

Little Lungs Evaluation

Final Report
May 2022



Contents

Page	Section
3	1 Terms of Reference
3	1.1 Commission Summary
3	1.2 Report Purpose
3	1.3 Agreed Methodology
4	2 Little Lungs Project
4	2.1 The VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund 2021/22
4	2.2 Collaborative Delivery
5	2.3 Project Purpose
6	3 Delivery
6	3.1 Approach
6	3.2 Project Management
7	3.3 Awareness Campaign
12	3.4 Direct Support
15	3.5 Impact
18	4 Fund Alignment
18	4.1 The VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund 2021/22
18	4.2 Provide Extra Support To Services and Acute Services
18	4.3 Raise Awareness Of Respiratory Infections
19	4.4 Support People With Children Suffering From Respiratory Infections
20	5 Budget
21	6 Lessons Learned
21	6.1 Key Learning
22	6.2 Legacy
23	6.3 Recommendations

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1 Introduction

1.1 Commission Summary

Koala North West appointed David Waterfall to provide an independent summary of its “*Little Lungs*” project, funded by the national VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund that is jointly run by the Department of Health and Social Care, Public Health England and NHS England and NHS Improvement.

1.2 Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to assess existing information and develop new insight, and collate this into a single point of reference responding to the following evaluation questions:

- Has the project achieved its intended purpose?
- Have any significant changes occurred, and if so what has been the impact?
- What are the lessons learned?
- What is the enduring need or legacy?

It is the intention that this report will enable Koala North West to understand the impact of the service, and to use this insight to help develop and deliver future interventions for the benefit of local families.

1.3 Agreed Methodology

The approach was agreed in advance with Koala North West, and has involved:

- Visits to the Koala North West office, including discussions with project staff and volunteers
- Desk-based review of existing monitoring and evaluation data
- Development of survey questions, and analysis of feedback
- Working with the team to consider qualitative factors and the impact of these
- Collation of the research findings into a succinct evaluation report

Ongoing contact has been maintained with Koala North West throughout the commission including taking feedback, discussing emerging findings, and updating on progress.

2 Little Lungs Project

2.1 The VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund 2021/22

The VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund 2021/22 was jointly run by the Department of Health and Social Care, Public Health England, and NHS England and NHS Improvement. The theme of the Fund was providing advice and support for families and children's respiratory and acute services, and to raise awareness of management of paediatric respiratory infections within communities that experience the greatest health inequalities. This was a priority given the predicted increase in paediatric respiratory viral infections, such as respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), given that there were fewer cases of these common infections than usual while society has been living under Covid restrictions.

A successful application to the Fund was developed on behalf of a local collaboration in August 2021.

2.2 Collaborative Delivery

The collaboration included:

- **Koala North West** (as the lead, and accountable body); responsible for project management, one to one support for families, borough wide promotional work, data collection and monitoring.
- **Wirral Multicultural Organisation**; offer a range of professional and culturally sensitive services to improve the overall health and wellbeing of the local minority ethnic communities, by providing language support, advocacy, social support and activities, assistance to access health and social care services, including advice and education services.
- **The Foundation Years Trust**; providing a nursery-based programme to deliver groups to support parents, and community early years programme for pre-school children in the community. Providing information and promotional work in their community for this project.
- **Ferries Family Groups**; providing family support, weekly group meetings, social events, training courses, crèche, and providing information and promotional work in their community for this project.
- **Bee Wirral**; providing a community resource, somewhere that residents feel welcome and can come to take part in training, courses, activities and support services. Including a range of baby groups. Providing information and promotional work in their community for this project.

2.3 Project Purpose

The intention was to deliver significant awareness raising and provide information to all Wirral families with a child aged 0-3 years, through a mix of campaign work and direct support:

- **Awareness Campaign;** delivering a blend of targeted promotional work, advertising, and awareness raising events.
- **Direct Support;** delivering a variety of targeted support through one to ones, a telephone helpline, home visits, and virtual and face-to-face group support. The priority target group was the BAME community and the borough's most deprived wards.

The project had a budget of £124,506, and as the Fund was designed to be short-term, the delivery timeframe was from 1st October to 31 March 2022.

3 Delivery

3.1 Approach

The approach involved several distinct areas of activity, grouped for ease of reference between project management, the awareness campaign, and the direct support. Each is considered below.

3.2 Project Management

This accounted for co-ordination of all areas of delivery, and key actions included:

- **Appointed Project Team;** the core staff for the project were brought into the role following a full induction, including:
 - 2 x Project Coordinators
 - 2 x Outreach Workers
 - 5 Helpline staff working on the helpline speaking English as well as Kurdish Sorani, Farsi, Polish, Tamil, Chinese both Cantonese and Mandarin.
 - Respiratory Paediatric Nurse

Routine team meetings were held, involving the project team as well as the partner voluntary organisations involved in the project.

