoning willingness to work with other sectors and organisations. This was motivated in two different ways: one because the nature of scarce resources - with current services '*stretched and few and far between*'; and secondly because there was a growing recognition that a holistic approach was likely to generate the best outcomes for children and young people. A general theme across a number of interviews was that in certain incidences there had in the past been an underestimation about the '*problems children face*' in Wallsend and the Wallsend Children's Community has gradually helped to bring these issues to the surface more.

> *"We just recognise that if we just simply deal with the behaviour, restorative or punitive response without actually dealing with issue whether it's domestic violence or literacy…then there is no point, we are just stuck in a loop of punishment and restoration…it won't deal with the underlying factors so we are trying to be a lot more intentional in solving what the issue is."*

A senior leader of one school interviewed stated they were more 'reflective' and 'understanding' as result of involvement in the Key Stage Three strategy group that was funded through Wallsend Children's Community.

Finally, there was universal optimism about how the forthcoming perception survey, which for the first time has buy-in from every Wallsend school, and the action research funded through the Ballinger Trust, might contribute towards identifying 'gaps' and developing a deeper understanding of what living in Wallsend is like; something that is hoped would ultimately help the "*Wallsend Children's Community create something that is really powerful*".

Culture

As noted above, services and programmes were generally at the start of a journey, with greater attempts at cooperation and partnership, something that the Wallsend Children's Community has played a role in helping to facilitate.

More widely, interviewees raised some quite profound concerns about the level of anti-social behaviour within the community, particularly drug and alcohol experimentation [attempts had been made at improving this through Play Days at the parks throughout the summer holidays]; along with the mental health of young people, and families' capacity in the context of diminished services and austerity to cope.

> *"We've got kids in crisis around mental health. I'll be really honest, I'm very anxious about the mental health situation within the school and within Wallsend at the moment."*

A key indicator of these concerns was noted at one school where it was estimated that around 8% of pupils were currently on a school action plus, something that is connected to an Early Health Assessment.

A further theme to emerge was that pupils and families were seen to still have quite limited horizons and rarely experienced life beyond Wallsend. One tangible instance of this was an interview with the Play Day's organiser who reflected what parents wanted most was trips within a 5 mile radius, suggesting a lack of comfort accessing places still comparatively nearby.

Related to this a different interviewee (a lead for careers at a school) contested that Wallsend pupils lacked aspiration, noting that education results were actually encouraging, but did concede that "*there's just not that knowledge about the pathways to be able to get somewhere".* The school was doing various things to attempt to improve this, including partnering with local charities.

Summary

Wallsend Children's Community has made significant progress overall in the past twelve months on systems change. This is especially the case in relation to strategic direction and operational management, driven by the leadership of the strategic lead and the recently appointed members of the core team. The three year plan and associated changes in governance have been important drivers. Strategic leadership is more focussed, and there is greater oversight of, and challenge in relation to the outcomes of, activity linked to the Children's Community. There is increasing visibility of the Children's Community amongst service providers, although this is variable. The engagement of families, children and young people in setting the agenda for the Children's Community is an area of focus for the next stages. In addition to this, further engagement with services and partner stakeholders is a focus for the next 12 months. A crucial next stage of planning is to develop clearer medium term goals, to enable strategic oversight to focus on these, with less emphasis on the operational development of specific activities in the three year plan. Overall the Wallsend Children's Community has been assessed as being in a *developing* stage of strategic direction and operational management and a *building* stage in relation to organisations and services.

For Wallsend, in the next phases of the evaluation, we would expect to see the following over the next 6-12 months.

Governance:

- Firstly, working to meaningfully engage the local community (see also operational management section).

- Secondly, create space in governance group meetings for higher level strategic discussion - but with purpose.

These require changes to strategic planning - see below.

Culture and power:

- Working with third sector organisations to build trust and common purpose.

- Actively move towards the community become less educationally focussed and more cross-service/outcome area.

- Developing active shared leadership across key partners.

Accountability and place-based strategy and plans:

- Build a Theory of Change with a MoU for all partners and associated milestones that can be considered strategically.

System capacity and system building:

- Clear understanding of role of the Children's Community amongst stakeholders, and an ability to articulate this in relation to their role in system change.

Communications and engagement:

- A live communications plan, with tangible changes visible and linked to it, potentially underpinned by a set of principles.

- Delivery of key engagement activities (Story of Place, Perceptions Survey), plans in place for responses to findings from these activities and some implementation of these.

Shared measurement:

- Data sharing agreements in place, progress in accessing and utilising shared data.
- Agreed evaluation plans for legacy projects, plans implemented.

People and workforce:

- Core team undertaking more strategically planned work, based on the new 3 year plan. Intense short term pressures demonstrably relieved.

Interventions, programmes and services:

- Work with local organisations and services to help staff understand the goals and strategic aims of the Children's Community.

Appendix 4: Impact data

A4

Impact evaluation

Core indicators

The evaluation has established a set of core indicators through which to assess change over time in the Children's Community areas. At this stage of the evaluation we have provided trend data where possible for these core indicators (three years or more), as a means of establishing a baseline for future change. At this stage, attainment data is based on local schools. It is possible to obtain bespoke data for individuals living in Children's Community areas through request to the National Pupil Database (NPD) but this is resource (and time) intensive and this approach may not be sustainable for the Children's Communities once the externally commissioned evaluation is no longer in place.

Early Years

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Good Level of Development (GLD)

Figure A4.1 Percentage of children achieving a good level of development, in Pembury, 2015 to 2017
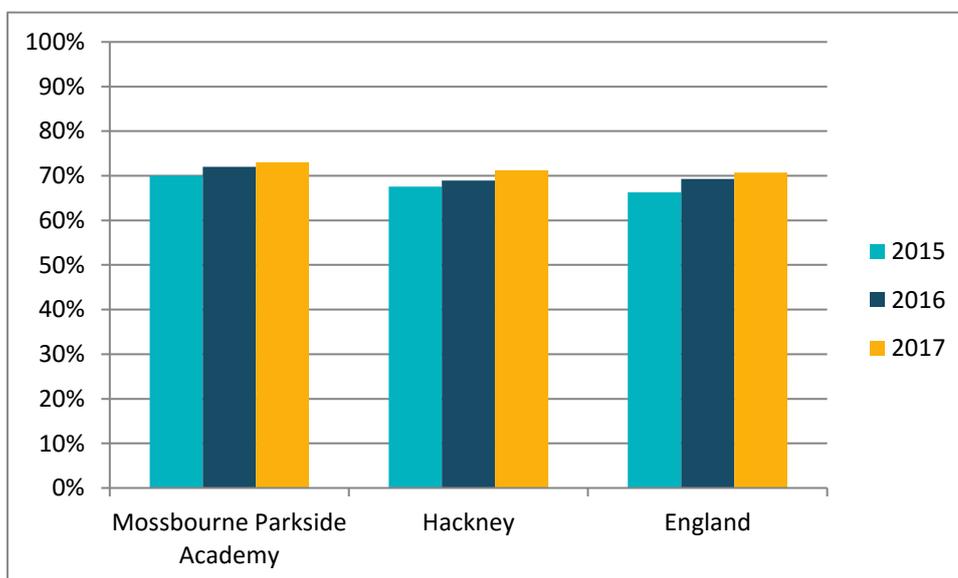
Source: Pembury Children's Community

The graph shows the proportion of children achieving a good level of development, (GLD), expressed as those achieving at least the expected level in relation to communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional

development, literacy and mathematics. In Pembury[8] 73% of children achieved this standard, compared with 71% in both Hackney and England. This figure is an increase of 3 percentage points since 2015 compared with an increase of 4 percentage points in both Hackney and England.

In Smallshaw-Hurst, 63% of children achieved a good level of development in 2017, compared to 66% in Tameside. Trend data for GLD outcomes in Smallshaw-Hurst was not available.

Figure A4.2 Percentage of children achieving a good level of development, in Smallshaw-Hurst, 2017
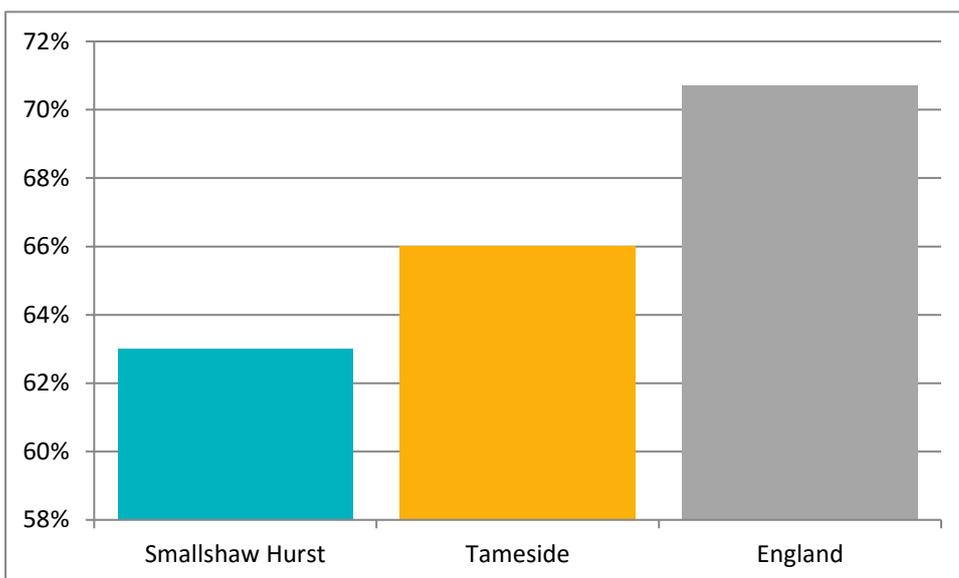
Source: Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community

Progression and attainment

Key Stage 2

These charts show the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths between the 2015/16 and 2017/18 academic years. To achieve the expected standard in all of reading, writing and maths, pupils must achieve a scaled score of 100 or more in reading, writing and maths tests and an outcome of 'working at the expected standard' or 'working in greater depth' in writing. In England, 64% of pupils achieved this standard, increasing by 11 percentage points in the last three academic years.

