

# **Sure Start Children's Centres – focusing on the neediest families**

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# Currently

- **Infrastructure** of over 3630 Sure Start Children's Centres.
- **Bring together services** for 0-5 year olds and their families:
  - Access to childcare.
  - Parenting and family support.
  - Employment and training advice.
  - Access to health services.
- **£1.14bn** revenue funding in 2010-11.
- But relatively **immature sector** (more than half open less than three years), at different stages of development.

# Changing context

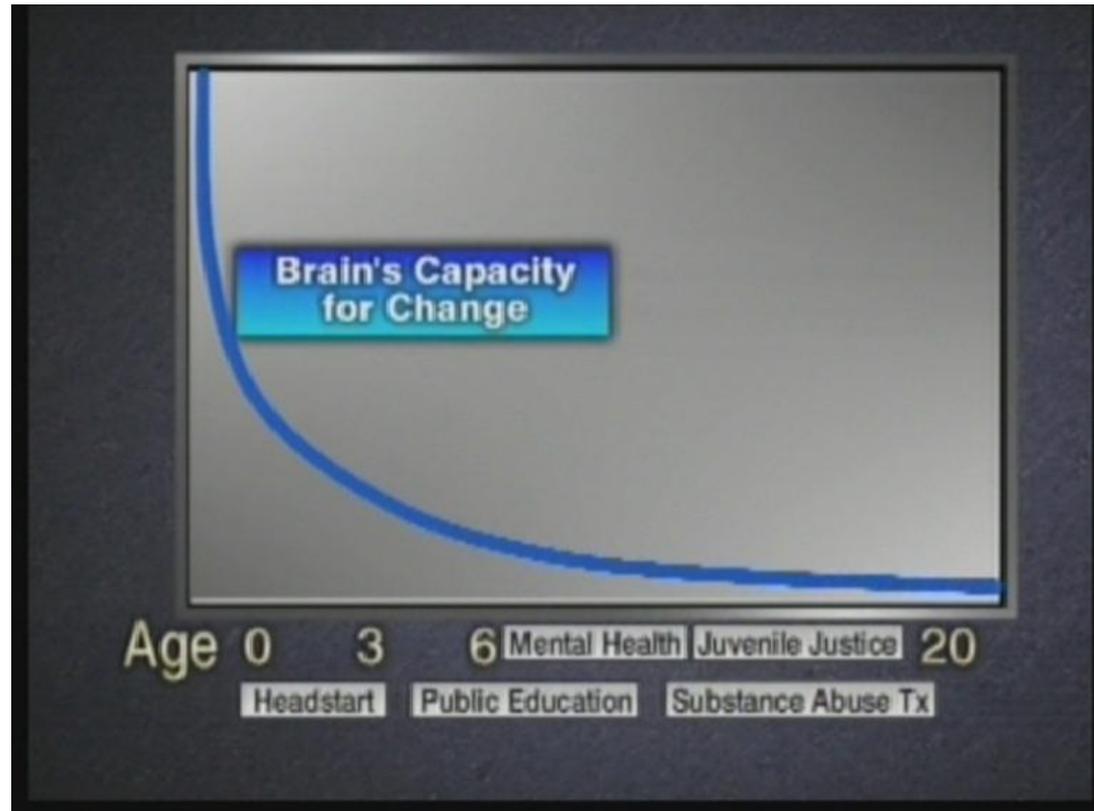
## Certainties:

- New Government – some clear commitments; a very different approach
- Children's Centres are valued and have a key role in delivering the Government's priorities for the neediest families
- Financial climate will get tougher: overriding importance of the spending review