- **Developed Branding and Design;** given the focus on public awareness raising a key foundation was a strong and identifiable brand. To achieve this a local design agency was appointed to create a logo and a range of collateral, such as leaflets, posters, bus adverts, as well as pull-up display boards.
- **Developed Online Presence;** involved the setting up of social media accounts including:

- Twitter, at [@LittleLungsWirr](https://twitter.com/LittleLungsWirr) [as image]
- Instagram, at [instagram.com/littlelungs_wirral](https://www.instagram.com/littlelungs_wirral)
- Facebook, at [facebook.com/littlelungswirral](https://www.facebook.com/littlelungswirral)

Also development of a website, at koalanw.co.uk/little-lungs-wirral, containing advice, support contact details, links, as well as a PDF of the Parent Advice Sheet on Bronchiolitis from the NHS Big 6 Leaflet.



- **Established Helpline Logistics**, early activity included confirming the help-line phone number - 07706 316 457 - and scheduling the operational hours of the helpline at partner organisation Wirral Multicultural Organisation:
 - Monday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm
 - Tuesday 1.00 pm - 4pm
 - Wednesday 3pm- 6.00 pm
 - Thursday 9.30 am - 12.30 pm
 - Friday 2.00 pm - 5.00 pm
- **Disseminated Insight to Stakeholders**; a fundamental approach of the project management was to ensure that the learning gained from delivery of the project was passed to local agencies. To achieve this fortnightly insight presentations were provided at the RSV Surge Group sessions attended by Wirral Hospital Trust, CCG, Primary Care Networks and Public Health. In addition, dedicated updates were provided to the Public Health Strategic Maternity Group and also at the Hospital Trust Paediatric Ground Rounds.

3.3 Awareness Campaign

This was the largest influencing element of the project, and key areas of activity included:

- **Awareness Raising with Voluntary Sector Organisations**; facilitation of a workshop for voluntary sector staff that covered a full introduction to Little Lungs, discussion on families' needs, and RSV training delivered by the Respiratory Paediatric Nurse. The two-hour workshop was delivered in October 2021, attended by 36 representatives from the partner organisations -Koala NW, Wirral Multicultural Organisation, Ferries Family Groups, The Foundation Years Trust, and Bee Wirral. Feedback indicated that the knowledge gained would be passed to attendee's colleagues, the families they supported, as well as other local groups they worked with, and there was a commitment from all attendees to share leaflets and social media content.

“So glad we got to come today. We had a little boy in nursery last week that we had to phone his parents to collect as he was unwell and had a bluish tinge to his lips. Now that I know the symptoms of RSV I will be better prepared to advise parents and be able to share the information with them.”

Workshop Attendee

- **Awareness Raising with Professionals**; the Respiratory Paediatric Nurse led presentations about RSV and the project at the January 2022 ‘Lunch and Learn’ sessions, which is a local resource for all professionals working with young children on the Wirral, to provide insight into local organisations that may support

their role. The recording is available on the Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership Board website, at wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/lunch-learn-sessions/ and directly from YouTube at <https://youtu.be/k45qh2NH2mc>

- **Translation into Over 100 Languages;** project partner Wirral Multicultural Organisation used its website to offer translation text and a variety of accessibility tools to allow the information to be shared in over 100 written languages (and some spoken languages), at <https://www.wmo.org.uk/little-lungs/>. In addition a detailed presentation was delivered to paediatricians and respiratory clinical nurses about the translation service available within the project, and how to access interpreters that could be called on to attend appointments with families. Activity also included specific attention to translation of the ‘Big 6 Bronchiolitis’ literature into the nine most common languages used on Wirral (Bengali, Polish, Kurdish, Farsi, Turkish, Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Romanian) that was shared widely with other projects via DH Exchange the NHS sharing platform for commissioned service. In addition a new member of staff at Wirral Multicultural Organisation (Bengali Speaking) assisted in the process of delivering induction training including the Little Lungs presentation.