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[8] Note that school-based outcome measures at EYFS and KS2 in Pembury are for a single school, the Mossbourne Parkside Academy, as this is the primary school accepting the largest number of children living on the Pembury estate. Other local schools contain very small numbers of pupils.

Figure A4.3 Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, in Pembury Children's Community area, 2015/16 to 2017/18
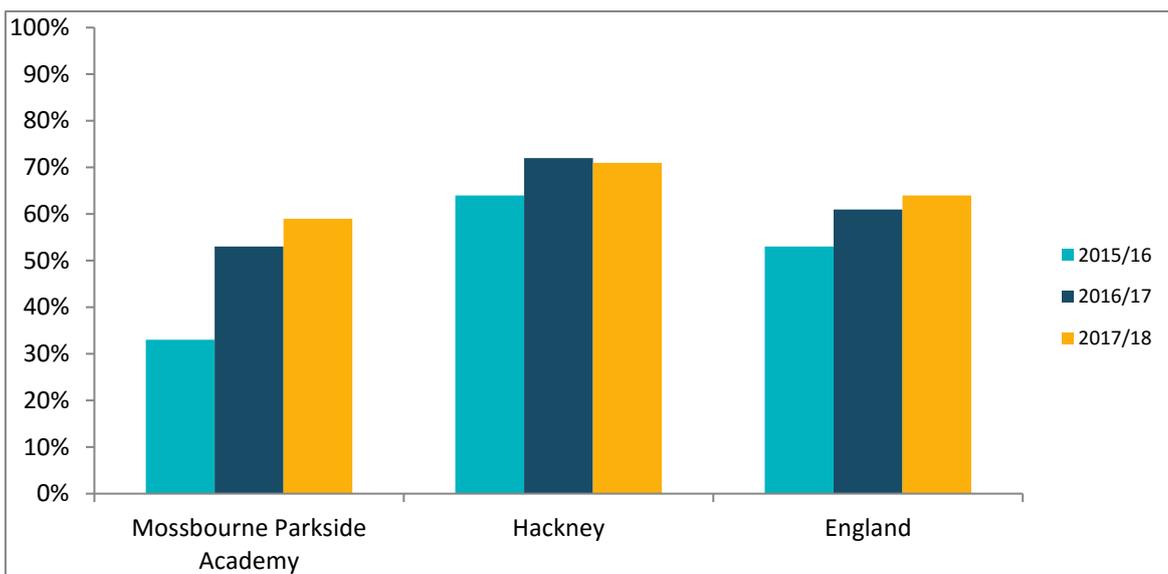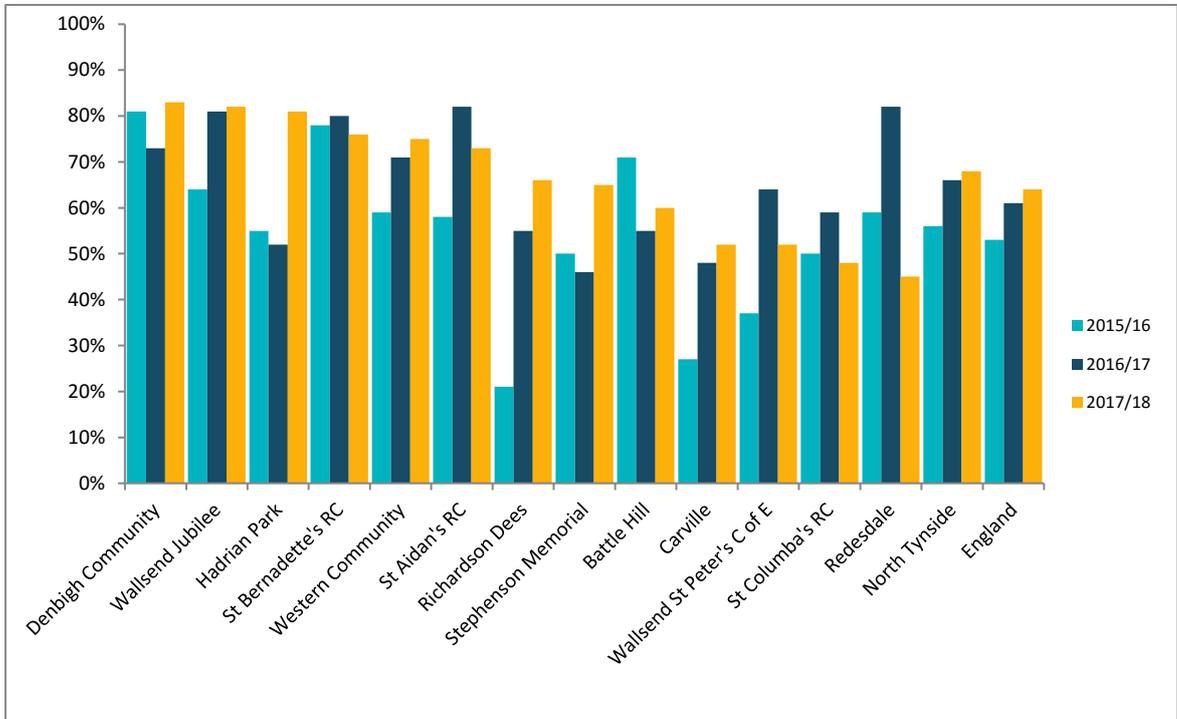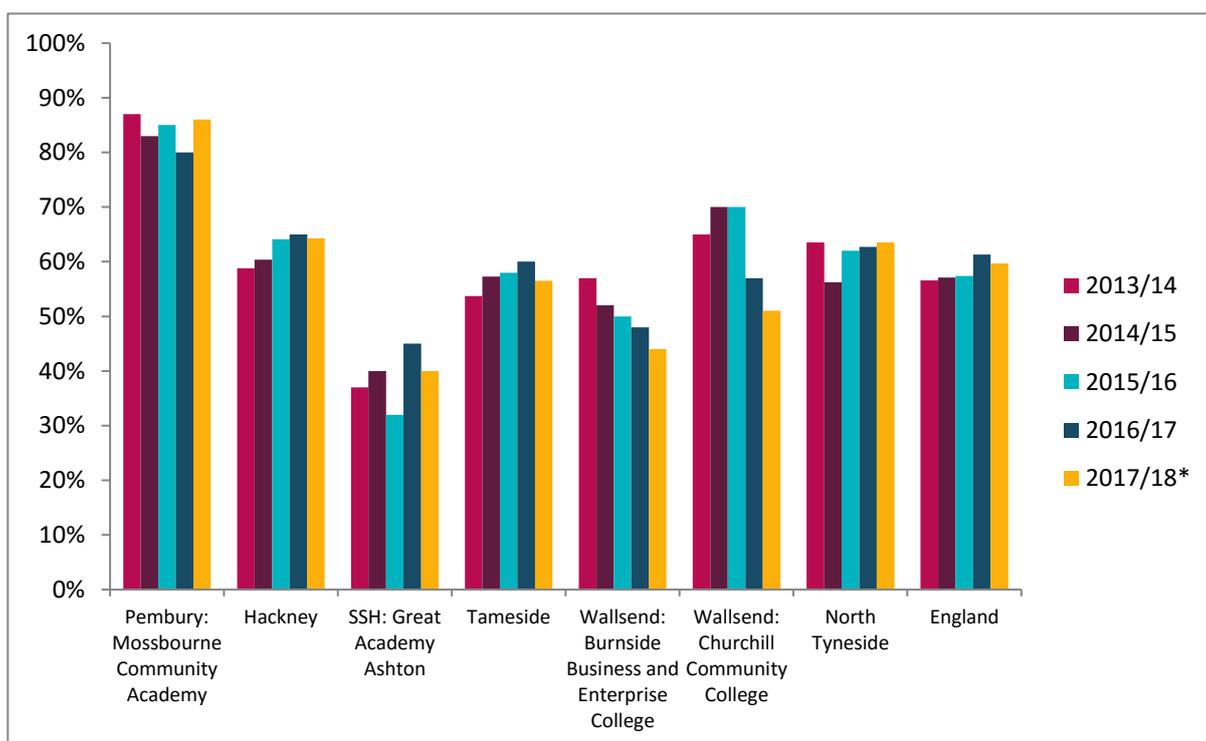

Source: Department for Education

In Pembury, 59% of pupils at the Mossbourne Parkside Academy achieved the 'expected standard', compared with 71% in Hackney. Attainment in the school experienced an increase of 26 percentage points in the last three years, compared with 7 in Hackney.

