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# Evaluation of the Children, Young People & Families Early Intervention and Adult Learning & Empowering Communities Fund Final Report



## CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS



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# Introduction

The Scottish Government established the Children, Young People & Families Early Intervention and Adult Learning & Empowering Communities (CYPFEI & ALEC) Fund in 2016 to enhance the core services and infrastructure of third sector organisations in relevant policy areas. In total 118 third sector organisations were awarded core funding of approximately £14m for 2016/17 with subsequent funding dependent on satisfactory progress towards their stated outcomes and Scottish Government budgets. Further annual core funding awards of £14m followed in 2017/18 and 2018/19. In March 2018, Scottish Government announced the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund would continue for a fourth year to the end of March 2020.

Iconic Consulting conducted a formative evaluation of the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund to assess whether the overall vision for the Fund was achieved and to help inform future decisions around this area of funding. The evaluation covered the core funding awards during the period from April 2016 to March 2019. It did not cover the fourth year of core funding or the project funding awards made separately by the Fund in 2017. A Baseline Report was published in September 2016 summarising the initial findings, followed by an Interim Report in November 2018 which assessed progress and the emerging impact.

## Fund overview

The overall vision of the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund was to:

- Deliver nationally on improved outcomes for children, families, young people and adult learners through supporting the third sector in prevention and early intervention approaches.
- Strengthen the third sector to increase the effectiveness of services and policies that prioritise prevention and early intervention in the areas of children, young people and families and adult learning, at a national level through:
  - Developing the third sector's national level infrastructure to support local service delivery.
  - Establishing mechanisms that support sharing of information and intelligence between Scottish Government and the third sector to improve policy development and the use of evidence in policy making.
  - Increasing the intrinsic capacity and skills of third sector organisations across a range of features (including through experience sharing between organisations).
  - Increase the number of formal and informal partnerships between third sector organisations.

The Fund aimed to contribute to national outcomes. The CYPFEI element of the Fund was expected to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families through: 1) the delivery of prevention and early intervention; 2) building parenting and family capacity and skills; and 3) contributing to positive and

sustained support for children and young people to achieve their potential under the GIRFEC Wellbeing indicators. The ALEC element of the Fund was expected to improve outcomes for adult learners and building community capacity through: 1) prevention and early intervention through adult learning and community capacity building; 2) support to, and delivery of, lifewide, lifelong, learner-centred adult learning as outlined in the Statement of Ambition for Adult Learning in Scotland; and 3) using an asset based approach, work with adult learners or with communities to plan and co-design learning or capacity building opportunities. The CYPFEI & ALEC Fund objectives were aligned with, and expected to contribute to, delivery of Scottish Government policy in these key areas.

The Fund supported third sector organisations across nine key policy areas:

- Parenting, Play and Family Support
- Early Learning and Childcare
- Looked After Children
- Children's rights and well-being
- Child protection
- Child Health
- Adult Learning and Empowering Communities
- Youthwork
- Gender based violence.

The Fund was overseen by the Scottish Government Promoting Prevention Team. The Corra Foundation (formerly Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland) was commissioned by the Scottish Government to deliver the grant management and monitoring aspects of the Fund and provide support to the funded organisations. The Support and Engagement Programme consisted of a series of learning and development workshops; networking and learning exchange sessions; 1-2-1 organisational support; information and resource sharing; and annual conferences.

## **Policy context**

The Baseline and Interim Reports summarised the evolving policy context over the life of the Fund. Key references included:

- GIRFEC.
- The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.
- The Scottish Attainment Challenge.
- The Adult Learning in Scotland Statement of Ambition.
- The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- The Fairer Scotland Action Plan (October 2016).
- Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 Community Planning Guidance (2016).

- Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017.
- Every Child, Every Chance: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-22.

More recent policy developments are summarised below.

Community Learning and Development (CLD) policy transferred from Education Scotland to the Scottish Government in September 2018. The new CLD Policy Team worked with the adult learning sector to refresh the previous Strategic Forum for Adult Learning and create the new Adult Learning Strategic Forum Scotland. The Forum will provide strategic advice and direction to the Scottish Government in support of adult learning policy including the development of an Adult Learning Strategy for Scotland in 2020. Also in September 2018, Scottish Government produced its Programme for Government. The aspects of the programme most relevant to the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund were The Best Place to Grow Up and Learn, and An Empowered, Equal and Safe Scotland.

In December 2018, The Scottish Government published Progressing the Human Rights of Children in Scotland: An Action Plan 2018-21. Children and young people contributed to the development of the plan which aims to help children and young people to experience their rights. The plan states: 'A Scotland where children are recognised as citizens in their own right and where their human rights are embedded in all aspects of society is the Vision we aspire to; a Scotland where policy, law and decision making takes account of children's rights and where all children have a voice and are empowered to be human rights defenders'.

