

# RISE AND SHINE:

## BREAKING CYCLES OF INJUSTICE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN THE UK

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DARTINGTON  
SERVICE  
DESIGN LAB

**IMPROVING SERVICES  
FOR CHILDREN  
& YOUNG PEOPLE**

dartington.org.uk  
info@dartington.org.uk  
@DartingtonSDL  
(01803) 762400

# ABOUT THIS REPORT AND THE AUTHORS

This report has been written by the learning coordinator team in the UK, commissioned by Comic Relief for the duration of the Rise and Shine funding period to facilitate a shared learning process for grantees and the wider early childhood development community. The team includes Tim Hobbs, CEO of Dartington Service Design Lab and Dartington Associates Sarah Frost, Dawn Hart and Dorothy Flatman.

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# 1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

This report summarises the learning from Rise and Shine, a programme focused on community action for early childhood development (ECD), funded by Comic Relief. The report is aimed at funders and commissioners of similar work and those who deliver it. The key message from the report is the importance of never stopping dreaming, adapting and evolving no matter what challenges a turbulent external environment creates.

Rise and Shine was the first funding programme under Comic Relief's 'Children Survive and Thrive' pillar. This aimed to support child-centred approaches and make progress in addressing the comprehensive development needs of children during their early years in the UK, Kenya and Malawi. The work was driven by a belief that every child has the right to the best start in life.

This report is based on the learning from the 21 geographically dispersed grassroots projects across the UK. Projects were funded for between 3–5 years, with sixteen projects in England, three in Scotland and two in Northern Ireland. Projects worked with a range of target groups, including children with disabilities, families living in poverty, young parents, and families experiencing domestic abuse. Further details of funded partners can be found in [Appendix A](#), but the key features of projects were that they:

- Were child centred
- Targeted the most disadvantaged families
- Were grassroots
- Were based on recognised good practices.
- Used innovative and flexible approaches
- Prioritised the comprehensive development needs of children during their early years, e.g. health, nutrition, safety and protection, early learning, responsive caregiving
- Adopted trauma-informed practice

***“We want all children to achieve their potential during the first years of life through good health, nutrition, opportunities for early learning, responsive and supportive caregiving, safety and protection”***

***(From the call for proposals issued by Comic Relief)***

***Comic Relief's Rise and Shine programme supports partners working on early childhood development, with a focus on not leaving children behind, narrowing disadvantage gaps and improving life chances. By investing in children in their early years who are most likely to be left behind, we can help break the cycle of poverty and injustice.***

Collective learning was integral to the programme and enabled funded partners to reflect and adapt throughout. The collective learning process, facilitated by Dartington Service Design Lab, sought to create the conditions in which projects and practitioners would have the impetus and support to learn and adapt their work individually and collectively as a cohort of projects. This was achieved through face-to-face events, online facilitated small group discussions, and online learning events ([see Appendix B for details](#)).

The funded partners involved in the collective learning really valued the space they had to come together to learn:

*"It feels good to know how we are all connected in the spirit of what we are doing."*

*"We are all in the same boat, and it's ok to stop and look back at the good - not just focus on what isn't working."*

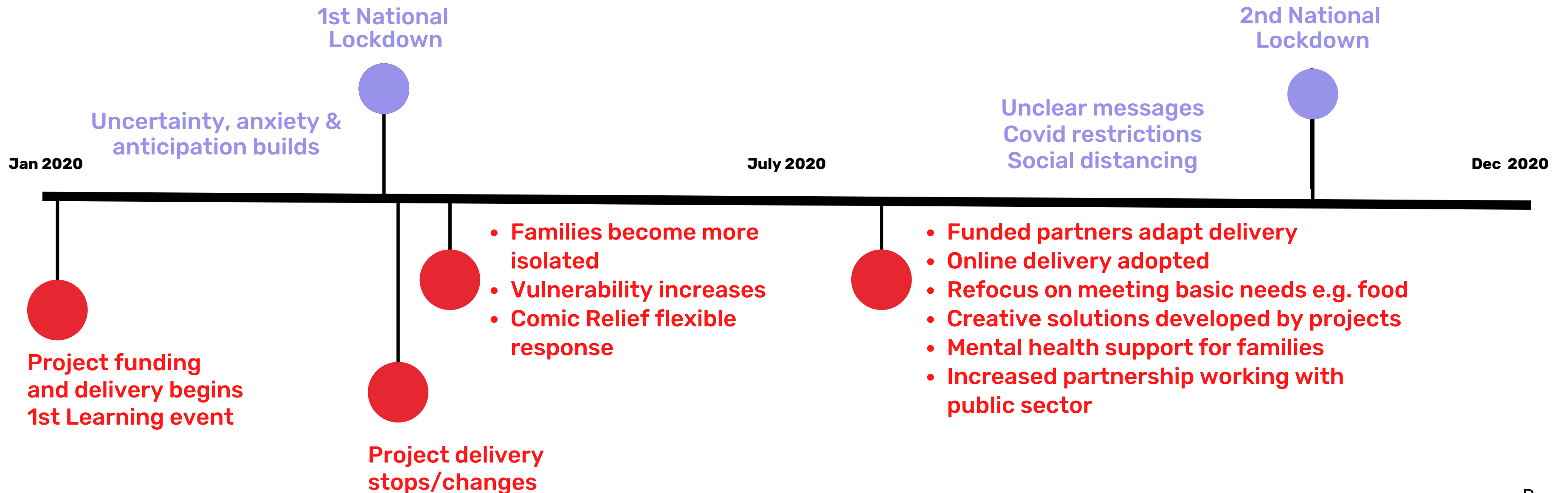
*"Having had the space in these sessions has been integral to the process and success - thank you."*

