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Perth and Kinross Council Transitions within the Community Project

Evaluation report

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July 2014
(Updated Sep 2014)

Acknowledgements

First we must thank Perth and Kinross Council for inviting us to conduct this evaluation; we applaud organisations who are willing to open themselves to independent evaluation and thank the Council for the opportunity to learn about this Project and extend our own knowledge in this area. Researchers are dependent on the information and help given to them by a wide range of participants, without which we would have nothing on which to base the evaluation. In this evaluation study, we had help from children, young people, parents and a wide range of staff who gave time to be interviewed or to provided data and information. Everyone involved has been keen to help and has expended great effort to comply with the requests we have made of them.

We would particularly like to acknowledge the assistance given by Sarah Litster, Graduate Trainee (Perth and Kinross Council) in collating sources of evidence, liaising with participants, co-ordinating interviews and meetings, and promptly responding to our queries. Her timely contributions have been of fundamental importance to us.

Thank you all.

Opening words

I would say definitely, going in the right direction, without the help and support from the child health team there is no way we would be in the situation, we are now, which is being able to function as a relatively normal family in our community. I just couldn't cope anymore and I needed somebody to be there, to show me what to do and to make sure I did it... to kind of hold my hand and that's what [name] did. (parent)

The difference has been for my [child] who has been able to learn things that will help [her/him] be independent in the future. It's a hard thing [for a parent] to think that their childhood might continue on into adulthood and I think everybody needs to know that there's a chance that children can live independently and have access to the same opportunities as other people. (parent)

... I think that we are achieving quite a lot, not just from a financial point of view but from a young person's point of view. I see more successes from that...their success is paramount I think, because in five years' time they'll be in adults' services and if they are better equipped for adult life then it's better for them and it's better for everyone that they live with... (worker)

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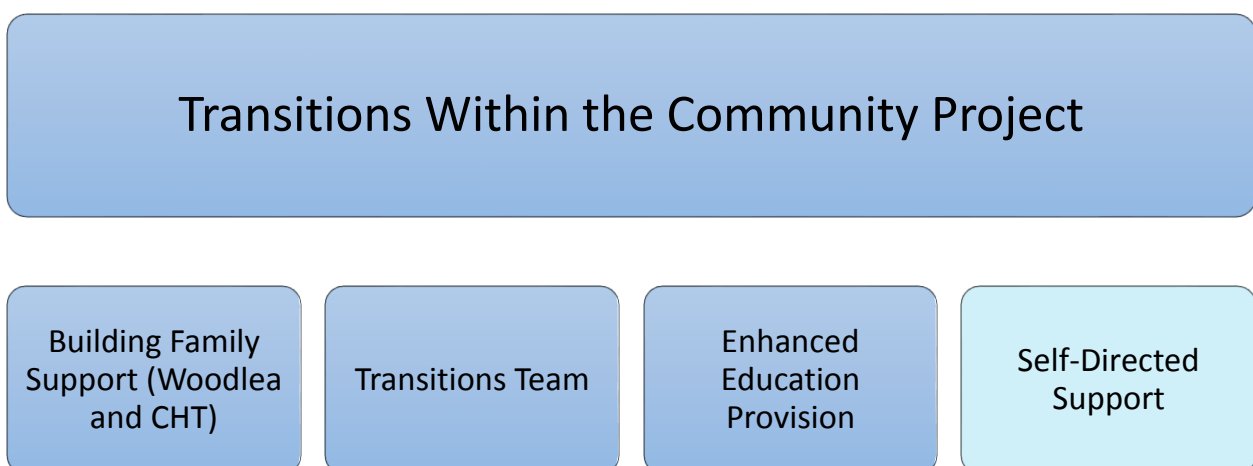
1. Executive Summary

This document reports the findings of an evaluation of the Transitions within the Community Project in Perth and Kinross (The Project). The evaluation was commissioned by Perth and Kinross Council and conducted by researchers from CELCIS at the University of Strathclyde. The Project is a change programme designed to reshape services for children and young people with Learning Disability, Additional Support Needs and Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.

The Project is a ‘preventative spend’ measure financed through around £805,000 provided through the Investment and Improvement Fund (IIF). It aims to ameliorate a projected overspend for Education and Children’s Services of around £1,000,000 per annum and annually increasing costs of around £400,000 to Housing and Community Care Services for young people transitioning to adult services. A simultaneous dual aim was to improve services by helping more young people with Learning Disability, Additional Support Needs and Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties to be part of their local community.

The Evaluation is based on data and information gathered by Perth and Kinross Council over the duration of the Project; this material has been supplemented by some new interview data gathered by the researchers. As a result of this mixed approach to data collection, the evaluation has a number of strengths and limitations; these are discussed in the report.

The Transitions within the Community Project aimed to reshape services through four related activity streams, these are depicted in the diagram below. This evaluation is focused on the first three areas:



The Project began in 2012 and has now completed remodelling the component structures and services. Each of the three areas; Building Family Support (including Woodlea and Child Health team), Transitions Team and Enhanced Educational Provision provide or deliver a number of different services, interventions and activities. Many of these are detailed in the report and a significant proportion of them represent either new or substantially changed developments of existing services. This process of change has necessitated staff changes and some changes to facilities. It has also been necessary to change the way in which information is provided to children, young people and their families about the new arrangements, services and systems.

Of particular note is the extent to which the Project has achieved significant shifts in cultures. In particular, there have been significant changes in the way some workers and others think about disabled children and the services provided for them, additionally there has been a shift in the approach to integrated working at 'grass-roots' level.

The business case for the Project proposed five Objectives:

- To keep children and adults in their own homes wherever possible;
- Children, young people and adults are 'included' and benefit from a personalised approach to meeting need in line with 'Getting it Right for Every Child' and the personalisation agenda;
- Services are more sustainable and cost effective;
- A range of learning, achievement and employment opportunities is made available and accessible to children and adult service users;
- Parental confidence is increased.

The evaluation finds that each of these Objectives has been met during the two years of the Project. Because of the short duration of the Project, it is easier to amass and provide evidence for some Objectives than for others. In the report we highlight that although each Objective has been met thus far, each describes a valid and important ongoing aim such that we feel that continued attention to these areas is highly desirable and may be capable of realising further benefit.

This report discusses a number of opportunities which were highlighted by the staff and families involved with the Project. These are discussed in the report and include:

- to intervene at a younger age;
- to potentially keep children within their own homes and community;
- to avoid cost of residential services;
- to be creative;
- to use existing services within the community;

- to make better use of further education opportunities;
- to use a greater range of services;
- to have time to spend with individual families;
- to help create a sense of ‘belonging’ for children and young people;
- to provide support to schools, ‘making sure the building blocks are there’;
- to begin to change attitudes towards disabled children and young people.

In addition, we also find a number of ‘process’ strengths of the Project. These are discussed in the report and include:

- The initial vision to work jointly across Education and Children’s Services, Housing and Community Care and Health Colleagues is very creative;
- There was clear planning from the outset with an Overarching Milestones Plan which was monitored regularly;
- The Project includes enhancement of universal services, such as education;
- There have been regular Project Board and Project Team Meetings of key personnel, including Finance;
- There is role clarity and respect for professional decision-making between staff from the Transitions Team, Child Health, Woodlea and Finance;
- All managers demonstrated an understanding of the Overarching Plan and their locus within this;
- Services are person-centred, being led by the needs, views and aspirations of children, young people and their families;
- Services provide early intervention, developing families’ capacity to think creatively and solve problems;
- Staff have the capacity to be creative and flexible, responding to challenges and the need to revise initial plans, while retaining the overall vision;
- Inter-professional working appears to be strong.

Each service area has faced and worked through a number of challenges; information about these is included in the report.

We conclude that the Project approach was highly innovative and that the Project successfully represented ‘preventative spend’. The Project has resulted in financial benefits and has had a significant positive impact on children, young people and their families. The evidence suggests that families are benefiting from the changes made. This is not to suggest that all the needs of these children and families are met all of the time. Indeed, it is likely that further change, both in services and in communities, could greatly benefit these families.

The evaluation also finds that the Transitions within the Community Project’s novel approach, and early achievements, suggest that the model is likely to be of interest to others; therefore, we recommend dissemination of these findings and suggest that consideration is given to conducting more detailed evaluation over a longer period of time.

2. Introduction and Background

This evaluation study was commissioned by Perth and Kinross Council and conducted by researchers based at CELCIS in the University of Strathclyde. The purpose was to evaluate the Transitions within the Community Project, an initiative run by Perth and Kinross Council and funded through the Council's Investment and Improvement Fund. This programme of work sought to further integrate provision for some of the 'most vulnerable children and young people' such that they would 'experience a genuinely seamless, co-ordinated experience from school to adulthood'. The target group for these services was children and young people with learning disability, additional support needs and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Project involved two Council Service areas; Education and Children's Services and Housing and Community Care Services. Alongside Health colleagues these two areas aimed to develop a single integrated approach towards meeting the needs of these children and young people.

The programme of work aimed for 'preventative spend'. It was initiated in response to previous and projected overspends of around £1,000,000 per annum in Education and Children's Services and a year-on-year increase in projected costs to Housing and Community Care Services of around £400,000 for young people transitioning to adult services.

Alongside these financial concerns there was a dual aim; to improve service quality and to support young people to fulfil their aspirations within their own communities. The resulting Project (Transitions within the Community) included the promotion of a more personalised approach delivered through service change and through self-directed support (SDS). Anticipated benefits included:

- *A shift in culture and practice will ensure almost all children and young people will be supported in their home and local community.*
 - *A whole-life approach in meeting the needs of children and adults within Perth and Kinross.*
 - *An increased sense of active citizenship and belonging to their community.*
 - *Increasingly innovative and community-based day opportunities.*
- (Perth and Kinross Council, 2012, p. 3)*

The brief for this evaluation suggested the following research questions (issues that needed to be considered). Whilst we aim to cover all of these questions, discussions with Perth and Kinross Council representatives suggested that particular attention should be paid to the first two (i.e. those listed under Benefits Realisation):

Benefits realisation:

- What impact has the Project had on young people and their families?
- Has the Project successfully achieved its various objectives?