Scottish Government published a progress report in December 2018 on the 50 actions outlined in its Fairer Scotland Action Plan (2016). The progress report outlined the many actions that have been delivered or are in progress, such as the Innovation Fund in partnership with the Hunter Foundation. The fund supported eight new projects to reduce child poverty in 2018/19 with a combined investment of £450,000. The projects ranged from job training and a befriending service, to school-based mentoring and support for lone parents.

2018 was the Year of Young People in Scotland. The initiative provided a focus for children and young people's issues, showcased the extensive range of activities and opportunities for children and young people, and delivered a series of events across the country. A Scottish Parliament debate on the Year of Young People took place in March 2019. 2018 also saw the Independent Care Review, set up in 2017, move from its Journey stage to the Discovery stage.

In early 2019, Scottish Government published National Operational Guidance to support the ongoing implementation of Scottish Attainment Challenge's Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). The objective was to help schools plan how they will spend their allocations in the most effective way. Education Scotland also published Interventions for Equity: a framework to support PEF. The framework was based on a range of approaches already being implemented across Scotland and aims to help schools select interventions to help close the attainment gap in their respective contexts.

In May 2019, Scottish Government published a Wellbeing Report that provides a holistic picture of the current and longer-term performance across the revised National Outcomes as outlined in Scotland's National Performance Framework (published in 2018). In the same month, the Scottish Government announced the Family and Communities Fund. From April 2020, the Fund will provide up to £16 million per year to third sector organisations to reduce inequalities and provide the best outcomes for children and families through offering support, such as training in parenting skills, helping looked after children or perinatal services. The Fund will be managed by the Corra Foundation.

In July 2019, the Poverty and Inequality Commission was established as an advisory public body after it had been proposed by the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017. The Commission will provide independent advice to Scottish Ministers on poverty and inequality, monitoring progress, and proposing solutions to reduce poverty and inequality in Scotland.

## **Evaluation**

The specific questions to be addressed by the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund evaluation are:

- How has this fund as a whole contributed at a national level towards improving outcomes for beneficiaries?
- Has the embedding of early intervention and prevention in the ethos of organisations supported through this fund been sustained or improved. If so, what was the contribution of this fund, and what has the impact been?
- Has the Fund impacted on internal Scottish Government processes and ways of working, including third sector having opportunities to co-produce and add value to the development of Scottish Government policy?
- Have the capacity, skills and knowledge of the third sector improved as a result of being part of this funding programme. If so, what has the impact been?
- Have formal and informal partnerships between third sector organisations arisen as a result of being part of this fund? If so, what has the impact of these partnerships been?

This Final Report is based on evidence gathered via the following research:

- A group discussion with the Scottish Government Promoting Prevention Team overseeing the Fund and a separate group discussion with the Corra Foundation team responsible for grant management, monitoring and support.
- A review of Fund documents including quarterly reports produced by a sample of 20 funded organisations selected at the outset of the evaluation to cover a cross-section of grant holders, the Corra Foundation's annual overview report and annual summaries of the Support and Engagement Programme, and minutes of the Stakeholder Group.

- An online self-assessment exercise completed by 85 of the 118 funded organisations in May 2019, a response rate of 72%. The self-assessment exercise was designed as the central part of the evaluation methods and the form was co-produced with the Scottish Government at the outset of the evaluation to focus on seven themes that reflected the Fund's outcomes and the evaluation aims. The survey was previously undertaken in May 2016 and May 2017 and the findings are intended to indicate changes in third sector views over the evaluation period. Appendix 1 contains further details on the survey and Appendix 2 contains a summary of the findings.
- A confidential survey completed by 14 of 34 Policy Officers from Scottish Government and Education Scotland, a response rate of 41%.
- Depth interviews conducted with representatives from 13 third sector organisations supported by the Fund.
- Detailed analysis of the quantitative and qualitative evidence gathered from the research described above. The evaluation questions provided the overarching framework for the analysis. Responses to the self-assessment exercise were analysed in Excel. Noteworthy changes in responses from 2016 to 2019 are highlighted in this report as potential indicators of change rather than definitive, statistically significant findings. These findings are complemented by the qualitative findings which were analysed using a thematic approach that identified recurring or notable issues.

## **Report structure**

This report addresses the evaluation questions and is therefore structured as follows:

- Section 2 assesses the Fund's contribution at a national level towards improving outcomes for beneficiaries.
- Section 3 examines the Fund's impact on the capacity, skills and knowledge of the funded organisations.
- Section 4 considers the Fund's impact on partnerships involving funded organisations.
- Section 5 assesses the Fund's impact on embedding early intervention and prevention in the ethos of funded organisations.
- Section 6 examines the Fund's impact on internal Scottish Government processes and ways of working.
- Section 7 presents the evaluation conclusions.

# Improving outcomes

The CYPFEI & ALEC Fund has contributed at a national level towards improving outcomes for children, young people, families, adult learners and communities. The third sector organisations have delivered on the specific outcomes defined at the outset of the Fund which have, in turn, contributed towards the national outcomes alongside other initiatives, funding streams and organisations.