*"Really good to make connections and hear other people's stories."*

# 2. A STORY OF TURBULENT TIMES

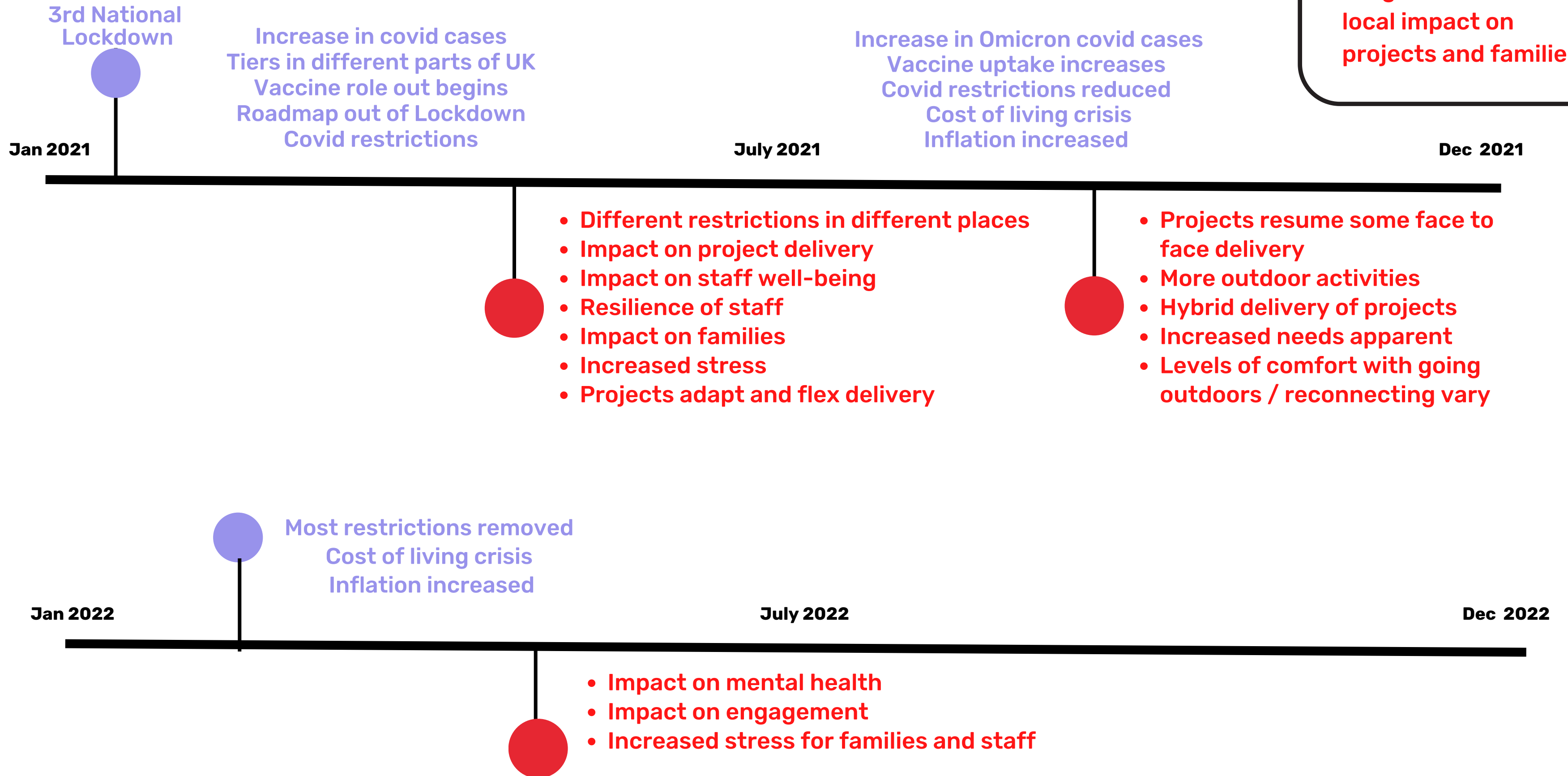
When Rise and Shine was conceived and funding granted, no one could have predicted how rapidly and dramatically the delivery context would change. Previous programme learning has taken place within relatively stable contexts but the pandemic and the consequent effects created a turbulent environment in which funded partners, funders and families were challenged. The programme learnings can only be seen in this context. The changing national context had an impact on the local delivery settings over the 3 years as illustrated below.

**KEY:**  
**National context**  
**Programme context - local impact on projects and families**



# 2. A STORY OF TURBULENT TIMES

**KEY:**  
 National context  
 Programme context - local impact on projects and families



# REFLECTIONS ON TURBULENT TIMES

In autumn 2021, eighteen months into the pandemic, funded partners reflected on the strategies they had employed to continue their support to families during these challenging times.



## Staff teams' adaptation and flexibility

Balancing on-going service delivery with managing risk for both families and staff was a constant challenge. Communication skills were vital, especially around issues relating to mental health and building resilience to inspire families' abilities to keep going. There was no road map for this, leading staff teams to wonder, "Am I doing this right?".

*"The on-going management of covid and ensuring staff are well and emotionally secure and balancing that with the needs of the families and the need to keep the nursery open whilst moving some teams to online working. The ever-changing guidance was very difficult to manage as a manager."*



## Mental well-being: Isolation

Many families supported by Rise and Shine funded partners were, due to the pandemic, very cut off from their wider families and other support systems. For women experiencing domestic abuse, the isolation carried additional risks.

The use of face masks made it hard to read people's facial expressions (made worse when social distancing), adding to the sense of loss of human connection.

The silence associated with isolation was noted by staff: it was very odd not to hear the sounds of parents and children in the projects and this was so welcomed when it returned.



## Mental well-being: Increased mental health challenges

The pandemic brought a massive acceleration in mental health challenges, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. Funded partners witnessed relapses among parents and carers who were previously improving. Restrictions led to project responses feeling like a sticking plaster - a temporary solution to crisis, rather than being able to provide more in-depth support.

*"There has been a massive acceleration in women's mental health needs and lots of relapses and short-term fixes - we had over 600 referrals in last year - all issues have been exacerbated."*

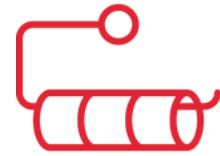
# REFLECTIONS ON TURBULENT TIMES



## The value of laughter, fun and joy

Funded partners reflected how, amidst the challenges of the pandemic, there was still a need for fun and silliness and to seek out joy wherever possible. Some sent out music packs to families, which enabled self-expression and a means to maintain connections. Others brought in children's entertainers to deliver sessions.

