

Summary of Community Planning Partnerships' (CPPs) Early Years Change Fund Returns (2012-2015)

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Why Research

Introduction

The Early Years Change Fund was established in 2011 as a partnership fund between the Scottish Government, local government and the NHS totalling £274.25 million. Its task was to take forward a significant change programme to help deliver the joint commitment to prioritising the early years of children's lives and to embed early intervention and prevention.

Since the start of the Early Years Change Fund, Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) have provided the Scottish Government with a yearly return on their Early Years Change Fund activities. This evaluation has been undertaken to summarise the impact of the Early Years Change Fund, as recorded by CPPs in their annual returns.

Prioritising early years

Across the three years of the Change Fund, returns indicate a strong focus on early years within both Single Outcome Agreements (SOA) and Community Plans. It is evident that CPPs have firmly embedded the early years agenda within their Integrated Children's Services Plans (ICSP) and within other local plans and strategies that relate to early years, children or learning.

The Early Years Collaborative (EYC), a multi-agency quality improvement programme for early years services, was mentioned by all of the CPPs. As well as having an Early Years Champion, seen as key in driving forward the early years agenda, many CPPs appointed a Programme Manager or Development Officer to take forward the EYC agenda.

Across the CPPs there was evidence of strong partnership and multi-agency working, joint action groups and community engagement. Structures are in place to lead implementation and delivery of local Early Years Change Fund priorities

including a range of public, private and 3rd sector partners as well as community involvement.

CPPs are continuing to plan for the future, working to identify the next steps towards improving outcomes for children and families. The key challenges being faced by CPPs include: resource issues; technical or operational issues; addressing national priorities; and balancing national and local priorities.

Partnership and governance

Returns showed that CPPs have involved a wide range of partner organisations and others in developing their ICSP (or local equivalent). CPPs reported partnership working and shared decision making involving public, private and 3rd sector organisations.

Many CPPs gave details of specific strategic structures in place to plan and co-ordinate the delivery of children's services. Structures comprise multi-agency groups at various levels of accountability and have been developed to align with local priorities and reporting requirements.

Local priorities

CPPs were asked to outline the outcomes they have identified as needing improvement and what they have tried to accomplish; both broad outcomes and specific local priorities were included in the returns. Some of the many priority areas mentioned include: ensuring children have the best start in life; reducing inequalities; support for children and families, including vulnerable children and families; healthy living; community engagement; and workforce development.

A wide range of sources and information gathering methods were being used to provide the hard and soft data needed to measure the impact of activity. In relation to identifying whether the change is an improvement, evaluation methods included measurement against set targets and milestones. Changes in returns over the three years indicate that measures are being reviewed and revised.

The wide range of actions and changes undertaken or planned by CPPs to achieve outcomes and improvements ranged from strategic to operational to activities linked to specific groups or projects.

Spend and outcomes

The Early Years Change Fund included both existing and new funds. Guidance from the Scottish Government set out the planned investment from Scottish Government, Local Government and NHS Scotland. As part of the returns, CPPs were asked to provide details of spend on specific programmes. However, figures reported are approximate as some CPPs were unable to provide precise figures for a variety of reasons, including allocations being added to other funding. One particular issue related to programmes that are managed on an NHS board basis rather than local authority basis, which makes it challenging for CPPs to calculate spend proportionate to their CPP area. The actual investment on the health

programmes is also recorded by the Scottish Government centrally and is reflected below. Each health programme therefore sets out the planned investment before the start of the fund, the actual investment as recorded by the Scottish Government at the end of the fund and spend reported by CPPs.

Local government finance settlements (from Scottish Government) included specific allocations for Family Support (£9 million across the life of the fund) and looked after 2 year olds (£4.5 million). CPPs provided detail of spend totalling around £8.6 million for Family Support and £5.6 million in respect of looked after 2 year olds.

In 2013/14 and 2014/15, CPPs were also asked to provide details of what these programmes have delivered and the majority of CPPs returned information, with varying levels of detail.

Family Support funding has been used for: family centres; family information hubs and resources; support within local authority settings; home support and outreach; family and parenting programmes; 'soft parenting' support; activity aimed at meeting specific targets; staffing; and training.

Looked after 2 year olds funding has enabled local authorities to: ensure that there are sufficient spaces in nurseries and childcare services; employ and train staff; and ensure every child has an individual plan involving integrated services.

Child Healthy Weight Interventions (planned investment: £6 million; actual investment: £5.9; spend reported: £6.2 million).

Many of the CPP returns for Child Healthy Weight Interventions focussed on activities aimed at meeting or exceeding the Scottish Government's HEAT target of achieving agreed completion rates for child healthy weight intervention programmes in the years 2011-14.