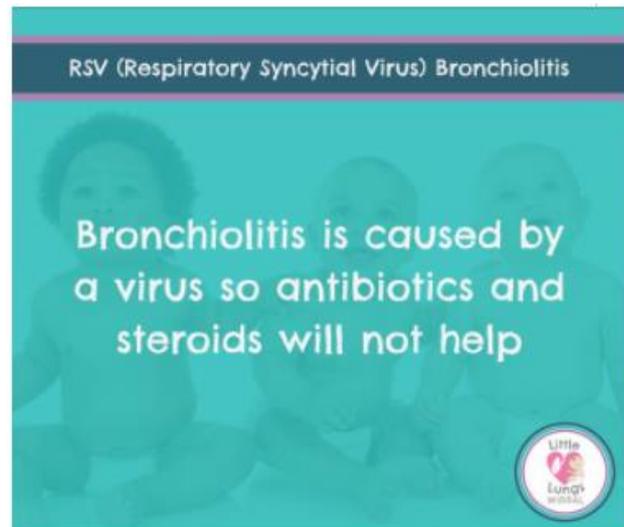
“Just want to say thank you for creating this! My little boy had it twice in less than a month and was so very ill. It’s so important to raise awareness of it and how it can be passed so easily from adults with just a little cold! He suffers with asthma so is bad with his chest anyway, I’m a nervous wreck taking him out anywhere in case he picks something up.”

Parent

- **Dedicated Bus Adverts;** included designing a bus advert and having this placed on the rear of 20 buses travelling across Wirral for four weeks starting on 25th October 2021. This also linked with a social media campaign whereby local parents were asked to take photos of where they had seen adverts (when safe to do so) and send them to Little Lungs [as image], which also helped in driving wider community interest and word of mouth discussions of RSV.



- **Dedicated Social Media Engagement;** a series of posts were created by the graphic designers to share bite size pieces of information to families [as image]. To support this the project team proactively managed social media messages including creating, developing, and sharing content. Included links with well-regarded external sites, such as with Wirral Mums (at



[facebook.com/groups/818296418289668](https://www.facebook.com/groups/818296418289668)). The team also responded to private messages received and any comments left on posts, as well as linked parents in with relevant support groups and outreach workers. Social media metrics included:

- Followers, with a page reach of 11.3K
- Instagram, 203 Followers, with a reach of 317
- Twitter, 26 Followers
- Webpage; 375 visits
- Facebook, 422 followers, 386 likes, overall reach was 33.4K (highest months being Nov/Dec averaging 4K)

Posts also shared through wider social media included:

- Koala NW, 3,806 Facebook Followers
- Koala NW, 660 Instagram Followers
- Koala NW, 746 Twitter Followers
- Bee Wirral, 4K+ Followers and the dedicated Little Lungs page has over 1,700 Followers, as well as a dedicated TikTok video

“What an absolute fab webpage my son has just had bronchitis and I honestly didn’t know what it was. I have just come across your page and this would of been amazing after reading through I would of know exactly what to look for at what point thanks for sharing this information!!!! Xx.”

Parent

- **Developed Media Releases;** a number of editorials, articles and press releases were created for several print and online outlets, such as Wirral View, Birkenhead News, and Wirral InfoBank. In addition a radio advert for Capital Radio was developed that was aired 256 times across several weeks which, for example, data supplied indicates had a reach of 263,000 listeners between 8th November and 5th December 2021 alone.

Client Story - Radio Campaign Result

The radio campaign reached a parent who had recently had a very poorly little boy. The mum made contact via Facebook and then joined the Little Lungs Wirral support group for peer support as she was anxious about her child's health over the coming winter months:

“Hi, I’ve just heard your advert in the radio now. Which couldn’t have come at a better time. My son is almost 11 months old. He was hospitalised in May with Bronchiolitis, he was struggling with breathing, temp was 39 and he was limp. His stay resulted in an IV drip, constant checks, care at home for a day and antibiotics. We knew he had been unwell as he had had a cough for 3 weeks prior but the GP would constantly say this was viral. He also contracted it again in July, again he had been coughing for a while and this was diagnosed as viral. He underwent numerous blood tests as his sugars were low etc. Is there a drop in/ telephone service we could use regarding more support for this please as I am really worried about Winter and the impact this will have on him and his lungs.”

- Dedicated Wirral Globe Campaign; this digital campaign [as image, from www.wirralglobe.co.uk/news/rsv-need-know/], received over 142,000 total impressions, generated almost 400 engagements with post, and received total time spent viewing the advert of over 100 hours.