Figure A4.4 Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, in Smallshaw-Hurst Children's Community area, 2015/16 to 2017/18
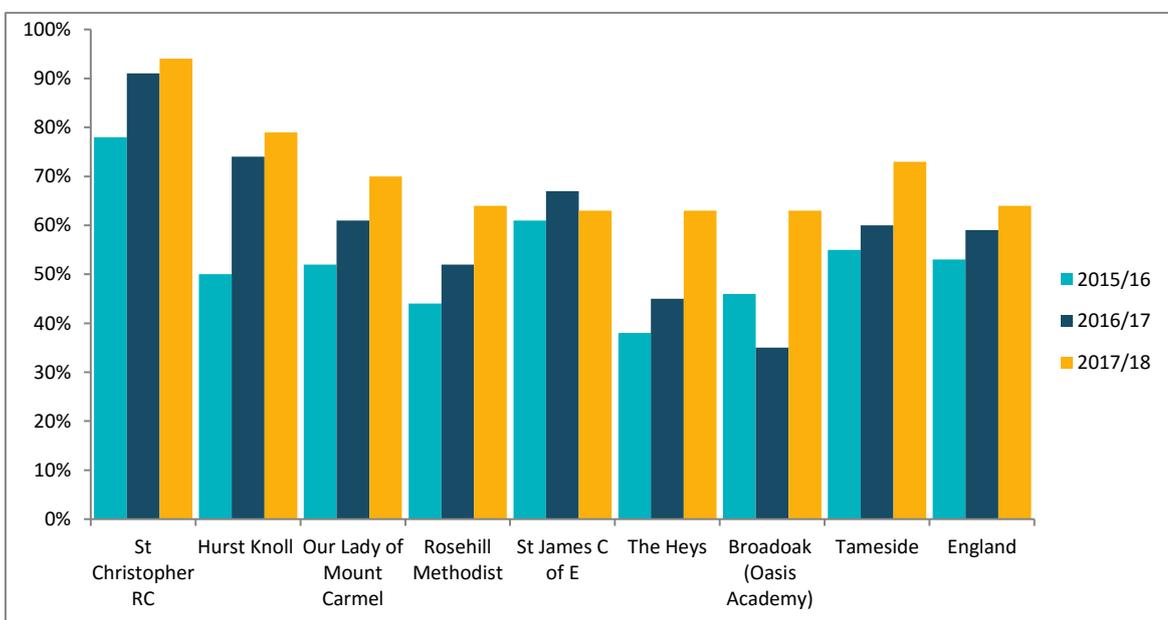
Source: Department for Education

In Smallshaw-Hurst, St Christopher Roman Catholic Primary School achieved the highest proportion of pupils achieving the 'expected standard' (94%). The Heys, Broadoak, Oasis Academy and St James CoE primary schools achieved the lowest rates, at 63%, around the national average. In Tameside, nearly three quarters (73%)

of pupils achieved the 'expected standard'. Since 2015/16, Hurst Knoll school achieved the largest growth in attainment, a rise of 26 percentage points. The smallest increase was seen by St James CoE, at 2 percentage points. The improvement across Tameside was 18 percentage points.

Figure A4.5 Percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, in Wallsend Children's Community area, 2015/16 to 2017/18

Source: Department for Education

In Wallsend, Denbigh Community School had the highest attainment (83%), while Redesdale had the lowest (45%). This figure was 68% in North Tyneside as a whole. Richardson Dees school had an increase of 45 percentage points in pupils achieving the expected standard. On the other hand, attainment at Redesdale primary school fell by 14 percentage points. In North Tyneside, by way of comparison, attainment increased by 12 percentage points.

Key Stage 4

Figure A4.6. Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*-C/9-4 or equivalents including 9-4 in both English and mathematics GCSEs in Children's Community areas, 2013/14 to 2017/18.

Source: Department for Education

The chart shows the percentage of pupils who achieved 5 or more GCSEs (A* to C/9-4) or equivalent results, including both maths and English, between the 2013/14 academic year and 2017/18. The latter results are currently provisional and the methodology has changed from 2018; thresholds are now percentage of pupils achieving Level 2, including standard passes 9-4. The national average is currently 60%, with this figure increasing by 3 percentage points in the last 5 years.

In Pembury, this level of attainment was 86% in Mossbourne Community Academy, compared with 64% in Hackney. However, in the school, this figure fell by 1 percentage point in the last 5 years compared with a 6 percentage point increase in Hackney.

In Smallshaw-Hurst, the attainment rate was at the Great Academy Ashton was 40%, an increase of 3 percentage points. Comparatively, Tameside had a GCSE attainment rate of 57%, also with a 3 percentage point increase since 2013/14.

Finally, in Wallsend, Churchill Community College and Burnside Business and Enterprise College had attainment rates of 51% and 44%, respectively. These figures were both below the local authority average, in North Tyneside, of 64%. Burnside Business and Enterprise College experienced a decline in attainment, of 14% while Churchill Community College also saw attainment fall by 13 percentage points. North Tyneside experienced no change in attainment during this period.

Post-16 outcomes

Figure A4.7: Destination of pupils in Children's Community Areas, 2015/16 to 2017/18
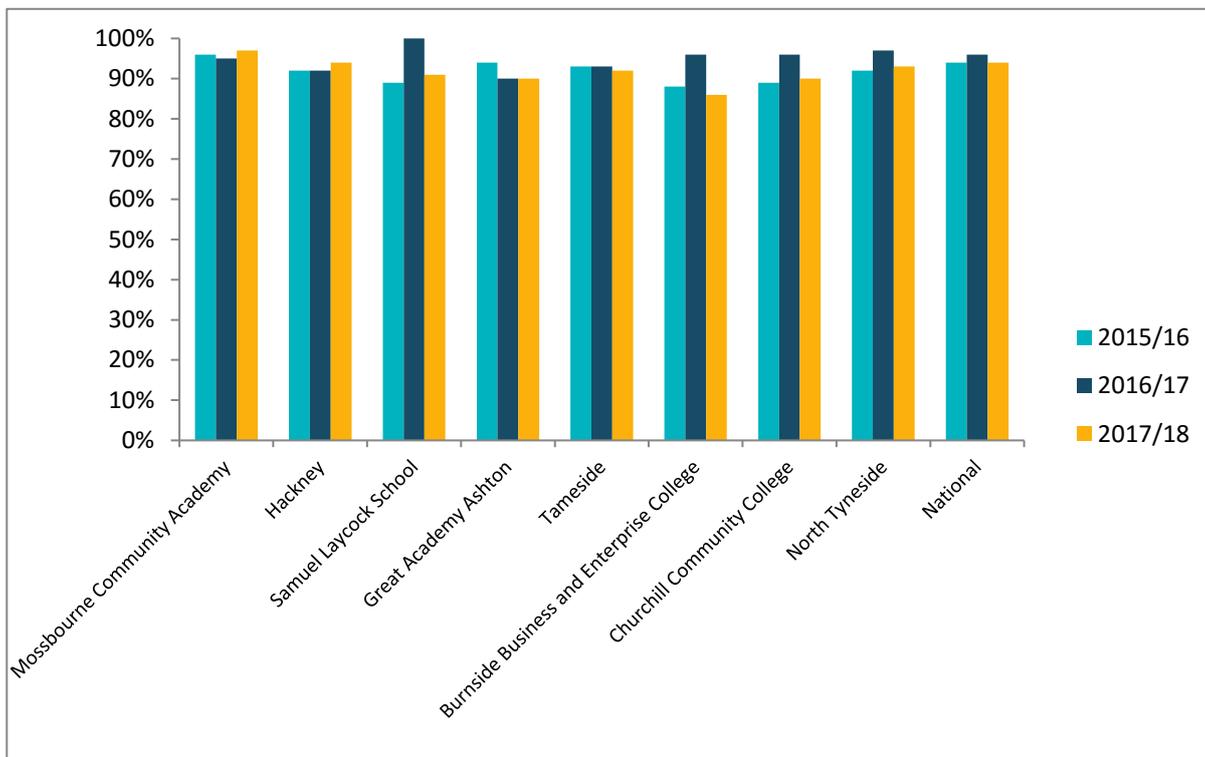

Source: Department for Education

The chart shows the destination of pupils in the Children's Community areas. This is shown by looking at the percentage of pupils staying in education or employment for at least two terms after finishing key stage 4. In England, this applies to 94% of pupils, with no change in the last three academic years.

In Pembury, 97% of pupils Mossbourne Community Academy stay on for at least two terms after KS4, increasing by 1 percentage point, compared with 94% in Hackney, an increase of 2 percentage points. In Smallshaw-Hurst, 90% of pupils at Great Academy Ashton stay on for two terms past KS4, compared with 92% in Tameside as a whole. Tameside saw the figure fall by 4 percentage points and Great Academy Ashton by 3 percentage points. Finally, in Wallsend 86% of pupils at Burnside Business and Enterprise College remain for at least two terms after KS4, also experiencing a fall of 2 percentage points during this period. By contrast, 90% of pupils remain at Churchill Community College, an increase of 1 percentage point and 93% in North Tyneside as a whole (also increasing by 1 percentage point).

Figure A4.8: Unemployment (Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit claimants) amongst 18-24 year olds in Children's Community Areas, Feb 2013 to May 2018
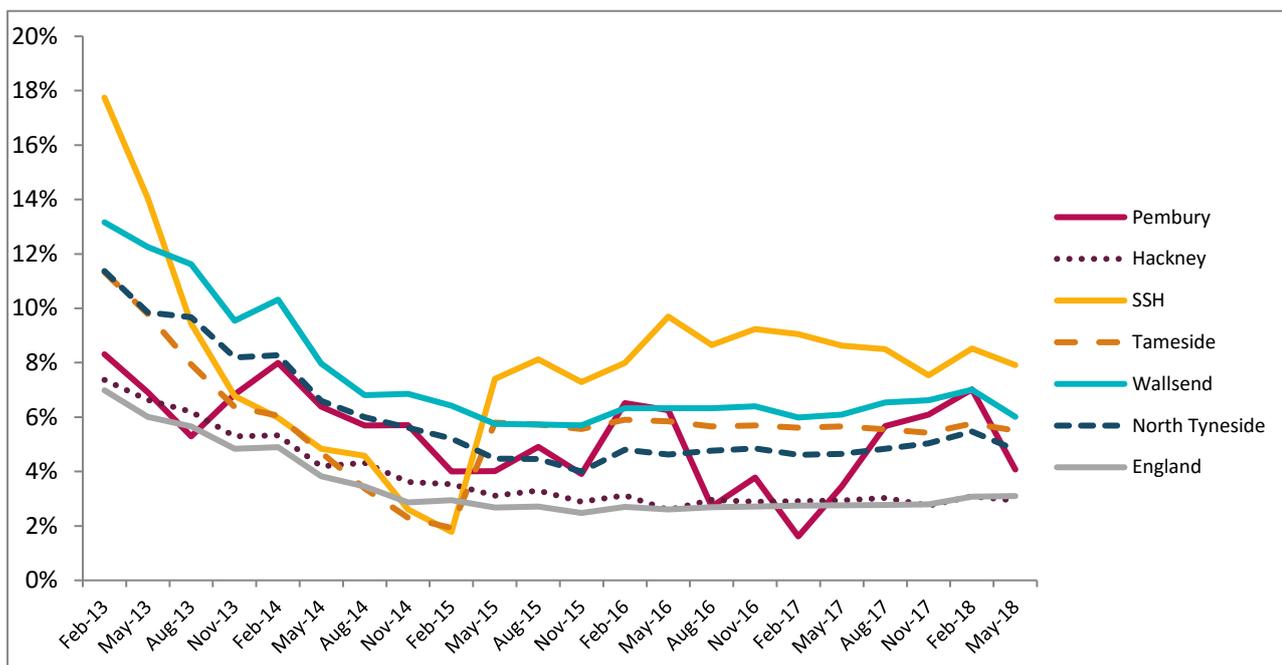

Source: DWP

The chart shows youth unemployment in the Children's Community areas, specifically amongst the 18 to 24 age group. Unemployment in this instance is calculated using the number of Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit (out-of-work) claimants aged 18-24 as a proportion of that total age group. Using this definition of unemployment, around 3% of 18-24 year olds are currently unemployed, nationally, representing a fall of 4 percentage points since February 2013.

