



National Children's  
Bureau

## National Children's Bureau Annual Review 2015/16

We champion children and young people's  
right to be safe, secure and supported.



## Welcome to the work of the National Children's Bureau

We work to build a better childhood for every child.

Whether it is through using our research findings to engage with policymakers, or working directly with disadvantaged families, NCB is proud to be a champion for children's rights in England and Northern Ireland.

One of our greatest concerns is how poverty affects the life chances of children growing up today, graphically illustrated by our report **Poor Beginnings**. But our researchers have contributed to a better understanding of a host of other important social issues too. For example, exploring the rising tide of mental health problems among young people, and in Northern Ireland, conducting the first long-term study of how children's use of digital technology impacts on their GCSE results.

Using our research we worked closely with policymakers as a strategic partner to both the Department of Health and the Department for Education, and by coordinating the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Children. Across the country we have been working with practitioners in local authorities, particularly through the Council for Disabled Children, which has been playing a leading role in the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Children's views, ideas and experiences inform every aspect of our work. In the past year we worked closely with young people to launch [www.getyourrights.org](http://www.getyourrights.org) – an interactive guide to children's rights within the NHS, and Young NCB members contributed to a major conference on mental health and happiness with the Children's Policy Research Unit.

I am particularly proud of NCB's role as a host to our specialist membership groups who continue to champion issues that really make a difference to children's lives. The Anti-Bullying Alliance, Sex Education Forum and Childhood Bereavement Network all continued to deliver highly influential campaigns from our offices. Our work is diverse, vibrant and robust but we can't continue without your help. So thank you for your support and I hope you enjoy reading about our achievements.

**Anna Feuchtwang**  
Chief Executive





# How we make a difference

We work to build a better childhood for every child by undertaking research, influencing policy and improving how frontline services are delivered.



## Research and evidence

A five-year-old in Leicester is five times more likely to have tooth decay than one in West Sussex. Our research report *Poor Beginnings* highlighted how shocking variations in the health and development of under-fives is often closely linked with deprivation.

## Policy and legislation

We applied what we have learnt about early development as lead member of the Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP), working with families in poor parts of the community to improve diet and nutrition, social and emotional development, and communication and language.

## Supporting practitioners

We worked with the Department of Health to evaluate pilots of a new development check for two-year-olds: the Integrated Review. As the Review was rolled out nationally, we created guidance based on the experiences of the first professionals to adopt this new way of working.

# Vulnerable children

All children and young people are vulnerable in one way or another, but some are in particular need of support. We work to ensure vulnerable children get the targeted help they need.

## Working for better social care

NCB continues to make significant contributions to the improvement of children's services. Our **Losing in the Long Run** report, showed how government funding for vital early intervention services is expected to be cut by 71 per cent between 2010 and 2020, leaving children and families without the help that can stop their problems spiralling out of control. Knowing this, we are working at the heart of Westminster coordinating the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Children's new inquiry into the challenges facing children's social care.

At a local level, our C4EO team enabled local authorities to deliver efficient and effective services for children through a leadership programme. Alongside this work, our researchers explored children and young people's experiences of independent advocacy services in England that help them to express their views and needs.

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## Children in care

Looked after children suffer consistently poorer life outcomes compared with their peers, a situation NCB works hard to alleviate. Our research on the impact of new quality standards in children's homes has built on our earlier study of the training and development of staff. Many of our recommendations have since been echoed in Sir Martin Narey's review of residential care. We have given children and young people in care, and care leavers, a voice through our Taking it to the Next Level programme, and as a leading member of the Alliance for Children in Care and Care Leavers we published a new vision for the standard of care every looked after child should have.

## Supporting the voluntary sector

Through the Children's Partnership, the voluntary and community sector strategic partner to the Department for Education, NCB encouraged more effective knowledge sharing through our Knowledge Makes Change portal. In Northern Ireland, our Engage NI programme supported 67 projects funded by the Big Lottery to improve how they involve young people.

## Children and the police

Our work with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Children on the relationship between children and the police continued to have influence. The government acted to ensure children detained in police custody overnight are transferred to more suitable local authority accommodation, and committed to introducing a ban on children and young people experiencing a mental health crisis from being held in police cells.