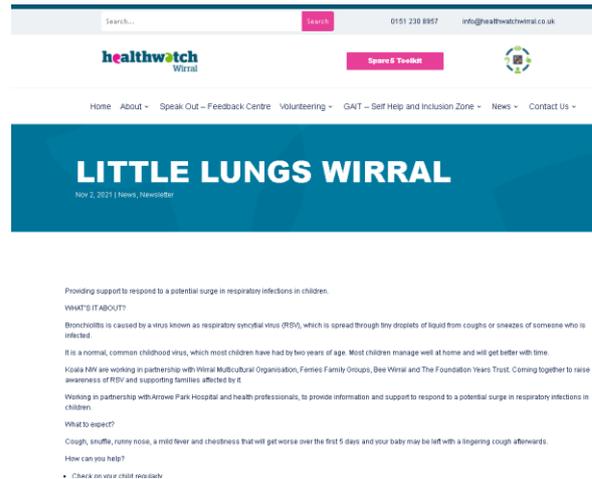
The Comms Officer of the Wirral Globe commented, *“That’s a massive amount of time there, and a really good results considering the average click through is around 0.04% your campaign ended on 0.27%.”*

“Hello, I was just looking for some advice really, my 2-year-old has been very poorly with a terrible chest and breathing since the beginning of September. Coughing so badly he throws up, temperature, rattle chest the lot. I’ve been to the Drs and spoken with a respiratory nurse twice, they just keep saying it’s viral it’s normal keep using his inhaler. But nothing is working and I don’t know what else to do. I’ve just seen your article on Wirral Globe page and everything you have listed as symptoms he has had for 2 months now. I don’t know where else to turn I feel like no one is listening to me x”

Parent via the Facebook Group

- **Distributed Campaign Information;** information and materials were passed to a broad range of local intermediaries and community touch points, such as:
 - **Partners,** all partner organisations displayed Little Lungs banners in their premises and shared information in all groups attended by parents with under 3s, for example Wirral Multicultural Organisation passed information to families at their Little World Nursery, and Wirral University Teaching Hospital passed messages to their Matron for neo-natal and children’s acute services.
 - **Local hospitals,** for example Arrowe Park Hospital was provided with 500 leaflets and four pull-up banners that were located in Children’s A&E, Assessment Ward, Maternity, and Children’s outpatients.
 - **Children’s Centres,** for example three pull-up banners were displayed in Bromborough, Birkenhead, and Seacombe, and 3,000 leaflets issued via their ‘Welcome to the World’ packs that were given out to all Wirral new parents.
 - **Wirral libraries,** for example four pull-up banners were located in the children’s sections of Wallasey, Bebington, West Kirby, and Birkenhead Central libraries.
 - **Bounty,** who added Little Lungs to their app under ‘my hospital’ section that links with Arrowe Park Hospital. They also adapted the project leaflet to create an article on RSV for their app.
 - **GPs and Pharmacies,** for example over 2,000 leaflets were distributed to 51 GP surgeries, alongside various pharmacies being provided with leaflets.
 - **Nurseries and Preschools,** for example Somerville Nursery and Prenton Penguins Preschool were sent a key information PDF to be shared with parents.
 - **NHS-led schemes,** for example information was shared with colleagues from a number of organisations as a result of the flu for 2-3-year-old campaign including to 59 individuals from NHS departments and local charities.
 - **Council’s Family Information Service,** which had project information included in their ‘My Child Can’ bulletin sent to all Wirral registered Early Years settings spanning private nurseries, childminders, and pre-schools.
 - **Christmas parties,** throughout December 2021 information and leaflets were shared at festive events delivered by local third sector organisations, reaching 181 families with infants 0-3.
 - **Little Lambs Paediatric First Aid,** this specialist company was provided with 100 leaflets to pass to parents on their courses.

- Several wider networks were also attended by the project team to share information, such as presentations at the Social Prescribers meeting, and Health & Wellbeing Fund meeting. Also presentations to Paediatricians at local hospitals, and sharing with Healthwatch [as image, at healthwatchwirral.co.uk/little-lungs-wirral]



A Healthwatch Wirral member of staff fed back that he had seen the bus advert, and as a parent of two little ones he had never heard of RSV. Healthwatch Wirral have helped to share project information via their social media.

3.4 Direct Support

This was the largest public-facing element of the project, and key areas of activity included:

- **Delivered the Helpline;** the Little Lungs Wirral Helpline went live on 25th October 2021 and ended on 31.03.2022. Unfortunately despite staff available on the phone acting as information advisers the helpline only received 6 calls. Doctors and clinicians at the Winter RSV Surge group reported that they were not surprised by this because the numbers or RSV cases in Wirral were so low.
- **Delivered the Support Group;** Regular Zoom meetings, and Whats App videos/messages for parents who asked for this. The Little Lungs Wirral Support Group held its first session on 26th October 2021 and concluded on 29.03.2022, and delivered 18 sessions in this time supporting 11 families. It had a dedicated contact number of 07549 673 617 that was free for most parents to contact from their existing mobile data plans. Numbers were lower than expected, but again not surprising because of the low number of RSV cases in Wirral during the course of the project.