In Pembury, around 4% of the 18-24 population are unemployed, compared with 3% in Hackney. Both areas have seen a fall in JSA/UC claimants of 4 percentage points during the period in question. 8% of 18 to 24 year olds in Smallshaw-Hurst are unemployed, in comparison with Tameside, where the figure is 6%. Smallshaw-Hurst has seen a considerable decline in youth unemployment, from as much as 18% in February 2013, to the current figure, a fall of 10 percentage points. The figure in Tameside, by comparison, fell by 6 percentage points during the same period. Finally, Wallsend has an unemployment rate for 18-24 year olds of around 6%, compared with 5% in North Tyneside. Both experienced a fall of 7 percentage points during the period in question.

Childhood Obesity

Figure A4.9: Obesity for reception children (age 4-5 years) in Children's Communities, 2008/09-2010/11 to 2014/15-2016/17
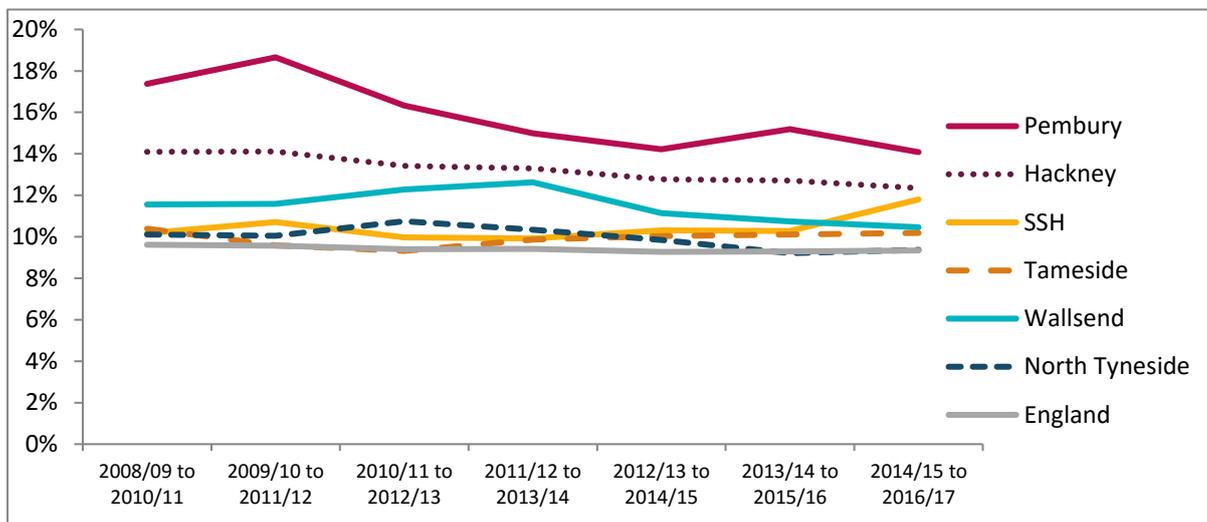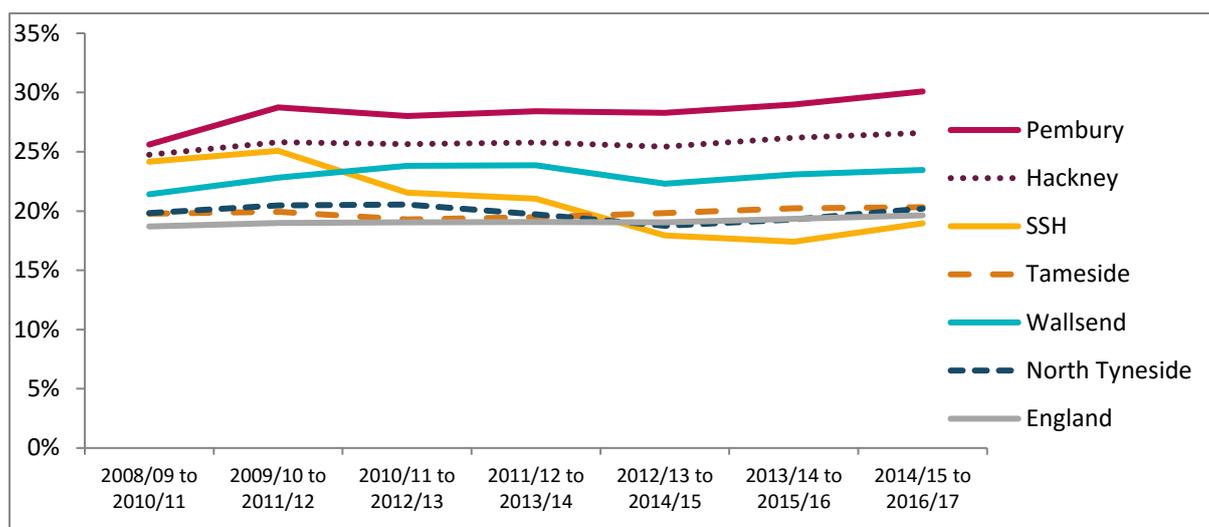

Source: Public Health England

The chart shows the proportion of reception age children (4 to 5 years old) who are obese. In England, this applies to 9% of children in that age group. There has been very little change in this figure from 2008/09 - 2010/11 to 2014/15 - 2016/17.

In Pembury, 14% of reception age children are obese, compared with 12% in Hackney. This is a decrease of 3 percentage points since 2008/09 - 2010/11, compared with a 2 percentage point fall in Hackney. In Smallshaw-Hurst, obesity in reception age children is 12% compared with 10% in Tameside. Obesity has increased by 2 percentage points in Smallshaw-Hurst during the period in question, compared with no change in Tameside. Finally, in Wallsend 10% of Reception children are obese; 9% in North Tyneside. Both areas have seen a fall of 1 percentage point between 2008/09 - 2010/11 and 2014/15 - 2016/17.

Figure A4.10: Obesity for Year 6 children (age 10-11 years) in Children's Communities, 2008/09-2010/11 to 2014/15-2016/17

Source: Public Health England

The chart shows the proportion of Year 6 age children (10 to 11 years old) who are obese. In England, this applies to 20% of children in that age group. This figure has increased by 1 percentage point from 2008/09 - 2010/11 to 2014/15 - 2016/17.

In Pembury, 30% of Y6 children are obese, compared with 27% in Hackney. This is increase of 4 percentage points since the 2008/09 - 2010/11, compared with a 2 percentage point increase in Hackney. In Smallshaw-Hurst, obesity in Year 6 age children is 19% compared with 20% in Tameside. Obesity has fallen by 5 percentage points in Smallshaw-Hurst during the period in question, but increased by 1 percentage point in Tameside. Finally, in Wallsend 23% of Y6 children are obese, compared to 20% in North Tyneside. Wallsend has seen an increase in Y6 obesity of 2 percentage points, whereas North Tyneside experienced no change between 2008/09 - 2010/11 and 2014/15 - 2016/17.

School engagement

Overall absences

These graphs show the percentage of possible morning or afternoons recorded as an absence from school for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised across the full academic year. They show the change between the 2015/16 and 2017/18 academic years. In England, primary schools recorded an overall absence rate of 4%. This figure did not change between the two academic years. In secondary schools, the rate is 5.4%, again with no significant change during the period in question.

Figure A4.11: Overall absences in Pembury primary schools, 2015/16 to 2016/17
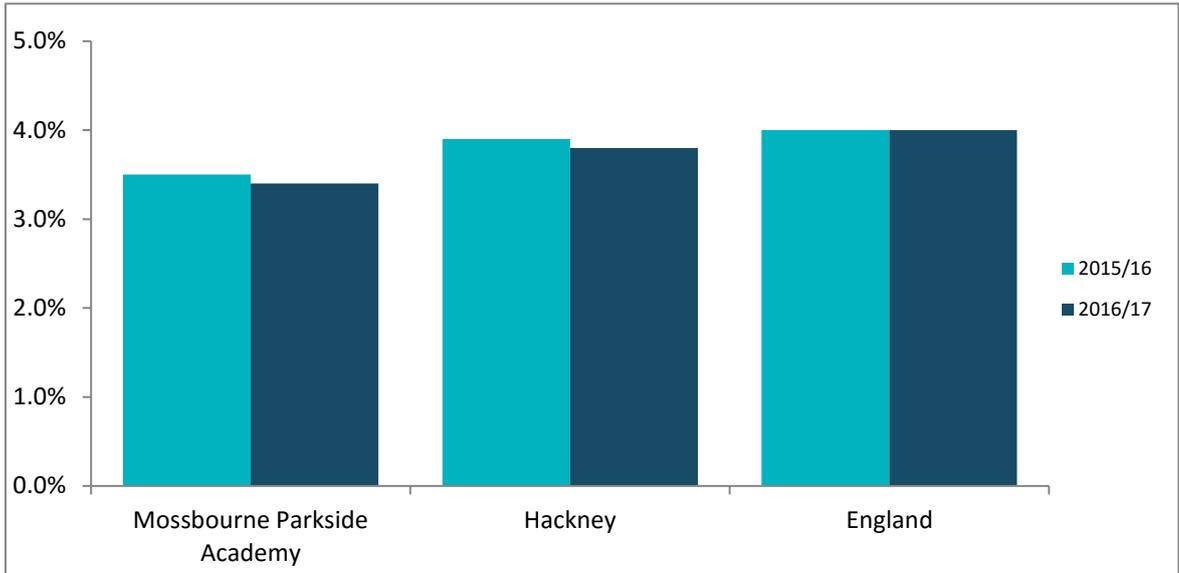
Source: Department for Education