## Other support for vulnerable young people

The Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) coordinated November's inaugural Children's Grief Awareness Week in partnership with Grief Encounter and many of its members. CBN also delivered a series of seminars for organisations supporting grandparents and older siblings taking on the care of bereaved children, and appeared before the Work and Pensions Select Committee raising concerns about bereavement benefits. NCB also worked with young parents in Northern Ireland to explore the sense of social isolation, stigma and negative assumptions they commonly face. During Anti-Bullying Week in 2015, the Anti-Bullying Alliance worked in partnership with Barclays to encourage millions of children to 'Make a Noise About Bullying'.





## Early years

**A child's early years have a profound impact on their future health, development and life chances. We work to ensure all children get the best possible start in life.**

### LEAP in Lambeth

In Lambeth, we are putting into practice what we know about early development, leading the Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP). The Big Lottery has funded LEAP to improve the lives of babies and very young children in Lambeth, focusing on their social and emotional development, communication and language, and diet and nutrition. In its second year, LEAP has:

- **Recruited 40 volunteer 'parent champions' to work in their local community, supporting and referring other families to services.**
- **Extended Family Nurse Partnership support to 100 per cent of eligible young mothers.**
- **Created a service for pregnant women with a high BMI to support healthy lifestyles.**
- **Set up a Parent and Infant Relationship Service.**
- **Trained over 100 frontline staff to identify families needing relationship support.**

### Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy)

Our Making it REAL programme supports practitioners to use the REAL evidence-based approach to reach out to parents and families, building confidence and knowledge to support the early home learning environment.

This year we supported eight local authorities to successfully embed REAL by running local training and projects funded through the Department for Education's National Prospectus Grant. REAL has become a key ingredient in strategic plans to enhance parental engagement and the early identification of additional needs. New developments include adapting the approach to support early maths and created training for volunteer parents. We have successfully completed the first year of Making it REAL in Oldham, part of the Parental Engagement Fund, evaluating the impact of REAL in ten early years settings.

### Improving outcomes in Jersey and Northern Ireland

We began a three year Early Childhood Development programme in Jersey, funded by UBS Optimus Foundation to build capacity in the early years and improve outcomes for all children. This has included a rollout of Making it REAL training and the development of an outcomes framework underpinned by Outcomes Based Accountability(OBA) methodology.

In Northern Ireland we have continued supporting the government, communities, service providers and voluntary sector organisations to measure and improve the impact of their work using the OBA approach, including working with policymakers to ensure the draft Programme for Government NI takes an OBA approach.

Alongside this work, NCB continues to coordinate the Incredible Years Programme across Northern Ireland, funded by the Public Health Agency. To ensure the best services are available for families, we are supporting practitioners to gain accreditation and have their work reviewed by peers.

### Integrated Review

In England, NCB continued to provide support to both health and early years practitioners implementing the new integrated health and early education review for two-year-olds. We looked at how the Integrated Review is being embedded within two local areas, and published guidance in the **Experiences of Practice** series.

# Health and well-being

NCB works to protect the physical and mental health of all children and young people. As well as preventing illness we want children to enjoy well-being and happiness in their day-to-day lives.

## Shaping health policy

NCB continued to help shape health policy as strategic partner to the Department of Health. Our work maintains a strong focus on the most vulnerable, and included work addressing the health needs of looked after children and supporting children and young people around HIV testing and prevention.

## Poor Beginnings

If under-fives in the North West of England enjoyed the same health and development as those in the South East, over 15,000 cases of ill health could be prevented. This was one of the findings from our report **Poor Beginnings**, which highlighted the unacceptable discrepancies between the health and development of young children growing up in different parts of the country, and how these differences are often, but not always, linked to deprivation.

With this in mind, we published **Ready to Listen**, setting out advice for health service providers on how to involve young children and their families in local decisions about health and well-being.

## Tackling obesity

Our European Youth Tackling Obesity project enabled children and young people to lead their own campaigns to promote healthy eating and physical activity among their peers. NCB coordinated a group of young people in England and worked closely with partners across Spain, Portugal and the Czech Republic to create peer-led initiatives to reduce obesity.

