

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS OF A NEW 'SURE START'

Guide for Local Authority Colleagues

The problem

- Significant funding cuts to early intervention services such as *Sure Start* undermine societal benefits such as improved social mobility and reduced intergenerational poverty.
- Since 2010, over 1,340 *Sure Start* centres have closed, removing trusted local support and deepening inequalities in health, education, and wellbeing.
- The replacement Family Hubs programme lacks the scale and speed to meet demand, needing over 30 years to cover all areas formerly served by *Sure Start*.

What you can do at a local level

- Map **ward-level partnerships around 'place'** by researching the range of potential local partners that can best support children and young people (CYP) and their families in local community spaces.
- Link **local health and education services to produce accessible information** for families and professionals (including schools), focusing on common medical problems and how to navigate local services/systems to seek help.
- Establish **joined-up local services** to support and transform neighbourhoods and thereby life chances. They should include voluntary groups, local service providers, local businesses, faith groups, multi-academy trusts, local authorities, charities, and other stakeholders.
- Deepen **learning from Sure Start** – schools should widen community social networks and lay the foundation for future employment by fostering essential life skills.

Evidence-based insights

As of 2019-20, there were around **60,000** missed opportunities to provide early help every year in England.

There has been a **49%** reduction in local authority spending on early intervention services for CYP between 2010-11 and 2017-18.

Examples of good practice that you may wish to explore

Education Alliance for Life Chances (EALC)

A partnership model which aims to sustain progress on social mobility through the collaboration of local nurseries, schools, colleges, businesses, charities, and health services. EALC champions a 'whole-system approach' to improving outcomes for CYP.

Parent Action

A largely volunteer-funded initiative that provides mothers with a safe space to talk about any worries and concerns they have. It also provides a high-quality play environment for children.

Schools Immigration Action Project

The project created a safe environment for families to share their experiences and concerns, offering free legal guidance, emotional support, and opportunities for community bonding.

Schools and Community Organising

In Birmingham, schools worked with Citizen UK to help position schools as community hubs, allowing parents to take proactive action on issues impacting their families' wellbeing.

Check out the innovative approaches outlined in this briefing and **consider implementing these practices into your local area/constituency.**



Scan the QR Code for the report

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