## Uncertainties:

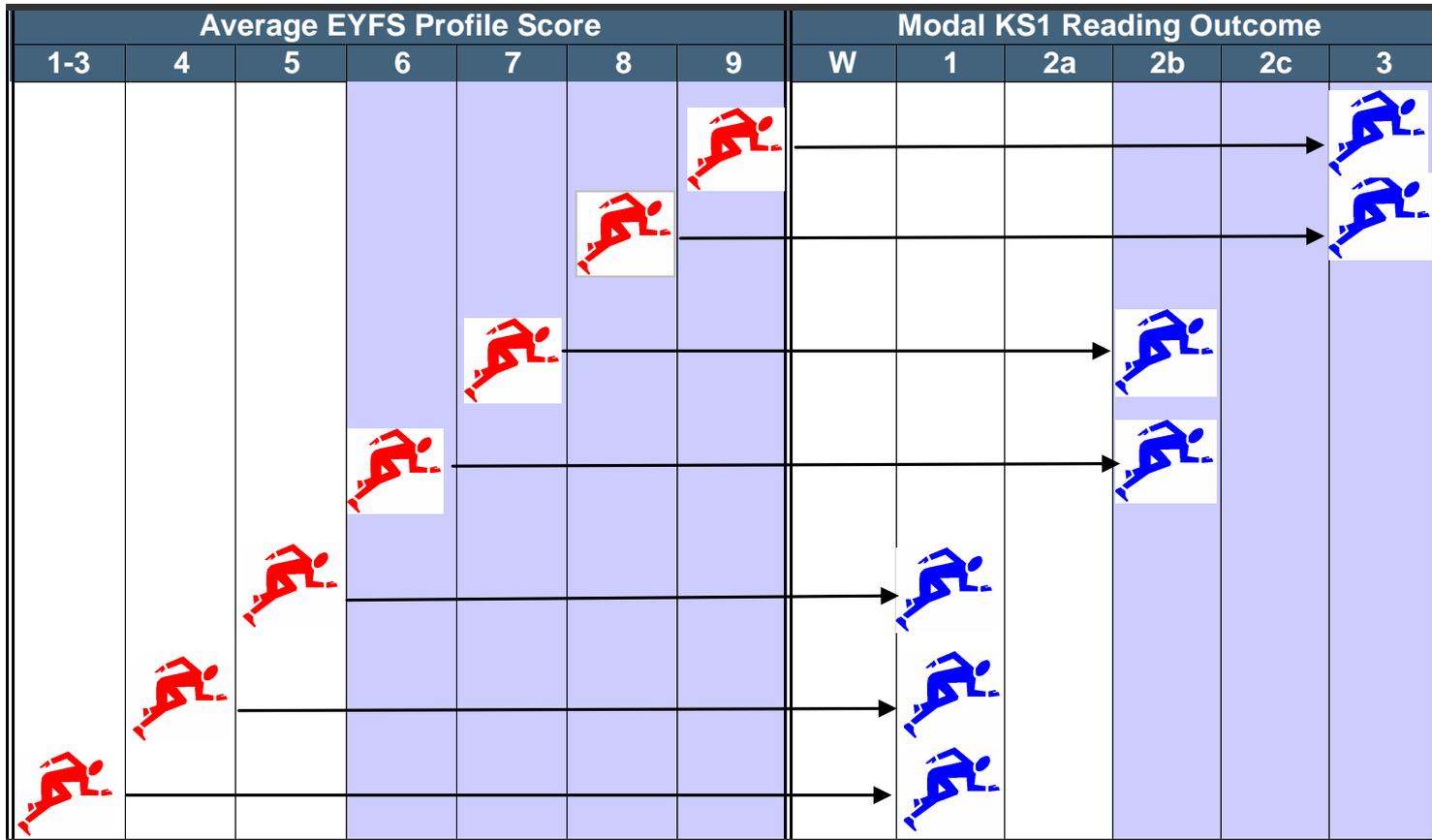
- Early days – many policies still being developed

# Growing evidence on the importance of the early years...



At birth, a baby's brain is only 25% fully formed, developing to 80% by age 3

# Achievement in the early years correlates to achievement at school ...



N.B. Correlation between EYFS Profile and KS1 outcomes varies across scales.

EYFS Profile  Key Stage 1 

Source: Department for Children School and Families

# Gaps emerge early...

- Differences between children's cognitive development **related to parental social status** are evident as early as 22 months.
- Highest early achievers from **disadvantaged backgrounds** **are overtaken** by lower achieving children from advantaged backgrounds by age 5.

## ...but quality makes a difference...

- High quality pre-school provision enhances children's all round cognitive, language and social development.
- More significant impact for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Impact on child outcomes negligible except where settings are high quality.

# Impact of Sure Start Local Programmes

<b>Positive impacts</b>	<b>At 3 years old</b>
Child positive social behaviour	✓
Child independence/self regulation	✓
Children with all immunisations	✓
Children who had accidents	✓
Less negative parenting/parenting risk	✓
Home learning environment	✓
Mother's satisfaction with life	No difference
Family makes greater use of support services	✓
<b>Negative impacts</b>	
Mother's self rated depression	x

# The Government has committed to taking Sure Start back to its original purpose of early intervention

- Increase **focus on the neediest families**
- Better involve **organisations with a track record** of supporting families
- Investigate ways of ensuring that providers are **paid in part by the results** they achieve
- **4,200 extra Sure Start Health Visitors**

# How can we increase the focus on the neediest families?

- Many examples of children's centres excelling at this
- Stronger emphasis on evidence of what works
- Extra Sure Start Health Visitors - supporting the Healthy Child Programme and links to GPs
- Linking the Family Nurse Partnership programme with SSCCs
- Making it easier for children's centres to learn from the best
- Trusting professionals to do their jobs, free from the top down bureaucracy.

# Broader work on children and families across government

- Frank Field's independent review of **Poverty and Life Chances**.
- Prime Minister's **Children and Families Taskforce**
- Professor Eileen Munroe's independent review of **Child Protection**
- Review of **Early Years Foundation Stage** led by Claire Tickell
- Graham Allen's review of **Early Intervention**

*"...strong and stable families of all kinds are the bedrock of a strong and stable society."*

The Coalition: our programme  
for Government

# Next steps

- Consultative phase – building evidence of what works in reaching the neediest families
- Spending Review (20 October 2010)

9 criteria including:

- **value for money**
- **impact on the neediest**
- **payment by results**
- **provision by citizens or non-state providers**

*“...It will mean thinking innovatively about the role of government in society...taking the difficult decisions collectively as a Government to reduce the deficit...consulting widely using all available talents to ensure that we deliver a stronger society as well as a smaller state.”*

The Spending Review  
Framework, HM Treasury  
(June 2010)

# Moving forward

- **Greater professional freedom**
- **Devolution: to communities and individuals**
- **Focus on the neediest – how far will learning from the best take us?**
- **Outcomes – do we know what we are achieving and can we measure it?**
- **Leadership role – never more important**