Project process:

- How well does the performance of the Project meet target times and costs?
- What approved changes were made since the original Project plan and business case?
- What has been the impact on the Project of these approved changes?

The evaluation was faced with extremely tight timescales; from the first data being received to the submission of the first version of this report was a mere eight weeks. The evaluation benefited from a range of pre-existing material which had been collected over the life of the Project; however, some of this information was located across the Project and its component service areas, and therefore took time to gather together. We have tried as far as possible to make the best use of all of the information we received.

In addition, the evaluation has been able to gather and incorporate additional data in the form of a number of interviews with children, young people, parents, service managers and workers across the Project.

The methods used in this evaluation (along with their strengths and limitations) are outlined in more detail in Section 7. The evaluation took place from May to July 2014, this document is the main report for the evaluation. Subsequently during August and September some further information became available and the report was updated to incorporate this data.

The document is prepared specifically for Perth and Kinross Council and is not intended for wider publication; however, we would be pleased to discuss a wider dissemination strategy by mutual agreement as we feel others will be interested in the findings.

Project drivers and response

A business case for the Project was set out in the paper '*Supporting Transitions within the Community*' (Perth and Kinross Council, 2012). The business case explained the context, drivers for change, objectives and proposals. The initiative had several drivers, some emanating from Perth and Kinross Council; these included ideological, practice and the financial factors already mentioned. Additionally, some drivers emanated from external sources, responding to national policy and legislation.

Ideological and practice drivers included the strong desire to improve quality and give all children and young people the right to be educated and cared for within their home community, thus reducing the necessity for children to be placed away from home or to regularly travel long distances. There was also a desire for services to be personalised (tailored to individuals) in order that parents, carers and young people would experience seamless, coordinated support from school to adulthood. It was also noted that there was a need to review and align pathways for assessment and decision-making in respect of children requiring Additional Support for Learning (ASL) and those with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD) and to ensure that Community Care services included provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

Financial drivers included the need to ameliorate significant past and projected overspends mentioned above, the need to reduce costs in line with wider financial restrictions and the need to ensure that services were financially sustainable.

External drivers included national legislation such as The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004; which impacted on Local Education Authorities and on parental entitlements; the Disability Discrimination Act 1995/2004 and The Equality Act 2010. In addition, the Business Case suggests that a number of policy and guidance documents are relevant including *The Same as You?* (2000); *Self-Directed Support Strategy* (2010) and the *Towards Autism Strategy for Scotland* (2010).

It was also recognised that children with additional support needs, particularly those with Autistic Spectrum Disorders have difficulty with changes and transitions in their lives.

In response to these drivers, a change initiative was planned to reconfigure services and an application to the Investment and Improvement Fund (IIF) was made to support this process. The aim was to radically reshape services so that the appropriate skills and expertise would be in place to maintain children and young people in their own homes and local educational placements, thus preventing the need for out-of-area placements or excessive travel. The additional finance made available through (IIF) (£805,000) allowed the infrastructure to be developed in order to offer a more streamlined, efficient and effective service model that could offer support to children, young people and their families at times of transition across their childhood and into adulthood, and also provide support around behaviour that parents found challenging.

In addition, where it was appropriate to their needs, it was decided that services would support the return of children already on in out-of-area placements to their home communities.

The resulting service model incorporated four main service areas: Building Family Support, Transitions Team, Enhanced Educational Provision and Self-Directed Support (SDS). The first three of these are the subject of this evaluation study and separate arrangements will be made for reporting on the SDS.

Overall, the new model is one of prevention, it aims to tackle emerging problems and give families the capacity to cope with reduced levels of ongoing support; this is a benefit in its own right, but it also has financial implications.

3. Services Before and After the Project

Prior to this initiative, service development strategies tended to be based predominantly on analysis of collective (group) levels of need, rather than on individual understandings of each child or young person's strengths, interests and requirements. [If children and young people had problems remaining at home or school using the standard support services, they were most often referred for a residential placement, usually outwith the area.

Below we consider the three main service areas covered in this report; for each service we briefly outline the shape of provision before the initiative, detail the current service model, including any sub-services, and provide a case example to show how the services impact on children and families. The personalised nature of the services means that each child's experience will be different, therefore these case examples should not be presumed to represent all children using the service.

Presenting information individually for each service area has the benefit of clarity; however, we note that doing so also has the potential to make the services appear separate. In fact a consistent finding of this evaluation was that the three areas were highly integrated with frequent collaboration and effective communication between them. Families receiving support from one service in effect had access to all of the other services if required.

Building Family Support (Woodlea & CHT)

The Building Family Support service area incorporates a number of diverse services, many of which have been achieved through a reorganisation of services based at or delivered through Woodlea Cottage. This includes residential short breaks (respite care), various forms of family support, outreach work, and support for the acquisition of independent living skills.

Research literature in the area of short-breaks is mixed, but most studies find that short breaks can provide a number of positive impacts; these include, benefits for parent carers as well as for children (Hatton et al., 2011; Robertson et al., 2011) additionally it has been shown that siblings may benefit from the child's short breaks (Welch et al., 2012).

Children themselves often gain confidence and learn new skills while attending short breaks; some, including those with Autism Spectrum Disorders, may need additional help to transfer these new skills to the home or school setting:

So it supports that young person to do (what they've maybe achieved within the residential unit), we have to support to help to take that back into the family home. And with working with families I've heard some of their challenges that they have especially when they've got other young people, siblings within the household as well... just to try and make the home environment better for them and for the family. (Study Participant)

Prior to the Project: to be eligible for a service children should have severe, complex and enduring disabilities. Every child attending Fairview School was automatically entitled to receive an agreed number of short break nights (respite care) in Woodlea, irrespective of whether they and their family needed such a service. In total approximately 40 children and young people received this service.

Waiting lists for assessment of other children and their families who had been referred for support often resulted in waits of four to five months. Services available were limited to either residential short breaks or community short breaks through one of the services available in the area.

At the very beginning the children coming here were attending Fairview school. So we soon progressed [...]we have actually opened it up wider and we are getting a lot of mainstream schools as well for the transitions group, the ones for when they're leaving and we have various other different schools that children attend that are now coming to the service here. So it is also a way of bringing the young people back into their own communities as well. (Study Participant)

The new funding allowed services at Woodlea to be reconfigured with the aim of better meeting the needs of the children and families. Rather than an exclusive focus on residential short breaks, a range of services was developed to better meet the needs of children, young people and their families and to address some of the challenges which they faced in daily life. Major changes included:

- Three teams of residential practitioners were consolidated into one;

- Residential care practitioners and supervisors accepted greater flexibility, allowing them to work seven days a week and over holiday periods;
- A number of Senior Care Officer posts were created to provide an ‘Outreach Service’ working with children, young people and their families in their own homes.

Within Woodlea Cottage, the main focus of intervention is now on supporting children to learn to do things for themselves; previously, the role of the residential unit was less focussed on development and primarily regarded as looking after children and keeping them safe. While some parents may still say that they only want a break, others are reported to have been surprised and pleased by what their child has achieved.

I would say the communication with the outreach staff has improved immensely, we are often in contact with each other making sure that [child] is [ok], what s/he has been taught at Woodlea has been replicated at home so we are all doing the same thing and um as a result we are finding it very beneficial at home. (Evaluation video participant)

Outwith Woodlea Cottage the service is now more flexible and responsive to families’ needs; staff can visit at times needed by the families, such as weekends and early morning, and young people can stay with their families and in their home communities. The service model is also designed to enable the staff team to provide consistent and predictable support for the children and young people. Particular services include:

Outreach Service

A central aim of the Outreach Service is to make more rapid contact with families and begin to work with them at the earliest opportunity. An Outreach Worker now visits within a two-week period, whether or not the child meets the criterion of having severe complex and enduring disabilities. The outreach worker may help the family tackle a range of different issues:

It could be various things that we are maybe putting in place like strategies, helpful information to support them, perhaps for behaviours that are happening within the home. Or even a little bit of support where we support the young person being as independent as possible. (Study Participant)

This service has provided support to 81 children, young people and their families; at least 45 of these were new referrals, i.e. children and their families who would not have received a service under the previous model of service delivery:

(The Outreach Worker) now ask ‘what can I help with’ and does an assessment or puts a programme in place very quickly. (Study Participant)

Because the locus of intervention is outside of the residential base, issues particular to that child and family can be addressed within the home environment, school and community. For example, practical strategies can be put in place for dealing with difficulties with daily routines such as bathing, eating and sleeping.

Families are supported to solve problems and develop their confidence in dealing with a range of parenting issues. Outreach workers can also help tackle issues at school and can help access other services to support when required. Families are enabled to re-refer direct to their key worker if further challenges emerge, ensuring that support can be timely.

