

Appendix 12

Extracts from External Evaluation Report July 2004, University of East Anglia

1 Government's Green Paper *Every Child Matters*

September 2003 the Government's Green Paper *Every Child Matters* was issued for consultation. The Green Paper sets out the draft framework for the reform and integration of children's services planning and commissioning and signals a reconfiguration of national government structures overseeing child and family policies, including the creation of a Minister for Children, Young People and Families and the Children Young People and Families Directorate (CYPFD) within the Department for Education and Skills.

Children's Fund principles are intrinsic to the approach of *Every Child Matters*.

A prevention rather than reactive approach to working with children is stressed throughout, with recognition of past failure to intervene early enough in the lives of children experiencing difficulty. It was recognised that failure to pick up early signs of difficulties was often exacerbated by poor co-ordination, failure to share information and no strong sense of accountability amongst staff.

The proposed vision for future children's services stresses child protection within a framework of *universal* rather than *targeted* services on children at risk, supporting every child to develop their full potential. As with the principles of the Children's Fund, a holistic view of child well-being is articulated covering five main areas: health, crime, education, civic engagement, and social exclusion. As the Prime Minister notes in the Foreword:

For children for whom action by the authorities has reduced the risk they face, we want to go further: we want to maximise the opportunities open to them - to improve their life chances, to change the odds in their favour.

The Green Paper includes proposals for strategic and service provision level change, including: earlier intervention, better prevention, a stronger focus on parenting and family support, overcoming weak accountability and poor integration, and workforce reform.

In principle at least, this national agenda aims to provide a framework where many of the innovations of the Children's Fund can be incorporated into mainstream practice.

2 Strategic priorities

Principles of voluntary sector and child centeredness and a continued focus on rural isolation and services targeting ethnic minority communities have emerged as strategic priorities for the development of Norfolk Children's Fund between 2004 and 2006. This direction is in line with the national strands for focus for 2005/6 which are: BME, travellers, refugee and asylum seekers, disability and crime.

3 Targeting

Project prevention levels

92% prevention level two 'early prevention' (23 of 25)

72% prevention level three 'heavy end prevention' (18 of 25).

The overall profile of Norfolk

Children's Fund supported service provision (post-full service review) may have developed 'a better fit' with intended prevention thresholds compared to one year previously, when there was a tendency to lower threshold targets.

Explicit targeting by particular group

Significant expansions of service provision explicitly targeting children:

- exhibiting anti-social or criminal behaviour
- children with learning difficulties and special needs

Addressing the seven sub-objectives

The overall balance of targeting by sub-objectives is in line with Children's Fund guidance and closely reflects the strategic orientation of the programme.

This suggests that Norfolk Children's Fund remains well positioned to deliver a preventive programme that is consistent with developing local and national priorities.

Expansion in the geographical coverage of Norfolk

There was considerable expansion of Children's Fund supported area-based provision during 2003. The programme has been effective in targeting services towards areas with relatively high overall levels of deprivation.

Expansion of school-based provision

Since the end of 2002 Norfolk Children's Fund has channelled significant additional resources into the critical mass of school-based preventative work, establishing an increasing number of schools as centres for the development of co-ordinated packages of multiple Children's Fund services.

4 Profile of Service Users

Episodes of support

Services collective total of regular support episodes Oct - Dec 2003 =3564

Net annual growth in the overall reach of the programme = 80%.

During 2003 supported services engaged with between 7,000 and 10,000 children and young people and/or families each quarter (includes initial contact only)

The gender profile of episodes of regular support

Shows a higher uptake of services amongst boys than amongst girls, with little variation from quarter to quarter over the lifetime of the programme.

Figures for October to December 2003:

- 57% male

- 43% female
(in line with the national profile).

Age distribution of service users

Uptake of services is weighted 'towards the centre' of the target age range: 9, 10 and 11 year old children and young people (and their families) in line with the national profile.

