

Educational Needs and Well Being

**Eleanor Bryant, Ruth Wadman
and Caroline Bond**



The challenge

- Complex issues spanning phases of childhood
- Despite some successes the current system isn't working, particularly for our most disadvantaged CYP
- All is not lost ...



Northern solutions

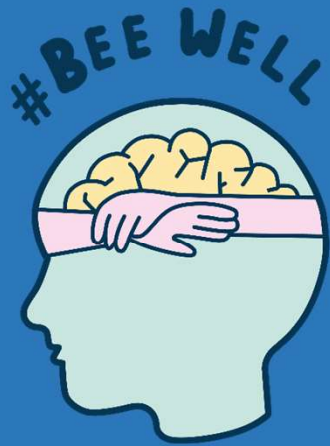
Place-based, universal, whole systems approaches

Co-producing solutions to complex problems

Expanding mental health support through schools

Harnessing the power of data to understand the issues

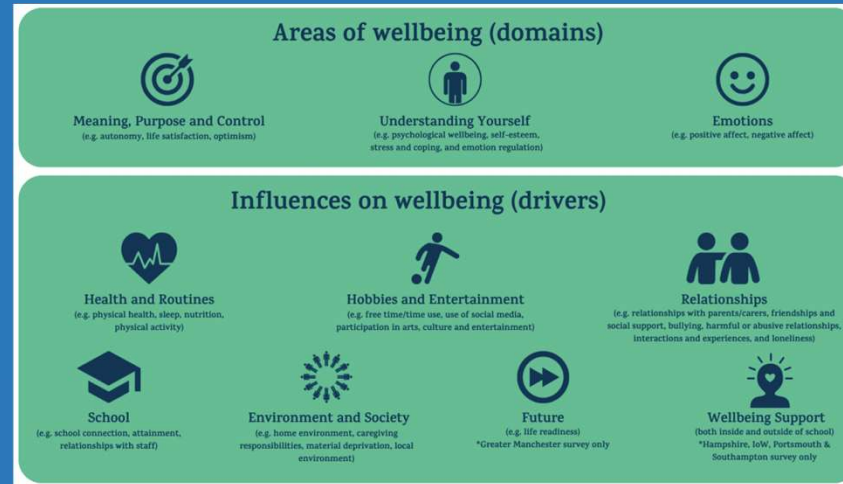




www.beewellprogramme.org

Research foci include:

- Neighbourhood effects on YP wellbeing
- Wellbeing of LGBTQ+ YP
- The role of arts/creativity in YP wellbeing
- Reciprocal relations between school belonging and wellbeing
- The impact of internal exclusion on wellbeing
- Factors that predict suspension and/or absence from school



#BeeWell basics

- c.135k YPs (aged 11-15) surveyed at least once so far
- Nearly 300 schools
- 14 LAs (10 in GM, 4 in HIPS)
- Background socio-demographic data provided by LAs or schools
- Third-party delivery of adapted versions of #BeeWell survey to 56 schools across 26 LAs, surveying more than 11,000 pupils



c.130k, c.300 schools

Schools, neighbourhoods, Local Authorities, project partners

Evidence base to inform decision-making and provision across the system



National imperatives



Holistic and long-term solutions

Tailored, place-based approaches

Evidence based data driven change

Listening to CYP, schools, families and
healthcare

Interdisciplinary research and
practitioner networks



Physical activity & Play

Andy Daly-Smith
Uta Papen



A country that works for all
children and young people

An evidence-based plan for
supporting physical activity
and healthy nutrition with and
through education settings

Physical inactivity costs
the UK an estimated
£7.4 billion each year.

£ **£7.4**
BILLION



Almost
four million
children are
not physically
active for the
recommended
60-plus minutes
a day.

Children and young
people from the most
deprived backgrounds
are least likely to be
active, with only **44%**
achieving 60 minutes of
physical activity daily.