The Outreach Workers are, integrated into team of professionals working with the family:

I mean the children I'm working with, we are part of a coordinated team working with schools, social work, Woodlea Cottage and all the sort of professionals that are involved and with that sort of consistent approach...I've see it reaping rewards for families. (Study Participant)

Over a period of time, some evaluative feedback has been collected from parents using the outreach service. This was made available to the researchers. The feedback is positive, although parents have usefully raised issues which can be addressed. Typical responses include:

All of the staff were excellent... Yes, I always felt involved...all parties were consulted and school was included in all things... very good communication... the service was excellent. (Parent feedback)

Been using Woodlea over the past few years and aware of the service...I provide input about my child that Woodlea need to be aware of...Woodlea [are] very much in tune with [] school which provides continuity between school and Woodlea for my [child]. (Parent feedback)

All the staff we have met have impressed us with their professionalism and enthusiasm... Felt involved. Discussed over the telephone and at school transition meetings... Staff contacted me on a number of occasions to discuss and to arrange visits to give us a better understanding of the service, enabling us to be more actively involved. Also met with our [child] at school. (Parent feedback)

Feedback on the Outreach Service has also been collected from relevant practitioners and professionals. Again feedback is dominated by highly positive comments along with some useful ideas for further development. A few typical comments include:

Outreach staff gather the relevant information prior to visits through information gained in the referral process and discussions with Social workers. Staff meet with families and take on board their views on the difficulties they are experiencing and meet with other agencies to inform their care plan. (Practitioner feedback)

Referrals are dealt with very quickly. Outreach workers tried to make contact with the family within a week of getting the referral. (Practitioner feedback)

I feel the support offered to several families was of a high standard and helped the parents manage some of the presenting problems. (Practitioner feedback)

If the support could have been more frequent and intense I believe it could have worked better. Sometimes a period of a couple of weeks passed between visits due to other responsibilities of staff. (Practitioner feedback)

Intensive Family Support

An intensive support service has been developed to support a small number of children with highly complex needs. For example, three requests had been made for children to be placed at schools outwith the Perth and Kinross area. These children have been provided with intensive support enabling them to receive more flexible services and remain within the community. In doing this, it is likely that financial costs have been reduced:

The staff put in targets which are gained through speaking to schools, parents, carers and other professions that are perhaps working with the young person. From there we do a lot of monitoring and assessments and we will take it... into the family homes so that we can transfer skills that they've gained within the building into their home environment. We do offer as well for the parents to come into the building as well to [...] shadow, if you like, the workers working with the young person on the targets that they have agreed. (Study Participant)

Two of these children stay in Woodlea three days a week during term time, returning home for the remainder of the week. This schedule along with planned weekend and holiday residential family support allows a supportive, predictable and consistent approach for these families. It is reported that close working relationships between staff in Woodlea, families, school and other agencies create a secure base for the children while ongoing assessment can identify their growth and development needs and ensure that an individual plan is created and followed for each child. The third child attends a residential school run by an independent provider less than one's hour drive from home and attends Woodlea three weekends out of four. The family visit during the child's time at Woodlea. On the fourth weekend the child returns to the family home. This

arrangement allows the child to spend more time within their home community and with family than would have been the case if the Intensive Family Support service had not been in place.

Short-term Intensive Family Support

A residential service can be provided, the aim of which is to provide a high level of support for a specified short period of time. This allows for crisis intervention, an opportunity to stabilise home and school settings and thus avoid the need for children to be admitted to longer-term residential care or residential school. Weekly meetings monitor the intervention and the child's progress. If a residential school is subsequently sought, this short-term intervention is able to assess the child's needs and begin to work on identified issues. Three children have used this service, and three further young people have been identified who may benefit from it.

Weekend and Holiday Residential Family Support

This service provides what may be regarded as traditional 'respite' or short breaks, provided to support a family. As with other Building Family Support interventions, an outcome-focused support plan is put in place based upon the principles of 'Getting it Right for Every Child'; this plan is reviewed every six months.

Independent Living Skills Programme

Woodlea together with the Transitions Team have established a programme for young people approaching adulthood. This is based around group activities taking place over weekend periods. There are two groups, running concurrently, each containing four young people. Each group experiences nine sessions throughout the year. The sessions are focused on independent living skills and socialisation. Parents provide transport and are fully involved in the programme.

In the Pilot year, pupils from Fairview attended, but in the second year this was extended to include young people from mainstream secondary schools who would not otherwise have received a service. At the time of writing there is consideration of whether it would be possible to incorporate an ASDAN award (a nationally recognised award for developing key skills and life skills) into the activities:

Coming out, going into the community at the moment, going to the shops making choices, making choices about the activities they want to do, planning a timetable getting them involved in an evening routine... (Study Participant)

None of the young people interviewed by the researchers had completed this Programme, but one young person has attended one session. Their parents are very supportive of the Programme's aims and suggested, that it would be even more effective if sessions could be fortnightly rather than monthly:

It would be better if this could be once a fortnight as it would allow more of an opportunity for her/him to develop independence skills and friendships. S/he may not remember over four week. (Study Participant)

They also added:

[Young person] gets really anxious and [] keeps mentioning it. S/he went once at the end of May and it is too long because s/he won't be back until the end of the holidays. Going 10-4 will be fine. More regular e.g. fortnightly would be more helpful. We would like to be involved to build on this. (Study Participant)

Sleep Counselling

Sleep difficulties can be particularly challenging for children with complex health care needs and for those with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Five staff have been trained as Sleep Counsellors and have worked with 12 families since this service was set up. Parents are intensively supported in implementing a number of interventions and are given practical advice and emotional support. Continued contact is provided should follow-up contact become necessary. This support has been particularly valuable for some young people, with one parent suggesting that this made the difference between the family breaking down and staying together.

Children in out-of-area residential placements

One of the aims of the Project was to support children in placements outwith the Perth and Kinross area to return their own communities *if* this was appropriate for them. Support from the Transitions Team and the team at Woodlea Cottage is available to facilitate this process. As yet, this work has not resulted in the return of children to their home area other than those who reach the end of their schooling.

This is because assessments (conducted with multi-agency input) have shown that a move would currently be counter to these particular children's educational and care needs, since they are settled and currently have strong attachments and/or are working on programmes of study. In addition there are challenges in varying placement arrangements where parents are not in agreement. If it becomes more appropriate for

any of these children to return, plans will be made in conjunction with their families to achieve this.

We find it encouraging that children and young people's needs appear to have been carefully assessed and prioritised in this way.

Whilst no child in this group has returned home, one child who was using a residential short break service outside the area now uses Woodlea Cottage, thus keeping within this child's home area and avoiding the need for unnecessary travel.

It is our view that this moment in time should be regarded as a transitional period, for a number of reasons: firstly, it would be anticipated that the early intervention services described above will help to reduce the need for residential services over time; secondly, children and young people currently in residential care will over time move on to adult services.

Building Better Family Support: Case example

One family consists of a parent and two children, the younger of whom (aged 5) had significant behavioural problems, including severe difficulties with sleep, often only sleeping for four hours a night. This had a number of negative outcomes for each member of the family. The child, who was chronically tired, displayed extremely challenging behaviour including aggression toward school staff, parent and sibling. The parent was highly stressed both through lack of sleep and through coping with daytime behaviours. The sibling was exposed to aggression and received less attention from the parent who was coping with the other child. After many months of this, the family felt that they were reaching breaking point.

.....I really felt there was no light at the end of the tunnel... we had no future. (Study Participant)

A Woodlea outreach worker was assigned to work with the family, first spending several hours with them to observe the day, then providing a range of strategies particularly around communication and routine. Emotional support was given to the family while they implemented these new strategies.

For the first few days there were daily visits, then visits three times a week, then weekly. This was followed by telephone contact once a week. The parent was astonished by the changes that this has brought; there has been marked improvement in sleep, and reports that the child seems happier and less disruptive at home and at school. The family continue to feel supported and are able to contact the outreach worker for help if problems return. The parent now describes the situation:

A changed child, a completely different little [child]... I look forward to the future now and can't wait to see what s/he will do next... S/he's much happier during the night and the day, much improved at school and at home... S/he's progressing well at school, starting to read and starting to write, a happy, cheeky, cuddly [child]. Recently s/he surprised everyone by going to the blackboard and writing "Cartoon Network"... [Sibling] is so much happier and says "it is like having a proper little [sibling] to play with"... The support has been transformational... they gave us our future back!

Building Family Support costings

Financial information has been made available to the evaluation; this was compiled in May 2014 and covers the most recent financial year (2013/14). The information looks at individual children, it covers actual costs to the Council along with projected costs of alternatives for external Council services. One hundred and sixty four young people are referred to in these costings. The level of service received by these young people varies considerably from a few hours holiday support, through outreach and regular short breaks, to 38 week residential school placements.

The information shows that overall spending was reduced or avoided by switching to the new service models. For these children and young people, services delivered through the new arrangements were said to cost £208,464 per annum. This was compared to a projected spend of £751,233 to provide services under the old arrangements, and thus represents a reduction of more than £500,000 compared to expected spending.

Some costs avoided include:

- Two children are now attending Woodlea for Intensive Family Support while attending Fairview School rather than going to a residential school outwith the area. It has been suggested this avoids spend of £250,000 per annum (£125,000 per child)
- One child is now attending a 38-week placement in a residential school along with support from Woodlea. It has been suggested that this package costs £57,000 per annum rather than a 52-week placement at an estimated costing of around £200,000.

Within the information we have analysed, the figure of £751,233 is made up of a number of projected costs which are broken down by service area. By contrast the figure of £208,464 spent can currently only be detailed as money spent against the £150,000 from the IIF3 annual funding, plus three other itemised costs. Detail on how the £150,000 spending was distributed within the diverse service areas provided through the Building Family Support work-stream is not currently available; consequently it is not possible to compare elements within the Building Family Support service area (e.g. spend on short breaks versus spend on outreach). Knowing this may be useful in future, for example if

there was an apparently disproportionate spending on one area where the corresponding alternate costs were small. However, we would urge that any such analysis should be performed with caution: Building Family Support is a preventive model and spending in one area (e.g. short breaks or outreach) may result in avoidance of spend in another area (e.g. residential school). It will be challenging and labour intensive to reliably identify and test these indirect causal routes.

It was noted that Woodlea initially showed a £21,000 overspend due to interim arrangements (additional staffing) and set-up costs for the new services; we feel that this is unsurprising, and it is reported that now restructuring is complete, this amount has been more than recouped.

All in all, to date the changes resulting from Building Family Support have resulted in a significant reduction of spend compared to expected spend. This is very encouraging. We would, however, highlight that this is a broad analysis and covers a relatively short period of time. We strongly suggest that additional analysis is conducted after a further period of time to investigate whether other benefits or costs can be identified. It would be helpful if this later analysis were able to be conducted at a finer level to compare spend within the various Building Family Support service areas.

Building Better Family Support: future plans

As with other areas, much of the change achieved through Building Better Family Support has been the significant change in culture, thinking and approach that has resulted from the Project. In particular this has been reflected in a shift towards family based forms of support:

*I have noticed a change in culture from residential support to family support as I have been working out within the family home and with more organisations working within the family home [this] allows staff to transfer skills knowledge and experience they have gained...
(Evaluation video participant)*

There has been a notable shift in emphasis from simply giving families support, towards a service that works alongside families, enhancing parents' confidence in their own problem-solving abilities. Consistent with this there has been a wish to intervene even earlier, and discussions have begun with local paediatric services about the possibility of children under five being referred to the Outreach Team for early intervention. Some practitioners believe that input at the stage where families are first realising that their child may have additional support needs, will help parents develop long term strategies to support their child's wellbeing.