## Outcomes

Scottish Government stated at the outset of the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund that the work being undertaken through the Fund was intended to support the following national outcomes:

- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- We have tackled significant inequalities in Scottish society.
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful.

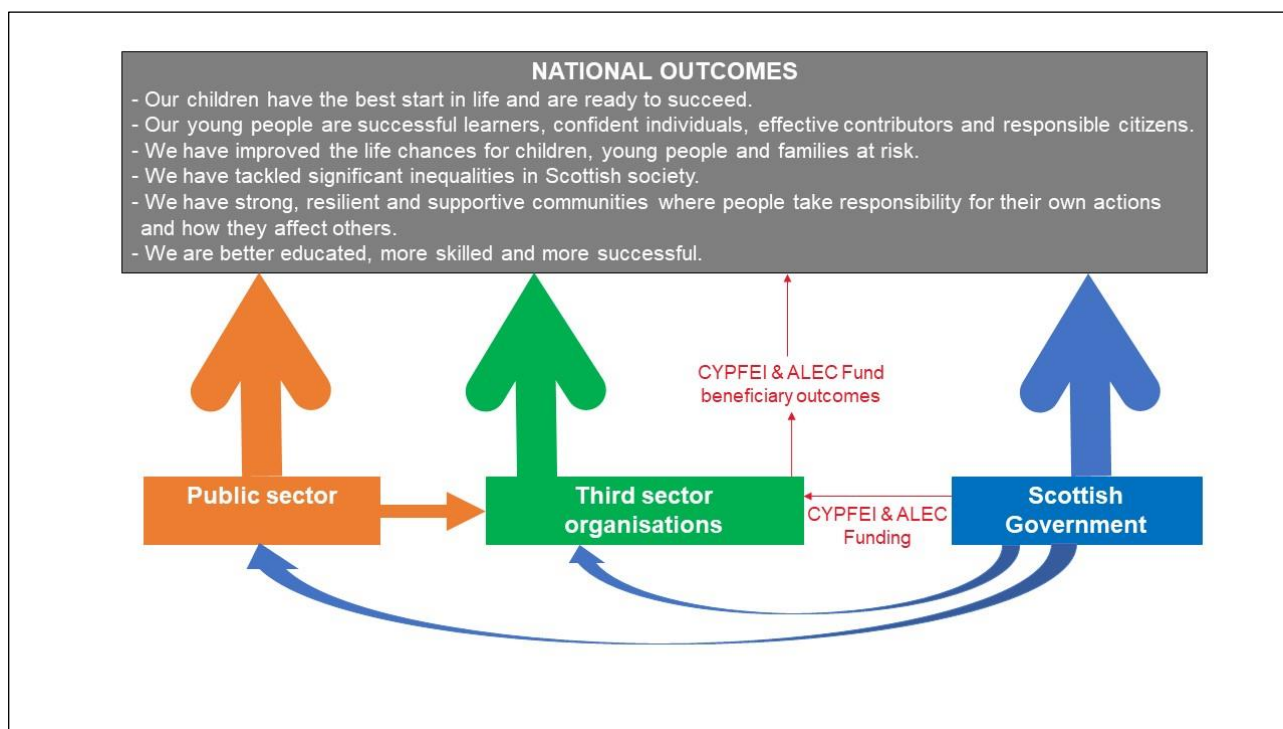
As highlighted in chapter 1, Scottish Government revised the national outcomes in 2018. The evaluation has retained the focus on the original outcomes as they were the ones funded organisations were asked to address.

With support from the Corra Foundation at the outset, the 118 funded organisations each defined outcomes to capture the impact of their funded activity. This resulted in 498 outcomes which have subsequently been monitored by the funded organisations and reported - via the Corra Foundation - to Scottish Government on a quarterly basis. The sheer number of outcomes and the disparate, self-defined nature has meant analysis and interpretation at a national level has not been possible. However, monitoring reports have consistently shown that the vast majority of organisations have been meeting their outcomes throughout the period 2016-19. There is substantial evidence - both qualitative and quantitative - in the monitoring reports to support this; the information is a mix of positive comments, survey findings, statistical information, and case studies. Where funded organisations have reported they were not on track, further investigation by the Corra Foundation team has shown the issues tended to be minor and have not been cause for concern. Therefore, it is possible to state that collectively the funded organisations have improved the outcomes they set for children, young people, families, adult learners and communities.



Drawing on evidence from the survey of funded organisations it is also possible to state that funded organisations' core services (which were partly supported by the Fund) were strongly aligned with the national outcomes as they rated this issue as 9 out of 10 in both 2016 and 2019. Policy Officers corroborated this as they reported the Fund had been very effective in delivering nationally on improved outcomes for children, families, young people and adult learners through supporting the third sector in prevention and early intervention approaches.