44%



P

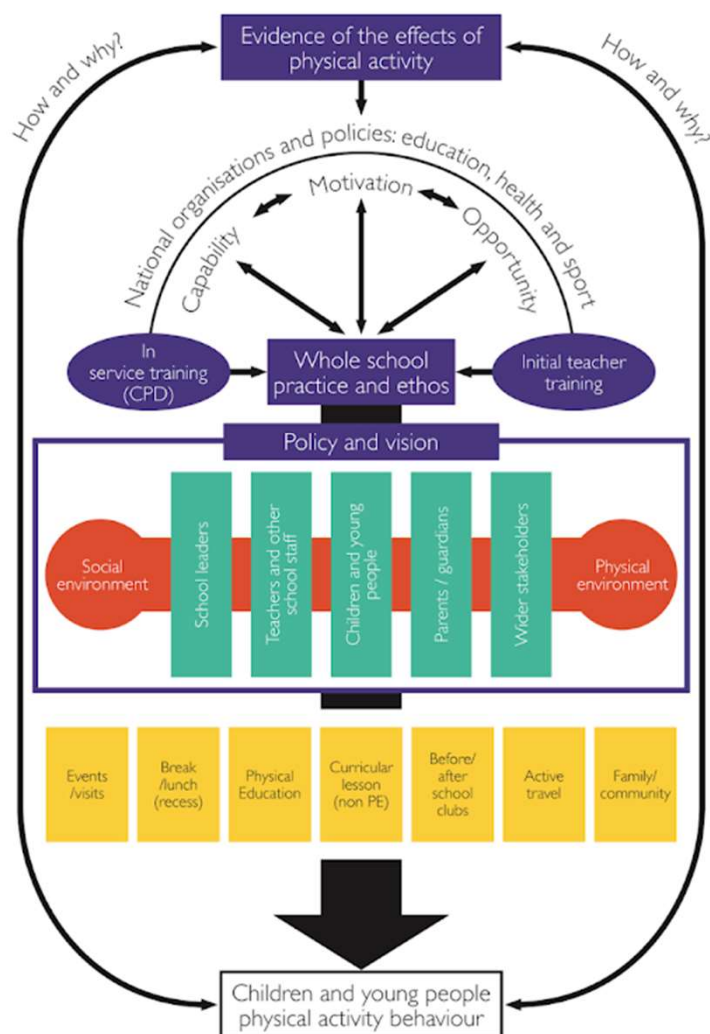
Policy

The cornerstone of the CAS framework is establishing whole-school practice and ethos for physical activity - the underlying sentiment that informs the beliefs, customs and practices around creating a physically active school.

S

Stakeholders

Stakeholders that influence physical activity behaviours in school (and beyond) are: school leaders, teachers and other school staff, children/young people, parents/guardians, and wider stakeholders (e.g. active school coordinators, public health specialists, local organisations and clubs).



E

Environments

The physical environment reflects the amount, variety (e.g. green space, playground, school hall) and quality of school spaces that impact on physical activity behaviours.

O

Opportunities

Combined, the environment and key stakeholders determine the implementation of physical activity across seven opportunities. The opportunities are determined by what the school can control (O1-4) and opportunities that the school can influence (O5-7). The opportunities with the greatest potential impact on whole-day physical activity reside closest to the framework midline.