Other possible developments under discussion include the development of a drop-in services for families and crèche provision led by parents themselves to help families to access services such as Speech and Language and Educational Psychology.

Transitions Team

The term ‘transitions’ is used to embrace a range of life changes including transitions between primary and secondary schools, transitions into adulthood and transitions between services. These changes may be particularly problematic for disabled young people and their families:

... you can't underestimate the impact that this has on the family... I think that the transitions process is more stressful for the parents... and I think that this has an impact of raising children's anxieties as well... and how much support that the parent actually needs through this, sometimes it's equal if not more than what the kids need. (Study Participant)

Prior to the Project, each school had an allocated social worker able to advise on transition. An outcomes-focussed assessment was carried out for each child and young person who met the criteria, one year prior to leaving school an individual outcomes plan was put in place.

The Transitions Team has been established to support young people and their families to be active participants in changes in their lives; this includes transitions into adulthood. The Transitions Team is managed through Housing and Community Care and includes workers from a range of different backgrounds. The aim of the team is to allow young people to experience smooth transitions and to provide them with support to achieve their ambitions and enjoy success. For some, this may eventually include training, further education, employment and independent living. Team members consider that to achieve these aims it is necessary to ensure that major shifts take place in service and community cultures.

The additional funding has given opportunities for earlier assessment and intervention. Families can be helped to develop coping strategies and services can begin transition planning at an earlier stage. Advantage of earlier intervention include that it allows workers more time to become acquainted with the young person and their family, to explore local and familial resource and to be more creative in agreeing and setting up an individualised care package which is more likely to be acceptable and workable:

... I have quite a few just now, very complex cases and a couple of visits just isn't going to do, so you have got to work with them to build up that relationship so that they have the confidence to have meaningful engagement with you. So, it's about more than one word answers, yes/no,

the way we are actually more meaningful with people, which I think is making the outcomes a lot more positive, I would hope anyway. (Study Participant)

Transitions between schools

Following new arrangements put in place by the Project, support for the child's transitions processes may start as early as primary 6 and no later than two years before the young person leaves school. The Transitions Team are integrated into a number of mechanisms for supporting young people; for example, members attend:

- Additional Support Needs meetings from Primary 6 onwards
- Transitions planning meetings
- Post-transitions Panel
- Primary 7 to Senior 1 Transitions Panel meetings.

So although we use the school to identify people who might need support in the future we will also have a good understanding, starting to build up a good understanding of who might need support in the future by attending ASN meetings at this point [P7] and sometimes we do that in 3rd and 4th year. So we are making our presence much more visible within the schools. (Study Participant)

The work of the Transitions Team involves working across the boundaries between different occupational groups; case management responsibilities for children lie with the Education and Child Care Services whereas the Transitions Team lies within the Housing and Social Care Team. This collaborative work is reported to occur in an unproblematic way, roles are reported to be clear and participants suggest that communication routes and responsibilities are well defined:

It was a colleague who worked on the independent living skills project, it's been her/his project but I know, kinda how to tap into it if need be, and the child health teams who we work very closely with... another part of the transitions support is schools and child health teams within Perth and Kinross, they are the teams that specifically work with people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities, so they are also able to signpost people to our services as well. (Study Participant)

While some parents may initially be slightly daunted to think about their child's transitions from such an early stage, the intervention is reported to be generally welcome. One member of the Transitions Team pointed out:

Transitions from primary to secondary schools can flag up issues that may come up later. It also means that we are a familiar face to parents and they really take this on board. (Study Participant)

This view was validated by the parents of one young person. They were very positive about the support which they and their child received in the transition from school to college but they observed:

(A Transitions Worker) has been involved since April 2014 and Transition has taken off. We want as much as s/he can access. There was a lack of help when s/he was younger and we just got on with it. There was only six months build up between primary and secondary. There is a real gap in transitions at this stage. (Study Participant)

This family were pleased to hear that transitions between primary and secondary are included as part of the current Transitions Project.

Transitions from School to Adult Life

It is recognized by the Transitions Team that the transition from school to adult life is not only stressful for young people but also for parents. The success of the transition will therefore in some ways be dependent on both parents and young children feeling confident in the support and information they receive:

I felt that during the transition it was vitally important to have a good strong communication link our transition officer was helpful, reliable and any information that was passed on was always accurate, s/he kept in constant contact with us throughout the whole process, thus making it much easier and less stressful. (Evaluation video participant)

As of May 2014 the Transitions Team was working with 13 school leavers and up to 19 are expected to require the service in 2015. The team are strongly committed to enabling young people to live fulfilled lives in their local area and this includes encouraging the development of community resources:

It's the whole community who should be looking at developing support and what's out there and it shouldn't just be the Council's job to do that. But we have to generate that, we have to encourage that, and move forward. I think it will happen, I think it is happening in Perth and Kinross, there are lots of community projects and the voluntary sector is quite strong in Perth I would say, and that's a good thing. (Study Participant)

As well as mainstream local services and activities, the Transitions Team help to link families into initiatives which support the transitions process in practical ways:

- The **Independent Living Skills Programme** has been developed in partnership with Woodlea Cottage and the Transitions Team. Eight students attend Woodlea Cottage at weekends to develop a range of skills such as cooking, shopping, planning meals etc. This service provides an example of Child Care and Adult Care services working together
- The **Independent Travel Trainer** is part of the Transitions Team and works with primary and secondary schools to ensure that children and young people can learn and develop skills such as the use of public transport which will help promote independence. Apart from the confidence and self-esteem which this gives young people and their families, travelling independently also reduces the cost to the Council in respect of taxi fares and similar transport fees.
- **Day Opportunities:** Over time, Perth and Kinross Council has tended to move away from centres for adults with learning disabilities. There are, however, three Day Opportunity Programmes within the area and a 'Joining-In Group' has been developed which provides a resource for some people who previously attended Day Opportunities but who no longer need such a service. At present, the Joining-In Group is supported by two staff from a Day Opportunity programme but it is hoped that this model can gradually be rolled out to other areas and become less reliant on the input of professionals.
- **Further Education:** Three local colleges (Scotland's Rural College at Elmwood Campus; Dundee and Perth College (University of the Highlands and Islands)) provide relevant courses and support for young people and work closely with the Transitions Team to identify opportunities and facilitate successful transitions.

Transitions Team: Case Examples

a) One young person with autism and learning disability who is approaching school-leaving age has had help from the Transitions Team to realise a wish to find a shared tenancy with support from Scottish Autism. This young person has two older siblings who currently receive support from the same organisation and hopes to live near to them; the family are very supportive of this idea. This young person has considerable strengths and will develop their interests through a range of Day Opportunities which will be made available.

b) A looked after young person with learning disability was expecting to return from an out-of-area placement to live independently and have their own tenancy. However, there was significant concern that this arrangement would result in social isolation. The Transitions Team are helping this young person consider a wider range of options, including more appropriate accommodation arrangements, possibly sharing with another young person. In addition, it is planned that a package of support will be put in place

which will allow the young person to attend college and continue to meet with friends and family.

c) Another who was young person leaving school, together with their family, were given support from a member of the Transitions Team to identify and select appropriate follow-on activities. This included support with identifying colleges and suitable courses, visiting on open evenings, selecting a place and transitioning into college. The course, which currently requires attendance for three days a week, is going well. Next year attendance at college will be for two days a week. The Transitions Team worker also gave the family information about other local activities to ensure the young person is able to access activities on non-college days as there is a risk of social isolation. The Team member will facilitate access to these activities should any prove appropriate. However, the young person and family have some reservations about whether appropriate appealing activities are available locally and are currently seeking more social group-based opportunities. The team continues to be available to provide support or advice.

Transitions Team Costings

Various costing data were made available to the evaluators. This included data regarding actual annual and / or projected annual costs for individual young people. Projected costs were the Project team's estimates informed by their broad experience of purchasing similar provision.

There were matched 'sets' of data (projected and actual) for 22 young people. This is useful, but it should be noted that this is a relatively small number of cases and that as the service is highly individualised the costs associated with other young people are likely to differ. However, the information about these 22 young people provided a wide range of examples, and so it is hoped that this information is at least indicative of what future costs may be.

Of these 22 young people, 10 cost less than projected whilst 12 cost more than projected; some differences were small whilst others were large. For these 22 young people, the totals suggest an overall reduction compared to the expected spend. This total reduction for 22 young people was £101,353; this equated to an average reduction of 14% of the expected spend.

The high level of variation may make this average figure misleading as it masks influence from a small number of more 'extreme' cost differences. Figure 1 below shows the relative sizes of the differences; minus numbers represent 'savings' whereas positive numbers represent costs which were higher than projected.