Episodes relating to children and young people of minority ethnicity

Recorded episodes during Oct - Dec 2003 = 3.7% (123 of 3322)

Almost a quarter of all projects recorded uptake of services amongst children and young people of minority ethnicity at over twice the countywide population rate for the target age group during October to December 2003. Overall, Norfolk Children's Fund has achieved relative success in reaching children and young people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

5 Organisational Structures and Processes Underpinning Service Provision

Core service provision

Projects funded from April 2004 are providing a mean average of 39.3 hours of core service delivery during a normal week. This reflects a general extension in the 'coverage' of core service delivery across the programme compared to one year previously.

On average, projects' core services were accessible for around 36.2 hours during a normal week.

Point of service delivery

- A school (or schools) = 72% (18 of 25)
- Service users homes = 60% (15 of 25)
- A community centre (or similar) = 60% (15 of 25)

The continued focus on school-based provision (including linkage with local development of Extended Schools at both strategic and service levels) and recent expansion of outreach services are compatible with both identified strategic priorities for development of Norfolk Children's Fund and Green Paper aims.

Local community involvement in project staffing

Local community involvement in staffing of projects is at a high level, which suggests that Norfolk Children's Fund has built and engaged additional community capacity in the provision of new preventative services.

Referrals to services

Self referral by children and young people = approximately 70%

Referral from another organisation or agency = 30%

Targeting service users

Supported services have utilised a wide range of means of publicising services to engage potential service users in a targeted, sensitive way:

- Via school-based staff
- Newsletters
- E-mail and Internet

Increased use of electronic communication methods coincided with the targeted provision of IT resources to projects by Norfolk Children's Fund in line with the e-government strategy and may also in part reflect the more general recent expansion and upgrading of IT services in schools.

Explicit targeting of children, young people and families

A clear majority of the 53 Norfolk Children's Fund supported projects that were delivering services up to April 2004 targeted groups of potential service users with *particular* backgrounds or circumstances, which include specific risk factors likely to make individuals vulnerable to social exclusion (85%, 45 of 53).

The most frequently targeted groups (explicitly targeted by ten or more projects) are:

- Children with self-esteem problems (19 projects)
- Children with learning difficulties or special needs (19 projects)
- Children with behavioural difficulties in or out of school (18 projects)
- Children living in poverty (13 projects)
- Children suffering bullying (11 projects)
- Children exhibiting anti-social or criminal behaviour (10 projects)
- Children with high rates of school non-attendance (10 projects)

Area based services

51% of Norfolk's electoral wards received NCF service.

68% of NCF projects are area based services.

63% of projects are area based services for wave 1 programmes nationally.

NCF has been successful in targeting services towards areas characterised by high levels of deprivation.

School based services

155 schools are receiving service from NCF.

The NCF breakdown of service to schools by type is shown below:

- 27% Infant Schools or First Schools (42 of 155)
- 48% Primary Schools, Junior Schools or Middle Schools (75 of 155)
- 23% Secondary Schools (35 of 155)
- 2% Special Schools (3 of 155)

1 in 10 schools have hosted a mix of services delivered by four or more projects.

6 Management and Governance

Service provider satisfaction with the Central Team

The high levels of service provider satisfaction with the Central Team that were identified in 'baseline' survey data have been maintained over the follow-up period.

This project has had bespoke support from Norfolk Children's Fund Officers, reflecting the flexibility of the team and their willingness to look at the uniqueness of each project context... The central team is an essential ingredient of team work on both a macro and micro level.

Project Manager, LEA Maintained Schools Lead Service Provider.

The Children's Fund Team have been very supportive.

Project Manager, National Voluntary Organisation Lead Service Provider.

During 2003 and 2004... Despite at times reduced capacity and increased workload, the work of the central team over this period has continued to impact on developments in Children's Fund beyond Norfolk, with features of the programme's management and governance processes becoming integrated into the practice of other partnerships.

