

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF A NEW “SURE START”

Guide for Child Health Colleagues

The problem

- Children in disadvantaged areas face disconnected and delayed services, impacting health, learning, and life chances.
- Service fragmentation leads to inequity in access, especially for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEN(D)), long-term health conditions, or living in poverty.
- Lack of coordination across services and failure to build on existing assets undermines efforts to create a fairer, more supportive society for all children.

What you can do as a child health practitioner

- **Work with nurseries and schools to co-locate health services** including school nursing, mental health, paediatrics, and dental care within education settings.
- **Use nurseries and schools as a referral point for health services** and provide school staff with direct communication channels to local health teams.
- Advocate for **the linkage of public service data** (via NHS number) to identify needs earlier and help coordinate timely support for children.
- **Support early years and school readiness programmes**, especially those that target health and development for under-fives.
- **Partner with local authorities and voluntary organisations** to deliver place-based health interventions through nursery and school communities.

Evidence-based insights

There are around **60,000 missed opportunities** to provide early help every year in England, as of 2019-20.

Over **2,500 children** in Bradford known to have eyesight problems were not taken to an optician.

Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore:

Bradford Birth to 19 / St Edmund's Nursery School

A programme that collaborates with health, care, and voluntary services to provide comprehensive support for children and their families, fostering a nurturing environment where every child can thrive.

Glasses in Classes

An initiative highlighting the power of connected datasets in flagging important intersections between education and health, showing where we need to address health barriers that impact education.

SUCCESS (Supporting Understanding of Children's Communication, Emotional and Social Skills)

This project stationed multi-disciplinary teams within the school gates to conduct autism assessments, helping to provide major long-term savings as well as a reduction in waiting times for autism assessment and support.

The INSCHOOL Project

The project recognises the needs of young people with long-term physical health conditions at an early stage and creates appropriate adjustments to help them thrive within educational settings.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider taking inspiration from these approaches to reflect on how you can help create positive change.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

Please share this guide and start a discussion with your colleagues about how we can all play our role in building a country that works for all children and young people.