Once restrictions were lifted, it was important to reconnect through fun channels and to celebrate landmarks, for example, the graduation of children from nursery to school in a positive way.



## Poverty and the political climate

It was frighteningly stark to funded partners how basic resources (e.g. food, toilet rolls, digital devices) have been lacking for many families.

Undoubtedly the pandemic has widened inequalities and has had the greatest impact on those most at the margins of our society. There were concerns about how the many families facing food and fuel poverty would get through the winter.

*"The impact of cost-of-living crisis is the biggest challenge, especially for those with under-5s who are not entitled to full-time school - a warm, dry environment with learning resources and, for some, free school meals. It is a critical time for our work to ensure we understand and respond to this crisis."*



# REFLECTIONS ON TURBULENT TIMES



## Care and kindness

Funded partners both gave and witnessed the protection afforded by the kindness and care within communities providing mutual support, for example older women knitting blankets for women in refuges.

Valuing people through actions has been important. One project working with street sex workers gave out marshmallows and hot chocolate, ensuring they were high quality, not just the cheapest available.

*"We want to give them hope and to feel loved. It's love that will win people through."*



## The value of connections

Maintaining connections with others was crucial during the pandemic. This connection was largely through digital means and then followed by the joy of getting together with friends and family in person once this was possible. Rebuilding these connections and people's confidence in coming out and reconnecting was vital after periods of isolation.

*"We had to put the shutters down and we missed the community and they missed us - so we didn't feel complete."*



## The importance of self-care

Project staff came to appreciate the importance of practising self-care, especially when they were giving so much of themselves in terms of time spent at work and emotionally. These times were described by some staff as an 'emotional roller coaster'. Creating strategies for sustaining staff well-being has been essential to avoid burnout. Nature and the outdoors became important to both staff teams and families as a valuable space. It became essential for workers to build in time to stop, listen, feedback, reflect and adapt to ever changing circumstances including home working and home schooling.

*"The house was the office and home were the nursery and school."*

# 3. WHAT DID WE LEARN TOGETHER?

Throughout the Programme, learning was captured and shared via face-to-face events, online facilitated small group discussions, online learning events and analysis of project reports (see [Appendix B](#) for more details).

Three key themes identified were:

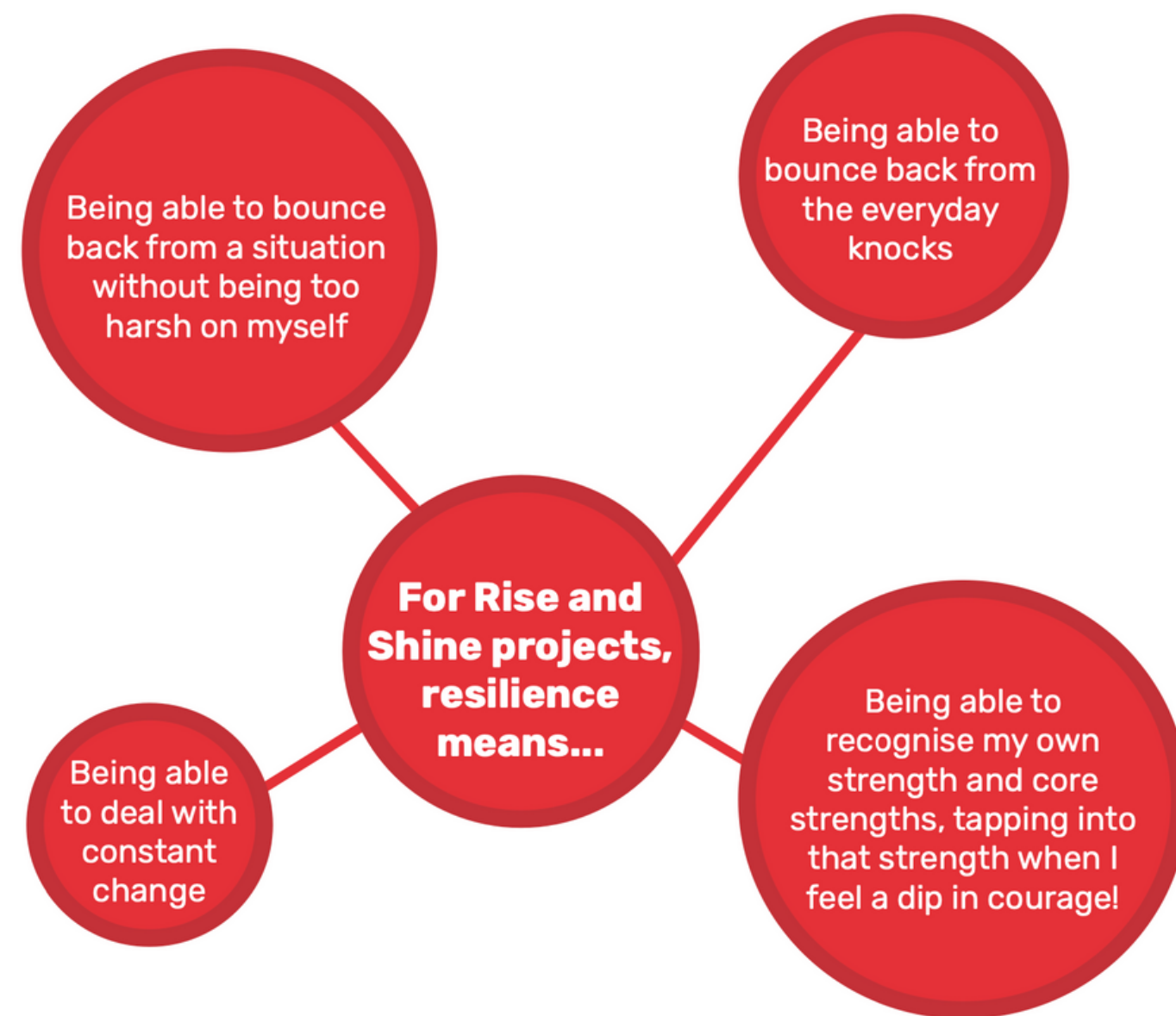
- 1. Resilience
- 2. Adaptability and flexibility
- 3. Partnerships, practice and policy

## KEY THEME 1: RESILIENCE

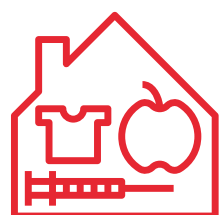
The families receiving support from Rise and Shine funded partners, along with project staff themselves, needed to be even more resilient during the pandemic. This accelerated their learning around resilience which also has bearing for similar projects and programmes in the future as the times we live in continue to be highly turbulent.