There is therefore evidence that the Fund has delivered outcomes which contribute towards the national outcomes. The strength of this contribution should be viewed in context and is limited by the Fund's inputs relative to the far greater influence of broader policy, initiatives and funding. For example, some of the large Scotland-wide charities reported that less than 1% of their funding came from the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund. Some funded organisations acknowledged that their contribution to national outcomes would be relatively small. The following diagram attempts to summarise the Fund's relative contribution at a national level towards improving outcomes for beneficiaries.



Although the contribution of the Fund to the national outcomes has been difficult to assess, the value and importance of the Fund to the third sector organisations was abundantly clear. In Corra's 2019 annual report the majority of funded organisations stated the Fund had a "very significant impact" on their organisation and the following comments illustrate the point.

"Our organisation would not have continued to function a Scottish service if it were not for the funding received from the Fund, so this funding has had a significant impact on our service here". (Third sector organisation).

“It is very unlikely that we would have survived without CYPFEI funding. Not only has the grant been a substantial part of our funding but it has also given us credibility”. (Third sector organisation).

“We could not have delivered our core services without the Fund”. (Third sector organisation).

The annual report also demonstrated that some organisations were very reliant on the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund. One organisation reported 100% of their income came from the Fund, with a small number of other organisations reporting between 50% and 80% of their income was from the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund. Several organisations reported figures around the 20% mark. This reliance on the Fund and the broader funding environment led funded organisations to express concerns about sustainability throughout the evaluation. The sustainability rating given by third sector organisations showed the greatest decline of all 20 indicators falling from 4.9 out of 10 in 2016 to 4.5 in 2019 – it was also the lowest rated issue in both surveys. This finding is supported by information from the 2019 annual report which showed an increase in the number of funded organisations feeling less confident securing funding from sources other than the Scottish Government. As the report stated, “a range of support has been provided for organisations to support them to develop their fundraising activities since April 2016”, however this has to be “set against the backdrop of overall cuts in the level of funding available for the sector”.

## **CYPFEI & ALEC outcomes and monitoring**

As noted above, the 118 third sector organisations supported by the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund self-defined 498 outcomes. The number and variety of outcomes hindered efforts to evaluate the overall impact of the Fund. In hindsight, it would have been beneficial if Fund-specific outcomes had been set at the outset by the funder, similar to other funding sources and programmes. Given the Fund’s focus on strengthening third sector organisations, it would also have been beneficial, in our view, if such outcomes related to organisational issues rather than beneficiaries. In addition, information on the cumulative number of beneficiaries which has been recorded and reported by funded organisations throughout the period 2016 to 2019 - which was a resource-intensive process - has not aided this evaluation.

Monitoring has been a recurring theme during consultations and has been reported previously in the evaluation Baseline and Interim Reports. Smaller organisations, and those receiving relatively small grants, have questioned a monitoring regime that does not take these issues of scale into account. Organisations of varying size and grant funding have also raised concerns about the time required to collate and report the information. A proportionate and streamlined monitoring regime should be considered in the future.

# Capacity, skills and knowledge

The CYPFEI & ALEC Fund helped sustain and improve the capacity, skills and knowledge of third sector organisations supported by the Fund. Flexible core funding had a significant role in providing funded organisations with the capacity to focus on planning and service delivery. Alongside funding, Corra Foundation's Support and Engagement programme was highlighted as an important factor in improving skills and knowledge.

## Capacity

Throughout this evaluation, third sector organisations have continually identified the availability of core funding, which can be applied flexibly, as the most significant benefit of the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund. This has enabled the funded organisations to sustain and in many cases enhance their organisational capacity. They have repeatedly stated the importance of such funding to the organisations and emphasised how it leads to benefits that are far greater than the face value of the awards. As well as flexibility, the funded organisations also highlighted the benefit of core funding over a three year period (subject to satisfactory progress) which has provided a level of security and sustainability, and the ability to plan more than twelve months in advance. For some organisations improved capacity has taken the form of additional staff, for others it has been improved systems, back office functions or training which have freed up time for existing staff including frontline workers. The following comments provide an insight into the role the funding played in enhancing organisational capacity.

“Funding of core services has provided the backbone for all our services. It has taken away a lot of the things frontline workers would have had to do, like admin and monitoring and reporting. This has allowed them to focus on the work they are meant to be doing”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has enabled us to build capacity and develop knowledge and skills through training for the volunteers” (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has offered us some security with the portion of resource that is allocated to the core. This has allowed us to look at how we plan over extended periods of time and how we can be more sustainable as an organisation”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has enabled core service staff to focus on delivering outcomes, rather than attempting to source additional funds for the service”. (Third sector organisation).

“CYPFEI funding has been critical in enabling us to employ two expert staff members who have been vital to enhancing our ability to deliver our core aims more effectively”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has helped with our capacity to deliver according to need rather than project funding”. (Third sector organisation).

“It has helped consolidate our early years and parenting learning into a good strong core of work with solid foundations that we have expanded and developed on. Our early years work was limited before this fund”. (Third sector organisation).