## Sex and relationships education (SRE)

In 2016 the Sex Education Forum (SEF) published **Heads or Tails**, highlighting alarming gaps in school SRE provision, with 50 per cent of young people not learning at primary school about how to get help if they are sexually abused. We also trained over 1,750 teachers and professionals on making SRE inclusive for LGBT pupils.

## Mental health and well-being

Our research with the Association of School and College Leaders confirmed the rising tide of mental health issues among young people over the past five years, and revealed gaps in specialist care beyond the school gates. Our Young NCB members took part in focus groups for the Department for Education and the Institute for Public Policy Research on young people's experiences of mental health issues and how peer support in schools can help. We also explored the links between poverty and the quality of children's relationships with their family and friends, publishing new research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in partnership with the Centre for Longitudinal Studies.

In Northern Ireland we have been pivotal in exploring how digital technology impacts on children's well-being. We helped develop the first e-safety strategy for children and young people in Northern Ireland. We also published **ICT & Me** exploring the link between young people's use of digital technology and their attainment in GCSEs.

The Young NCB Advisory Group launched a social media campaign called #high2low to educate young people about the health dangers of so-called 'legal highs'.

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North West could be prevented







## Special educational needs and disabilities

**We want disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs to have full and happy childhoods, to fulfil their potential and be active within the community.**

### Embedding SEND reforms

This year the Council for Disabled Children (CDC) once again played a key role in supporting the sector to implement the SEND reforms introduced in September 2014. As Strategic Reform Partner to the Department for Education, CDC continued to provide intelligence from the ground, developing resources and providing training to support front line practitioners.

CDC also provided a range of support for social workers, health professionals and local authorities as part of the Delivering Better Outcomes Together consortium. This included holding national and regional events for Designated Medical / Clinical Officers from across the country to share learning and best practice. CDC also worked closely with NHS England and the Department for Education to improve joined-up working between health services and local authorities.

### Children's rights to healthcare

In 2015, we successfully launched the Get Your Rights website

as part of a three-year project funded by the Department of Health. [www.getyourrights.org](http://www.getyourrights.org) was co-produced with children and young people, and provides guidance on their rights in the health system. CDC also published the **Get Your Rights** toolkit to help practitioners have conversations with children and young people about their rights when using the NHS. The toolkit was piloted with over 300 children and young people by local Healthwatch teams across the country.

### Disablist bullying

Disabled children and children with special educational needs are significantly more likely to experience bullying than their classmates. With funding from the Department of Education, the Anti-Bullying Alliance created a programme of training and resources to reduce levels of disablist bullying in schools. The programme received the highest possible rating and trained thousands of teachers, professionals and parents across the country.

### Transition to adulthood

CDC continues to lead on developing national policy and practice, supporting disabled children to make the transition to adulthood. In 2016 the Transition Information Network, hosted by CDC developed the It's My Life training for professionals on the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and on supporting young people to make decisions.

CDC also successfully delivered the fifth year of the Preparing for Adulthood Programme, in partnership with the National Development Team for Inclusion, providing information, expertise and support to develop practice nationally.



# A big thank you

We would like to thank all those who have funded and supported our work on behalf of children and young people during 2015/16, including:

Ardmonagh Family & Community Group, Atlantic Philanthropies, Barclays, Belfast City Council, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust, Belong, Ben Cohen Stand Up Foundation, Big Lottery Fund: A Better Start, Big Lottery Fund: Awards for All, Big Lottery NI, Colin Early Intervention Community funded by Colin Neighbourhood Partnership, Comic Relief, Department for Education, Department of Education NI, Department of Health, Education Endowment Foundation, EU Commission, Estate of Irene Anne Mitchell, Estate of Vera Joan Anderson, Extern, Foyle Foundation, Grandparents Plus, Health Education England, Health and Social Care Board, James Wentworth-Stanley Memorial Fund, John Menzies plc, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, JP Getty Jnr Charitable Trust, Lambeth CCG, Lankelly Chase Foundation, London Borough of Lambeth, Matthew Elvidge Charitable Trust, Medici Choir, Mozilla Foundation, NESTA, Nominet Trust, Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister NI, Prince's Trust, Public Health Agency, Safeguarding Board for NI, Souter Trust, South East Health & Social Care Trust, Sutton Trust, The Building Change, UBS Optimus Foundation Trust, True Colours Trust, Translink NI, Wellcome Trust

Also our grateful thanks for the support and donations received from NCB members, companies, trusts and foundations, voluntary organisations, schools, community organisations, individual donors and participants in sponsored events.