### What is resilience?

Resilience is not a trait or personal characteristic, there is no such thing as a resilient person. Resilience is the ability to adapt positively to a changing environment in a context of stress and uncertainty. Positive adaptation isn't just about what an individual person does – it is also about the interaction between a person and their social environment.



# How did projects create the right conditions for resilient children and families?



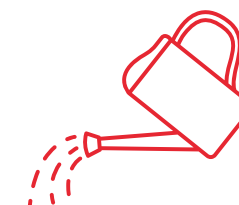
## Ensured practical needs were met

Families were unlikely to engage in projects, if they didn't have basic essentials (e.g. food, heating, adequate housing). Funded partners therefore focused on meeting families immediate and practical needs e.g., providing food and clothes, help with heating bills, support around housing issues and providing equipment to get online.



## Offered opportunities for connection

Lockdown and social distancing posed challenges to connecting with others. Projects sought to create opportunities for connection through creating small peer to peer groups e.g., new mums meet with no agenda just to share a cuppa and small groups for families to share concerns about social mixing post lockdown. One project described the great value in providing an outlet and place to connect with others through 'injecting energy' into communities e.g. through film making sessions, or bringing families together to create pizzas.



## Nurtured relationships/making people feel safe and important

In the absence of positive relationships for many families, projects recognised that the quality of their interaction with them was important. This emphasised the importance of giving families lots of positive reassurance and validation and praise for things they do well, and nurturing them, e.g. by making the project setting a special, homely space where families could feel safe.

***"We care about the quality of the tea and coffee we provide to women – we give them the same as we'd have at home."***

# How did projects create the right conditions for resilient children and families?

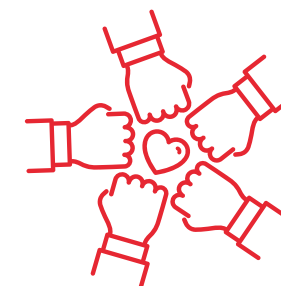
Some projects also provided personalised items for children (e.g., a teddy with their initials on) which helped them feel someone was waiting for them. This consistency and safety was seen as important in helping build resilience in children. The provision of special, celebratory events was another way projects made families feel nurtured and valued:

***“The honouring of HIV mothers journey through provision of a three course meal after which they shared their stories and testimonies, served as a safe space where women could talk and make connections with each other. The gratitude and love they show for each other is amazing.”***



## **A culture of taking care and the importance of love**

Projects talked about the importance of enabling and providing a culture of caring – and found various ways to give the message to families that ‘we really care about you’ and that, ‘you deserve good things’. One project talked specifically about the importance of love – *“people don’t change unless they feel loved”*.



## **Having the right staff team and looking after them**

Having a strong staff team with the right skills and attitude and who come to work to make a difference, was seen as important in supporting the resilience of families. Nurturing and looking after staff was vital for the staff themselves as well as for the families they support.

## KEY THEME 2: ADAPTABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY

The history and strength of grassroots projects has always been in adapting to the needs of communities. The need for adaptability and flexibility was amplified and accelerated by the pandemic, for both funded partners and funders.

Interpreting the ever-changing guidance, and sometimes being the enforcer of the guidance, sometimes sat uncomfortably in an environment where problems and solutions were usually addressed collaboratively. New levels of communication and relatability were required just to keep everyone safe in a community space.

For many, this adaptability and flexibility was seen as a necessity and a key strength:

*“Our strength has been the ability to respond quickly to urgent need and adapt our services to plug as many of the health and social care gaps that we feasibly can to help maintain quality of life.”*

For others, being agile and responsive was seen to be essential in achieving positive outcomes for families and allowed them to diversify their support offer:

*“A key strength that is vital for the success of our work is the ability and readiness to flex and adapt our interventions in response to our families and children's often complex, chaotic and changing life circumstances. We are able to be innovative and dynamic in our delivery responses (e.g. increasing home visits if a parent's mental health becomes so poor they are struggling to leave the house.) - this ensures that we are able to have maximum, sustainable impact on children's lives. To ensure the best outcomes for all participants, the delivery of the work needs to be agile, fluid and responsive.”*

*“Over the past three years, we have diversified our offer to families, recognising that families are all at different points on their journey and that the level of support that they require varies from family to family and from time to time.”*

***“Within the first 6 weeks of the grant the first national lock down was announced, and staff had to quickly adapt to a different way of working, and families requiring a different type and level of support, all in the face of having to manage their own worry and anxieties about their health and that of their families.”***

# How did the Rise and Shine programme and funded partners adapt and flex their provision?



## Increased or developed online delivery of work with families

Some sessions were delivered by Zoom, others maintained mobile phone contact with families.

*“We have continued to learn how to adjust and improve technical equipment so children could be heard and were better able to interact with sessions. We now have a large screen monitor to see children and families more clearly.”*



## Reaching a wider geographical cohort

The team turned to providing support online meaning that some projects were able to reach a wider geographical cohort and reach more families where access to provision may be limited. Using remote provision, one project, Body and Soul, were able to extend their reach beyond London and to engage families in areas where specialist services are limited or non-existent.



## Developing and delivering hybrid projects

Development of hybrid project delivery (using a mix of online and face-to-face) e.g. sending or delivering materials and resources to families to be used in online sessions. For some this also allowed time for doorstep chats and check-ins when delivering materials to family homes.