Pupil and Locality Impact Tools

I am good at being able to maintain balance when my body is still and moving

Not at all like me

Not really like me

A bit like me

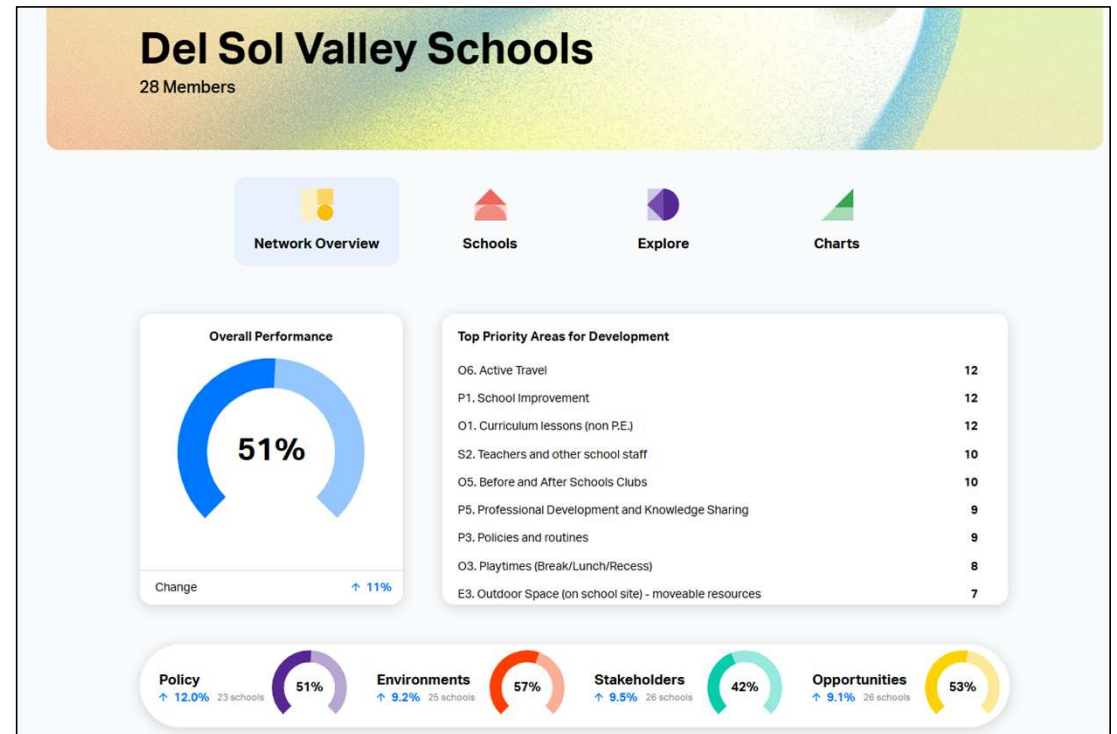
A lot like me

18 / 20

How do you feel when you take part in these activities?

😊 😊 😊 😊 😊

Previous Next



WHOLE-SCHOOL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CONFERENCE 2024

Recommendations for Researchers, Practitioners and Policymakers
to prioritise and plan for whole-school physical activity



Together we will share learning, influence
leaders, and shape future policy.

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University of Bradford, UK.



www.wspa2024.co.uk



#WSPA2024

POLICY BRIEF SEPTEMBER 2025

Policy recommendations from
the International Whole School
Physical Activity Conference 2024

More than fun and games: getting the UK's children moving

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

- 1 Establish national physical activity standards and expectations for schools that go beyond physical education classes.
- 2 Require schools to track and report on pupils' overall physical activity.
- 3 Include elements of physical activity in the national curriculum across the whole school day.
- 4 Include core competencies for physically active learning in teacher training and professional development across all subject disciplines.
- 5 Fund whole-school physical activity fairly and sustainably.

Being physically active is a key part of a healthy lifestyle. Instilling the habits and culture of physical activity in children will help them retain those behaviours throughout their lives. One of the most important places this can happen is in schools.

UK policy initiatives have focused primarily on supporting physical education in school. But not all children feel comfortable playing sport. Physical activity – getting children moving – has broader appeal and helps more children to take part.

'Whole-school physical activity' means enabling children to be active in different ways at different times throughout the school day – not just in sports lessons. This can include incorporating movement into lessons, active travel to school, events and trips that involve movement and increasing physical activity during breaktimes. 'Whole-school' also acknowledges this is not just the responsibility of teachers – but of everyone involved with schools, from parents, to multi-academy trusts, local authorities, Ofsted and policy makers.

In 2024, an international conference at the University of Bradford brought together over 320 delegates from 24 countries, to learn from globally leading whole-school physical activity (WSPA) programmes. The goal: to address the challenges of implementing whole school physical activity. The result is a series of recommendations for UK policymakers, highlighting five key steps to make the changes needed.

Why does this matter?

The most recent figures from NHS England show that in 2022, one in seven children (15%) aged between 2 and 15 are obese – similar to obesity rates in 2019. The UK Chief Medical Officers advise that children aged 5-18 should engage in moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity for an average of at least 60 minutes per day across the week. The 2024 Sport England survey of 5-16-year-olds found that only 48% achieved this level. This means that a whole generation of children are missing out on the multiple benefits of an active lifestyle, not only during childhood, but into adolescence and adulthood as well.

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The Morecambe Bay Curriculum + the MBC Storytelling and Writing Pilot Project



An educator-led movement (over 600 educators and 135 partner schools +institutions) <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/morecambe-bay-curriculum/>

Key principles: **place-based learning, ecological awareness, sustainability**



curriculum innovation: to emphasise the unique characteristics and challenges of the region; make education relevant + inclusive.



MBC Story Telling and Writing Pilot Project

7 schools involved, each created a story – local place/event/history

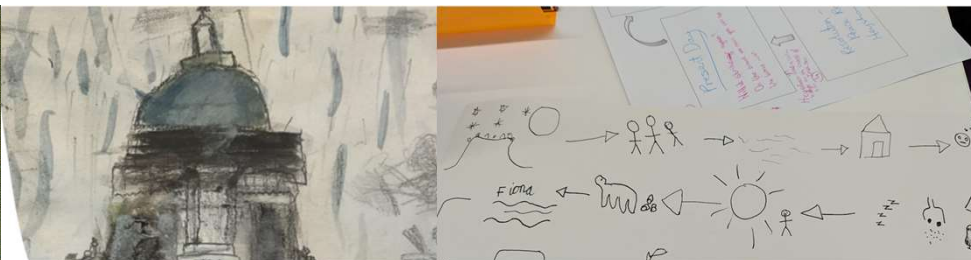
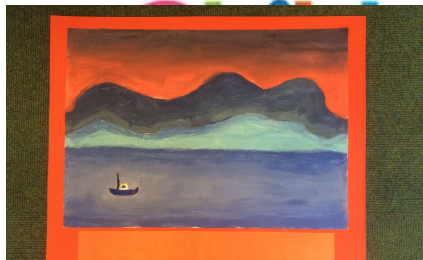
Motivation: link with place/children's environment