# Our specialist groups and partnerships

A number of networks and partnerships dedicated to specific aspects of children and young people's lives are based at NCB.



## Council for Disabled Children (CDC)

CDC is the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector in England. CDC provides a collective voice that champions the rights of children, young people and their families, and challenges barriers to inclusion.

[www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)



## Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)

ABA is open to all who share our vision to stop bullying between children and young people.

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)



## Sex Education Forum

The Sex Education Forum is a coalition of 100 core members, working together for better sex and relationships education (SRE) for all children and young people.

[www.sexeducationforum.org.uk](http://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk)



## Childhood Bereavement Network

The Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN) is the hub for those working with bereaved children and young people across the UK.

[www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)



## Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP)

NCB is a leading member of LEAP, funded by the Big Lottery to improve the lives of babies and very young children in Lambeth.

[www.leaplambeth.org.uk](http://www.leaplambeth.org.uk)

NCB also hosts the **Partnership for Well-Being and Mental Health in Schools**, the **Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum**, and the **Children and Young People HIV Network**.

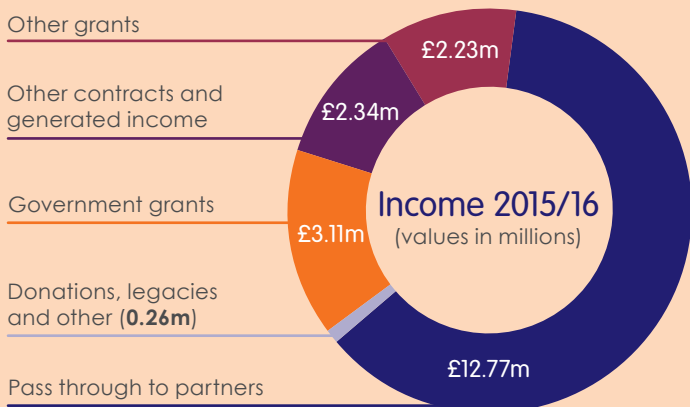


# Financial summary

NCB's financial performance continues to be strong. Our free reserves position meets our target and we continue to have diverse sources of income and positive relations with funders.

Although our overall headline income is £20.7 million, a significant proportion of this is passed directly to partner organisations to deliver the Independent Support programme amongst others. The vast majority of our underlying remaining income of £7.7 million is tied to direct delivery of grants and contracts.

We are proud to have continued to diversify our income, developing relationships with important funders such as Barclays and the UBS Optimus Foundation: the latter has supported a three-year programme of work to improve outcomes for children in Jersey. We have been successful in winning work across government departments and in securing support from charitable trusts, donations and corporate partnerships. Our 10-year programme of work leading the Lambeth Early Action Partnership (LEAP), part of the Big Lottery's A Better Start programme, has further strengthened our long-term sustainability. We have taken action to reduce our costs to ensure that we remain sustainable and are investing in developing new income streams including generated income. For a copy of our Annual Report and Financial Statements email [enquiries@ncb.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ncb.org.uk).



# How you can help

Many children and young people, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged, are prevented from achieving their full potential.

We build evidence to make the case for change and help those who work directly with children and young people to do the best job possible. We need your support to continue this vital work.

Get involved and support our work:

- **Make a donation online** at [www.ncb.org.uk/support-us/donate](http://www.ncb.org.uk/support-us/donate) or by using the attached form.
- **Fundraise** at work or school.
- **Get active** – run, walk or cycle to raise funds for NCB.
- **Support us simply by shopping online**
- **Give in memory or in celebration** – make a donation in memory of a loved one in or celebration of a birthday, wedding or anniversary.

Contact [fundraising@ncb.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@ncb.org.uk) for more details or visit [www.ncb.org.uk/support-us](http://www.ncb.org.uk/support-us) for details.

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