“Hello, Wirral mummy here!! RVs (Rhino enterovirus) is also going round at the moment similar to RSV. My little boy has tested positive for this and been in hospital for a week (second lung collapse in a month) will be going home with oxygen now, he’s 3. I’d never heard of RSV before, thank you for all the educating you’re providing for parents I have seen a few of your pop up information stands now! X.”

Parent feedback on Facebook

- **Targeted Local Groups;** information and leaflets were shared with a wide variety of local groups, centres and community trusted venues with a focus on Wirral's five most statistically deprived wards, for example:
 - **Birkenhead & Tranmere,** including Birkenhead Park Visitor centre Café, Make it Happen community shop, Koala NW Hub (Complex needs group, Breastfeeding group, and Stay & Play), Short Break Group offering weekend respite for children with additional needs, Practice Nurse at St Catherine's Hospital, Wirral Multi-Cultural Centre, Clown Around Play Centre, and at Europa pools.
 - **Bidston & North Birkenhead,** including Community Shop Beechwood, Little Centre Beechwood, Tots & Baby Group at Egan Road Church, Koala charity shop in Claughton, Bumble Bees stay & play, Tam O'Shanter Farm Café in Bidston, Day Lewis Pharmacy in Beechwood, Breastfeeding group at Brassey Gardens Children's Centre, St Pauls Primary School, Sensory Shack, Bee Wirral Young Mums Group, Equilibrium at the Livingstone Centre, and Gautby Road Centre.
 - **Leasowe and Moreton East,** including Leasowe Community Centre (Social supermarket), Leasowe Leisure Centre, and Eastway Primary School.
 - **Rock Ferry,** including Ferries Family Groups
 - **Seacombe,** including Foundation Years Trust, Breastfeeding group, Guinea Gap swimming baths, and at the Egremont Community Centre.
 - **All Other Wards,** including Tots Spot (0-4 yrs) at St Marys Centre Upton, Bubbles Play Centre in New Brighton, Activity For All Play Centre in Arrowe Park, Pre-school at St. Marys Church Upton, Babble & Bounce in Upton, Story Explorers at St Andrews Church Meols, Baby Ballet in Woodchurch, Prenton Penguins, and at Inspire Community Café.

“After receiving information I went back to my Doctors and my son was then diagnosed with Bronchiolitis, with the leaflets/information I feel more confident about it. I will also be ringing the helpline number and also looking at attending some groups.”

Parent (son age 18 months) after attending a local group

- **Delivered Outreach Work;** a variety of sessions and activities that were designed to engage and support families in any face-to-face or virtual setting they felt comfortable in, with examples including:

- **Whatsapp Video Support Calls**, for example 1:1s with parents expressing concerns or having specific questions, with the ability to signpost to wider support or provide information electronically.
- **Engaging Mosques**, for example Wirral Multicultural Organisation led contact to two mosques linking with the project’s Bengali speaking staff member who supported with interpretation.
- **Supporting Travellers**, for example working with staff from the Irish Community Care Merseyside to reach traveller and gypsy families who do not traditionally engage in mainstream provision.
- **Focus Groups**, for example bringing six families together with a presentation and full Q&A from a local Doctor and his team that provided information on RSV, and also helped build relations with local parents.

“It was such a scary time and I wish I had seen your page before, my partner has just heard it on the radio and told me to have a look - now I know it’s there that’s going to be a big help as there is a lot of info on there that I definitely needed. He’s on the mend not better, but a lot better than what he was so thanks again for sharing all this xxx.”

Parent, received information at outreach activity

- **Supported Wirral Multicultural Centre**; assisting delivery at this well-regarded community venue with strong links to BAME communities, with examples of specific activity including:
 - **Flexible Access**, for example delivered pop-up workshops for parents/carers that enabled the handing out of advice sheets and speaking with local families that are known to have minimal engagement with other services.
 - **Jargon Free Information**, for example liaised with the Respiratory Paediatric Nurse to develop easy-to-understand responses to frequently encountered questions from parents.
 - **Engaging Widely**, for example co-designed group session at the Deen Centre (an Islamic organisation open to all people in central Birkenhead) to engage local families.
 - **Audio Support**, for example developed audio versions of Little Lungs presentation for parents that do not have English as a main language or who struggle with literacy.

Client Story - Signposting to Little Lungs

A mum was ending family support with Koala NW and was told about Little Lungs as she has two children, with the youngest being 10 months who was transferred to Alder Hey with breathing difficulties due to RSV.

Mum contacted Little Lungs and attended an online parent support group. She was very anxious and worried that every time her son started to sniffle it would affect his breathing so she was watching him all the time and would not go out in case he caught anything.