Confidence: speaking/story-telling (oracy)

Creativity and imagination: multimodal writing – literacy

'A long time ago; before there were cars on the road and children in the park; before Sunderland was a bustling port but not long after St. Helen's church was built, women were not allowed to fish.

However, there was one girl, Ivy, who didn't think this rule was fair. Her father, Randel, was a fisherman - the best of the best - but even he was struggling to catch enough shrimp to feed the whole community....'



Early years, poverty and health

Child Poverty

Improving children's oral health

Partnerships addressing child poverty

Charmeale Ayadurai

Peter Day, Zoe Marshman

Liz Todd



Children living in poverty (UK)

4.2m (2021-22)

4.5m (2023-24)

4.8m (2029-30) (Before benefit cuts are factored in)

If there is no substantive action to change course.



**Families with below average income are
going without at least
1 of 3 basic essentials:
Food
Heating
Household Bill**





Economic Growth

To achieve sustainable economic growth, UK needs to have a well-educated workforce.

| Special Educational Needs | Lives in poverty | Support of social worker | Passing Maths + English at GCSE |
|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ✗ | ✗ | ✗ | 80% |
| ✗ | ✓ | ✓ | 65% |
| ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 13% |

REMOVING BARRIERS TO EDUCATION

Putting children first, legislation has already been established in Scotland (Getting it Right for Every Child) and Wales (Future Generations Act). Scotland has a Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan that includes the Scottish child payment of £25 per child, per week. It is estimated that 90,000 fewer children will live in relative and absolute poverty because of Scottish Government policies.

Universal Free School Meals should be a long-term ambition for all schools and can be initially targeted in boroughs and wards with the most disadvantaged populations.





Reforming Childcare

Moore et al., (2025)

Two-child benefit cap has pushed 30,000 more children into poverty in April 6, 2025, and is further pulling 109 more children into poverty every day. Already 1.3 million children in large families in receipt of Universal Credit are going without at least 1 basic essential, this number will grow further if the 2-child limit remains in place.

Government's £7 billion cut to disability and health-related benefits will push 50,000-100,000 additional children into poverty. Already, 43% of children in families receiving disability and health-related benefits are growing up without at least one basic essential.

We ask for the removal of the 2-child limit and protected minimum floor in Universal Credit as it will lift 500,000 children out of poverty and reduce the depth of poverty for a further 1 million.

We ask to stop cuts to disability and health benefits and involve disabled people in reform.





A country that works for all
children and young people



An evidence-based plan for
improving children's oral health with
and through education settings



Oral health

"One of the most shocking statistics I discovered since I took up this position is the most common reason for children being admitted to hospital is for tooth decay. It is completely and utterly shocking, it is truly Dickensian" Minister Kinnock



School readiness and oral health



SCHOOL READY



Children who are not school ready have **1.6-2.2 times higher odds** of dental decay, independent of Free School Meal (FSM) status



Images generated by CoPilot



School absence for dental reasons

ACROSS WEST YORKSHIRE IN AN ACADEMIC YEAR

586.5 days lost in
7 primary schools

369 days lost in
2 secondary schools

estimated based on 3958 pupils, data collected over single school terms



Images generated by CoPilot

Government action welcomed:

A country that works for all children and young people

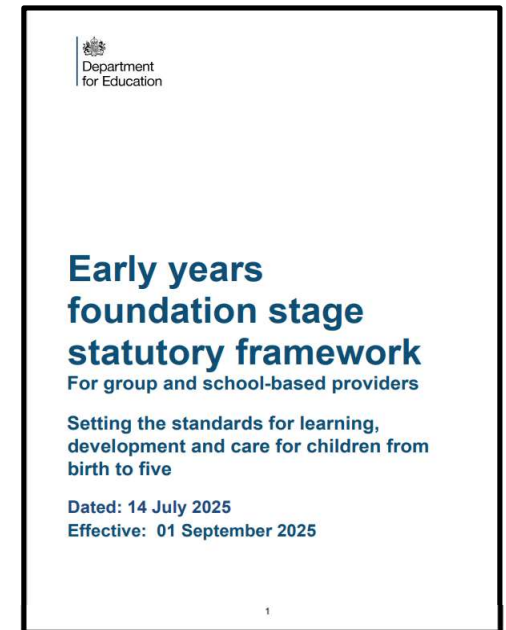
This strategy should be a priority for the new government and include: (1) reducing sugar consumption (which is also associated with other non-communicable diseases) through policy action. For example, expanding the Soft Drinks Industry Levy to include other sugar-sweetened beverages, applying restrictions on food marketing, advertising and promotions, and restricting the sale of caffeinated energy drinks to under 16-year-olds; (2) optimising exposure to fluoride through a combination of community water fluoridation and targeted programmes (such as supervised toothbrushing). Significant opportunities have been identified for increasing the number of programmes involving supervised toothbrushing, expanding existing programmes, and ensuring sustainability.