In Pembury, the overall absence rate at the Mossbourne Parkside Academy is 3.4%, compared with 3.8% in Hackney. There was very little change in absences between 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Figure A4.12: Overall absences in Smallshaw-Hurst primary schools, 2015/16 to 2016/17
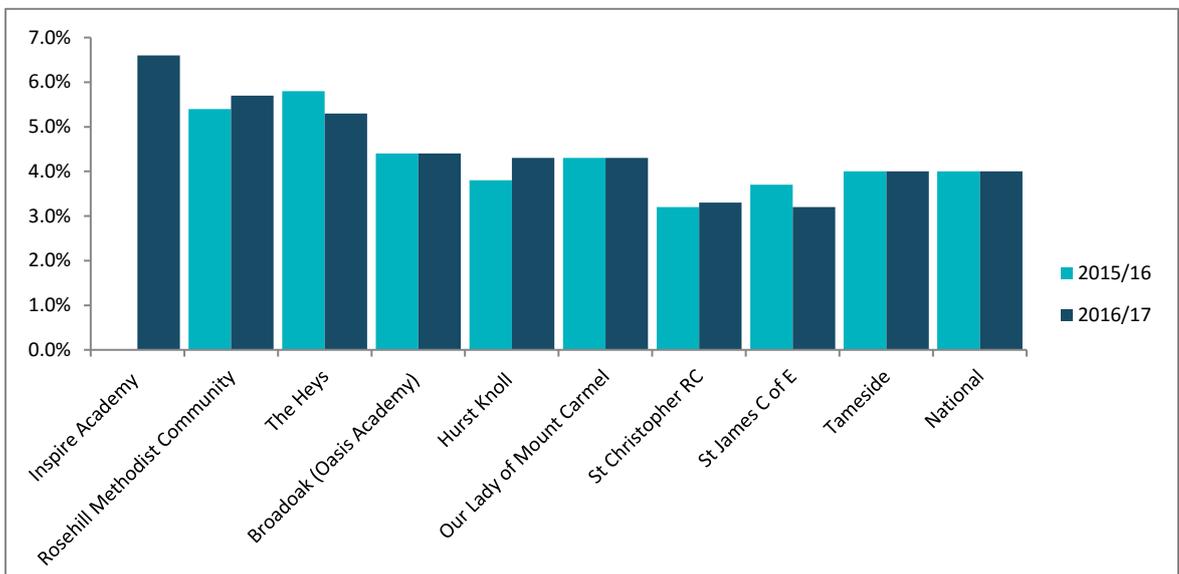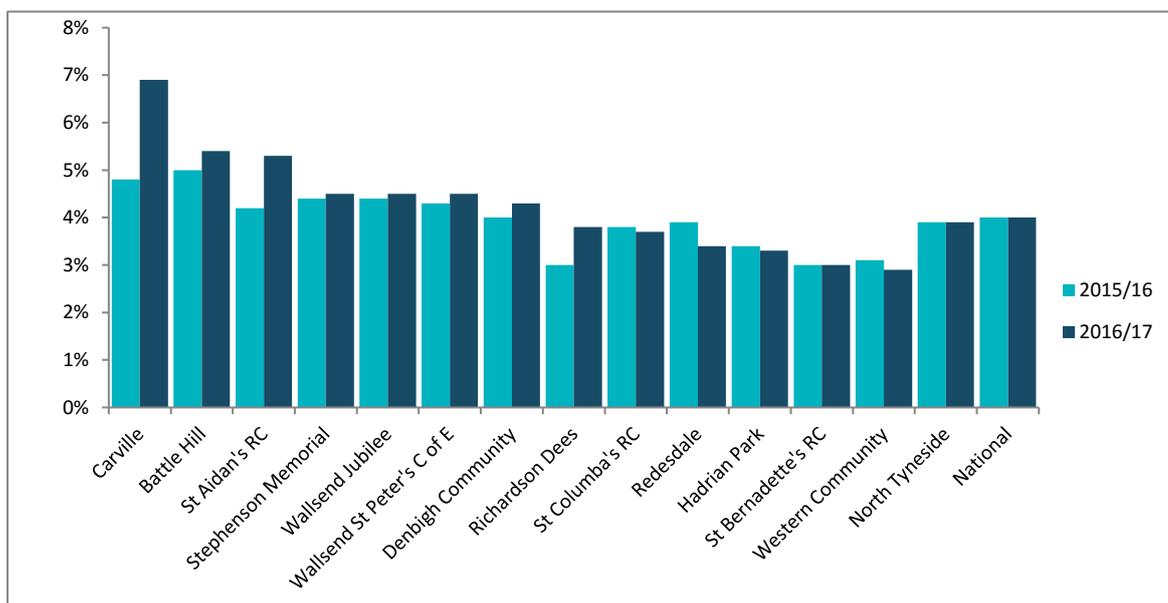

Source: Department for Education

In Smallshaw-Hurst, St James C of E Primary School achieved the lowest overall absence rate, at 3.2%, whilst Rosehill Methodist Community Primary School had the highest rate 5.7%. In Tameside, the rate of overall absences is 4%. There were only minimal changes in overall absences the Smallshaw-Hurst schools, whilst Tameside saw no change at all since 2015/16.

In Smallshaw-Hurst, St James C of E School achieved the lowest overall absence rate, at 3.2%, whilst Inspire Academy had the highest rate 6.6%, although there is no previous data to compare any change over time. In Tameside, the rate of overall

absences is 4%. There were generally only small changes in overall absences in the Smallshaw-Hurst schools since 2015/16. Tameside, meanwhile, saw no change at all during this time.

Figure A4.13: Overall absences in Wallsend primary schools, 2015/16 to 2016/17

Source: Department for Education

In Wallsend, Western Community School had the lowest overall absence rate, at 2.9%. Carville, on the other hand had an overall absence rate of 6.9%, whilst North Tyneside as a whole had an overall absence rate of 4%. Redesdale School saw its absence rate fall by half a percentage point from 2015/16 to 2016/17, whilst Carville experienced a rise of 2.1 percentage points during this period. North Tyneside had no significant change in its overall absence rate during the period in question.

Figure A4.14: Overall absences in Children's Communities secondary schools, 2015/16 to 2016/17
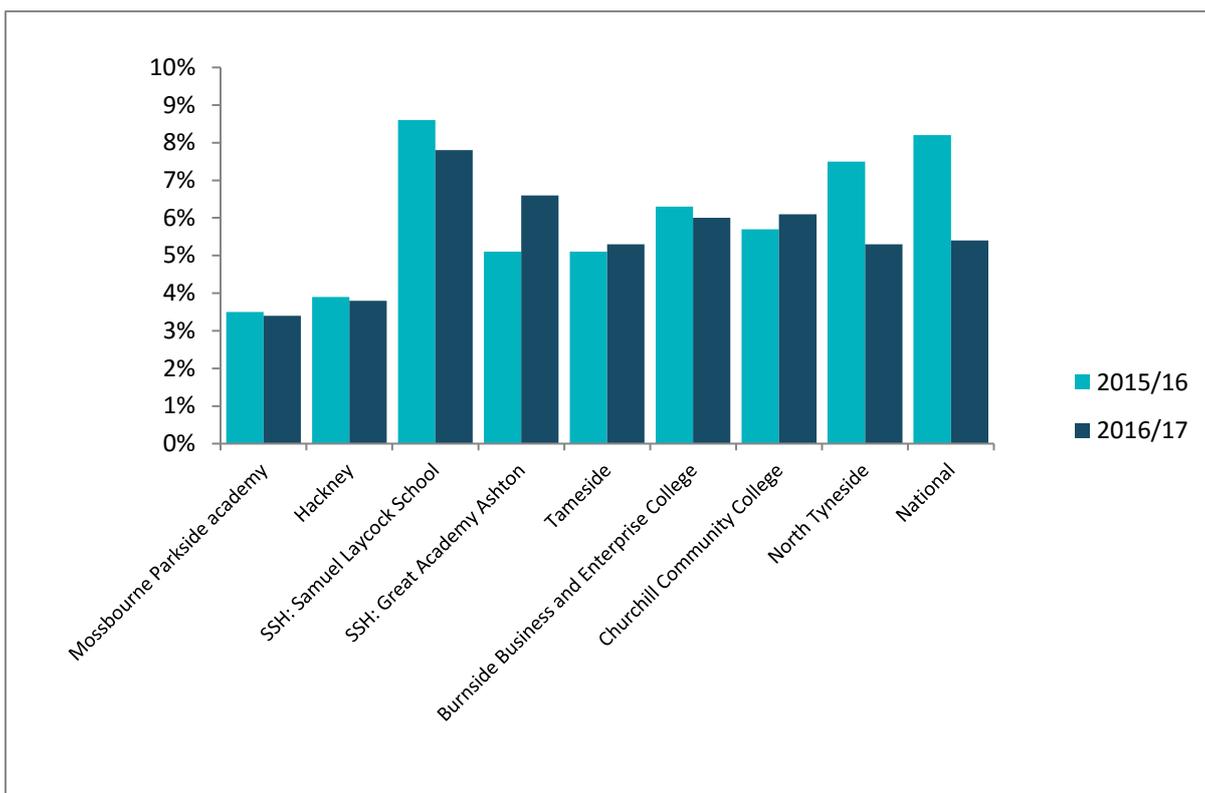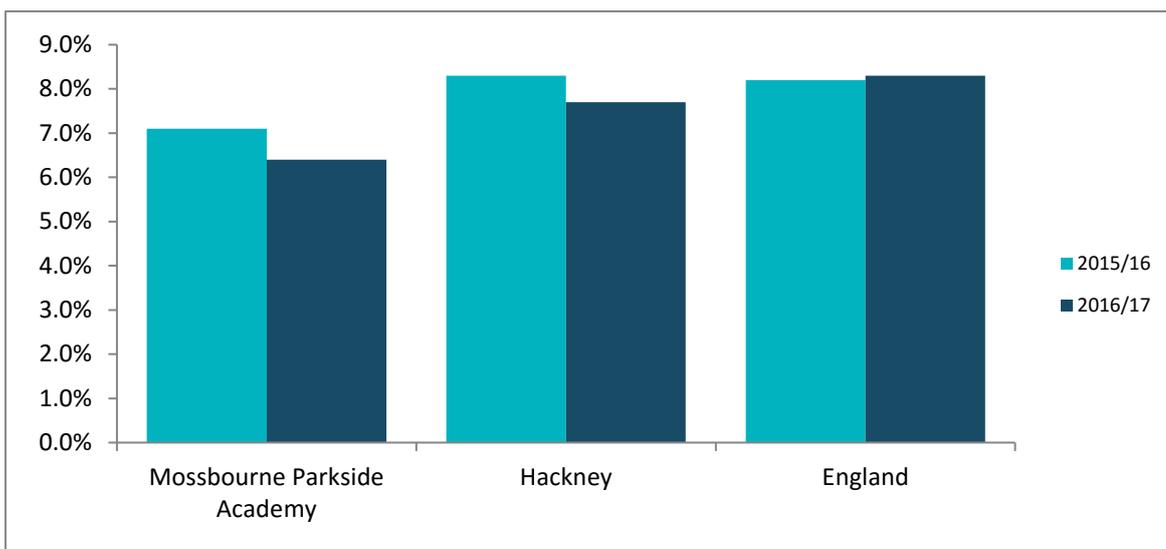