I contacted Mum to offer additional one to one support which she accepted. Mum was able to call or text me if she was feeling anxious and to talk things through. Mum tried to get a GP appointment as she was worried but the receptionist wouldn't make an appointment. I encouraged Mum to call the GP back and explain her situation which Mum did and she was given an appointment. Mum sent me a text to thank me for encouraging her to phone again.

I met up with Mum in person to get her out of the house. I gave her details to our respiratory nurse who contacted Mum to offer advice and reassurance. Mum still attends our online support group but is in a much better place now. She is happier, stronger and is getting out and about. She told me that she feels less anxious knowing that we are there to support her.

Little Lungs Team Member

3.5 Impact

The project created immense impact in what was a relatively short timeframe, considering the scale of activities delivered and the diverse needs of the families engaged. While a variety of outcomes and benefits have been identified in the previous section in terms of the awareness campaign and the direct support delivered, the overall impacts achieved by the project may be summarised below:

- **Raised Awareness of Respiratory Infections;** the project put RSV on the radar for families across Wirral, as well as acting as a timely reminder for healthcare professionals.

A GP from the Winter Surge group meeting said he had seen the bus campaign and it reminded him to speak with families he is seeing about RSV. He admitted that without Little Lung's awareness raising, this wasn't something that he would otherwise have discussed with parents.

Little Lungs Team Member

- **Reassured Parents and Reduced Their Stress;** the project provided a wealth of information and advice to parents, helping them to recognise the symptoms and know what to do. This helped reduce uncertainty and anxiety for parents, and enabled them to better cope with what can be a troubling situation.

“Little Lungs has really been helping me and us all as a family have benefitted from it. I have the reassurance each week talking to those who have experienced the same/similar thing with their own children, and I have been looking forward to talking with the zoom group and reviewing how our week has been. My husband has definitely been more relaxed going to work knowing that the support is available and this has helped us be more relaxed rather than constantly stressed and this has really made things easier for us day-to-day as a family.”

Parent from the Support Group

- **Strengthened Voluntary Sector Infrastructure;** the project brought several partners together and established operational connections with a multitude of other third sector providers and community venues. This increased the capacity and capability of the sector to support families, and will also be an enduring legacy of the project for years to come. To highlight the upskilling of children’s workforce on Wirral so RSV awareness raising will continue especially in areas where there are significant health inequalities. Families already accessing trusted organisations within these areas so message is easily shared.

“Thankful I managed to come today. We definitely want to arrange for an information session for our parents and a pull up banner for the centre. It’s vital we raise as much awareness as possible and we, as a charity, are on board in helping to do that.”

Voluntary Sector Workshop Attendee

- **Linked Professionals and Created Support Pathways;** the project worked closely with clinical partners that created both new networks and information sharing links, and also ensured a clear pathway was in place for families to navigate and access the appropriate support services.

“The campaign and information has been great. Our health visiting teams are sharing and providing the links for further information. It has been a great campaign for the conversation starter for this.”

Service lead 0-19 Health and Wellbeing Service, NHS

- **Created Unexpected Opportunities For Clinical Trials;** a significant, but wholly unintended, impact of the project was that it informed and shaped the Liverpool School Of Tropical Medicine’s (LSTM) clinical trials for the immune boost treatment to protect children from RSV. The lead clinician, Dr Nuttall, heard of

Little Lungs on social media and made links with the project team to help develop links with local community groups and their families, to provide a robust evidence base for their research - with the project supporting the LSTM team to work with groups of parents to establish impact of RSV, quality of life, socioeconomic issues, and learn how families can be better supported.

Exemplar - Supporting Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine

“Our Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) groups were set up across a range of sites around Birkenhead, on the Wirral peninsula. Sites included two day-care centres, a day-care/community support centre, and a multicultural community centre. Participants were all parents, some with children under the age of 2 years, and participation was open to staff members at the sites who had an interest in the study. During our PPI groups we asked parents about their familiarity with RSV and bronchiolitis. Parents were generally aware of the impact coughs and colds, or other general respiratory infections, can have on children and families. However, they raised concerns that the terms RSV and bronchiolitis would not be familiar to the majority of parents. Parents who had previously had exposure to the Little Lungs project reported that as a result of this exposure they were more familiar with both RSV and bronchiolitis and felt more confident about being able to identify health problems or red-flag symptoms in their children. They reported that prior to being exposed to Little Lungs they would not have heard about RSV/bronchiolitis. They generally felt that parents who had not attended groups where Little Lungs had had a presence would not have known about RSV/bronchiolitis. In general, when parents discussed the Little Lungs project they did so in an overall positive light. They felt Little Lungs had made a positive impact on the groups involved, and parents had increased confidence/awareness on bronchiolitis. They highlighted the general lack of information on this topic that was readily available to busy parents, and said Little Lungs had been their only real exposure to RSV/bronchiolitis, despite how common it is in young children. Parents found the name ‘Little Lungs’ to be reassuring and welcoming, without being patronising. They felt it related well to the topic of RSV and lung health in infants, and clearly stated the intentions behind the group.”