“We are delivering our work at a much deeper level now with our college qualifications (SCQF5/6/7) and the ACEs toolkit, giving parents a much more holistic experience”. (Third sector organisation).

“By providing core funding, the CYPFEIF & ALEC Fund has allowed [organisation] to track and respond to emerging trends and issues in youthwork”. (Third sector organisation).

“The CYPFEI & ALEC Fund has allowed us to run small pilot projects with communities that we wouldn't otherwise be able to secure funding for because what we bring in as an organisation. These projects allow us to support communities to pilot their ideas that often turn into larger projects or projects that self-sustain. This is a very important aspect of our work as an organisation as it means we are able to stay responsive to the diversity of different groups throughout Scotland and also bring the learning of these groups together for sustainable peer networks”. (Third sector organisation).

“The flexible core funding helps us sustain our work to ensure we meet the needs of the children and families we support”. (Third sector organisation).

“Flexible funding allows us to be both proactive and reactive according to the needs and changing context of the families we support”. (Third sector organisation).

The organisational capacity created by the Fund was also recognised by Policy Officers. For example, one commented:

“The Fund has been well received from organisations and support for infrastructure means that organisations can focus on work to improve outcomes rather than directing attention/time to securing funding”. (Policy Officer).

The funding encouraged third sector organisations to reflect on their aims and objectives, strengths and weakness, and priorities. For example one organisation stated that funding provided the ability and capacity to look at its infrastructure alongside delivery and this has enabled the organisation to improve its efficiency and undertake more development work. Another organisation reported the Fund's monitoring and evaluation processes helped bring its team together and think deeply about its purpose. Other relevant comments included:

“The Fund has contributed to the sustainability of the core function at an organisational level. This in turn helps us to build on what works, develop planning, monitoring and evaluation skills which in turn gives us the evidence of impact needed to source funding to sustain/develop the important early intervention work”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has been very good because it has forced our charity to examine its strengths and weaknesses in terms of strategy, delivery and evaluation. It has shone a light on the gaps in our capacity to deliver, it has shown us where we need to shore up our knowledge and skills” (Third sector organisation).

The funded organisations’ survey recorded an increase in organisational capacity over the period 2016 to 2019, although the change over time was relatively small from 6.9 to 7.2 out of 10. The fact that organisations rated their capacity at 7.2 out of 10 illustrates the challenges they face and, we suggest, the continued need for support in this area. One organisation, for example, stated that the ongoing rise in referrals from children and young people under 25 had been a challenge which it addressed by prioritising under 18s. Similarly, another funded organisation had to limit the amount of support available to those in greatest need and signpost other individuals with wider needs to other organisations to manage its increasingly stretched service. Capacity remains a cause for concern for funded organisations - a challenging financial environment, limited resources, high volume of work, increase in demand and inflationary costs were cited as factors affecting capacity, and this is illustrated in the following comment:

“The provision of core funding has allowed our organisation to maintain a stable base from which to grow. As part of that growth, we have increased our skills within the organisation. Capacity remains a challenge given the volume of work, increasing policy and practice initiatives, limited resources and challenging financial environment”. (Third sector organisation).

Corra Foundation’s annual report 2018/19 highlighted staff retention and recruitment, and capacity as the key challenges facing third sector organisations. The report stated, “a significant number of funded organisations had reported issues with staff retention or recruitment, capacity and the challenges of working with other partners and the knock-on impact these had on their work”. Examples were given.

## **Skills and knowledge**

Very much linked to the above, funded organisations also reported the benefits of CYPFEI & ALEC funding on the skills and knowledge available in their organisations. The funding enabled many funded organisations to recruit staff with the additional skills and knowledge they sought; funding has also had an important role in retaining key staff. Several organisations noted that enhancing skills and knowledge helped improve service delivery.

“The Fund has enabled us to recruit and support the staff with the skills and knowledge needed”. (Third sector organisation).

“It allowed us to keep training professionals to expand their expertise to better support the families they work with”. (Third sector organisation).

“It has encouraged us to develop our knowledge of UNCRC, the work we did on GIRFEC led us down avenues we didn't anticipate, our perinatal mental health services have enabled us to develop creche facilities which meet the needs of this particular client group and we have developed specialist knowledge in this regard”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has allowed us to gather more knowledge from the people we work with to build our knowledge and skill to work with and understand the needs of young carers, young carers services in the current financial and political landscape”. (Third sector organisation).

It was noteworthy that benefits in terms of skills and knowledge were also attributed to Corra Foundation's Support and Engagement programme as well as the funding. For example, one organisation stated: “because Corra do training sessions for free we're able to upskill our staff who are able to attend these”. Other consultees highlighted the benefits of Corra Foundation's annual conference and seminars on their sustainability.

“Corra's annual conference has been extremely helpful - there are always other third sector organisations there who are working in similar areas to ours. What really helped us was one of their seminar sessions on the 'Lasting Difference' toolkit. We started to use the toolkit within the organisation and have asked Corra to support us with this”. (Third sector organisation).