# How did the Rise and Shine programme and funded partners adapt and flex their provision?



## Using outdoor spaces and smaller groups

Projects used outdoor spaces and opted for smaller groups for meet-ups within covid restrictions such as the 'rule of six' and social distancing guidance

*"The outdoor groups that ran [during covid] were attended by a group of parents/grandparents who have decided to continue to meet up in a local park."*

*"The smaller groups during [covid] restrictions allowed children and families to really get to know one another and those friendships remained outside our sessions allowing for greater support networks."*

***"Being adaptable and having to change programs and plans is not necessarily a bad thing. The changes and adaptations we had to make during covid and post covid resulted in some programs being more successful than we would have thought."***

**Comic Relief was also flexible in their approach as a funder and this was greatly valued by funded partners.**

*"Previous funding has been quite restrictive. Comic Relief funding has allowed us to be so broad and imaginative in the stuff we have done ... it's given us the freedom to say, 'lets try this thing...let's give it a whirl.'"*

*"It's really hard to grow and develop services when you're doing little projects and don't have time to reflect and when it feels like its hand to mouth. That's the great thing about three-year funding - you get a chance to step back and do that thinking."*

# KEY THEME 3: PARTNERSHIPS, PRACTICE AND POLICY

Partnership work on this programme allowed small grassroots organisations to work alongside others for shared learning, increased reach and referrals, opportunities to influence policy and practice and improved connections and multidisciplinary working.



## Sharing learning and expertise

Many projects have shared their learning within local networks, for example: via representation on steering groups, development and sharing of approaches and good practice models, providing training for other agencies.

*"We are linking in with Greater Manchester BAME network and the maternity steering group who want to learn from us. We are working very much as part of the system and learning will be shared across the [Greater Manchester] parent-infant mental health system."*

Trevi House are part of the trauma informed network and work in partnership with other agencies to share trauma-informed approaches.

*"We are developing our own model of practice for the work with families to share with other agencies. Influencing mindset is an important element of this e.g. understanding how to engage families, examples of successful strategies, remaining child and family centred."*

Children 1st shared their expertise and knowledge in working with families with the local police. They provided advice and training to help highlight where action should be taken. This was prompted by a situation with one family which raised concerns for project staff, but where police had left having taken no action, showing gaps in their awareness and ability to identify risk.



# KEY THEME 3: PARTNERSHIPS, PRACTICE AND POLICY

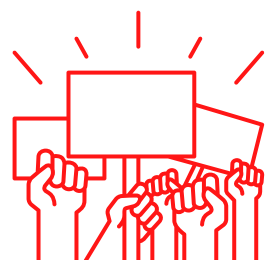


## Advocating for families and influencing practice

Advocacy work on behalf of families was key to many of the projects-carried out in different ways - at both the individual family level and also with other agencies through being able to share the lived experience of families.

*'We advocate for families and have a high standard around 'what is good enough.' Not all agencies have the same standards - so we share this with partner agencies and use that to help them understand our role and their role and how we can work together to achieve more sustainable outcomes.'*

Some projects also saw an increase in parents advocating for themselves and for change which was seen as a positive in terms of their levels of engagement with the project and other agencies.



## Lobbying and campaigning for change and informing local and National guidance - examples shared by funded partners.

- Trelya have shared their model of practice and contributed evidence towards the national "A Fair Start?" campaign," led by the Sutton Trust to improve access to quality early education.
- At a local level, local mums supported by Citizens UK have contributed to the development of public health strategies [via Healthwatch North Tyneside] and to the development of a local park.
- Trevi House lobbied for children to be recognised in the Domestic Abuse Bill.
- Housing for Women shared their model of working with children in refuges via the All Party Parliamentary Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy.
- Spinabifida Hydrocephalus (SBHC) Scotland contributed to Scottish guidelines on 'breaking unexpected news' which informed the new guidelines for sonographers about how to talk to women at their 20-week scan if a SBHC diagnosis is made.

# KEY THEME 3: PARTNERSHIPS, PRACTICE AND POLICY



## Working with other professional partners

Building effective relationships with key professionals and agencies served multiple purposes for funded partners.

In particular:

- Raising the profile of the projects and the challenges for families
- Signposting
- Sharing expertise
- Developing new partnerships
- Securing future funding

*“We continue to ensure that we capitalise on the expertise of our professional partners and work together to meet the evolving challenges of our families.”*

Working with others has raised the profile and reputation of the work of projects resulting in increased validation from statutory agencies and increased referrals.

*“The Health Visiting team is our greatest supporter, valuing the scope of the project offer - 95% of families enrolled via health teams’ referrals.”*

*“[We are] externally building these stronger networks to strengthen our reputation and profile as a professional organisation which delivers on services and support to families most in need.”*

Being well connected to other professionals and providers has enabled effective signposting to other services and agencies.

*“We’ve welcomed partners, including health, libraries, arts and culture organisations into the group to talk to and consult with mums.”*

Working together with statutory agencies also helps improve processes and outcomes through sharing knowledge and experience of the needs of families.

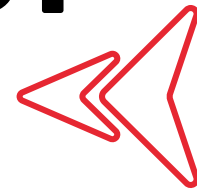
*“There are opportunities to build on relationships with a range of health education and social care professionals having identified opportunities to minimise the impact of NHS disruption to families. For example, we are negotiating with colleagues in NHS for increased collaboration to improve outcomes for families.”*

# 4. WISDOM AND LEGACY

In the final stages of the learning support, funded partners shared the wisdom gained through delivery of the projects and the legacy they hoped the work would leave behind.

Key wisdom shared was:

- Recognise small differences can be huge differences
- Consult and engage families from the start - 'do with - not for'
- Allow time and space to trial and learn
- Be collaborative, not competitive - share strengths and skills
- Join and work with key stakeholder groups to influence policy and practice
- Focus on being proactive, not reactive
- Be brave!