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Service providers of current projects

Lead providers

Voluntary or community sector agencies = 83% (24 of 28)

'Non-lead' agencies

Statutory sector = 62% (102 of 164)

This is in line with the Norfolk Children's Fund's strategic plan for the next two years. The diversity of lead service providers remains striking and unlike many other historic child service settings.

Strategic and operational linkage between supported projects

Strategic and operational linkage between projects remains prevalent. Partnership links are between projects within the same Local Partnership Group or managed by the same lead agency or based within the same premises. The articulated rationale for partnership reflects the concepts of 'economies of scale' and 'integrated service delivery' that can result from joint working. Existing networks are persisting service cuts.

Partnership and supported project links with relevant initiatives and services.

Links with related area-based initiatives, special grant regimes or services

- Projects reporting representatives of **five or more** related area-based initiatives, special grant regimes or services involved in management or development structures within their project = 76% (19 of 25)
- projects with some established linkage of this type = 100% (25 of 25)

Links into current projects' management or development structures were most frequently reported in relation to representatives from:

Social Service Area Teams = 76% (19 of 25)

Services for Children with Mental Health Problems = 64% (16 of 25)

Sure Start = 60% (15 of 25)

Connexions = 60% (15 of 25).

Projects in receipt of funding or other material resources from one or more related initiatives = 52% (13 of 25).

Projects receiving funding or resources from related initiatives, special grant regimes and services = 87% (20 of 23)

Projects receiving funding or resources from Connexions, New Deal for Communities, Social Services Area Teams and Services for Children with Mental Health Problems = 12% (3 of 23)

7 Level of parent and child participation

Surveys suggest a *high level* of parent and child participation at project level in both the early and later stages of implementation across a large majority of current projects.

A variety of strategies, from stakeholder groups, to the Children's Survey, to less formal methods of consultation, have been used in a sensitive and supported manner to promote user engagement.

A culture of user participation appears to be becoming embedded across Norfolk Children's Fund at the project-level.

Participation of children in strategic level decision making is rare nationally (The Children's Fund National Evaluation Report, 2004), but initiatives to develop children's capacities to work at this level are in progress in Norfolk.

National child and family policy developments have shaped a new agenda for the future of children's services planning and commissioning including key proposals for strategic and service level change that, in principle at least, provide a clear framework within which many of the innovations of the Children's Fund can be incorporated into mainstream practice.

Norfolk Children's Fund, with its models of effective partnership, user participation and preventative focus will be well positioned in any future service reconfiguration through Children's Trust policy developments.

Children's survey

Top ranked service priorities

- 1 Someone who helps children keep away from drugs, alcohol and smoking
- 2 More activities for children during the holidays
- 3 More activities for children in the evenings
- 4 More help to stop children being picked on at school
- 5 Extra help for children in school with Special Needs

Out of all (15) ideas which do you think are the 3 best ones?

Rank within first choice (n=136):

- 1 More activities for children during the holidays (15.4%)

- 2 More help to stop children being picked on at school (12.5%)
- 3 Extra help for children in school with Special Needs (11.8%)
- 4 Help for children who look after their parents or other members of their family who have been ill for a long time (10.3%)
- 5= More stuff before school starts, during break-times, lunchtime and after school (8.8%)
- 5= Someone who helps children keep away from drugs, alcohol and smoking (8.8%)

Conclusion:

Priority 1: Some services are providing additional enhancement to support the statutory requirement for schools to educate on this issue within PSHE delivery. In the main this has not been a target for two reasons:

- 1 This would be a health priority and is not a strategically targeted sub-objective by this Programme
- 2 The Drug and Alcohol Action Team and Safer Schools have this work as a specific remit and NCF would be duplicating service delivery.

Priorities 2,3, 4 and 5 have good current NCF delivery coverage in and out of schools, and fit within the strategic development plan for Extended/Full service schools.

A copy of the full evaluation document is available on request from the central team. Tel: 01603 495121.