



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.



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

Michelle Black  
Amy Barnes



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

# Our talk

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



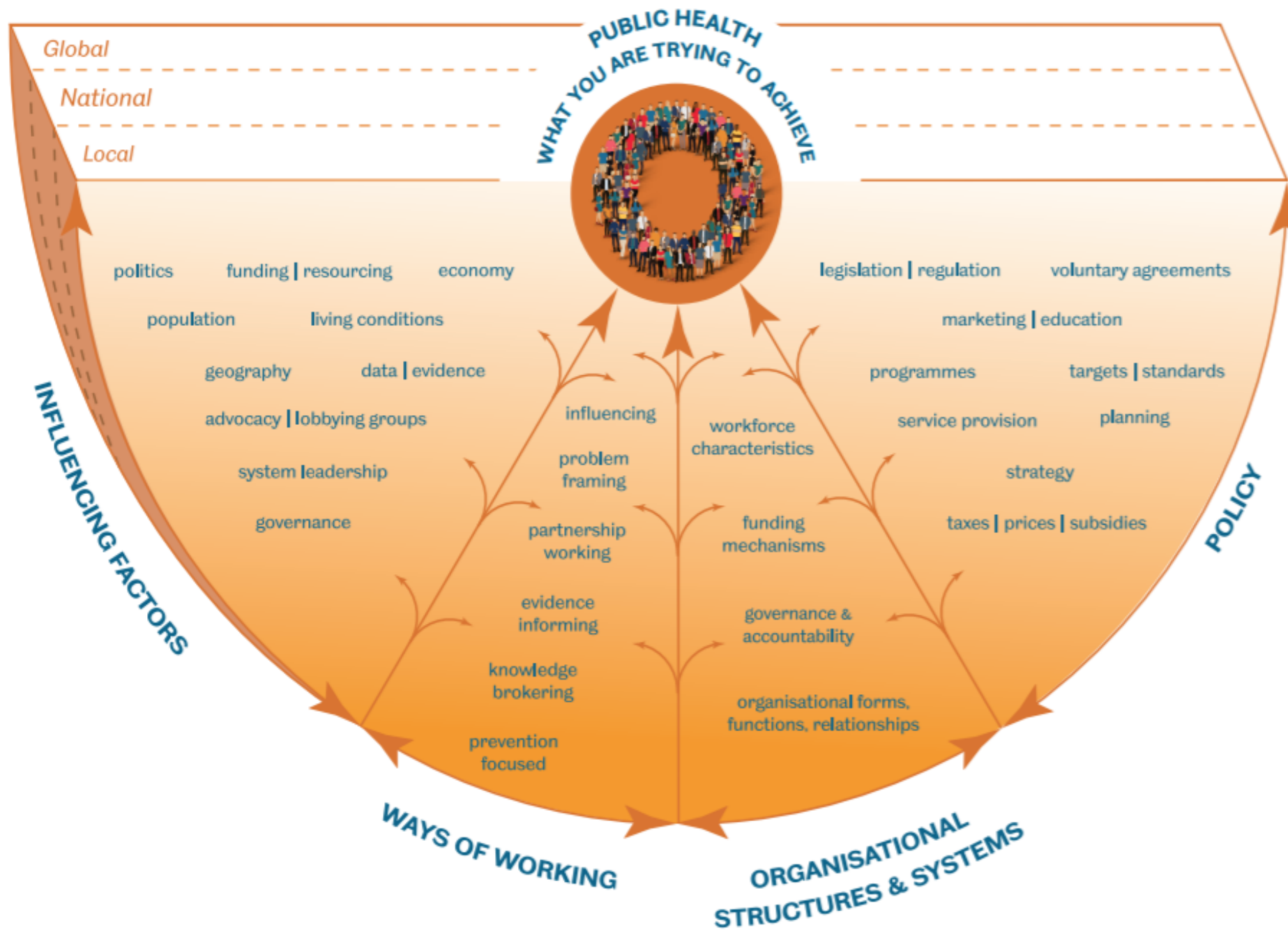
# The 'Four nations' study

- 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





The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

# What we learned



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

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



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

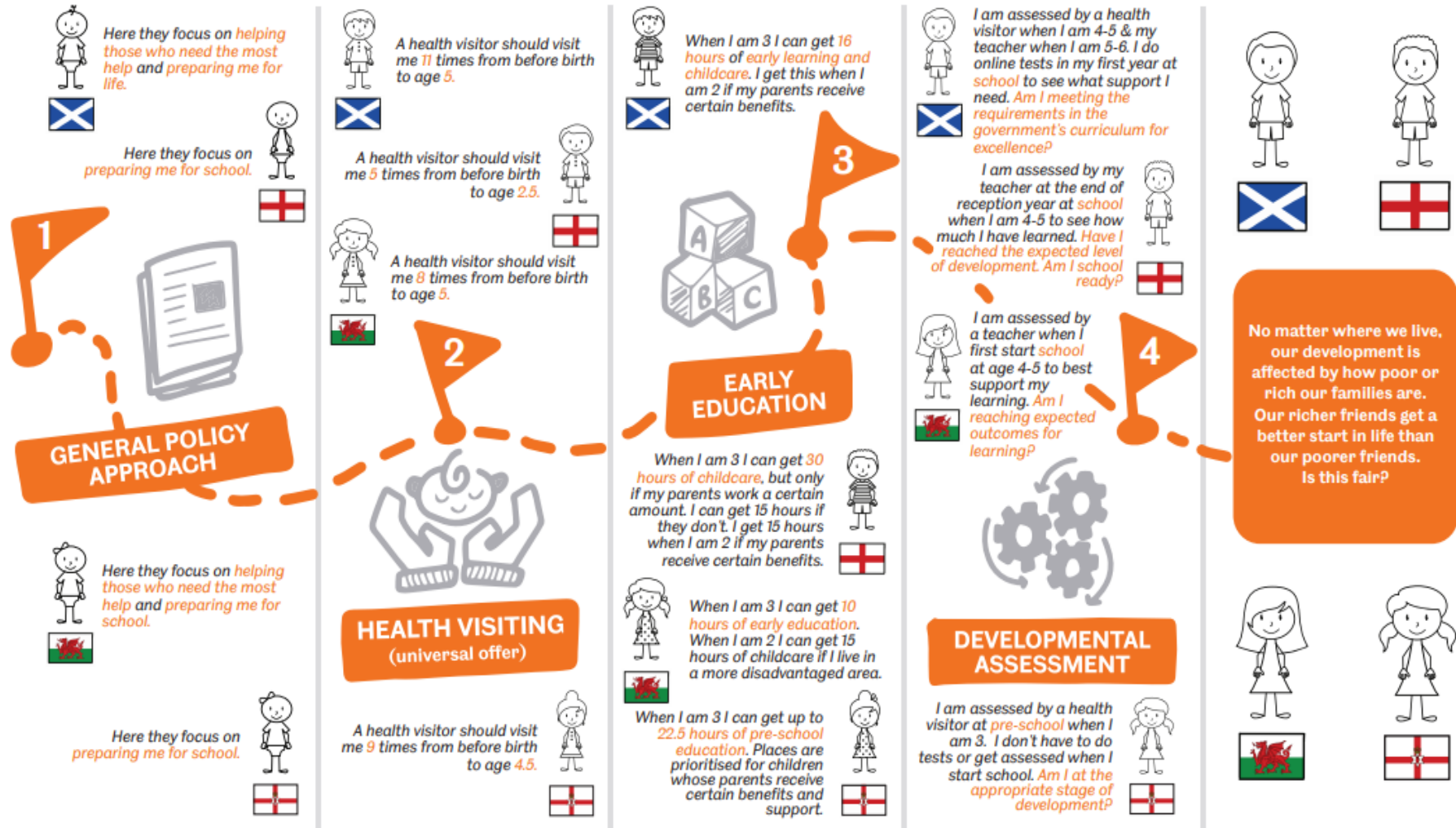
Child development in the early years is emphasised as a key 'prevention approach' in policy across the UK

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?



**WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THIS?** 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.**



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

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



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

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.



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

# Questions...?



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

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?



The  
University  
Of  
Sheffield.

## 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://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>