## Small differences can be huge

*"To recognise that the small things and the small differences that we perhaps have enabled or empowered our children or families to make are huge to them. I perhaps felt a little bit frustrated sometimes that I wasn't making enough difference, or the project wasn't doing enough to support. And it took someone to actually say to me, but it is huge. That's been a real learning curve for me. My wisdom would be to recognise that small things are actually huge, and they've made a massive impact and difference."*



## The benefits of being able to trial and learn

*"The importance of being adaptable and having to change programs and plans is not necessarily a bad thing. The changes and adaptations we had to make during covid and post covid resulted in some programs being more successful than we would have thought."*



## Consult and engage families from the start - 'do with - not for'

*"Consultation with families is essential in delivering a service which can drive real change for parents and children."*

*"We really feel that the opportunity we had as the pandemic hit and with the permission of Comic Relief being able to go back to the drawing board a bit and ask families directly what they really needed allowed us to make an impact at a responsive and deeper level which provided us with richer relationships and buy in from families who felt included for the remainder of the funding period. We asked families what they really needed and wanted from us. That element of co-design and co-production was done in real time and shaped the success of what we provided through a really difficult time."*

## 4. WISDOM AND LEGACY

Funded partners identified three main areas of legacy left by the programme:



### New provision for families

Many projects felt that the legacy of the work was the existence of the new or improved provision that had been made available to families.

*"The programme has allowed us to focus and prioritize training for the staff. They will carry this knowledge forward and will continue to be able to deliver some very much needed and SEND specific training courses for families."*



### Families staying together and experiencing improved outcomes

Others felt the legacy related to the change and positive outcomes that had occurred for the families who had been supported by projects.

*"Mums staying with their babies because of the support and the work that we've been able to do. Some of them would have had the previous two or three [babies] removed because the right support wasn't there. They didn't have the service, they didn't have the rehabilitation. I've been able to support them in any way possible, a mum said to me last week, "I wouldn't have my baby if it wasn't for you guys," which is amazing."*



### Being connected to other grantees

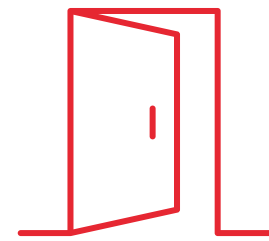
Grantees sharing learning from each other's experiences had expedited their own learning, generating new ideas and reinvigorating passions for social change.

*"The like mindedness of my colleagues in the wider sector and our collective power - so let's harness and utilise it."*

*"[Our] next steps is to really utilise [these] connections, learning and reflections going forward in this project and the others. Having had the space in these sessions has been integral to the process and success - thank you."*

# 5. HOPES AND DREAMS

In projects with external funding, the need to think about the future in terms of both funding and delivery is a constant consideration. Funded partners shared some of their aspirations for the future.



## Everyone has essential needs met

*"[That] everyone has access to support - that there weren't any barriers, that we had more staff, more money, that nobody was cold or hungry. And that we can carry on this gorgeous work without that constant panic of funding applications."*

*"That the work that we do would guarantee really, really, really brilliant outcomes for our families."*



## More resources to work with more families

*"At least one more member of staff and a bigger space, just so that we can accommodate the need that we have. We can run more programmes, more classes and have more people in classes. It would make a massive impact on the people that we work with, and the number of people we can work with too."*

*"Unlimited funding, without lots of restrictions on it would be amazing."*



## 'Our work is recognised and valued'

*"That the early years Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) are recognised - particularly by parliament."*



## 'Change in the World'

*"To end poverty, the cost of living crisis."*

*"To extinguish that pain and trauma for people. But to continue to believe that life can be okay. And life can be nice and good and kind."*

*"To create all the school provision that is needed for all of the families and the children with complex needs. We already know that a lot of our families are basically being told to defer, because there isn't a place in specialist school for your child this year."*

# 6. LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

The process of collective learning and reflection from the Rise and Shine programme has led to some key lessons for the future commissioning and delivery of ECD provision.

## Lessons for funders and commissioners in the ECD sector

- Ensure provision targets those families most in need, in terms of geographical location and services which can effectively build trust and rapport with the most vulnerable families.
- Provide flexible and long-term funding that allows for sufficient time for families to participate and benefit from services, as well as for service providers to trial, reflect, learn and adapt what works best for families.
- Fund approaches that are proactive in preventing issues, and less reactive.
- Ensure the practical and essential needs of families, such as food and warmth, are met before seeking to engage them in more therapeutic interventions.
- Consider funding partnerships, collaborations and alliances to ensure sharing of resources, knowledge, expertise and smoother pathways for families.
- Focus on funding that builds strength within the sector, rather than react to immediate needs and issues (Focus on the 'dream' and 'what could be' rather than on 'needs'.)
- Allow space and funding for learning, sharing and connecting with others in the sector to influence for positive change.



# 6. LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

The process of collective learning and reflection from the Rise and Shine programme has led to some key lessons for the future commissioning and delivery of ECD provision.

## Lessons for ECD providers

- Co-produce and co-design with children and parents from the start - 'do with - not for'.
- Focus on meeting practical needs (e.g. food, heating, clothing).
- Seek to be more proactive, to prevent issues, and less reactive.
- Allow time and space to trial, learn and adapt what works best for families.
- Don't underestimate the value of care and kindness.
- Nurture relationships - making people feel special and important - the little things matter.
- Allow for adaptation and flexibility to meet individual families needs.
- Recognise the value for families of connecting with others where mutually supportive relationships can be forged.
- Connect with and work with others sharing resources, knowledge, expertise - be collaborative not competitive.
- Having a strong staff team with the right skills and attitude, who come to work to make a difference is important in supporting the resilience of families. Allow time for staff self-care.
- Make time for laughter, fun and joy.
- Work with key stakeholder groups to influence policy and practice.
- Capture and share learning to influence positive change.
- Focus on the 'dream' and 'what could be'.
- Recognise that small differences can be huge differences.
- Never underestimate the power of love.