- Consultation on expanding Soft Drinks Industry Levy undertaken
- Consultation on restricting sales of energy drinks - just opened!
- Plans to expand existing water fluoridation scheme in the North East announced
- Funding for new national supervised toothbrushing programme announced



Supervised toothbrushing programme

- Evidence of effectiveness at preventing tooth decay and reducing inequalities
- Included in DfE framework and NHS Plan
- NIHR-funded BRUSH project started in 2021 to investigate ways to optimise implementation of supervised toothbrushing



BRUSH

optimising toothBrushing pRogrammes in nUrseries and ScHools



Supervised toothbrushing programme

- Government funding of £11 million for 2025/6 to reach 600,000 in most deprived areas

BRUSH

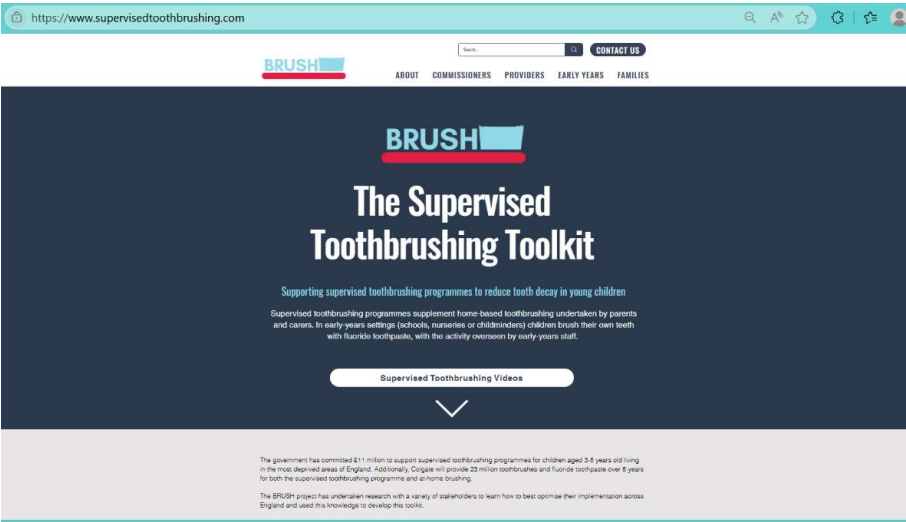
optimising toothBrushing pRogrammes in nUrseries and ScHools



School toothbrushing 'makes life easier' - parents



PA MEDIA
Supervised toothbrushing will be rolled out across the country to help prevent tooth decay



Newcastle a Living Wage City

21 Mar 2024

A coalition of local businesses, charities and public sector organisations today launched a plan to substantially increase the number of accredited Living Wage employers in Newcastle.



NORTH EAST CHILD POVERTY ACTION PLAN

Tackling child poverty, creating real opportunity.



LOGIN

GET ACCREDITED

MENU

Real Living Wage could boost UK economy by £1.7billion

14 Nov 2022

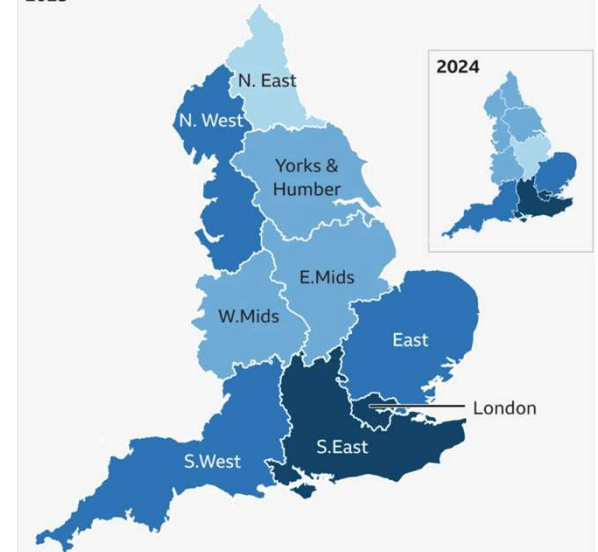
- If just a quarter of the UK's low-paid workers were given a pay rise to the real Living Wage, as set by the Living Wage Foundation, it could put an extra £1.7bn back into the UK economy
- Regions across the UK would see a significant economic boost if a quarter of low-paid workers were uplifted to the real Living Wage. London would see the biggest boost (£208m). Followed by South-East (£197m), North-West (£191m), Yorkshire and the Humber (£165m) and West Midlands (£148m)