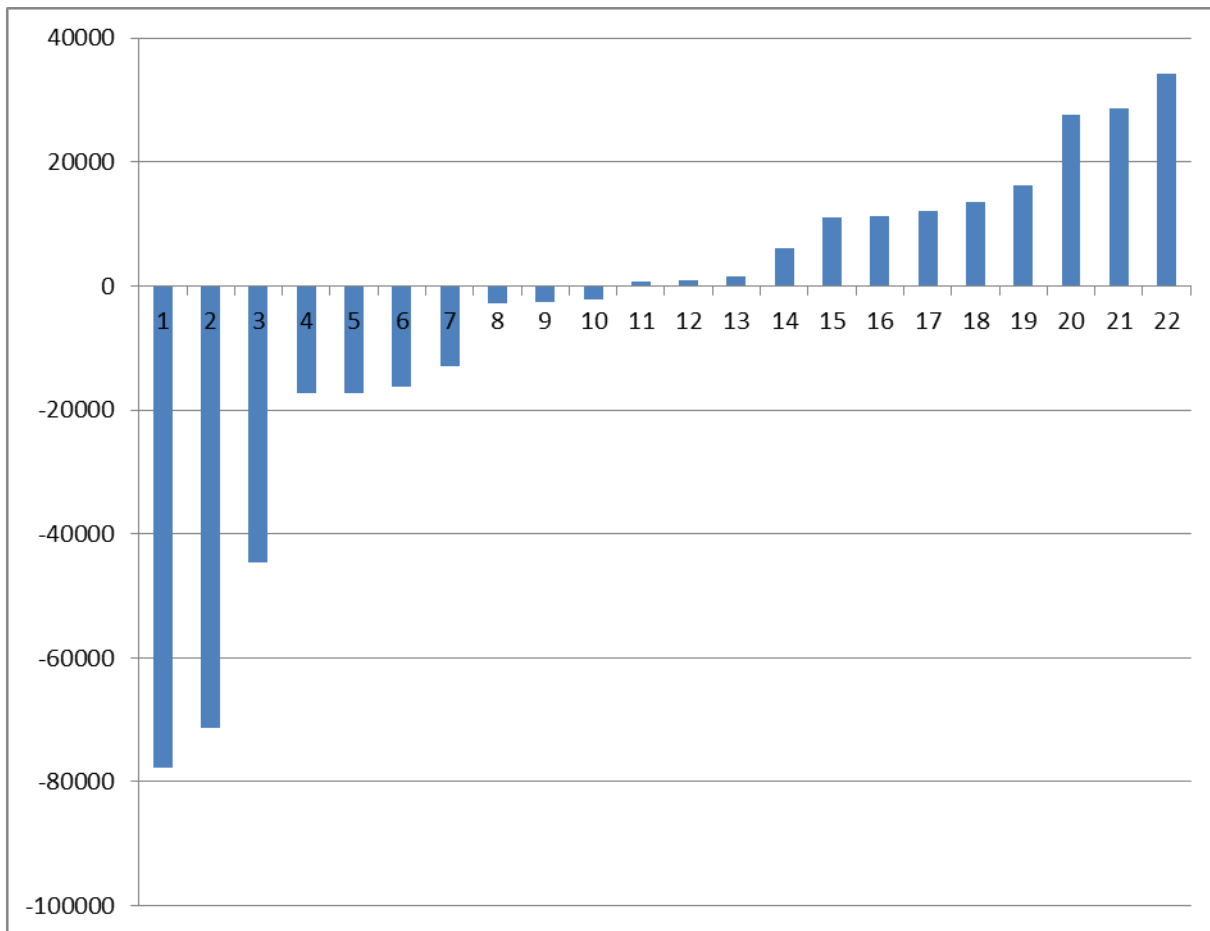


Figure 1 Chart showing differences between projected and actual annual costs for 22 young people

It will be seen that there are a small number of extreme cases. Some of these arise due to the fact that some young people have now returned to live in their home area on completion of their education, in some cases this has resulted in considerably less spend that had otherwise have been projected, with reductions approaching £80,000 per annum for two young people. These cases are a minority, but similar instances may be anticipated.

Consequently we decided to recalculate the data excluding the three highest and three lowest cases, in order to produce what may be a more typical estimate of the financial impact of the team. Information from the remaining 16 cases suggests that the Transitions Team is relatively cost-neutral, typically making less than £2,000 per annum difference either way.

Based on these 16 cases alone, there is an overall additional spend of £1,792; this equates to an average increase of +0.6% of the expected spend for these 16 individuals. Again, this suggests that the work of the Transitions Team has thus far been relatively

neutral in terms of costs. In other words, the Transition Team have so far achieved some significant improvements in care packages without significantly increasing the cost.

In addition, the fact that costs have been higher than otherwise projected for some young people, suggests that the work of the Transitions Team is primarily focused on achieving the best solution for the young person, rather than solely on reducing costs. This is encouraging, as it suggests that solutions may be more 'stick-able' and settled, which itself may result in further longer-term reduction of costs.

The high level of variation in cost effects, with some very large reductions is also promising as it demonstrates that the provision of flexible and responsive support to meet young people's needs, is not necessarily achieved through the most expensive option. Furthermore, we would expect (but can't yet demonstrate) that the Transitions Team will continue to identify and stimulate increasingly innovative local solutions which may enable further avoidance of high expenditure in the long term.

As mentioned previously, no children have yet transitioned from an out-of-area residential placement to an in-area residential placement; these decisions were based on careful multi-agency assessments. Again, we are reassured by this finding; it is unsurprising that these are some of the most vulnerable children who have difficulty with change and one would not expect a settled placement to be disrupted unless it was demonstrably for the child's benefit. Over time, the number of young people in this situation will diminish as they 'age out' of their current placements. The Transition Team will be well placed to help secure appropriate (and less costly) arrangements for these young people. It is therefore likely to be some years before the full financial implications of the Transitions Team's work become apparent.

In conclusion, for many young people the work of the Transitions Team has thus far made only small financial differences; however, for a smaller number of young people large differences are seen including some large reductions to projected costs. We feel that this analysis is currently very promising, but urge that costs should be carefully monitored for a larger number of people, over a longer period of time.

Transitions Team: Future Plans

The work of the Transitions Team has been multifaceted. Their role has not simply been to facilitate access to services, but to be part of a significant change in the way in which services are thought about and delivered. To date, even within the short life of the Project, there is evidence to suggest tangible shifts in cultures are taking place. This is most clear across a range of staff groups who are already taking a markedly different

approach. Furthermore, there is evidence that many families welcome and appreciate the new approach to services and the types of support available to them.

The Transitions Team are keen to ensure that these cultural changes become more deeply embedded and self-sustaining within communities, such that local areas are better able to provide opportunities and benefit from the inclusion of their own young people.

Enhanced Education Provision

Children and young people spend much of their time in educational settings; this is as true for disabled children as it is for their peers. Given the other demands on their time and attention, it can be challenging for teachers and other educational staff to understand the range of needs that disabled children may have and to devise appropriate strategies to serve them.

Prior to the Project schools were reliant on expertise within the school system, one outreach support teacher and existing services such as educational psychology. This was particularly challenging for staff in rural areas where there may only be one teacher for the school and where there may be children of different ages and stages.

The creation of the additional post of Outreach Teacher has allowed the outreach service to be enhanced with one teacher focussing primarily on primary schools and the other focussing on secondary schools. A wide array of practical resources to be put in place to support teachers, young people and their families. These include:

Capacity Building: Teachers and Parents

The Outreach Teacher has built up a wealth of materials for teachers, training courses and worksheets to help build knowledge and skills. The teacher also provides telephone support in respect of individual children. Simple solutions such as strategy cards on a key ring were said to have been particularly helpful to school staff. The Outreach Teacher was able to liaise with family and schools in respect of the children's support needs prior to Primary 1 and has attended transitions meetings.

The Outreach Teacher has also been in close contact with parents, and has helped to build their knowledge and capacity or support them when things are not going well. This has required good interpersonal skills and the Outreach Teacher has been able to mediate where their school finds a child's behaviour particularly challenging. This activity was reported to reduce exclusion of children and young people from school, thus

reducing stress and distress for children, young people and their families as well as helping to prevent children being placed in specialist or residential provision.

The teacher has also worked to change cultures and influence thinking within schools about disabled children. This has been achieved through various activities and training sessions:

What we are trying to do is gain [...] time from head teachers and to have a shift in mind-set within departments where staff presently have more ridged views about children with developmental disorders and [achieve] a change in mind-set with just one or two staff, so we are hoping that will spread within departments. (Evaluation video participant)

The only critical comments about education provision were not about learning or curriculum matters; rather, they were about the wider systems around educational provision. The following quotes are observations made by young people and their parents who are at different stages in the process of transition to college. The parents of one young person who is still at school and has just started the process of transition to college observed:

Thinking back primary school was great... [S/he] was seen by doctors at the school once or twice a year. We then looked at schools and (name of school) said [s/he] would be supported, but this didn't materialise. There was a meeting in 3rd year (2013). There was then a big gap and school organised a meeting but a lot of people were not informed. It was arranged on a day [her/his] [parent] couldn't manage and a number of people couldn't go. [Worker from Transitions Team] made it but we thought the communication was rushed and maybe should have had more time to make sure the right people were there. There are a number of people now involved in her/his life and they should have been there – Social Worker, Transitions Worker, Woodlea, Enable, Independent Travel Coordinator, and Paediatrician but school organised it and it felt rushed... People always explain to [name] about what is going to happen. I would like [her/him] to be involved in school meetings however. (Study Participant)

This young person will soon attend college one day a week and s/he will transfer to full time the following year.

The second young person had already attended college for one year. S/he had had difficulty in the transition to college as s/he experienced bullying. Her/his parent explained that s/he had found the transition from primary school to secondary school difficult. Her/his parent spoke very highly of the secondary school that s/he had attended but wondered if young people could have been better prepared for life after school:

(Name of school) was very nurturing but maybe for [name] and [friend] it would help if they had been exposed to some of the social challenges, like if they were being bullied. At college (name) had tried to help the [young person] who bullied her/him, s/he didn't know what to do.
(Study Participant)

The situation had later been resolved as young person and college had worked together and s/he was able to come back into college.

Autism Training

Ten sessions were run between September 2013 and May 2014, the focus of these being to increase the knowledge and understanding of staff working with children on the Autistic Spectrum and to provide a bank of strategies for use in schools. These sessions were delivered in partnership with Perth Autism Support; all sessions were positively evaluated. The majority of participants were interested in further training and confirmed they:

- Enjoyed the sessions
- Found the session useful
- Felt more confident to work with children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Were likely to try the strategies

SCQF National Progression Award Level 4 Horse Care

Another initiative within the Enhanced Education provision was provided to eight young people with a range of Additional Support Needs and two staff referred by five different agencies in Perth. These individuals participated in a practical course in horse care. This course took place over eight sessions each of two hours duration and involved all aspects of horse care leading to an accredited SQA award of SCQF National Progression Award Level 4 Horse Care. As well as achieving an SQA award and the possibility of moving on to complete SQA Level 5 in Horse Care, a number of social benefits were noted by parents; these included improvement in social conversation, interaction with adults and peers and increases in confidence, positive mood, self-esteem and assertiveness.

An unexpected outcome of this initiative was an improvement in school attendance for some of the young people involved.