“Corra, in collaboration with Scottish Government, have provided excellent training and networking opportunities to expand our knowledge and skills and without the Fund providing core funding we would not have the capacity to achieve anything near our core aims”. (Third sector organisation).

“It has helped with the capacity (by funding core posts) and skills through the programme of learning and networking workshops and conferences”. (Third sector organisation).

“The support we have received has helped us increase both skills and capacity. The funding obviously enables us to recruit and retain skilled staff and the additional support (in terms of conferences, workshops, and ongoing advice from officials) is also very helpful”. (Third sector organisation).

“The training and networking available through the CYPFEIF & ALEC Fund has most definitely increased the knowledge and skills within our team”. (Third sector organisation).

“The extra support and learning opportunities support our skills, knowledge and capacity. This is more around being able to network and learn from others, keep up to date and seek additional support if needed. The Fund itself is vital as these knowledge and skills would potentially be lost without core funding to sustain and retain skilled staff members”. (Third sector organisation).

“The grant has been vital to supporting our capacity to deliver our core aims and support from Corra and Education Scotland has been useful in ensuring we have all of the relevant knowledge and connections to further delivery of our core aims”. (Third sector organisation).

“Through network meetings learning from others, the workshops and experiential learning (positive and learning from mistakes) and continuous professional development we have developed what now is a good skills and knowledge set and increased our capacity to deliver through re-thinking our business model and grown the business itself”. (Third sector organisation).

Overall, funded organisations highly rated the knowledge and skills available in their organisations with average scores of 8.9 and 8.6 out of 10 respectively. The ratings were very similar to the 2016 levels suggesting the Fund helped maintain and refresh skills and knowledge.

On a scale of one to ten, please rate...	2019 rating	2016 rating	Change 2016 to 2019
The knowledge available in your organisation to deliver your core aims	8.9	8.8	+0.1
Skills available in your organisation to deliver your core aims	8.6	8.5	+0.1
Organisation’s capacity to deliver core aims	7.2	6.9	+0.3
<b>Overall</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>+0.1</b>

# Partnerships

Formal and informal partnerships between third sector organisations have arisen as a result of the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund. In some cases these were new relationships, that may have been facilitated by the Corra Foundation or Policy Officers, and in other cases they built on existing relationships between third sector organisations. The partnership working helped improve services, raise awareness and the profile of organisations, and enhanced knowledge sharing and learning.

## Formal and informal partnerships

Generally, partnerships are an integral way of working for third sector organisations and have been for some time. This entails both formal and informal working with third sector partners, as well as public sector agencies.

“Some people face complex issues so one organisation is unlikely to provide all of the support they need to help them recover their situation. That is why partnership working between organisations is important”. (Third sector organisation).

“Working in partnership with other organisations is fundamental to us because as a small team and charity we must work in partnership so we can reach parents where they are. So informal partnership working is innate to us, we work with many organisations to ensure they know our resources for families that they can give to parents”. (Third sector organisation).

“Informal partnerships happen all the time where this can be of huge benefit, such as utilising specific skills and support for pieces of work”. (Third sector organisation).

The Fund’s focus on partnership working, and the continuing policy context which promotes partnerships, resulted in funded organisations working extensively with third sector partners. Numerous examples were included in monitoring reports and during consultations. The examples demonstrate the breadth of these partnerships which have been formal and informal, as well as operational and strategic, and included intermediary organisations.

“CYPFEI has generated and sustained inward and onward referral partnerships at operational level across multiple sectors, by supporting our inherently partnership-based programme activities. It has also contributed to our strategic partnership building in a variety of ways”. (Third sector organisation).

“Partnership work is embedded as a project outcome for us, and is also clearly valued by the Fund so we've been able to really focus on this in our work and our reports”. (Third sector organisation).



“We have always had strong and positive partnerships within the community development field and the funding has helped us to strengthen these”. (Third sector organisation).

“The CYPFEI & ALEC programme has enabled and supported the work of our organisation in developing and maintaining partnerships, formal and informal, across the third sector and with our statutory partners”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has allowed us to build and sustain a very wide variety of partnerships”. (Third sector organisation).

“We are a membership organisation and therefore partnership working informally and formal is key to our activity. Funding allows us to deliver that membership support”. (Third sector organisation).

The Corra Foundation’s role in encouraging and facilitating partnership working was emphasised. This encompassed direct introductions facilitated by Corra staff as well as partnerships that evolved from networking at the Fund’s annual conference or workshops organised by the Foundation. There appears therefore to be tangible added value in the Support and Engagement Programme.

“[Corra Foundation] have been very good at suggesting partners we could liaise with and facilitating some of these introductions and through those introductions and other networking across the sector, although the immediate introductions perhaps didn’t bear fruit, they’ve started to bear fruit further down the line, so for example, we’ve now got a very good close working relationship with [organisation] that we didn’t have before and that’s about to get consolidated further as we’re both about to move into the same office suite...those kind of introductions have been really helpful”. (Third sector organisation).