England's A-level results 2025

Percentage of A and A* grades by English region

less than 23% 23 to 25.9% 26 to 28.9% 29%+

2025



Source: Joint Council for Qualifications

BBC

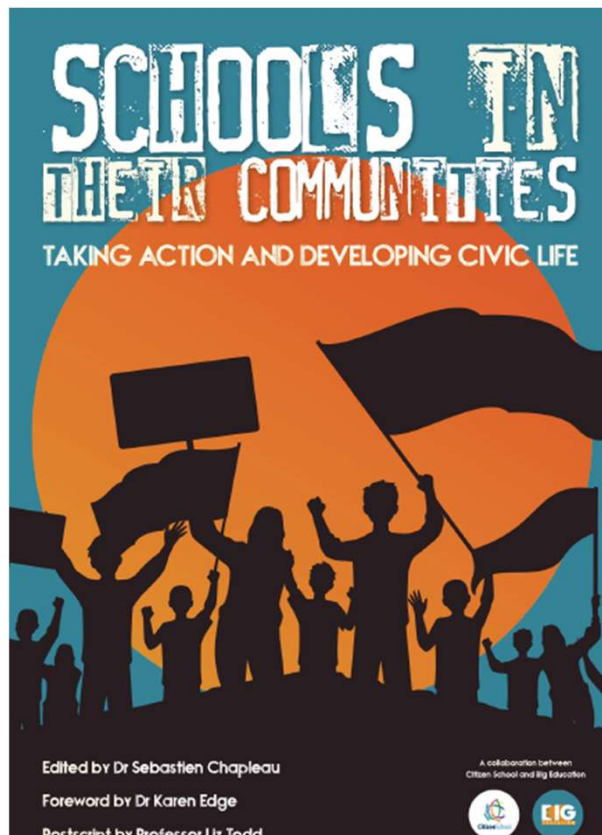
Anchor institutions at the heart of impactful partnerships that unlock barriers with the potential to shift the dial on child poverty and economic prosperity

1st time since birth of democracy in this country, people don't expect their children to be better off than themIf people are once again to be authors of their own lives, and to feel secure, they must sense their influence in the collective decision-making endeavour that is democracy 2023, IPPR

We have to build trusted relationships with our communities and mechanisms to do this, through which everything flows from hyperlocal to councils, to regional authorities and national levels

We invite the government to support bold partnerships that are developed by universities, health trusts, local authorities, MATs and other anchor institutions

We invite the research councils to enable us to measure impact and analyse processes as we navigate these ambitious partnerships in uncharted territory



Child of the North N8 policy campaign and webinars

A country that works for all
children and young people

An evidence-based plan for
improving children's oral health with
and through education settings



A country that works for all
children and young people

An evidence-based plan for
addressing poverty with and
through education settings



A country that works for all
children and young people

An evidence-based plan
to build the foundations of
a new "Sure Start" in and
around education settings





Schools tell us that organising is...

- ...an expression of their commitment to develop **student leadership**, as well as **strengthen their links with families and neighbouring organisations**.
- ...a way for them to address **issues beyond the school gates**, as well as issues which have a **direct impact on the wellbeing of their young people and families**

citizens^{uk}

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6aZ_8P8WZg&t=74s



Child
of the
North

N8 RESEARCH
PARTNERSHIP



Shaping the future: Newcastle and the 4th Generation University

12 August 2025 | By: Professor Jane Robinson, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Engagement and Place | 5 min read



In recent years, a new idea has been gaining momentum across the higher education sector – one that reshapes the very reason universities exist.



