

The Children's Fund

Six Case Studies

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Every Child Matters
Change For Children

Six case studies

- Sheffield
- Gateshead
- London
- Leicester
- Hartlepool
- Somerset

The Children's Fund was introduced in 2000 to provide increased and better coordinated preventative services for 5-13-year-olds and their families. Local partnerships administer the fund, working to pre-empt and tackle social exclusion in their communities through a range of approaches, including:

- **Work with children in school**
- **Family support and parenting programmes**
- **Play and after-school support**
- **Youth crime prevention**
- **Capacity building**

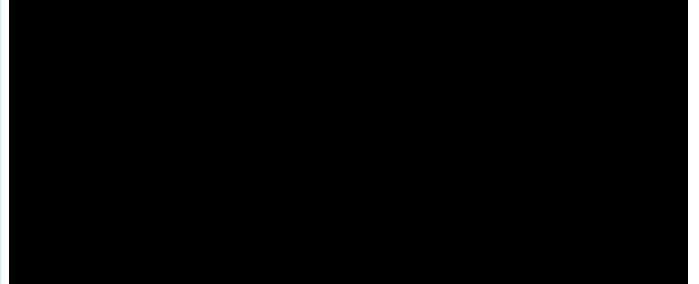
From promoting emotional well-being to tackling youth offending, there is a natural synergy between the aims of the Children's Fund and those of the Every Child Matters: Change for Children national programme, launched in December 2004. Speaking at the Children's Fund National Conference on 2 March 2005, Margaret Hodge, the previous Minister for Children, Young People and Families, said that *"the Children's Fund is a model for what we need to achieve if we are to deliver the Every Child Matters agenda."*

Children's Fund Partnerships are already at the heart of the drive to transform preventative services for children aged 5-13, and have pioneering experience in areas such as:

- **Partnership working and joint strategic commissioning**
- **Integrating front-line service provision**
- **Capacity building with the community sector**
- **Developing child and family-centred services**
- **Children's and young people's participation**

The six examples in this brochure aim to show how Children's Fund teams and projects around the country are putting these principles into practice to make a real difference for children and families at home, at school and in the wider community. They are also looking to the future, building on successful projects and helping to develop children's trust arrangements nationwide.

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■ Sheffield

Darnall and Tinsley 'On Track'

Challenge and objectives

'On Track' was set up in 2001 to reduce youth offending in high crime, high deprivation communities. Darnall and Tinsley 'On Track' in Sheffield supports children aged 4-12 to address risk factors such as behaviour and attendance at school and school exclusion.

What was done

'On Track' uses the Common Assessment Framework to produce assessments of children's needs which are shared with the family. Individual and group work takes place to help with social skills and behaviour management, emotional literacy, anger management, parenting skills and self-esteem building with children. Reviews occur with families each term, to assess impact and agree next steps.

Intervention takes a wide variety of forms and is essentially long term with families and children. The support available includes child development workers as home-school links, school nurses to address health needs (including emotional well-being), speech and language assistants, peer mentoring to provide good role models and practical support, Education Welfare Officers to ensure good transition to secondary school, support (including volunteer help) from a Domestic Abuse Project, and play schemes during school holidays and after school.

Costs

In 2004/05, the project cost £110,000. This compares favourably with the cost of a single prosecution of a parent for their child's poor attendance which is a minimum of £1,500.

The average cost per 'On Track' intervention is £2,000 for helping a family with a tailored package of support over 12 months.

Impact and outcomes

Around 200 children in the area have been identified as potentially vulnerable and it is this group that the programme targets. Currently 50% of users are from black and minority ethnic groups (this reflects the population profile in the area).

Following the first two years of activity, there has been:

- A 50% reduction in the number of referrals to Social Services of children and young people aged 0-17 in the area covered by the programme (almost double the reduction in the overall city figures)
- A reduction of 50% in the numbers of 10-12 year olds involved in criminal activity and anti-social behaviour in the 'On Track' area
- 70% of target families report that there is improvement both at home and in school – more positive parenting, lower levels of problem behaviour, exclusions and offending, and improved relationships with school
- School attendance increased by twice the city average between 2002 and 2004 (up 2.4% compared with 1.2%)

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Sustainability and embedding good practice

The project is delivered through inter-agency case managers and commissioning is on a locality basis, with pooled resources being used to respond to shared assessments of need and priorities.

School-home links and children's participation are especially strongly fostered, with school staff now used to going out into the local community to make home visits and school-children getting involved in helping plan out-of-school activities.