“Positive efforts made by our monitoring officer to introduce and make links with other organisations”. (Third sector organisation).

“Offered networking opportunities at conferences and learning events. [Monitoring officers] connected us with organisations linked to our current project work”. (Third sector organisation).

“Being part of the Fund has created opportunities to meet other funded organisations. Corra offers introductions to other organisations where they see a potential benefit or opportunity for joint work. The networking opportunities and learning network events are much appreciated”. (Third sector organisation).

“The opportunities to meet, network, learn about the work of others, and share our own work have been very helpful”. (Third sector organisation).

“The networking events, and particularly the conference are great for meeting people and generating ideas. It has allowed us to explore other ways of looking at our work, and to consider projects we are interested in developing in a fresh light”. (Third sector organisation).

“CYPFEI has, primarily through the training and networking opportunities offered, increased our ability to consider appropriate involvement with other third sector organisations. This has resulted in more informal working relationships than was evident before”. (Third sector organisation).

Some funded organisations highlighted the increased capacity that CYPFEI & ALEC funding provided as a driver of the partnership working.

“It has provided us with the capacity to enable greater formal and informal partnership working”. (Third sector organisation).

“The work we do funded by CYPFEIF is collaborative by nature - having this funding in place has certainly led to some partnerships that we would otherwise not have had the capacity to pursue”. (Third sector organisation).

“It has provided us with the capacity to enable greater formal and informal partnership working which has enhanced knowledge sharing and learning”. (Third sector organisation).

The longitudinal survey of funded organisations, shows both formal and informal partnership working among third sector organisations improved between 2016 and 2019. Given the evidence presented above, it is reasonable to conclude that CYPFEI & ALEC funding contributed to this. The improvement in formal partnerships was greater (+0.4) than the improvement in informal partnership working. Interestingly, funded organisations rated their informal partnership working with other third sector organisations significantly higher (8.6 out of 10) than their formal partnership working (7.6).

On a scale of one to ten, please rate...	2019 rating	2016 rating	Change 2016 to 2019
Your organisation’s informal partnership working with other third sector organisations	8.6	8.4	+0.2
Your organisation’s formal partnership working with other third sector organisations	7.6	7.2	+0.4

On partnership working in a broader sense, it was noteworthy that the most significant increase over time on the longitudinal survey of funded organisation was recorded on their involvement in local groups. This increased from 6.5 out of 10 in 2016 to 7.5 in 2019. Additional capacity was one explanation offered by some funded organisations.

## **Improved services**

Many organisations supported by the Fund described improved services and achievement of positive outcomes as a result of strengthening and developing partnerships. For example, one third sector organisation commented: “From this funding, we have deepened existing partnerships and built new, exciting partnerships that enable us to help young parents take steps towards making bright futures and make positive differences in their communities”. Another funded organisation commented that: “We have been able to work more closely with other third sector organisations to better support a wider range of families”. Other relevant comments include:

“The funding has enabled us to develop and deepen our partnerships with other organisations in order to jointly deliver services”. (Third sector organisation).

“We are an intermediary organisation and the Fund has allowed us to increase our membership, develop new networks and create new formal partnerships all of which has improved our performance and helped us achieve our core goals”. (Third sector organisation).

## **Raised awareness and profile of organisations**

Partnerships have helped to raise awareness and promote the work undertaken by funded organisations. For example, one organisation reported “It has raised awareness of our work among other organisations as well as helping create new relationships”. New partnerships formed through the Fund have also helped raise awareness of services amongst the target group. Third sector organisations suggested their increased presence and profile places them in a strong position for future funding and other opportunities that may enhance their sustainability.

“It’s been a massive opportunity to spend the time and have the space to build relationships and promote work with partner organisations – we have developed good links with Who Cares? Scotland, Barnardo’s and Education Scotland, for example, so that we have been able to raise awareness of the service amongst kids in care and those who work with them, been able to develop education resources to ensure that they are on the curriculum in Keeping Me Safe lesson plans”. (Third sector organisation).

“We are now being approached by other organisations to share important aspects of their work through our networks, social media and bulletins and are asked to comment on consultation exercises. Our profile has grown substantially since receiving the funds”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has enabled us to be present at a wider range of national events/training/Corra events to inform and promote our training development, this has significantly increased our presence outwith our traditional area of operation and has enabled us to form much stronger connections with other

third sector organisations and promote their work in our local area”. (Third sector organisation).

## **Enhanced knowledge sharing and learning**

The Fund has also enhanced knowledge sharing and learning among some third sector organisations.

“The CYPFEI Fund has most definitely given us the opportunity to work with some amazing organisations and we have been able to share a lot of good and interesting practice with our members”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has been useful in consolidating connections we had - the knowledge sharing group we participated in during the first couple of years of the Fund was made up of a number of organisations who we have similarities with and we had an existing relationship with most of them”. (Third sector organisation).