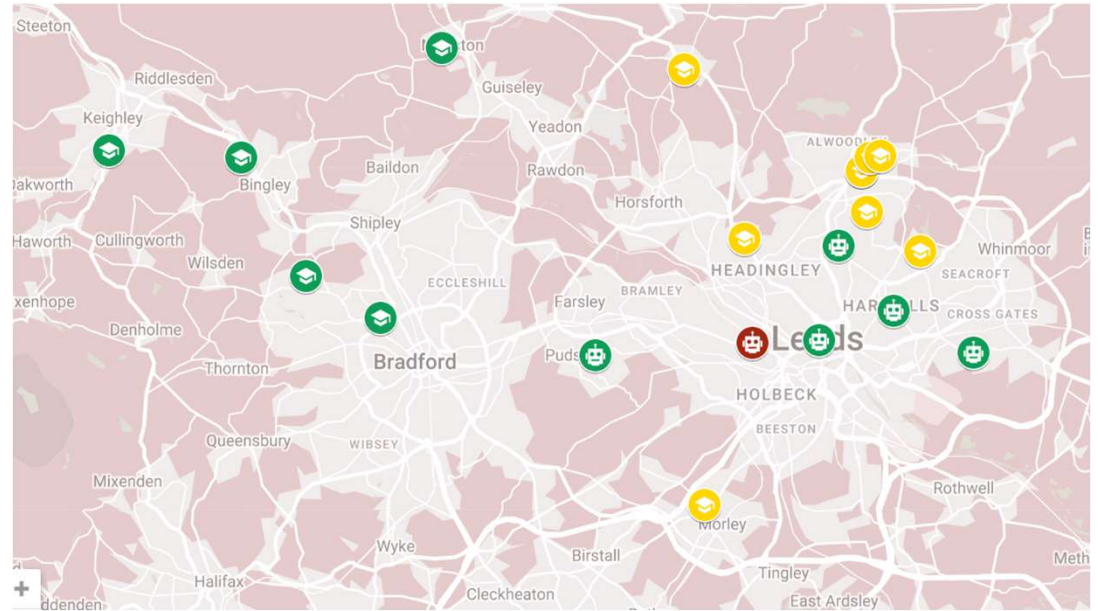
Upskilling Children for Digital Futures

Bridging the Divide
Connected data

Sarah Howard
Faisal Mushtaq
Mark Mon-Williams



Opportunities?



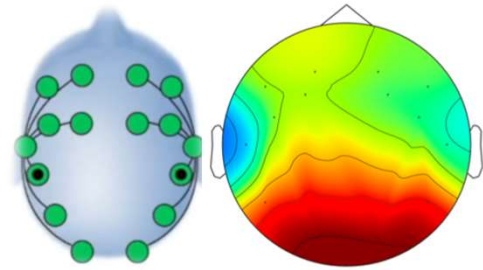
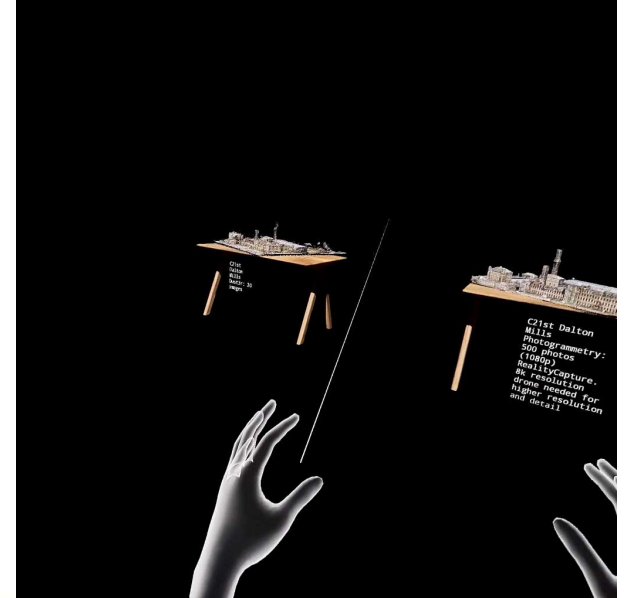
Partnership: Communities

{CodePlace}: Embedding Digital Skills Training within the Community through Trusted Institutions & Organisations



Partnership: Schools & Students

Delivering Citizen Science & Digital Skills Engagement through State-of-Art Brain Scanning & Virtual Reality Technology



Partnerships: Universities & schools

Teacher AI-enabled professional learning and digital strategy development



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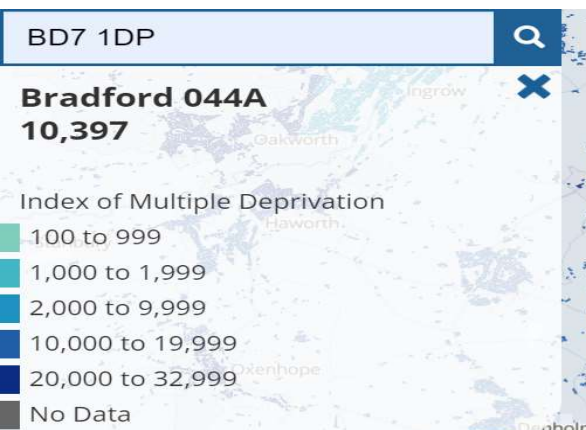


