

National Evaluation of A Better Start: Learning from Families

**We are independent researchers from the University of Sussex.
We want to talk to families who have worked with A Better Start.
Could you help us learn from your experience?**

What's happening?

- A Better Start (ABS) is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund to support young children and families in Blackpool, Bradford, Lambeth, Nottingham and Southend.
- The National Lottery Community Fund has asked a team of researchers to carry out **a national evaluation** to find out what kind of difference ABS can make to children and families:
 - The national evaluation is being carried out by five organisations: NatCen Social Research, University of Sussex, RSM Partners, National Children's Bureau and Research in Practice.
 - **Researchers from the University of Sussex are talking to families**, to learn from their experiences.

Who is being asked to take part?

- We want to talk to **25 families of young children** who have used ABS services:
 - We are talking to families with at least one child aged 0-12 months or 24-36 months.
- We want to talk to the child's parent/carer – but other family members can join in too.

If you take part, what would you have to do?

- We would like to talk to you **twice a year over the next four years**.
 - Whenever possible, the same researcher would speak to you each time
- We'd like to:
 - Come to visit you once a year
 - Talk to you by phone or online (e.g., Zoom) 6 months later.
- We want to learn about your experience of ABS services:
 - What's important to you and your family? What makes a difference? What could be better? What else would you like to be done?
- If you agree, we will take notes and make a sound recording of our conversations.
 - If someone wants to join in but doesn't want to be recorded, we will stop the recorder when they are speaking. We will check the recording to make sure we don't include anyone who didn't want to be recorded. If no one wants to be recorded, we will take notes instead.

What happens when we visit?

- We would come to your home – or somewhere else if you want.
- The visit will take about 2 hours, at a time that suits you and the family.
- We want to talk with you and do some activities. These help us learn what's important in your family life:
 - We will give you a camera (to keep) – so you (or anyone who wants to) can take pictures to show what's important to your family.
 - We will bring things for making a map of important people and places.
 - We can go for a walk in the local area so you can show us what matters to you.

What happens when we phone you?

- The phone call will happen six months after the visit.
- It will take about 30 minutes – and we will call at a time that suits you.
- We want to catch up on what has been happening for you and the family.

What happens to the information you provide?

- We'll **write a report each year** and **give talks** about the evaluation. **Any information we use in our reports will be anonymous**, so no-one can tell who said what.
- **Everything you tell us will be confidential.**
- The only exception is if we are worried that someone might not be safe or could be at risk of harm. If that happens, we will try and talk to you first about what to do.

What are the benefits?

- Taking part will not help you directly. We hope that the evaluation will help other families in future, by finding ways to improve services.
- To show our thanks, each family will receive:
 - o a £30 voucher when we visit;
 - o a £20 voucher for each catch-up phone call.
- This gift voucher is yours to keep, even if you decide to stop taking part in the study.

Are there any difficulties or risks?

- Talking about your family life could bring up difficult feelings. You can skip any questions that make you thSu