'On Track' are aligning more closely with extended schools, Children's Centres and the Children and Young People's Services Trusts. They are also strengthening links with Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BESTs) and the Parenting Support programme across the city. There is more emphasis on area working and a common assessment approach is developing. Schools are using evidence to increase the emphasis on parents and the relevance of home on education targets, for example, in terms of behaviour and attendance.

Parents' comments

“It's helped me as a parent to gain confidence and feel more in control. I can go into school and talk to teachers now and know they are there to help.”

“Having someone to talk to who is interested in my children has made a big difference.”

Children's comments

“I've not been in the discipline log-book at all this term”

“My mum doesn't get as angry with me now, so it's better at home.”

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■ Gateshead Children's Fund

Including Children

Challenges and objectives

St. Chad's Community Project provides a range of services for families in the community, including an 80-place out-of-school club. Within this, the Including Children project helps pupils at risk of exclusion to develop positive patterns of behaviour and the skills to support them.

What was done

Children identified as at risk of exclusion or social exclusion are offered subsidised places within St. Chad's out-of-school programme. A support programme is developed and agreed with the participation of parents and children are allocated a key worker who will monitor their progress.

The programme aims to provide:

- Age-appropriate activities to children at risk
- A safe and stimulating play environment
- Respite for siblings and parents of those children having difficulties both in home and in school

St. Chad's also provides Playworkers to support children with behaviour difficulties and those at risk of exclusion within school during lunchtimes. Many of these children also attend an open access drop-in that provides play activities for children from 5-15 years old.

Costs

Development and reviewing work is carried out by the development worker, paid for by the Children's Fund, which also contributes to childcare costs of around £10 per pupil per evening session (3-6pm) and £20 per day for holidays.

Impact and outcomes

For children, the benefits of participation include:

- Proved attendance and support to reduce exclusions

- The opportunity to develop social skills and techniques to manage their own behaviour
- The creation of respectful relationships with peers and staff, so that conflict and disciplinary problems are less likely

Families gain through:

- Respite for parents and siblings
- Improved relationships with staff due to support
- Advice and help with contacting other agencies, professionals and services that may be able to provide support
- An improved relationship with their child due to respite

Sustainability and embedding good practice

The availability of the programme strengthens partnership working in the area, with professionals from a variety of services able to refer pupils. Prior to this project, St. Chad's was already working with the school in question, but these links joined together various aspects of St. Chad's work in school and its own play scheme.

Without access to this service, children would be more likely to be excluded from school and more would be on the child-protection register.

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■ London

ViewPoints photography project

“ I saw this beautiful garden. It was like there were layers of roses and they go in different colours.

It had been there all the time but it was like I've never seen it before.

Mohammed, 13

“ The best bit was getting to use the camera for a whole day because it was a really good camera and people trusted me to take good pictures with it and take care of it.

Junior, 11

Challenge and objectives

Children who might not otherwise have a voice can express themselves through images. This project aimed to raise young people's self-esteem by showing that their insights were valued and to allow them to review and change the way they see themselves and their environment.

What was done

On 1 October 2004, 141 children and young people aged 5-13 from 16 London boroughs went out to take digital photographs of one day in their lives. Many had never held a camera before and a professional photographer was on hand to teach them basic skills.

The young people included young carers, refugees, children with disabilities, young offenders, traveller children and young people with Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). One project brought children from Afghan, Afro-Caribbean and West African communities who met for the first time.

An exhibition of their work was launched by the Mayor of London on 20 November 2004, Children's Rights Day, at City Hall.

Costs

The total spend for the project came to £26,900, including the cost of workshops, cameras, printing,

and a website. Contributors were the 15 Children's Fund partnerships the Greenwich Early Years partnership and the Sir William Boreman Foundation.

Impact and outcomes

The project gave an insight into what's important to children across barriers of age, ability, language and location. Children built trust and confidence in their own abilities, gained a sense of importance by being part of a London-wide initiative, and parents and guardians were impressed by the responsibility their children were given. Groups of children benefited, for example, by building their confidence and helping them make new friendships at a new school. Individuals were helped in specific ways - one pupil with ADHD got a boost to his self-esteem when he was able to take photos of his head teacher receiving birthday presents.

The project also helped build relationships with local children. In Hounslow, it helped kick-start the process of participation which will result in a children's forum. In Newham, the project advised on the new Children's Fund Disabled Children Service Specification. Harrow plans to use the cameras in a project in which young people think about personal safety.

Sustainability and embedding good practice

Viewpoints is the first initiative to engage many London Children's Fund Partnerships in the same project simultaneously and establishes a spirit of multi-agency co-operation that can be built on in the future, as well as helping to embed the active involvement of children and young people.