1. **Belfast Central Mission - Parents Support Project**
2. **Body & Soul - Strengthening Foundations**
3. **Buttle - Targeted financial support, young children impacted by trauma**
4. **Children 1st - Bourtreehill and Beyond**
5. **Citizens UK - Parents and Communities Together (PACT)**
6. **Coram - Happy Futures for Children following Care Proceedings**
7. **Early Years Scotland: Stay, Play and Learn**
8. **Education Futures Trust- Survive and Thrive**
9. **The Elizabeth Foundation - Communicate for Change**
10. **Harbour Support Services - Family Intervention Service**
11. **Home Start - Oldham and Tameside**
12. **Housing for Women - Restart Children's Services**
13. **Leeds Mencap Early Years Support project**
14. **Markfield - Building Stepping Stones**
15. **Prison Advice & Care - Visiting Mum**
16. **Rainbow Child & Family Centre - Our Thriving Children**
17. **Romsey Mill - Young Families Programme**
18. **SpinaBif/Hydroceph (SBH Scotland) - Be All You Can Be**
19. **Trelya - Skylar 3 - 5**
20. **Trevi House - Project Sunflower Seeds**
21. **The Yard - Early Years Outreach**

# **APPENDIX A: THE RISE AND SHINE PROJECTS**



# BELFAST CENTRAL MISSION

## Parents Support Project

Target group: Children of young families and parents who have been part of the care system to reach key early years development milestones and escape the likelihood of entering the care and/or social services system themselves.

Location: Northern Ireland - North Down and Ards council

They Provide Supported Housing and Floating Support, therapeutic Counselling for care leavers and, since 2002, Parents' Support. The parent support service supports care leavers and vulnerable young people with their parenting skills and aims to break the in-care cycle and, when appropriate, can access support from the other BCM projects.

*"This photo means a lot to us as it's the representation of coming out of COVID and getting back together in a group setting. Its families and other children meeting, playing with each other, doing activities and having fun. Our group setting is for some families the only chance either the parents or children get to interact with others and this photo sums that up for us."*



# BODY & SOUL

## Strengthening Foundations

Target group: vulnerable and marginalised people from every borough of London and across the UK.

Location: London and across the UK

B&S's mission is to transform the life-threatening effects of childhood adversity. B&S provides a safe and non-judgemental space and an array of therapeutic services to support people of all ages who have experienced childhood adversity, allowing them to rediscover their strengths, their purpose, and sense of identity to live their lives free from the trauma of their past.

# BUTTLE UK

## Targeted financial support, young children impacted by trauma

Buttle UK have used Comic Relief funding to support children aged 5 and under in the South East of England and North East of Scotland, and to explore what impact our grants have for early years children. We are using the grant to explore what barriers exist for families and frontline workers in applying for Buttle UK grants where there are children aged five and under and what can Buttle UK consider in the future about supporting under-fives, in our processes and work.

# CHILDREN 1ST

## Bourtreehill and Beyond

Target group: Survivors of abuse, neglect and other traumatic events in childhood

Location: Scotland

The project supports children who are vulnerable due to trauma, neglect and/or abuse. The project will offer advice, guidance, and emotional and practical support to children and their families through individual support and weekly group sessions.

# CITIZENS UK

## Parents and Communities Together (PACT)

Target group: Children (0-3)  
Location: Leeds and Tyne and Wear

Citizens UK organises communities to act together for power, social justice and the common good by developing the leadership capacity of our members so they can hold politicians and other decision-makers to account on the issues that matter to them. PACT Project is a community MumSpace Groups and a book sharing initiative to support parents (and infants) so they will be less isolated, have good support networks and be able to influence services – resulting in better long-term outcomes for children.

*"This photo shows that mums who feel socially isolated and suffer mental health issues can come together and support each other in a welcoming, safe environment whilst the children are bonding and engaging with others at the same time. Mums can then reconnect with their children feeling better about themselves after sharing their worries."*



## CORAM

### Happy Futures for Children following Care Proceedings

Target group: Disadvantaged Children (0-5) experiencing poverty, neglect and may be subject to care proceedings

Location: London

Provides Creative Therapy (Art and Music) delivered by highly qualified therapists to 75 children aged 0-5 and their parents/carers to improve bonds, overcome trauma and equip children with the skills and functions to succeed at school and relate positively with peers.

*"We worked with children who had experienced complex family trauma. As part of the intervention we sent an instrument pack to every child, it represents expression, communication and connectedness; where the music therapy gave the children and their carers, a space to express their bigger feelings and be heard, held and understood."*



## EARLY YEARS SCOTLAND

### Stay Play and Learn:

### Supporting Children and Families to Thrive and Flourish

Target group: Children (0-5)

Location: Renfrewshire, Scotland

*"This picture captures the essence of our Stay Play and Learn sessions. The children are outdoors, learning about and through nature, embracing the ethos that 'there's no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothing'. The intergenerational approach we take to our work is clearly demonstrated, as is the strong commitment to promoting and developing children's literacy and the importance of storytelling from a young age. Getting children and families outdoors as much as possible and encouraging them to learn and play together sits at the very heart of Early Years Scotland's vital work."*



# EDUCATION FUTURES TRUST

## Children Survive and Thrive

Target group: 0-3 yrs

Location: Hastings, East Sussex

Delivering a play-based approach to learning and relationship building has enabled Education Futures Trust staff to provide collaborative support to families during their developmental early years journeys. This Comic Relief project has met essential needs with access to wider community opportunities, whilst fostering empowerment with a long-term goal of improved outcomes.



# THE ELIZABETH FOUNDATION

## Communicate for Change

Target group: babies & preschool children (0-5)

Location: UK wide

The Elizabeth Foundations' mission has been to facilitate early diagnosis of hearing loss in babies and preschool children and provide comprehensive educational and support services for them and their families. They provide education sessions for parents and deaf children up to 5 yrs, monthly sessions with children who are deaf and have Down syndrome, and support children to transition into mainstream education.



# MY HARBOUR

## Family Intervention Service

Target Group: families and individuals affected by domestic abuse

Location: Hartlepool

Support for a Family Support Team to work across six refuges in North East England, supporting women who are pregnant or with children under school age. This will be through 1-to-1 and group support to mums and babies/children to mitigate the impacts of domestic abuse and enable mums to provide effective nurturing care so their children can thrive

*"This photo shows a baby having the freedom to explore, learn and thrive, in a safe environment, which is our focus for this project. We aim to encourage babies, children and mums to explore together, building a positive bond, using their senses and physical touch."*



# HOMESTART TAMESIDE & OLDHAM

## Developing Parent Infant Mental Health Support for Vulnerable BAME Families in Tameside & Oldham

Target group: BAME families with children aged 0-2 living in diverse, deprived communities

Location: Tameside and Oldham, Manchester

Provides support for parents to have better relationships with their infants and help them to understand the vital role they play in their child's learning and development through a weekly tailored support package for the families.