Childsmile (planned investment: £35.6 million; actual investment: £35 million; spend reported: £31.5 million).

CPPs reported on the delivery of this national oral health programme including: the numbers participating; the number of children registered with dental practices; the percentage of children now free from dental decay; decreases in number of missing or filled teeth; and staffing and monitoring procedures.

Healthy Start (planned investment: £39.3 million; actual investment: £30.8 million; spend reported: £0.5 million).

The Healthy Start Scheme is a UK-wide demand led scheme providing vouchers for food and vitamins for low income families and pregnant women under the age of 18, up to the child's fourth birthday. Planned investment of £39.3 million was based on an estimate of uptake and £30.8 million was the spend for actual uptake. Healthy Start is administered by the UK Department of Health and the Scottish Government reimburses them directly for Scottish voucher claims. CPPs are reporting on additional work associated with improving uptake and not on the

voucher spend. CPPs reported on a variety of activities, including work taking place through the EYC to maintain and increase the uptake of Healthy Start.

Infant Nutrition and Maternity Services (planned investment: £22.1 million; actual investment: £19.4; spend reported: £14.1 million).

Funds were allocated to support the implementation of Improving Maternal and Infant Nutrition: A Framework for Action 2011 which aims to improve the nutrition of pregnant women, babies and young children. Main activities within CPP areas included supporting the UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative including training on and promotion of standards as well as Baby Friendly accreditation. Many CPPs focussed on promoting and supporting. There was also a focus on healthy eating initiatives and on improving eating habits and weight management for pregnant and postnatal women. Funds also support the implementation of A Refreshed Framework for Maternity Care in Scotland 2011, which aims to improve maternal and infant health and to reduce inequalities in maternal and infant health outcomes.

Family Nurse Partnership (planned investment: £13.9 million; actual investment: £14.6 million; spend reported: £15.4 million).

This intensive, preventative home visiting programme for young, first time mothers was being delivered in nine NHS Board areas at the time of the returns. Returns from those CPPs with established FNP's showed developing services with teams being expanded to ensure the programme can be offered to all eligible young women, over time.

Health Funding over and above the Change Fund - CPPs were also asked to report on Health/NHS Change Fund related activity over and above the original NHS commitment and one main area of additional spend related to the introduction of the 27-30 month review. There was also a focus on developing improvement methodology and testing changes.

Local Government Funding was a combination of new and existing resources and was not aligned to any specific programmes. Decisions on how to allocate these resources were made in line with local priorities. As well as the planned spend from local authorities, CPPs also reported on activity over and above the local government's planned investment. A very wide range of different programmes were supported and these fell under three main headings: general family support, for example play or literacy services; targeted support such as support for vulnerable families; and staffing, workforce development and training.

The return forms also asked CPPs to provide information on other resources spent on the early years. The majority of information provided by CPPs related to additional investment from the third sector, with a much smaller number reporting investment from Police or other organisations.

Prevention and disinvestment

In 2013/14 and 2014/15, CPPs were asked to provide specific examples of preventative spending and all did so at some point in their returns. Several

commented that much of their early years work, if not all, is focussed on prevention or early intervention and this is evidenced by the many and varied examples provided.

In 2013/14 and 2014/15, CPPs were also asked to provide specific examples of disinvestment, including disinvestment from wider activity beyond the change fund that has a bearing on the early years. Several CPPs were able to provide this information. Disinvestment was predominantly budget realigned either within early years or, to a lesser extent, from services outwith early years.

Successes and lessons learned

The EYC featured in many of the reports of successes. Several CPPs reported that the EYC has been well received and has helped strengthen communication, co-ordination and partnership working.

There were many examples of improvement methodology enabling CPPs to identify areas where real change is taking place and where activities are making a real difference for children and their families.

Returns also show that there is strong leadership, developed and developing multi-agency working and a continuing focus, both strategically and locally, on the early years agenda. Several CPPs detailed successes in providing specific programmes, achieving outcomes and addressing local priorities, including activities that have been commended as examples of good practice.

Some CPPs shared the lessons they have learned in delivering their early years activities and these related to: ensuring initiatives are sustainable; ensuring that lessons learned from the delivery of an approach or programme are heeded when delivering others; the benefits of sharing information and having a dedicated co-ordinator to enable both information sharing and sharing good practice; and the need to ensure projects are evaluated at an early stage.

How to access background or source data

The data collected for this social research publication:

are available via an alternative route using the following link

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/early-years/leadership>

may be made available on request, subject to consideration of legal and ethical factors. Please contact <email address> for further information.

cannot be made available by Scottish Government for further analysis as Scottish Government is not the data controller.



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