Therapet Service Trial

The Canine Concern Scotland Trust, established in 1988, set up a Therapet service to promote the therapeutic value of dogs to patients or anyone isolated from normal association with pets.

Fear of dogs can be debilitating or even hazardous for some children; for example it can create a fear of leaving the house and a risk of running off when they encounter a dog in the street. The Outreach Teacher arranged a service whereby dogs attended three sessions at each All Stars group (Primary Provision for children with complex emotional and behavioural difficulties) and at St John's Academy where they worked with two pupils, one who had ADHD and one with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder and ADHD.

Evaluation feedback from both children and staff was positive. Observations from staff included:

Pupils greatly enjoyed the sessions and were obviously happy. (Staff Evaluation feedback)

One child had a fear of dogs and this experience has enabled them to overcome this to a significant extent. (Staff Evaluation feedback)

Great benefit to positive peer interaction. (Staff Evaluation feedback)

Reducing the ratio of children to dogs would be great. (Staff Evaluation feedback)

Young people's feedback also gave a particular insight into the value of the initiative:

It was awesome! (Young Person's Evaluation feedback)

I want a dog. I hope they come back. (Young Person's Evaluation feedback)

I didn't do anything with the dogs because I'm scared of dogs. I didn't even look at them on the first visit, but I watched them through the door on the second visit. (Young Person's Evaluation feedback)

Enhanced Educational Provision: Case Example (NB. also received complementary support from the Transitions Team)

A young person with a diagnosis of Dyslexia, ADHD and Oppositional Defiant Disorder was evoking considerable concern due to non-attendance at school over a long period of time, refusal to engage with workers and refusal to opt into any activities that were offered. A Supervision Order was put in place for three months. The Outreach Support Teacher provided around 40 hours of input over a period of time via telephone and face-to-face contact. Bit by bit, the young person began to engage in a range of activities of interest and is now well integrated into a number of activities. To date this has included volunteering in a charity shop and at a nursery and ultimately achieving a Saltire Award for 25 hours and 50 hours volunteering. Along with this there was some attendance at a local school which enabled the achievement of five Access 3 awards and engagement

with a careers adviser. Having completed a CV the young person was accepted to start college for NQ Basic Engineering Skills and undertook a work experience placement in a rail depot. This led to another college course to study Introduction to Engineering which has resulted in a potential future career path. It is felt that if these services had not been in place, along with support to engage, this young person was likely to have had a range of poor outcomes such as isolation, potentially being accommodated and having long-term social work and youth justice involvement.

Enhanced educational provision costs and plans for the future

As the role of Outreach Teacher was a new and developing role it is difficult to provide comparison of costs before and after. It was noted from information provided that staff costs were around 20% higher than has originally been planned, but that this funding was found from alternate sources.

There is evidence that several children been supported to remain in their local school rather than being relocated into more costly and distant specialist provision. This effect in itself is likely to have had significant savings in respect of transport and the cost of alternate placements. Perth and Kinross Council are currently collating comparative data for this aspect of the project.

We urge that a small number of financial case studies linked to the work of the outreach teacher are conducted over a period of time. These should examine cases where higher cost alternatives have been avoided and the costs and benefits of general activities such as training and support.

Project Wide Budgets and Finance

Across the services there has been acute awareness of funding issues, the impact of additional funding is seen as being significant and this has allowed important changes to be made. There is a clear impression that these funds are being used sustainably and a clear belief that this spending is expected to 'save' money in the longer term:

I have to be totally commendable on the support, the financial support, the resources that we have received; I have never in all my years of social services seen this amount of support in so many forms. (Study Participant)

I think the size of the team is relevant to the success of the Project and to the success of future projects, and I know we are all governed by financial constraints but I think, in the greater scheme of things, if the planning is done properly initially, then you will reap the benefits in five years' time or ten years' time. (Study Participant)

Studies of integrated working often highlight the role of financial systems in creating barriers to successful integration. This can occur because of the net amount of monies available but often results from organisations' or departments' behaviour in respect of protecting their budgets (Raine & Watt, 2013).

Given the range of services and divisions involved in this Project and the flexibility of the services provided issues of protectionism could have arisen. We found no evidence to suggest this, indeed there was evidence that the converse was true. It seems that this was avoided through a shared sense of purpose, effective communication and consistent close working:

[regarding finance] It has all been pretty straight forward. (Study Participant)

4. Summary of Project Opportunities, Strengths and Challenges

Earlier sections have considered individual services with the Project, but as previously mentioned, it is important to recognise the high level of integration with the services within the Project. In this section we seek to summarise a number of cross-cutting opportunities, strengths and challenges arising from the Project as a whole.

Opportunities

Study participants identified a number of opportunities which were created by the new approach, these included the chance:

- to intervene at a younger age;
- to potentially keep children within their own homes and community;
- to avoid costs of residential services;
- to be creative;
- to use existing services within the community;
- to make better use of further education opportunities;
- to use a greater range of services;
- to have time to spend with individual families;
- to help create a sense of 'belonging' for children and young people;
- to provide support to schools, 'making sure the building blocks are there';
- to begin to change attitudes towards disabled children and young people.

Strengths

In addition to these opportunities identified by staff, we found a number of factors which we consider to be strengths of the Project, these include:

- The initial vision to work jointly across Education and Children's Services, Housing and Community Care and Health Colleagues is very creative;
- There was clear planning from the outset with an Overarching Milestones Plan which was monitored regularly;
- The Project includes enhancement of universal services, such as education;
- There have been regular Project Board and Project Team Meetings of key personnel, including Finance;
- There is role clarity and respect for professional decision-making between staff from the Transitions Team, Child Health, Woodlea and Finance;
- All managers demonstrated an understanding of the Overarching Plan and their locus within this;
- Services are person-centred, being led by the needs, views and aspirations of children, young people and their families;
- Services provide early intervention, developing families' capacity to think creatively and solve problems;
- Staff have the capacity to be creative and flexible, responding to challenges and the need to revise initial plans, while retaining the overall vision,
- Finally, we note that inter-professional working appears strong, this is especially pleasing given the relative newness of the Project:

Also I can't underestimate the support our health colleagues give as well as a lot of my cases have a dual diagnosis of the health issue whether it is mental health or physical disabilities as well as the diagnosis of learning disabilities and autism. So it's about working together to make sure we are joint planning and the needs are being met so it's quite good. (Study Participant)

Challenges

The Project was highly ambitious and innovative and has required considerable change; unsurprisingly there were a number of challenges to implementing the changes. Some of these challenges are detailed below; they seem to have been relatively minor and were generally specific to individual service elements rather than to the overall vision. It is important to remember that despite the challenges, all participants thought that opportunities and benefits to the children, young people and their families greatly outweighed any problems. Indeed, it is notable that no participant could identify a

child, young person or family who had not benefitted in some way from the new approaches. Below we note some of the issues that have arisen:

Building Family Support (Woodlea & CHT)

One particular challenge was bringing three staff teams together as one full team in December 2012. This required shifts in working arrangements and the resulting uncertainty initially unsettled or challenged some staff. It seems that these challenges have been quickly resolved.

We work on a rota system so I work over Monday to Sunday, 24/7 if you like on a rota, so I take part in all of it. (Study Participant)

Staff have been amazing in their belief that this is what we should be doing (Study Participant)

Staffing arrangements have remained under review and after considering early information from the Outreach Workers, it has been decided to reshape the outreach service.

Enhanced Educational Provision

There were several logistical challenges to providing a service to families; these included the level of need, the geography of the area, and, related to this, the diversity in educational provision from small single-teacher primary schools to large secondary schools with over 1000 pupils. The Project team remain acutely aware of this challenge and continue to consider responses to it.

Transitions Team

It quickly became apparent that parental high expectations meant that transitions staff needed to have a demonstrably high level of knowledge, skill and experience in order to assess needs and create plans which were robust enough to ensure families' confidence. It was also suggested that in the early stages there some lack of clarity about the precise nature Transitions Team roles. These issues have been resolved and posts in the Transitions Team have been reconfigured.

Financial and community challenges

One general issue is related to the low level of community support, opportunities and provision available in different areas; this is especially an issue in the more rural areas and can lead to social isolation for some young people. Equally it is important to note that communities stand to benefit in many ways from greater involvement of their

disabled young people. However, without support it may be that opportunities are slow to develop; consequently the Council may like to engage in activities designed to stimulate and support such developments.

In terms of this Project there is now a need to be able to plan ahead beyond the end of the Investment and Improvement Funding period. Financial uncertainty has clearly presented a number of challenges for services, in particular the Transitions Team and the Enhanced Education Provision. Early clarification of these issues would be beneficial.

5. Achieving Objectives

The Project objectives are detailed as follows in the business case (Perth and Kinross Council, 2012, pp. 7-8):

- To keep children and adults in their own homes wherever possible;
- Children, young people and adults are 'included' and benefit from a personalised approach to meeting need in line with 'Getting it Right for Every Child' and the personalised agenda;
- Services are more sustainable and cost effective;
- Range of learning, achievement and employment opportunities is made available and accessible to children and adult service users;
- Parental confidence is increased.

Objective 1: To keep children and adults in their own homes wherever possible

To achieve this objective collaborative working and a shared vision and approach are required. Typically this might require education, social work and housing and community care and health and other agencies to work effectively together towards common goals.

The Project has achieved a significant change of culture across a range of partners in respect of services for disabled children and young people. For example, there appears previously to have been a default expectation that children would be placed in residential placements if there were difficulties with their current placement (and/or parents made a request). This is no longer the case; instead, the default position is to put together a package of care and support around the school and family in order to avoid or reduce the requirement for residential care. Although in some cases the Additional Support Needs panel has placed children into residential care if no suitable support is available. In particular, strong efforts are made to avoid use of out-of-area placements. These packages have included support services from within and around

Woodlea Cottage, community resources accessed by the Transitions Team and Enhanced Education Provision.

There are many examples of change; for example, it is reported that one child has ceased using a residential short break service over an hour away, is now successfully supported using Woodlea for short breaks and has become familiar with resources in their home area. A number of older young people have also returned to live within their home area during their transition to adulthood. These moves have been supported by the Transitions Team who have supported young people and families to make decisions, achieve their preferred arrangements and become more active in their community.