The project findings will be used by the Greater London Authority's Children and Young People's Unit in its work towards a more child-friendly capital for all London's 1.61 million young people.

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■ Leicester

Two Halves One Whole

Challenge and objectives

'**Two Halves One Whole**' (TWOH) is a project working with mixed-heritage children and their families living in Leicester and Leicestershire, offering the opportunity to share feelings and experiences about belonging to more than one culture, and encourage self-esteem and pride. It also helps children develop strategies for challenging and coping with racism both within and outside the family, and works with professionals and foster-carers to address the specific issues faced by mixed-heritage children and families.

What was done

Groups are set up for children of mixed heritage aged 5-13, and use activities to build self-esteem and a sense of cultural pride and identity. These range from finding positive role models, discussing what racism is and how to manage it appropriately, and finding out about hair and skin care, to creative writing, art, dressing-up and music.

Referrals are taken from schools, and individuals and families receive support through home visits and drop-in facilities. Group work is also complemented with individual work where appropriate. TWOH also organises networking and training events for schools and professionals, providing tools and skill-share, as well as information on the barriers and difficulties families face in accessing services.

Costs and numbers of children helped

With funding from Leicester Children's Fund, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Leicestershire County Council, the total cost for the year 2004-05 was £43,665.

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Children's comments

“It is the best group and you should hurry up and go.”

“The group is cool and lots of fun.”

“It is well good and we have a laugh but still be serious.”

Teachers' comments

“The sessions emphasised achievement and this will benefit both pupil and school in the long run.”

“In the longer term, this foundation will ensure that they achieve and that they do not get excluded from school either temporarily or permanently.”

Impact

One hundred and twenty-four children were helped by the programme from April 2004 to March 2005. The impact has been measured through questionnaires and external evaluations. Parents detected a rise in their children's confidence, and an increased ability to manage racism more appropriately. Parents also saw the opportunity to meet up with the other parents as very positive. All of the participants in a school-based group which ran from September 2004 to January 2005 said they would know what to do if there was a racist incident at school.

Sustainability and embedding good practice

Over the next two years, **'Two Halves One Whole'** will be running more groups in schools and playschemes, and providing parents and carers with opportunities to attend support groups. The project is also actively developing new working relationships with other agencies, as well as encouraging and supporting other professionals to undertake some of the work through organising skill-share events and consultancy. The long-term aim is to make the project part of everyday work with young people.

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■ Hartlepool Children's Fund

Belle Vue Community Sports and Youth Centre

Emotional Literacy Project

Challenges and objectives

The emotional-literacy project was developed as a consequence of Hartlepool Children's Fund providers reporting a high incidence of children and young people referred who appeared to have little or no understanding of their feelings, with poor social responses and ineffective interaction skills.

What was done

A pilot group-work programme proved extremely successful and led to the creation of ten-week courses of up to eight participants delivered in schools. The work centres on an interactive resource book called **My Diary of Discovery**, and the development workers work alongside a school staff member, providing group activities aimed at enhancing each child's insight into their feelings.

The project now runs groups in primary and secondary schools with the development workers working in partnership with school staff to deliver the group sessions. In the longer term, some school staff have taken responsibility for running the groups in school. This allows the development worker to move to other schools.

Costs

From 2002-04 the project was managed by a part time development worker. The cost has been approximately £20,000 staffing and £5,000 running costs per annum.

Impact and outcomes

This project provides support to children who need to acquire an understanding of their emotions and learn ways to deal effectively with their feelings. This is vital for all children in building resilience to the many risk factors that they face.

The feedback from head teachers has been extremely positive with examples of major changes in the behaviour of individuals and groups. The project has had letters from parents proclaiming major changes in their child's well being. Most importantly, evaluations from children have been extremely positive.

At this stage, signs are that the project is providing some staff in a variety of settings with the opportunity to re-evaluate the importance of taking into account how children's feelings impact on their ability to function. Organisations are actively meeting the challenge of how to integrate emotional literacy group work with their core business. Positive links have been made between the project worker and other in-school providers such as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and Learning Mentors with the consequence of joint work being initiated. This is likely to result in organisations that actively listen to children about the issues they face daily as part of their role, rather than an addition to it.

School staff have many curriculum pressures on their time and would not have been able to develop the emotional literacy package as it stands that is proving so effective. The impact that this package has had on those children showing early signs of vulnerability would be lost, and vulnerable children would be less likely to be supported at such an early stage. This project will fundamentally impact on the success of the local preventive strategy. The package does now link to the work in some Hartlepool primary schools based on Department for Education and Skills (DfES) materials designed to promote Social Emotional and Behavioural Skills, (SEBS).