Policy & strategies to incentivise

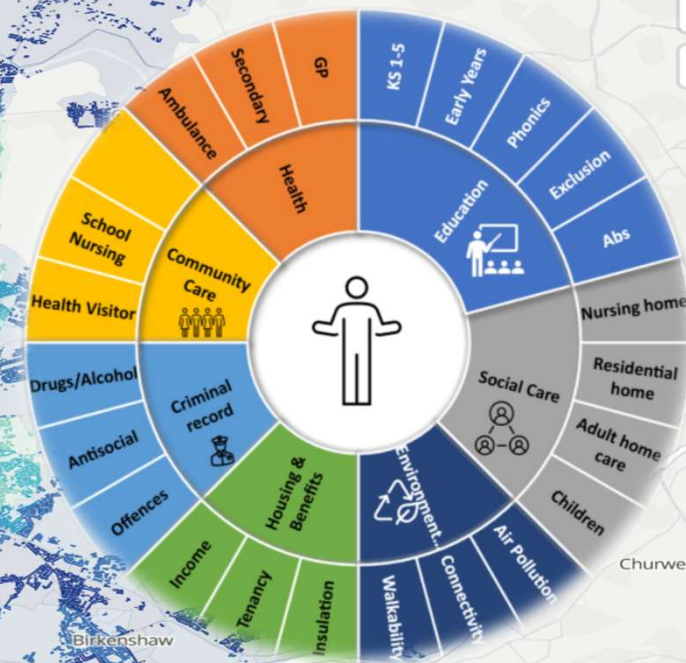
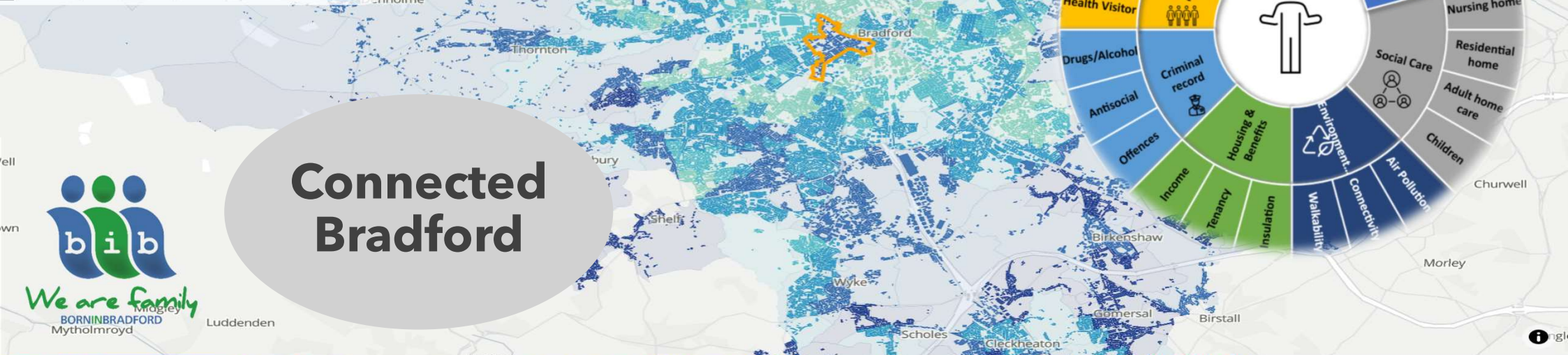
Building strong connections between industry, universities and the DfE to support teacher development and use of AI

- Establish a mission-driven **UK Strategic Digital Upskilling Fund** to catalyse place-based university-school partnerships.
- Implement **educator digital immersion programs** in collaboration with regional industry partners.
- Embed digital upskilling within a **national strategic framework**, ensuring equity, progression, and workforce relevance.





**Vulnerability &
Policing Futures**
Research Centre



**Connected
Bradford**



How can we make sure every child has the best start in life?

If you want to hear more on some of the issues raised today, the University of Leeds has recorded a podcast to support the summit. The episode includes a roundtable discussion involving Professor Mark Mon Williams, Professor Cat Davies - an international authority on early education and language development, and Professor Louise Tracey – an expert in speech and communication. The QR code on this slide will take you to the podcast.



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