Source: Department for Education

In Pembury, the overall absence rate at Mossbourne Community Academy is 3.5%, compared with 4.6% in Hackney. Neither area experienced a significant change between 2015/16 and 2016/17. In Smallshaw-Hurst, Great Academy Ashton had an overall absence rate of 6.6%. By comparison the absence rate in Tameside is 5.3%. Great Academy Ashton saw an increase in the overall absence rate, of 1.5 percentage points and Tameside as a whole experienced no significant change during the period. Finally, in Wallsend Churchill Community College had an absence rate of 6.1% and Burnside Business and Enterprise College a rate of 6%. North Tyneside as a whole had an absence rate of 5.3%. Both schools and the local authority only recorded small changes in overall absences since 2015/16.

Persistent absence

These charts show the percentage of pupils who are persistently absent, as a proportion of the overall absent population. A pupil is classed as persistently absent if they miss 10% or more of the mornings or afternoons they could attend, meaning that if a pupil's overall rate of absence is 10% or higher across the full academic year, they are classed as persistently absent. The charts show the rates and changes across the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic years. In England, primary schools recorded a persistent absence rate of 8.3%, and 13.5 in secondary schools. In both cases, the rate did not change significantly between the two years.

Figure A4.15: persistent absence in Pembury primary schools, 2015/16 to 2016/17

Source: Department for Education

In Pembury, the rate of persistent absences at the Mossbourne Parkside Academy is 6.4%, compared with 7.7% in Hackney. There was very little change in absences between 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Figure A4.16: persistent absence in Smallshaw-Hurst primary schools, 2015/16 to 2016/17
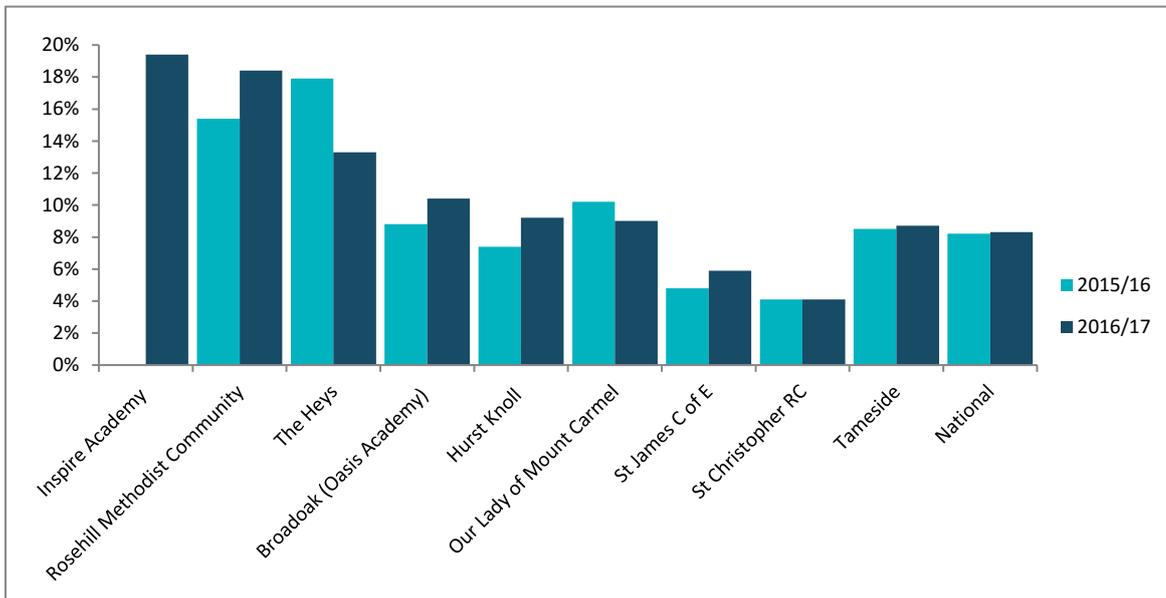
Source: Department for Education

In Smallshaw-Hurst, Inspire Academy had the highest persistent absence rate (19.4%, although there is no previous data to compare change over time), followed by Rosehill Methodist Community School (18.4%); St Christopher Roman Catholic Primary School, on the other hand, had the lowest (4.1%). By comparison, Tameside has a persistent absence rate of 8.7%. Broadoak Primary (Oasis Academy) experienced a fall in persistent absences of 4.6 percentage points during the period, whilst St James C of E Primary School had an increase of 3 percentage points. Tameside saw no significant change.

Figure A4.17: persistent absence in Wallsend primary schools, 2015/16 to 2016/17
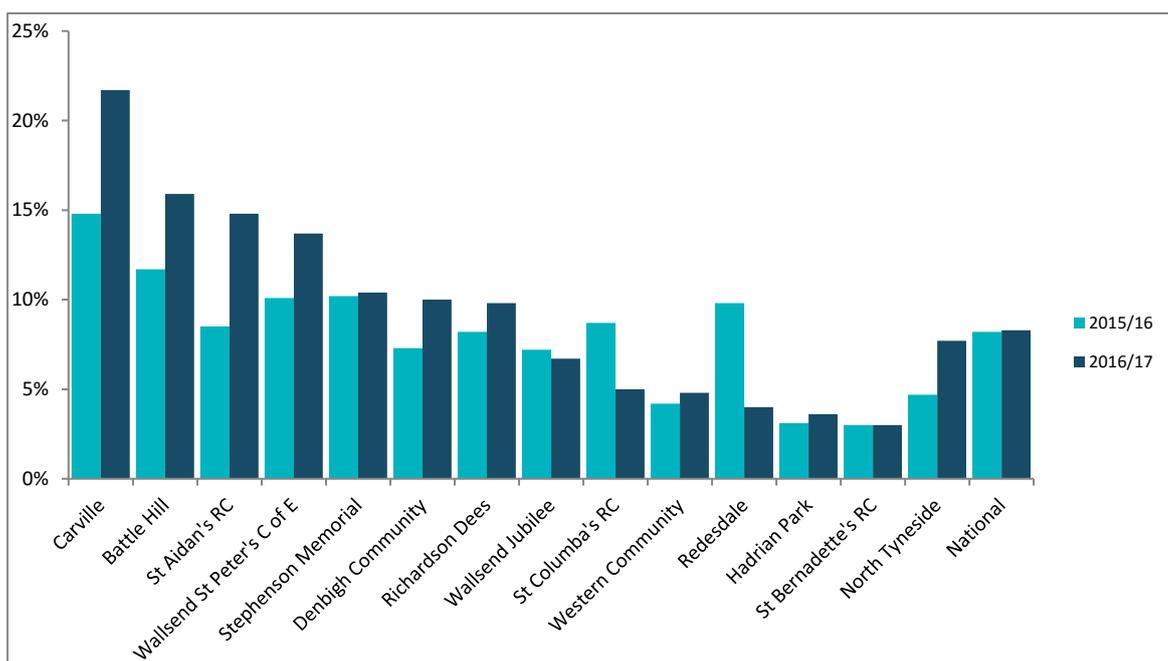
Source: Department for Education

In Wallsend, the persistent absence rate at Carville Primary School is 21.7%, in contrast to 3% in St Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary. North Tyneside as a whole has a persistent absence rate of 8.3%. Carville also saw an increase of 6.9 percentage points. Redesdale, on the other hand, experienced a fall in persistent absences of 5.8 percentage points, while North Tyneside experienced no significant change during the period.