Lead Clinician, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine

4 Fund Alignment

4.1 The VCSE Health and Wellbeing Fund 2021/22

The theme of the HW Fund 2021/22 was providing advice and support for children, families and children's respiratory and acute services during autumn/winter 2021, and to raise awareness of management of paediatric respiratory infections within communities that experience the greatest health inequalities. This was a priority given the predicted increase in paediatric respiratory viral infections, such as respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), parainfluenza and human metapneumovirus, given that there were fewer cases of these common infections than usual while society has been living under lockdown restrictions.

The Fund aimed to support the VCSE sector to:

1. Provide extra support for families and children's respiratory services and acute services affected by respiratory infections.
2. Raise awareness of respiratory infections.
3. Support people with children suffering from respiratory infections, especially where they may not have access to other support.

Little Lungs aligned with the Fund's aims in a number of ways, and without duplicating evidence earlier in this report, key aspects are outlined below.

4.2 Provide Extra Support To Services and Acute Services

The project worked in true partnership with statutory services, for example through the Wirral RSV Winter Surge Group whose members include Wirral University Trust Hospital, Primary Care, Wirral Community NHS Trust, Cheshire Wirral Partnership, Wirral Public Health and Wirral CCG. The team also liaised closely throughout delivery with wider services, for example GP practices, pharmacies, and the hospitals.

The project focused on prevention activities, for example helping to avoid late admissions to hospital of children experiencing acute symptoms. By working with the range of statutory agencies, the project was able to understand clinical need and concerns of practitioners, and as such contributed meaningfully to the existing clinical pathways for respiratory services in both the community and acute settings.

4.3 Raise Awareness Of Respiratory Infections

The project delivered a dual focus; firstly an awareness campaign, and secondly direct support. The combination of these raised family and practitioner awareness of how to manage paediatric respiratory infections, and especially so within communities that experience the greatest health inequalities.

Furthermore, as all partner organisations were based in the borough's deprived wards this ensured that information and support was well promoted and accessible by those most in need. For example, project partner Wirral Multicultural Organisation introduced a track record of engaging the borough's BAME community, and supported translation and interpretation to further raise awareness via the most common languages spoken in Wirral.

4.4 Support People With Children Suffering From Respiratory Infections

The project's portfolio of direct support to families was broad and through a process of co-design was able to offer a needs-led support service that was accessible and trusted. This again was enhanced due to the track-record and confidence that all project partners held with families across Wirral.

The project offered a menu of face-to-face and virtual support, for example support groups, targeted activity at established local groups, flexible outreach work, as well as the helpline. This enabled rapid assistance to be provided to families, all supported by a strong social media presence, which could provide advice, reassurance, and signpost to relevant services as required. The inclusion of a specialist Respiratory Paediatric Nurse further enhanced the ability to support families with children suffering from respiratory infections.

5 Budget

The project had a budget of £124,506, as follows:

Project Budget			
Item	Expected	Actual	Variance
Staffing and partner overheads	£59,708	£59,708	£0
Direct delivery costs	£39,785	£39,785	£0
Volunteer/ user participation costs	£2,670	£2,670	£0
Administration	£22,343	£22,343	£0
Total	£124,506	£124,506	£0

It may be seen that the budget was spent as intended, with no areas of variance.

6 Lessons Learned

6.1 Key Learning

Delivery allowed the partnership to gain a wealth of insight that will help shape and inform the delivery of future interventions, as well as that can be shared with local organisations. Learning included:

- **Time Required For Campaign Launch;** given the nature of the funding, the timescales for developing the project and getting it off the ground were very tight. This was compounded by the additional need to deliver the project through a partnership model of several voluntary sector providers, seeking to build relations with a variety of statutory sector agencies, and while understanding and subsequently responding to the needs of local families. The additional need to establish a borough-wide helpline would also have benefited from a longer lead-in time.
- **Project Reach and Covid;** many of the families from BAME communities were still reluctant to go out and mix in a social setting due to covid. The project partner Wirral Multicultural Organisation reported that this cultural approach had a negative impact on the areas of the project that would ideally have been delivered in group sessions, but instead had to be provided on a 1:1 basis or through virtual methods. In a wider sense, other areas of the project that it had been hoped would be face-to-face, such as attendance at groups, has been limited, and in general the number of families accessing face-to-face provision has been lower than hoped for.
- **Low Rate of RSV on Wirral;** there were significantly lower levels of hospital admissions than were forecasted, and Wirral as a borough did not experience the surge that was predicted. This arguably reduced the scope of wider word of mouth communications that occurred as parents were less likely than expected to have friends or family directly experiencing RSV.
- **Efficacy of a Borough Level Helpline;** many families reported that they were aware (and in many cases had used) national and established helplines that were provided by large, national charities with a focus on RSV, for example Asthma and Lung UK blf.org.uk/support-for-you/RSVhelpline, Barnardo's RSV Helpline barnardos.org.uk/nhs-rsv-helpline, Bliss bliss.org.uk/respiratory-cyncytial-virus-rsv, or Contact's Support Line contact.org.uk/respiratory-syncytial-virus-rsv. As such the presence of a new and relatively unknown localised helpline may have been seen as duplicative.
- **Parents Communication Preferences;** feedback from families identified that what the majority wanted was information about RSV to be provided to them as part of their existing support offer and the activities they choose to engage with,

for example Stay and Play, rather than having to access a separate resource or activity.

- **Ability to Engage Families;** the project was able to successfully engage those families that do not routinely attend mainstream appointments such as with Health Visitors. As the partners were trusted local organisations, they were able to visit and include such families directly to pass on RSV messages, and were also able to upskill and inform mainstream professionals who could then cascade that information out to those families that did engage with them.
- **Qualitative Versus Quantitative Focus;** the project focused near exclusively on gathering qualitative evidence during delivery. As such while there is little ability to define the demographics of the families engaged or the numerical scale of activity, the project has been able to gather a strong evidence base of empirical insight and feedback directly from the families supported. It may be possible, or desirable, to increase the aspiration to gather quantitative data in future projects.

6.2 Legacy

Several aspects of project delivery have created impact and benefits that will endure, such as:

- **Embedded Awareness of RSV;** the project has put the acronym “RSV” in the consciousness of local families, as well as knowledge of respiratory infections in general. Equally the project has acted as a reminder and a source of new information for healthcare colleagues. Both of these aspects will endure beyond the project lifetime.
- **Strengthened Voluntary Sector Infrastructure;** the project brought several partners together and the operational connections that were created will continue after the project. Within this the insight and learning gained will also enable all partners to better engage with families on similar issues in the future.
- **Lasting Resources;** while all materials from the project can be considered a legacy in terms of the knowledge and insight within them, such as ongoing use of pull-up display boards, several in particular will act as specific resources for the future:
 - The ‘Lunch and Learn’ session on RSV delivered by the Respiratory Paediatric Nurse will be available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/k45qh2NH2mc> in perpetuity.
 - The audio voice overs to the RSV presentations for parents will be a valued resource as the inherent information about the condition, what parents can do, and what to look out for, is unlikely to change significantly.

- The dedicated webpage will be hosted indefinitely by Koala NW, at <https://koalanw.co.uk/little-lungs-wirral>, which will act as a resource and source of information for the future.
- Little Lungs Wirral awareness leaflets will continue to be available in Community Settings, partner organisations will continue to use as a conversation starter with families.
- Little Lungs awareness pull up boards will be able to be used every year.
- Awareness raising collateral will continue to spread the message about RSV whilst acting as a conversation starter with families on Wirral in preparation for next winter [as image].



6.3 Recommendations

Considering overall delivery and the insight gained, recommendations include that:

- **Future Interventions Builds On Existing Provision;** partner learning as well as family feedback demonstrated that there was no meaningful need to create a separate support offer, as the campaign was best delivered through already embedded support across the partner organisations. These were trusted, local providers that were willing and able to reach out to families quickly, and also extend messages into other community settings such as libraries, Children’s Centres, community hubs, or GPs.
- **Community Health Messages Utilise Voluntary Sector;** many of the wider stakeholders (especially clinicians) appreciated how quickly the project was initiated and public health messages were delivered to local families. It was felt that this was primarily due to the capability of the voluntary sector, which when properly resourced is an efficient conduit into the community.

“Congratulations to Koala NW for securing this funding application and mobilising the project so quickly. The project has clearly demonstrated the value of partnership through Koala NW and a network of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners reaching into our local communities to raise awareness around Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) through delivery of key messages and providing support. The additional clinical element further strengthened the project. The feedback from parents in the report gives real insight into the value of the information and support. Thank you to all the organisations that took part.”

Julie Webster, Director of Public Health