Conversely, no children have returned from existing out-of-area residential placements other than those transitioning into adult services; however, this has been carefully considered and decisions made in their best interest. In addition, it should be noted that some children may always require highly specialist services which may be unavailable in the Perth and Kinross area and therefore it is unlikely that 100% of children will always be able to remain in the area.

It is clear that services have become more seamless and integrated, adopting a whole-life approach. We feel it is now important that efforts are made to maintain this type of provision such that children and young people are supported throughout transitions in their community as they grow up.

In conclusion, we find that there is evidence that this Objective has been met over the life of the Project; where possible children and young people now remain in their home area and where they do not, this is for appropriate reasons.

Objective 2: Children, young people and adults are ‘included’ and benefit from a personalised approach to meeting need in line with ‘Getting it Right for Every Child’ and the personalisation agenda

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) specifies a number of outcomes for children: they should be Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Achieving, Respected, Responsible and Included. Inclusion and active participation in decision making is an area which has been challenging for some services to achieve with disabled children and young people (Stalker et al., 2013; Stalker & Moscardini, 2013). Service managers across the Project indicate that GIRFEC outcomes are enacted through a personalised approach which drives individual care planning.

Inclusion is not simply a function of participation in decision making or service delivery; it is explicitly enacted through the positioning and status of children within their

community and society. Sending children away from their local community is implicitly an act of exclusion and thus Objective 1, to keep children in their community, can itself be regarded as inclusive.

Furthermore, there are particular examples of services where the Project aims to adopt a personalised approach:

- In terms of Enhanced Educational Provision, there have been efforts to improve provision through increasing awareness and skills of all practitioners, particularly in respect of ASD. This, along with direct input and support from the Outreach Teacher should help to develop appropriate individualised plans for children.
- The provision of a range of additional opportunities such as Therapet and Level 4 Training in Horse Care increases the scope and flexibility of what can be offered.
- A range of residential short breaks are now available with differing degrees of intensity depending on the child, young person and family's assessed needs.
- The Outreach Service enables parents to obtain advice and practical support tailored to the needs of their child and family.
- Families have been supported to cope with a range of difficulties and stay together.
- The essence of the work of the Transitions Team is to support the development of a personalised package of education, activity and care for children and young people moving from one part of their lives to another.
- The Transitions Team look at options within the family and community driven by the interests of the young person:

It's about the ability to be creative, which we can be, on the back of Self-Directed Support... It is not about being service-driven but rather we can look at other options. (Study Participant)

Some participants in this study suggested that young people particularly enjoyed social events with their friends or young people of a similar age; it was suggested that this could include simple group activities such as trips, craft sessions or 'sleep overs' with friends. It was noted by some participants that these opportunities are not always available in all areas.

Examples of inclusion and exclusion

One young person in this study emphatically told us that new ideas were always discussed with them. S/he spoke very positively about the range of range of activities that s/he was involved in and particularly about having a Personal Assistant (PA):

Since getting a PA, I have been able to do things with [them]. I go to college, I do life skills, ASDAN, read books, work with money, living safely classes and citizenship. This year I have

done football, yoga, gardening, music, creative movement, and volunteering (in a school) with [parent]. (Study Participant)

This young person also volunteers in a café where s/he is involved in a range of tasks. S/he has a good circle of friends and enjoys going out with [boy/girlfriend] who is described as a ‘complete rock’ who helps the young person to be independent. This young person’s parent emphasised the importance that their child is able to have close social relationships of this sort. Reflecting on the services received, this young person’s parent explained:

(The Transitions Worker) has really helped. At first I thought ‘Dream On!’ But it has worked out well. (Study Participant)

Another young person at an earlier stage in the transitions process is about to move to college after the summer holiday period. S/he thought that people did not listen at first and that parents had to help. This young person was very positive about their experience at school where s/he felt included in classes and had made several friends. Their interests were typical of young people of this age (cinema, shopping and going to cafes). S/he is working towards the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme Gold award, attends [Guides / Scouts] and is active in sports having played for ‘the Scotland Squad’ traveling to other parts of the United Kingdom.

This young person is also a member of a group at Dundee University meeting with others with communication impairments to explore technology and work with researchers developing better technology. This young person’s experience of using Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems has allowed them to contribute as a volunteer at a school for children with cerebral palsy, particularly dealing with issues of communication.

When considering going to college, this young person wanted to be in the mainstream classes and to focus on ICT and English; however, there was heavy pressure on them to opt for a course in Social and Vocational Studies (SVS). S/he did not want to do this as s/he had covered home economics at school and ‘hair and beauty’ was not relevant to their interests. The young person told us that her/his parents had to become involved and a change of worker at the Transitions Team occur before the young person was able to put together the college plan which s/he wanted. S/he now has a PA and is looking forward to starting college.

Now I will be in the main department and study ICT and English. I like to write. (Study Participant)

The parent added:

We had to fight for what (young person) wanted. We started planning for (young person's) transition to High School in Primary 5 but it did not seem to go so smoothly in the transition to college. (Study Participant)

Her/his parent added that there was still a need to establish how her [young person's] health care needs such as physiotherapy would be met, noting that college was different as there was less structure.

The parents of a third young person who has only recently been introduced to a Transitions Worker were particularly concerned about social isolation and lack of activities as s/he had experienced bullying in the community. They also thought it would be helpful for her/him to be involved in sporting activities such as football, badminton, bikes etc. for health and fitness reasons (as s/he was growing out of activities geared to a younger age group). However, as yet, this young person had not been offered relevant alternatives. The use of a PA helped to ameliorate this to an extent:

With (Transition Worker's) agreement, we use some of the money for respite for a holiday and use the remainder for hours with (her/his PA). There is enough for one day and an evening. There end up being extra hours in winter but these can be rolled over to summer. (Study Participant)

In conclusion, we feel that there is evidence to suggest that significant and rapid progress has been made towards this Objective and that the Project has successfully increased inclusion and personalisation for many of the current cohort of children and young people. However, we feel that there remains a priority for this type of work to be continued and broadened in line with GIRFEC principles; therefore, we hope that this Objective will remain as a broad and ongoing aim.

Objective 3: Services are more sustainable and cost effective

Wider literature suggests that there is mixed evidence about whether programmes of integration tend to be successful in providing the level of cost savings anticipated or required (Curry & Ham, 2010; Welch, McCormack, Stephen, & Lerpiniere, 2014). It is noted that some programmes may actually increase short-term costs (Weatherly, Mason, Goddard, & Wright, 2010). Consequently we advise that it may therefore be unwise to read too much into early analyses of cost information following any change programme.

A detailed, longer-term cost-benefit analysis was beyond the scope of this study; however, available financial data and our enquiries to relevant participants did provide evidence that the Project has avoided or reduced expenditure on services for a number of individual children and young people. In addition there is already some evidence to suggest a reduction in other costs:

Reduced costs have been attributed to the following:

- The more diverse and flexible use of Woodlea Cottage facilities and staffing (short breaks, outreach work, intensive family support etc.);
- The Transitions Teams securing improved services and outcomes with similar or lower than projected costs [NB costs for some young people may be higher than projected]
- Enabling children to remain in their community school by enhancing educational provision and avoiding the need for costly alternatives.

Combining reduced costs for each of the areas we have considered, we would expect that the changes enabled by the Project, if maintained, will allow lower costs to be achieved. The actual annual cost is likely to vary year-on-year, depending on the particular needs of the current cohort of children and young people, but typically we might expect costs to be reduced by in excess £500,000 per annum compared to earlier service models. Thus we believe the Project represents valuable preventative spend and effective use of the original £805,000 IIF funding. Given that the Project has been in existence for less than three years, we strongly suggest that costs and benefits should be monitored over a longer period as there remains a possibility that other, as yet unknown, benefits or costs will be identified:

For us it has given us confidence that [young person] may be able to become independent in the future and that's important for everybody, for us to know that [young person will] be fine when we're gone, for us to know that s/he won't be dependent on her/his siblings for care and for us also to know that s/he's not going to be a burden on anybody financially or practically. S/he's going to live by her/himself with the state not having to pick up the tab at the end of the day and I think that's the crucial part of any transition project. (Evaluation video participant)

So far so good, certainly [child] has made a lot of improvements, but I feel that significant results will be shown over a period, a longer period of time, I don't think it will be an overnight thing, but yeah definitely things are going in the right direction. (Evaluation video participant)

A detailed cost-benefit analysis would be appropriate after the new services and systems have bedded-in and costs and benefits have stabilised, this may require a period of five years or more but could provide an indication of the longer-term financial outcomes.

In summary, we feel that there is sufficient information at this stage to say that the new arrangements have been cost-effective compared to previous models of working and will contribute to sustainability. Therefore, we feel that this Objective has so far been met.

Objective 4: A range of learning, achievement and employment opportunities is made available and accessible to children and adult service users

To achieve this Objective efforts will be needed to increase the range of local opportunities and/or increasing their accessibility; this in turn would be consistent with promoting inclusion, choice and personalisation as in Objective 2.

A number of new local opportunities have been provided across the project. For example, as part of the Enhanced Educational provision and resources accessed with support from members of the Transitions Team, the Outreach Teacher, the Independent Travel Trainer, and the Flexible Short Breaks and Independent Living Skills Project. The evidence suggests that these opportunities are provided in a coordinated way to promote smooth transitions. In addition, services are working with Personal Assistants provided through SDS and other mechanisms.

Together these opportunities provide an increased range of learning, achievement, volunteering and employment opportunities and thus we conclude that the Project has already achieved this Objective for most young people. We would, however, add that we found that a small number of young people in more rural locations were not yet able to access sufficient opportunities for social / group contact in their communities. This highlights the need for ongoing engagement, support and development work in local areas.