Progression outcomes

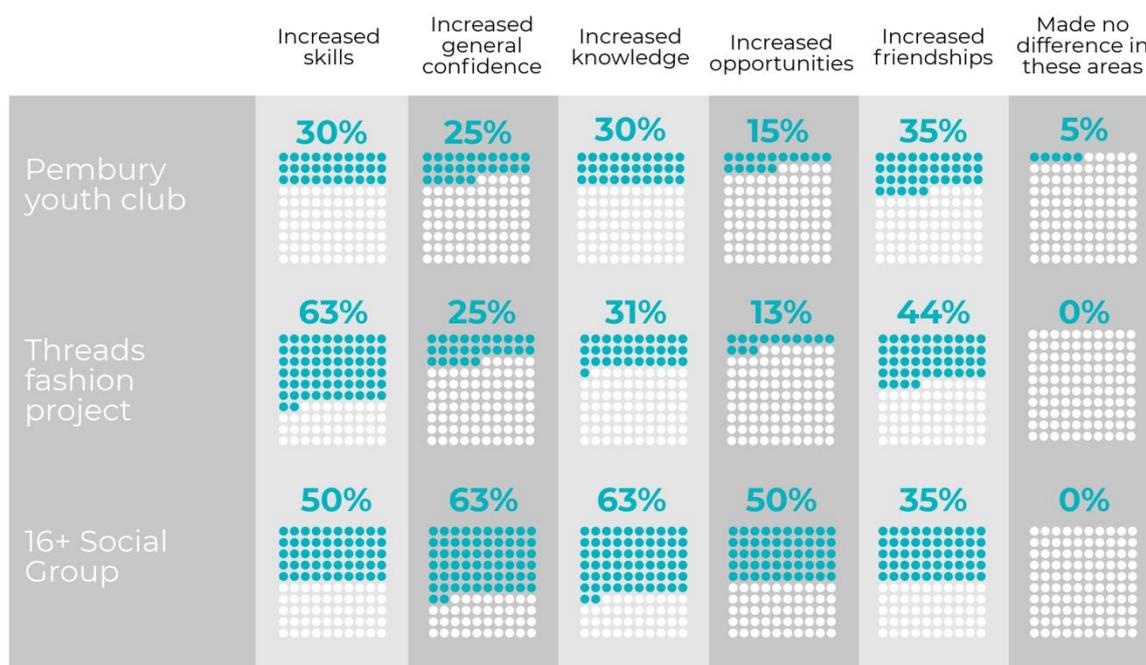Data through which to assess progression outcomes has been collected in two ways:

- a pilot beneficiary survey
- qualitative research with children and families

Pilot beneficiary survey

To date, beneficiary data has been collected via a pilot beneficiary survey carried out in the Pembury Children's Community. Additional beneficiary data from local evaluation activities in the three Children's Communities will be collated going forwards and included in future evaluation outputs.

Figure A4.18 identifies the impact on a small number of beneficiaries in Pembury associated with participation in three services: the youth club, threads fashion project, and 16+ social group. The numbers of responses to the pilot survey are small: Pembury youth club (n=20), Threads fashion project (n=16), 16+ social group (n=8), but the data suggest that there are positive benefits associated with these activities.

Figure A4.18: Beneficiary Outcomes

	Increased skills	Increased general confidence	Increased knowledge	Increased opportunities	Increased friendships	Made no difference in these areas
Pembury youth club	30%	25%	30%	15%	35%	5%
Threads fashion project	63%	25%	31%	13%	44%	0%
16+ Social Group	50%	63%	63%	50%	35%	0%

Interviews with residents, children and young people

Qualitative research has focussed on three themes:

- Participants' views on services and facilities available to the residents living in the Children's Communities.

- What it is like to live, grow up and raise a family in a Children's Community, and how (if at all) this is changing over time.

- Participants' experiences of local services, including those provided by the Children's Communities.

Data for each Children's Community is presented below.

Pembury

The evaluation team conducted interviews and focus groups with parents, children and young people in the Pembury Children's Community between January and June 2018. The research involved:

- Semi-structured face to face interviews with four Pembury residents involved in the residents steering group and/or activities delivered at the Pembury Community Centre (March 2018).

- A further focus group with representatives of the residents steering group (December 2018).

- Semi-structured face to face interviews and focus groups with young people attending the Pembury Youth Club. Three interviews and two focus groups (involving two and five young people respectively) were carried out with young people aged between 11 and 17 years.

- Parent interviews: five parents were interviewed in 2018, two of which had also participated in interviews about the Ready for School project in 2017.

- Discussion with children participating in the Ready for School project (in January 2018).

Living in the Children's Community

The general consensus amongst participants was that Pembury is a nice place to live, and furthermore it is an area that has improved in recent years. It is notable that interviewees do not highlight a sense of area decline or of the withdrawal of facilities and services which sometimes characterises people's experiences of living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Whilst this cannot be attributed entirely to the Children's Community (and the gentrification of Hackney more generally may create issues around access and affordability for existing residents) there is a strong sense in the interviews that Pembury is a community which provides good support to children and families.

Most participants felt that instances of crime had decreased over the last five years and said that the area was a safe place to live and that they were happy that their children also felt safe in the area.

Participants commented positively about the strong sense of community they felt in the area. This was attributed to the range of family and young-people friendly activities in the area and particularly the community events supported by Peabody and the Children's Community during the summer months.

> *"(The Children's Community) make an effort for the youths definitely. That all of the kids come from everywhere. That side of Pembury and everyone gets to meet everyone and speak, where do you live? It's nice for the kids to know who they're growing up amongst as well I think it's great… For all sorts of reasons. For communicating, being with the community, letting the kids bond with each other. Just having a fun day it's really nice. Sometimes you're focussed on life which is bills, cooking, washing and then you've got a nice fun day and you think it's from Peabody Trust. It's very nice and everybody always attends and everybody is always polite. They get such a vast amount of people attending. It's nice. They do make an effort."*

Engagement with and experience of services

The Pembury Community Centre

The Pembury Community Centre provides a focal point for social activities and is a source of information and assistance. All the participants had been involved with the Community Centre at some point and many had attended the courses and activities, either for themselves or concerning their children.

Pembury Pathways

A set of interviews was carried out with parents who were being supported through the Pembury Pathways project (providing advice and support to local parents looking to improve skills or move into employment) and/or involved in activities taking place at the Pembury Community Centre.

Parents were happy to receive the support offered. The project was welcomed and described as friendly and encouraging. Parents were able to progress at their own pace with things they wanted support with. Interviewees highlighted the impact of proactive outreach work in helping them to engage with services:

"I felt supported, I'm a single parent and I had two children, I felt that she supported me and I felt there was somebody in my corner trying to help me move better where I'm going with my family."

The Pembury youth club

Interviews and focus groups were carried out with young people attending the Pembury youth club, which is run by Peabody in the Pembury Community Centre.

These young people spoke positively about the youth club and the activities that were on offer (which included computer games, sports activities, dance and chill out areas) and suggested that it provided a valuable social space. For those struggling at home without computer and internet provision the youth club also provided an essential access point to enable them to complete homework and coursework. The fact that activities are free or low cost is very important to the young people.

The youth club was considered somewhere to go instead of hanging around on the streets.

"I think the estate would be very boring…without the youth club I don't know, it would just be really weird not having somewhere to go if you want to chill out, if you're cold and you're out with your friends it would just be really boring. … Yeah I would be on the street more often which is not good."

Young people were well aware that the youth club provided them with an alternative to getting involved in what they called *"bad stuff"*, and were conscious that younger people could be easily led into getting involved in anti-social activities.

"If there wasn't places like this where young people could go to you'd be reckless. So it does help."

Some of the young people who were interviewed had been on organised trips and holidays with the youth group. Travelling outside Pembury and broadening their horizons and experiences, was welcomed by young people who enthused about the trips.

All the young people who participated in the research considered the youth club to have provided them with social skills that they could carry forward into the future. Social interaction with friends, youth workers, getting to know new people, participating in discussion groups and indeed talking to an interviewer, were all considered valuable skills to support them in later life.

"It gives you more confidence as well when you're out in the real world and you see people and you can talk to them, you have more confidence to do that."

Experience of Ready for School (seed corn project)

Discussions were also held with groups of children participating in the Ready for School project which supported a cohort of children from the Pembury estate prior to and during their first year at a single primary school. Because of the very young age of these children (four and five years), interactive methods were used and the interviews carried out by a member of the research team with expertise in conducting research with young children. These discussions focussed on the children's experiences of the Ready for School project. Five children participated in the research, all of whom were girls.

The children were able to express themselves in relation to their views and perceptions of the activities they had been involved with. Things that came up in the discussions included

- Phonics - this may indicate the frequency that this is covered, that the children do enjoy this, or that the children feel this is the right thing to say.

- Play - this was brought up several times by the children. The children indicated that they enjoyed a play based approach and the literature supports this in terms of what is appropriate at this stage.

- Children had a keen interest in the adults and their peers - relationships were important to them.

- Social activities prior to starting school may help with settling in but the children's view on this was unclear.

Evaluation of the Ready for School project carried out by the Pembury Children's Community suggests that the pilot had a positive impact on the progress and outcomes of children in the cohort and strengthened home-school relationships for the families concerned. The project also enabled a number of families to connect with the Peabody family support worker to address issues including childcare, employment and benefits. The Ready for School project has been extended to a second cohort of children from the Pembury estate and the Children's Community is considering options for the future roll-out of the project which may include involvement of another primary school context.

Smallshaw-Hurst

We have conducted two initial family interviews with parents in Smallshaw-Hurst that will form a baseline to gauge the lived experience for families in the area and how it changes over time. These families were identified in collaboration with the Smallshaw-Hurst core team. The interviews covered:

- Living in Smallshaw-Hurst: area satisfaction and perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour, housing and community; provision of and access to community facilities, shops and work; how the area has changed; and what helps or hinders children and young people in the area.

- Schools in Smallshaw-Hurst: which schools they use; their perceptions of the schools; their relationship with the school; their confidence in engaging with the school; the support that they receive; and the school activities that they get involved in.

- Their experiences of local services, for example GPs, health and wellbeing services, pre-schools and early years, housing, social services and community groups.

The headline findings from these interviews are provided in the bullets below. More detailed analysis will be presented in the second annual report when we have interviewed a larger number of families.

- The two families were very positive about their housing and immediate environment.

- They felt very safe and reported no issues with crime, anti-social behaviour or noise.

- A key issue for both was the limited provision of facilities and services in Smallshaw-Hurst.

- If they wanted to access many facilities and services it involved travelling outside the area. This was reported to be expensive by bus (£2.80 for an adult single or £1.40 for a child single). Walking was not seen as a preferred option due to a steep hill. There were also complications in accessing children's services and groups when parents had children of different ages.

- Both families were very happy with their schools and would be confident to speak to the school about any issues, however neither was very involved in the school or its activities.