*"The photo captures what our project has been about which is supporting a positive parent-infant relationships in families from minority ethnic communities."*



*The photo clearly shows the connection (and eye contact) between the parent and child which is so important to the development and longer term outcomes of the developing baby. For parents who are struggling with their own mental health, this connection doesn't always come easily but here we see a mother who is doing so much better as a result of the support received from Home-Start.*

# HOUSING FOR WOMEN

## Restart Children's Services

Target group: Children (0-5)

Location : London

A specialist early years worker works with children aged 0-5 who come into refuges with their mothers. The early years worker will provide intensive support to help children overcome trauma, enrol in playgroup/school, access specialist services and take part in activities and outings to replace negative memories with positive ones.



*"Life in the refuge doesn't have to be dull. Children are able to play freely whilst mum still receives the support to heal."*

# LEEDS MENCAP

## Early Years Support project

Target group: children with a learning disability

Location: Leeds

They offer specialist support, advice and care to families in Leeds who have a young child with a learning disability aged 0-5. This project provides individualised early support to children and their parents.

# MARKFIELD

## Building Stepping Stones

Target group: Children with disabilities

Location: Harringey, London

This project seeks to empower parents to support their children's development through play, particularly addressing the needs of children with communication and behavioural difficulties through a child-centred training programme for parents, run play sessions, and offer much needed emotional support for parents.

# PACT

## Visiting Mum

Target group: prisoners, people with convictions, and their families

Location: Surrey

This project addresses the trauma of separation and responds to the multiple harms to mother and child (age 0-5). It is a unique initiative aimed at maintaining the critical attachment bond between mother and child in the potentially catastrophic separation imposed by a mother's imprisonment.



*"Before Rise and Shine, the areas in the prison that children encountered were unwelcoming and stark. Alongside security measures, including big, noisy gates and people in uniform, it was difficult for young children to feel relaxed about visiting mum. Today young children feel happy and engage with the physical environment positively. Alongside all our project activities, this transformation supports children to have positive experiences and memories of coming to visit their mum in prison."*

# RAINBOW CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRE

## Our Thriving Children

Target group: parents and disadvantaged young children

Location: Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland

This project provides a range of support groups, advice, training, and programmes for preschool children and their parents. It connects families to community support, enhances children's development, and improves parents' ability to successfully raise their children.

*"Our baby massage class where parents joined together in learning a new skill, learning about how touch can support babies development and bonding. Whilst making new friends and supporting each other in the first few months of motherhood."*



# ROMSEY MILL

## Young Families Programme

Target group: Young Families – young parents aged 16-25 in Cambridgeshire with children aged 12-24 months who are facing disadvantage and difficulties.

Location: Cambridgeshire

The project provides support to young fathers and mothers, with a dedicated worker providing tailored 1-to-1 and group support to help improve their parenting, life skills and confidence whilst also addressing issues around domestic violence, relationships and the father's own education and employment prospects.

*This photo captures a lovely moment between a group of young mums and their children, with a member of staff in the background.*



*"We value and create space for parents to develop relationships with their children, to have fun and learn together. I particularly like how relaxed and happy everyone looks, as young parents often feel anxious about accessing group settings because they feel scrutinised because of their age."*

# SPINA BIFIDA HYDROCEPHELUS SCOTLAND

## Be All You Can Be

Target Group: Families with children affected by Spina Bifida

Location: Scotland

The project provides tailored support to families with children affected by Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus. Includes 1-to-1 and group support to help families improve their understanding of the condition, and to develop self-management skills.

*"Be all you can be provides holistic whole family support to all those aged 0-5 affected by the complex disabilities of spina bifida and hydrocephalus. The project helps create an environment that will give all the best possible chance to succeed."*





# TRELYA

## Skylar 3 - 5

Target Group: Children aged 3-5 experiencing or at high risk of adverse childhood experiences.

Location: Penzance, Cornwall

This project provides tailored support to families to help them improve parenting skills and support to children directly, linking them to their nursery, which is based at the community venue. Support will include home visits, 1-to-1 and group work, and training to improve parenting and family bonds, and to help children develop their Early Years Foundation stage.

*"The magic of learning and sharing together."*



# TREVI HOUSE

## Project Sunflower Seeds

Target group: Children (0-5) whose mothers have multiple and complex needs and have primarily come through substance and/or alcohol abuse, and domestic violence.

Location: Plymouth

This project provides a specialist trauma-informed nursery, delivering supportive play and activities to help children develop important building blocks for future life, whilst also addressing the issues they have faced and witnessed. This is through a combination of individual, group and mum and child sessions.



*"These photos encapsulate the project as we have provided a safe, trauma-informed space and groups with amazing activities which have enabled parents and children to build relationships, have fun and feel a sense of belonging."*

*"We have supported and empowered mums to develop their parenting skills and knowledge so that children remain with them. Our therapeutic, trauma-informed creche has allowed Mums to continue their journeys by attending groups and training sessions."*

# THE YARD

## Early Years Outreach

Target group: disabled children (0-5) and their families facing disadvantage in areas of high deprivation.

Location: Across Scotland

This project provides support for play team leaders and play staff to provide activities and equipment that will increase disabled young children's self-esteem and give them opportunities to play in their community as well as create informal community support networks and disabled-friendly hubs for families who wouldn't otherwise access support

*"This photo captures the sensory messy play that we absolutely love at The Yard! Our young people adore the different textures and the open-ended play that it encourages. It also encourages social play and helps children overcome barriers to inclusion"*



# APPENDIX B: LEARNING PARTNER APPROACH



**IMPROVING SERVICES FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE**  
 dartington.org.uk  
 info@dartington.org.uk  
 @DartingtonSDL  
 (01803) 762400