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Sustainability and embedding good practice

In April 2004, this work was effectively mainstreamed through the Behaviour and Education Support Team (BEST) in Hartlepool. The arrangements for this mainstreaming process saw the development worker from the voluntary sector being seconded into the BEST for three days a week and remaining with the Children's Fund and Belle Vue Community Sports and Youth Centre for two days. This dual role provided a real opportunity to establish a working partnership between different initiatives and sectors. The cost of this process was covered jointly by Children's Fund, Behaviour Improvement Programme (BIP) and National Remodeling Framework (NRF) funding.

In April 2005, the secondment of one of the Development Workers transferred full time to the BEST.

The Children's Fund Manager is now in the early stages of developing a project, connected to the emotional-literacy project, with Child and Adult

Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and New Deal for communities. This new project could form the hub for a range of mental health-services operated by a number of different stakeholders.

Several attempts had been made in the past to develop such work, but had failed due to lack of cohesion, development time, other pressing agendas and funding. The fact that schools, voluntary sector organisations, BEST and the DfES are now fully involved with the process illustrates a significant milestone in the move to mainstream this approach. Children and parents helped in the development process and effective partnership working has involved a range of stakeholders to take on the challenges still facing the project.

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■ Somerset Children's Fund

Somkids

Challenges and objectives

The **Somkids** project promotes positive and effective parenting techniques and teaching practices, strengthens children's social competence and problem-solving strategies, and reduces aggression at home and school.

What was done

Somkids facilitators deliver a structured therapeutic programme (the Webster Stratton model). Groups of up to 10 parents meet for weekly sessions over 12 weeks, and a children's worker works with the children on individual or group activities.

The parents are given manuals, practical sessions, home assignments and handouts, and undergo weekly evaluations. Childcare is available alongside the courses, there is regular telephone contact, and follow-up visits are made as appropriate between sessions.

Costs

Somkids is based in Yeovil, but with £30,000 extra funding from the Children's Fund has recently extended to the Mendip area of Somerset. After set up, costs are lower, so some of Yeovil's funding is being used to deliver the project for six months

“Before I came today I felt as though I’d failed my goals, but through this session I feel less guilt and more encouraged. I can do this.”

“I have learnt how to praise all my children.”

“Many people were in the same situation and were able to help each other outside the session.”

“We have stopped smacking and are working at stopping shouting.”

in Mendip, with a Social Services contribution towards Children and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) training being used to fund the other six. The Primary Care Trust contributes health visitor services to the project.

Impact and outcomes

Improved parenting skills meant that parents were better able to keep their children safe, for example by setting effective limits on the time their children came in at night. A less stressful home life helped children stay healthy, and better organisation made preparing good-quality meals easier. Parents learned new techniques to help their children enjoy and achieve, from being able to take them shopping to helping them attend school more regularly and do their homework. The ability to take children outside the home, for example, to the park or the beach, without problems, is fundamental to their being able to make a positive contribution.

Individual successes and achievements include one child who had been permanently excluded and who has been re-integrated into another school full-time, and another whose SATS results really improved because he was no longer being excluded from the class during the day for disruptive behaviour.

Future sustainability and embedding good practice

The Yeovil children’s worker was recruited using a children’s panel of children aged 7 to 11. The children’s views were highly influential in the choice of candidate, and they were awarded certificates at the end of the process.

Funding has been secured to spread the model across Somerset. In addition, **Somkids** is working to train schools in the model being used, to help develop consistency in relating to children and parents.

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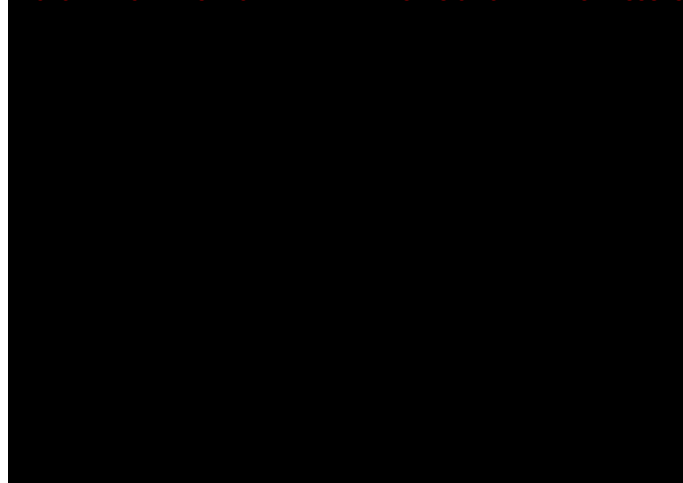
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