- One parent sent her eldest child to a school outside Smallshaw-Hurst due to the bad reputation of a local school (in relation to bullying). This created issues in accessing the school and as a result they had never attended it, even for parent's evenings.

- Despite both interviewees highlighting poor provision of activities and services they mentioned the following places that they had used to find out about what is happening locally: the Family Information Service and Tameside Mummies Get Out and Play.

Wallsend

Play Days service user interviews

The Wallsend Children's Community Play Days intervention was one of the seed corn funded projects intended to provide free summer holiday activities to local children and families. Part of the aim was to also encourage greater use of Howdon Park, as well as provision of much needed play activities. The five Play Days ran for three hours, one day a week, for five of the six weeks of 2018 summer break for children aged 8-12 years. Sessions included craft activities, dance, sport, singing, games, den building and healthy eating/cooking.

Contact details of about 50 parents/carers attending with their children over the five sessions were collected. Attendees were asked whether they would be willing to be contacted later for research and evaluation purposes. Researchers contacted parents/carers via email and text, and from this list seven were recruited to take part in interviews in November 2018. Six interviews were conducted face to face and one interview via telephone. Participants were offered a £10 voucher as an incentive for taking part.

The seven interviewees were all mothers living in the Howdon, Wallsend and surrounding areas. They had all attended at least one of the Play Days and were or had been regular users of Howdon Children's Centre where the face to face interviews were conducted. Their characteristics ranged from single mothers in receipt of benefits, to partnered and married mothers working in full and part time jobs. Numbers of children ranged from one to seven - from babies to older children in the 20s, but all had primary aged children who attended the Play Days. Some lived in social housing, others had inherited their homes from family members, were owner occupiers or had recently moved outside the area from the new build private estate. Some mentioned they had children with special needs and mental health difficulties, others talked about their child/children doing well at school.

Living in the Children's Community

Their local area of Howdon and Wallsend was commonly described as having problems associated with antisocial behaviour, vandalism, graffiti, violence, crime, alcoholism and drug taking. These issues were said by all of the interviewees to have increased in recent years and made their local area more undesirable, a stressful place

to live. It was generally not seen as a good place to bring up children (although there were some differences, noted below).

Keeping children safe was a recurrent theme. Most said they wouldn't allow their children to play out because of fears about safety, gangs, mixing with 'bad kids', drug users, and traffic dangers. Interviewees acknowledged that this restricts their children's opportunities to do well, physically and socially. Safety anxieties applied to both younger and older children, with one mother saying that her 18 year old son does not feel safe going out alone. Many felt that after 5pm even adults should not go out, as there are regular fights between neighbours. ASB was an issue with vandalism and burglaries, murders, kneecappings, gangs, robberies, drunkenness and people on drugs. Children were witnessing some of this ASB.

Many parents grew up locally and remember things being very different, and compare their childhoods to their children's experience. One parent stated, *'it's now a very rough area This isn't where I wanted to raise my children but had to move here because of my ex'* (she lived in Wilkie just outside Wallsend). Parents reported that they had more freedom as a child and could play out in the local parks and fields with friends, as this used to be safer. The perception was that there were more clubs and activities after school and in the holidays until the recent past - even if this was informally arranged between friends, neighbours and the local community. There was a general sense that community spirit, trust, cooperation, looking out for others including other children had changed for the worse. *'Parents can't control themselves let alone their children. They do not understand that their behaviour is unacceptable'.*

The physical environment was reported to have worsened, with more derelict, neglected houses and buildings. Irresponsible landlords were seen as part of this problem as they appeared to have no regard for the property, type of tenants, their behaviour or impact on neighbours. Roads and pavements were mentioned as being more poorly maintained, with litter, broken glass and needles commonly seen as an added danger, especially for children. Increased traffic in the area was also cited as making the roads more dangerous for children to cross. Some interviewees felt that cuts to police, council and other services meant that the authorities were less responsive at dealing with these issues.

A key negative factor that made growing up in the area more difficult for children, cited by nearly all the interviewees, was the limited out of school activities to support and constructively occupy local children. This was especially the case for over 11s and teenagers and was mentioned by all parents regardless of the age of their children. Parents felt they had to keep their children indoors for safety reasons, with the extent of their screen-based activities seen as problematic. This meant their children had fewer opportunities for playing together and socialising, but this was preferable to them being out on the streets, getting into trouble as there is so little for them to do. Some parents commented that most of the activities are run are for primary children over 8 years, but not the younger or older children. Children became bored with not enough for them to do, especially during the school holidays. For some parents the feeling was that activities on offer were just one offs and not consistent. One parent emphasized that *'there's nothing for them'*.

A strong work ethic and parenting were seen to be highly important in determining the role models and guidance children and young people have to enable them to do well and better equipped for life. It was suggested that if children saw parents working hard (e.g. holding down two jobs) this would stand them in good stead for the future. This was especially the case for male family members. One parent who particularly believed this said,

"It's the parents. My dad had 2 jobs and fixed cars, my mum had 6 jobs while she trained to be a nurse, and volunteering to get experience. I used to see my mam crying at the computer trying to pass her exams. We just had to go along with it; it's what they had to do. We still got lots of family times together, not as many. My brothers are workaholics, still work hard but can't get his son to go to school - it's this generation - but they still need parents as role models with working."

There was still a sense that very traditional views were part of the culture. It was expressed that women were viewed as being at home and men providing. The role of women was described as having children and taking care of them whilst men went out to work. One parent stated, *'I was raised old fashioned. Men work and mams raise the kids'*.

Generally it was viewed that children and young people were not seen as well equipped for the future. The graduate parent shared, *'Some children have limited worlds here, no push to go beyond. Some have never been to the beach 10 minutes away, unless on a school trip'*. They were seen as equipped to survive the local area e.g. they knew not to give eye contact to certain members of the community and knew how to avoid conflict which was all around them. In other ways children were not prepared as they were over protected at home due to community violence. One parent who lived just outside of Howden and who felt her area was now not a safe place to live talked about how one child was prepared for work but not survival in the community whereas the other would struggle to get work but would survive in the community. She spoke of her two sons saying,

"I've kicked him up the butt so he isn't a druggie, one of these people on the street. He's quiet, well equipped for a job but not strong enough for this life. They were raised so violence wasn't an option. My younger son with ADHD he's very argumentative, could deal with the violent side of life but not workwise - he doesn't take orders very well"

Parents were anxious about their children's future, especially for those already struggling at school (e.g. with SEND, mental health issues and unable to access support). One family had several children and finances were sparse. One of the children needed to access counselling for a mental health problem but this was further away in Newcastle and they could not sustain taking all the children to Newcastle. Consequently, her child could not access support and the parent was very upset about this. Some participants felt this generation will still struggle more than they did (regardless of parenting/ role models), because of being exposed to more negative influences locally, more special needs, more stress and mental health problems, fewer opportunities for children to be kids/play, limited access to extra support when they need it.

"In the past, as kids knew you had to go out there to get what you want, get a job, get ready for life. Now kids expect things all the time, they're naïve, think money grows on trees and they don't understand, they're definitely not equipped like we were."

Engagement with and experience of services

None of the parents interviewed were aware of Wallsend Children's Community - one mother wondered if it was connected to civic awards or other programmes run by Sure Start. A nursery owner who was involved in developing the first year of Play Days in meetings with Alan Strachan recalled a possible link related to Save the Children, but had not heard about Wallsend Children's Community.

The Sure Start Children's Centre (where interviews took place) was seen to be an important and valued community support service for young families. It was seen as a comfortable, safe, supportive part of the community.

The local schools were generally thought be good, although some interviewees expressed concerns or specific criticisms, and comparisons were drawn between schools with more or less funding for free activities. Some parents felt there was inequity between the schools.

Parents had been asked to make financial contributions to schools based activities but concern about pressure to do so had resulted in fewer trips and days out than there used to be, or that activities are very short term. The general feel was that sustaining activities was not possible and the summer holidays were very long. Consequently, children were bored and there was very little to do that was free.

Most parents did not feel they are involved, have a say or influence on anything locally. Most parents had never been asked their views. Those that had complained and campaigned felt that they had been ignored or that it had taken a lot of effort to see some small improvements. Most suggested that they have difficulty finding out what's going on locally, and that access to information is an issue for all but the most proactive community members. A key issue identified was that there isn't one central place to find out about everything.

Experiences of Play Days (seed corn project)

Play Days were positively valued by nearly all parents for being fun and free. Examples of crafts, face painting, den building, healthy food tasting, smoothie bike, stilt walking were mentioned.

> "We don't have a lot of money so anything free is great as we need to fill the 6 weeks holidays. It wasn't a lot but it was great."

The play days covered 15 hours over the 6 week holidays (5 weeks of 3 hours), so not enough, given the stress and cost of the summer holidays for most parents interviewed. Six weeks rather than five and additional days would have been welcomed. One parent said the days did not cater to children with ADHD.

Barriers to attending all sessions included: parents needing to accompany their children, difficult for working parents; other siblings too young/old to take part; health issues; fathers did not want to attend with kids; other parents 'kicking off'/smoking. One parent shared, *'The play days were fantastic! The stuff they put on was lovely - pedal bikes to make smoothies. What let it down was all the parents smoking, parents kicking off'.* Other things on offer included, den building, smoothie making bike, beading, crafts. There was a dental health promotion stand (oral health project presence). It was generally felt that normally the parents would not go to the park because of the broken glass and have not been back since because of the ongoing problems. Other parks have had money spent - Richardson Dees, but this one is locked at night.

Play Days were associated with Sure Start Children's Centre (the venue used in case of wet weather). None were aware of Wallsend Children's Community links.

Differences in locality experience

The experiences and views about the local area, access to, and quality of services differed depending on where interviewees lived and their resources. Overall, however the area was thought to be in decline, with some streets and areas seen to be particularly problematic in relation to anti-social behaviour. Local estates were viewed

as lacking in access to shops and services, and having the resources to access facilities outside of the area was an important driver of more positive views expressed.