





# Understanding and influencing the national policy context to deliver a fairer start for all?

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#### Our talk

- A fairer start for all?
- The 'Four Nations' Study
- What we learned
- Concluding questions





### The 'Four nations' study

- UK countries face similar PH challenges
- Since devolution has each country developed distinctive PH approaches to policy and systems?
- What can we learn from similarities and differences?
- Big question?!
- We conducted a general review and review focused on child development in the early years

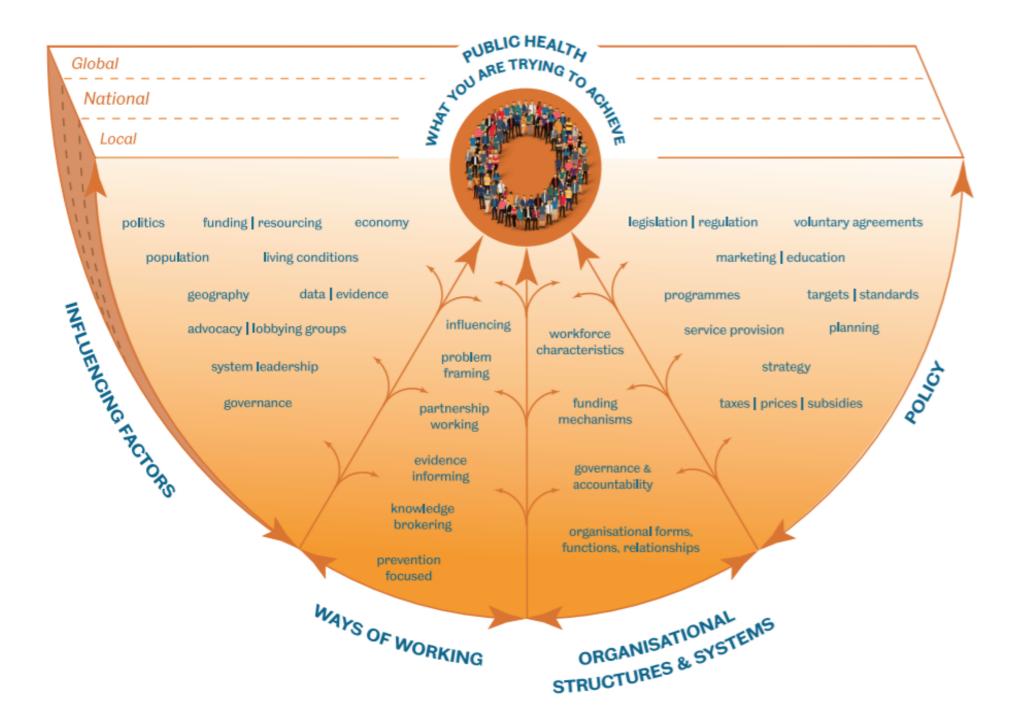




## Public health systems framework

- We developed a systems framework with PH stakeholders
- This identified key elements within a public health system
- The framework was 'tested' and revised through two systematic reviews







## What we learned





A public health systems framework is a useful tool for comparison and thinking about where change might be needed





Child development in the early years is emphasised as a key 'prevention approach' in policy across the UK

But... there are some differences, common challenges and persistent inequalities



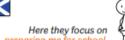
#### Early Years Policy in the UK - from the child's perspective

National devolution enables countries to do some things differently. What does this mean for policy to support early child development?













 $\overline{\phantom{a}}$ A health visitor should visit me 8 times from before birth to age 5.

to age 2.5.

A health visitor should visit

to age 5.

A health visitor should visit

me 5 times from before birth

me 11 times from before birth





HEALTH VISITING (universal offer)

A health visitor should visit to age 4.5.





When I am 3 I can get 16 hours of early learning and childcare. I get this when I am 2 if my parents receive certain benefits.

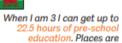


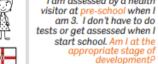
#### **EARLY FDUCATION**

When I am 3 I can get 30 hours of childcare, but only if my parents work a certain amount. I can get 15 hours if they don't. I get 15 hours when I am 2 if my parents receive certain benefits.



When I am 3 I can get 10 hours of early education. When I am 2 I can get 15 hours of childcare if I live in a more disadvantaged area.







I am assessed by a health visitor when I am 4-5 & my teacher when I am 5-6. I do online tests in my first year at school to see what support I need. Am I meeting the requirements in the government's curriculum for excellenceP

I am assessed by my teacher at the end of reception year at school when I am 4-5 to see how much I have learned. Have I reached the expected level of development. Am I school



I am assessed by a teacher when I first start school at age 4-5 to best support my learning. Am I reaching expected outcomes for learning?

DEVELOPMENTAL

**ASSESSMENT** 

I am assessed by a health

am 3. I don't have to do

start school. Am I at the

appropriate stage of

development?

visitor at pre-school when I















Here they focus on preparing me for school



me 9 times from before birth



prioritised for children whose parents receive certain benefits and



WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM **THISP** 

These are examples of similarities and differences in policy to support early child development across the UK. There are differences in: Policy approaches - preparing for life or school? Health visiting - number of contacts? Early Education - childcare or education, universal or earned benefit? Little is known about the significance of these differences in shaping children's development and long-term public health outcomes. We need ways to better understand how early years policies interconnect, reinforce or undermine outcomes in and across each country of the UK. How exactly is policy making a difference and what research methods do we need to better understand this? Persistent inequalities in children's development outcomes by socio-economic status across the UK highlight the need for continued action to give all children the best start in life.



Ways of working - particularly *influencing* and *partnership working* - are important given that early child development is a cross-cutting issue

But... there are gaps in evidencing what and how well the PH workforce does to influence a fair start for all





Influencing at *central executive / parliamentary level* is important to affect system change to ensure a fair start for all

But... influencing requires stakeholder coalitions, advocacy, coherent framing of issues, connections to policy makers.





# Questions...?





Is there an effective coalition of PH stakeholders working to collectively influence national policy to ensure a fairer start for all?

Do we need to strengthen the power of PH voices in national policy to deliver a fairer start for all?





#### Full report, paper and infographics:

https://figshare.shef.ac.uk/articles/Four\_Nations\_Study\_A\_comparative\_systems\_review\_and\_thematic\_policy\_analysis\_of\_public\_health\_across the four constituent countries of the UK/8075744

https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdz012