Objective 5: Parental confidence is increased

Information suggests increases in confidence for many parents, this is experienced differently for different people in diverse circumstances. Some parents may demonstrate increased confidence by taking on different roles in respect of planning or delivering their child's care:

... parents and carers that I have been working with of late have embraced a greater hands on approach, they have acknowledged there are more opportunities available and that they have a greater say in how their child is going to get on in the world, and cultural change takes time, but the signs are that it is absolutely happening. (Evaluation video participant)

For many parents, increased confidence was demonstrated both through their expressions of high levels of satisfaction with services received and also a willingness to provide considered views about how provision could be further improved. In some cases simply knowing that help with transitions was available, helped parents to feel more confident about the future:

From a personal point of view, yes I would say you are going in the right direction. The creation of the transition team has been a positive step forward, any transition for a young person is daunting, and having a transition team with experienced people to help makes this situation a lot less stressful. (Evaluation video participant)

Similarly, the practical support received through different aspects of the project had enabled some parents to feel more comfortable and confident in thinking about their child's future; this appeared to significantly reduce anxiety for some:

I am able to delegate stuff and I do feel that it will help me prepare for when [child] is an adult and when other people have to do those kind of things for her/him. I'm hoping I won't be as shocked or as bothered by not being the major person who does everything, but I still have my complete role as a [parent]. (Evaluation video participant)

Similarly some parents were more confident that their child was developing skills needed for their future lives:

We have seen the children having more structured learning about independence, they are keep busier, they are given more opportunities to do things that they are going to have to do out in the world and that has been the biggest improvement, that when you pick up your child you know they have not just sat about, you know that they have had structured activity, and structured learning. (Evaluation video participant)

This was not to say that these parents did not have remaining concerns about the future, and whether sufficient ongoing support would be available. One parent whose child attended Woodlea Cottage short breaks was happy with the package of care currently made available but expressed concerns about what would happen around transition to adulthood, as they had heard from other parents that this could be a difficult time. However, when asked to explain further, the parent suggested:

If the support continues as it currently is, then I'm hopeful that all will go well... I don't foresee any problems if services continue to be as good as now. (Study Participant)

Another parent was very content with the service received from the Transitions Team and from their PA but remained dissatisfied with the availability of social group

activities for a young adult. Although college services were reported as very good and transition had been very well supported, there were insufficient opportunities for group activities on other days of the week, such that her young person was at times lonely and isolated. This parent had been proactive in seeking other activities with mixed success. It is notable also that this parent clearly had the confidence to state the fact that service changes had resulted both in benefits and some drawbacks.

One parent stated that her/his child had experienced difficulty with the first PA appointed but [] reported that this had been very efficiently and effectively resolved by a member of staff in the Direct Payments Team. What was noteworthy was not only the quality of the response but that the member of staff had liaised with the relevant person in the Transitions Team ensuring good inter-professional communication. This parent concluded the interview thus:

We are very lucky with Perth and Kinross, (names of staff in Transitions Team). (Study Participant)

These examples suggest it is possible for parental confidence and satisfaction to be high in respect of some aspects of support whilst simultaneously having concerns about other important areas. Parents of disabled children are often highly proactive in seeking information from their peers and other sources. Over time they will have learned about other families' experiences of services and support and they will have had experiences of their own. Other research suggests that many parents become strong advocates for their child. For some, their experiences lead them to regard themselves as being engaged in a continuous battle to secure support.

As a result, it is likely to be a number of years before parents will trust whether or not any new model of service will continue to meet their child's needs. Given their role as their child's advocate, it seems reasonable that parents should retain a degree of alert wariness.

We conclude that there is evidence that parental confidence has been increased in various ways by aspects of the Project such that this Objective has been met across the life of the Project. Again we urge that this Objective is seen as an important ongoing aim and that we suggest that continued attention should be given to promoting parental involvement and confidence.

6. Conclusions

We conclude our findings by briefly revisiting each of the research questions as set out in our study proposal.

Benefits realisation:

- What impact has the Project had on young people and their families?
The Project has had significant positive impacts on children, young people and their families. Many of these impacts are detailed throughout this report. It is notable that no participant could identify a child, young person or family who had not benefitted in some way from the new model and approach.
- Has the Project successfully achieved its various Objectives?
We have found evidence to suggest that the Project has demonstrated success in meeting each of its five Objectives. These are discussed in the previous section, we further believe that some of the Objectives should remain as relevant and important aims or features of ongoing work.

Project progress:

- How well does the performance of the Project meet target times and costs?
Critical milestones were monitored and the Project was sufficiently successful in adhering to them to enable it to meet its ambitious Objectives and cost targets. For some aspects of service we are aware of some minor staffing overspends during early stages. Across the Project we have been made aware of various examples where costs have been successfully reduced.
- What approved changes were made since the original Project plan and business case?
A number of minor operational changes have been made as the Project has progressed; some of these are detailed in this report, such as changes made to the Transitions Team staffing.
- What has been the impact on the Project of these approved changes?
Any changes appear to have been minor readjustments designed to ensure that the Project met its Objectives as set out in the business case, therefore we conclude that any changes made impacted positively on the Project as a whole.

7. Methodology: How This Evaluation Was Conducted

Perth and Kinross Council staff ensured that various evaluation data were gathered as an intrinsic part of activity throughout the Project. This generated a body of different

materials, data types and formats including numerical information and narrative text in electronic format as well as video feedback and hard copy. Perth and Kinross Council wished to commission an independent organisation to conduct an objective analysis of this material and to present the findings in a format that would help to inform decisions about the future of the Project.

The CELCIS research team were commissioned and sought to provide a sensitive, objective, reliable and valid evaluation of the Project through:

- Categorising and collating existing data, checking for sufficiency and suitability to answer the evaluation questions;
- Conducting a small amount of supplementary data collection within the available time;
- Conducting appropriate analyses, using quantitative and qualitative approaches;
- Reporting in writing on the findings of analyses in a format that responds to the evaluation questions and provides information for decision-making;
- Responding to queries on the report and/or presenting the findings in person to a suitable gathering of relevant stakeholders;
- Making recommendations as appropriate for further evaluation.

The limited time available meant that this had to be a highly-focused evaluation yet it also needed to be sufficiently robust to identify the effectiveness of the Project and demonstrate its impact.

Analytic methods

The evaluation used a range of data analysis methods and these were largely determined by the nature of the data that were available.

Textual data included transcripts of supplementary interviews, interview notes, user feedback, descriptive assessments, staff reflections, meeting notes, promotional materials etc. These were thematically analysed to identify descriptions, explanatory concepts and patterns. Each item of data was analysed by one or two researchers (in discussion with other members of the team).

The amount of numeric data forthcoming was relatively small; this allowed for simple descriptive analyses and incorporation of relevant contextual numerical information throughout the report.

Additional data collection

Additional data collection took place to provide responses and perspectives from a wider base of individuals; examples included:

Seven telephone interviews conducted with lead staff and managers responsible for the implementation of the Project. This included staff from each of the three different areas. The interviews were semi-structured discussions addressing description of services, reflection on changes enabled by the Project, impact for children and young people issues arising and how these had been handled, and thoughts about the future.

In addition, telephone and face-to-face interviews with parents were conducted; again, these were semi-structured discussions focusing on the family's needs, use of services, reflections on services, changes for children, young people and other family members and thoughts for the future.

A small number (<5) of face-to-face interviews with young people also took place and gathered important information about wishes, experiences and opinions of services.

All persons invited to speak to a researcher were provided with information about the study and their rights in relation to it. They were given time to consider this and to ask further questions before deciding whether to consent to participation. Participation was voluntary, and whilst full confidentiality could not be assured (as interviews were arranged via Perth and Kinross workers) all data used in this report and any subsequent outputs has been carefully anonymised.

To further reduce the chance of identification we have removed key identifiers and made all quotations and references gender-neutral. We appreciate that phrases such as 's/he' or 'her/his' are rather grating to read, but feel it is necessary given the small numbers of participants involved.

Throughout the report we have used quotations provided by different types of individuals. Most of these relate to people that the researchers spoke to directly; each quote is ascribed to the generic 'Study Participant' in order to avoid unduly identifying individuals. We have also drawn some quotes from the video material supplied to us, where this is done quotes are accordingly ascribed to 'Evaluation video participant'. We have also used a small number of brief quotations from completed evaluation feedback forms and similar documents copies of which were passed to us by the Project team; the origin of these quotes is described accordingly in the text.

This document is produced using the current standard CELCIS report format. We would be happy to discuss other forms of output, such as summaries, quick-read versions, and audio or video summaries made available on the web. Equally, we would be happy to deliver the key findings in person to an appropriate audience.

Limitations

There are a number of important limitations to this study. Firstly, it is based upon analysis of a diverse range of 'data'. Much of this was in the form of documents and material collected during the course of Project implementation. The quality and completeness of this material was inevitably varied; where there were known gaps the researchers, together with the Project team, have tried to locate information or find alternative sources. To a large extent this has been successful.

The greater part of information for this evaluation was provided to the researchers by the Project team; similarly participants who spoke to the researchers were put in contact via the Council's staff. In these situations it is always possible that a degree of 'selection bias' may unintentionally be introduced; for example, it may be easier to secure consent to pass on a parent's contact details with families where there is an ongoing and positive relationship or documents may be selected on the basis of which best describe the Project in ways which make clear sense.

The fact that the evaluation has been largely explanatory and based on qualitative analyses helps to guard against any undue influence. The fact that some parents, staff and managers have highlighted more problematic areas as well as successes also provides a degree of confidence that any bias was minimal. In addition, the researchers involved in the evaluation have significant combined experience of relevant service delivery and of evaluation. We believe this experience helped to generate an objective overview and supported the identification of critically important information.

In these ways, we feel that although there are limitations, this evaluation report provides a robust and useful initial account of the Project and its achievements. Throughout we have also strongly advocated that deeper, more systematic evaluation is warranted by the novelty and success of the approach. The Project could provide useful learning for other authorities wishing to achieve similar objectives, and the process of further evaluation would facilitate sharing of this learning.

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About CELCIS

CELCIS is the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. Together with partners, we are working to improve the lives of all looked after children in Scotland. We do so by providing a focal point for the sharing of knowledge and the development of best practice, by providing a wide range of services to improve the skills of those working with looked after children, and by placing the interests of children at the heart of our work.

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