## **Barriers to formal partnerships**

Third organisations reported some resistance to formal partnership working. Barriers to formal partnerships related to tendering and the sharing of commercially sensitive information, and they were sometimes based on previous bad experiences.

“Formal partnerships are a tricky one and imply entering into some form of financial or tied agreement and organisations are reluctant to do this, either for intellectual property reasons, competition, or having had a bad past experience”. (Third sector organisation).

“The challenge is that many of the third sector are all applying to the same funders and can be stressful as times. You have to be very patient and honest up front when working with other third sector organisations. One way around this is finding your USP and making sure it fits with the other partners”. (Third sector organisation).

Partnership agreements was offered by one third sector organisation as a potential solution.

“We have developed processes and procedures over the years to ensure our formal partnerships work effectively for example by putting partnership agreements in place prior to applying for funding”. (Third sector organisation).

## **Information sharing**

Generally, the funded organisations had a positive attitude to and experiences of sharing information with other third sector organisations. The issue was rated at 7.9 out of 10 in 2019, a broadly similar level to 2016 (8.0). The introduction of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018 brought with it a new set of challenges although they had subsequently been overcome. There were isolated

examples of particular challenges which tended to involve information sharing with statutory partners rather than other third sector organisations although solutions were eventually found in these examples.

# Early intervention and prevention

The CYPFEI & ALEC Fund helped sustain and improve the embedding of prevention and early intervention in the ethos of third sector organisations supported by the Fund.

The third sector organisations reported that early intervention and prevention were integral to the organisations at the outset of the Fund and funding had helped them to maintain the focus in the face of a challenging operating environment, particularly financially. Many organisations highlighted that early intervention and prevention was “why we exist” or “what we do” adding that it had been a policy priority for a number of years. There was specific reference to the catalytic effect of the Christie Commission (2011) which advocated a preventative approach to reduce demand on public services and tackle inequalities. The survey of funded organisations reflected this situation with organisations highly rating, at both the outset of the Fund at the end of the third year’s funding, the importance of prevention and early intervention and the extent to which they were embedded in the delivery of organisations.

On a scale of one to ten, please rate...	2019 rating	2016 rating	Change 2016 to 2019
The importance of prevention and early intervention to your organisation	9.3	9.3	0.0
The extent to which prevention and early intervention are embedded in the delivery of your organisation	8.6	8.7	-0.1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

CYPFEI & ALEC funding enabled several organisations to develop new services or refine existing ones to enhance their early intervention and prevention work. For example, one organisation explained that they piloted a project that encouraged health visitors to ask young parents, particularly fathers, about their mental health and wellbeing and they reported this had resulted in young dads increasingly opening up to health visitors and getting the support they need before reaching crisis point. Another organisation explained that increasing demand for their counselling service had led them to develop additional support for parents at a “very early intervention stage” which in some cases prevented the need for counselling, in some cases reduced the number of subsequent counselling sessions or made the counselling more successful.

Other organisations explained how the funding had impacted on their early intervention and prevention and a range of benefits were apparent:

“The CYPFEI Fund activity has enabled us to develop an early warning system highlighting the impact of social security changes on families in detail

and to then support policy and service interventions that prevent poverty and income crisis amongst families”. (Third sector organisation).

“Through CYPFEI funding we have been able to develop and enhance a service specifically aimed at prevention and early intervention. Without this support, whilst our aims would have remained constant it is arguable as to whether we could have achieved some of the outcomes we have”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has enabled us to focus on empowering disabled children, young people and their carers to influence preventative and early support approaches”. (Third sector organisation).

“This fund has helped us reach parents before a crisis arises as well as after a crisis. The early intervention and prevention comes from offering courses in local areas with no stigma attached and open to all. It means parents can come to build social networks, engage with services at a much earlier opportunity and learn new skill and techniques to offset any crisis. Early intervention can be at any stage of a family’s situation and we believe that by offering our programmes we are halting future challenges and breakdown of relationships. Parents are sometimes learning for the first time how to cope with challenges in a much more positive manner”. (Third sector organisation).

“We have been able to use our funding to raise awareness and reach more families before they reach crisis point”. (Third sector organisation).

“Our work has shifted from purely assisting people with legal problems to addressing the stress, lack of parenting skills and poor communication which often contribute to the problems that they face”. (Third sector organisation).

It was noteworthy that the benefits of CYPFEI & ALEC funding on early intervention and prevention were reported by intermediary organisations as well as those working directly with children, young people and families. Several intermediary organisations have been supported by the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund and some stated they had emphasised the importance of the early intervention and prevention agenda to members and provided targeted support to this end.

“The grant has enabled us to support our local member organisations to ensure a prevention and early intervention approach is adopted at local community level”. (Third sector intermediary organisation).

“Early intervention and prevention is a core element of work in the early years, which is where our focus is. On a universal level, funding has allowed us to continue to support our members”. (Third sector intermediary organisation).

# Internal Scottish Government processes

The CYPFEI & ALEC Fund has improved internal Scottish Government/Education Scotland processes and ways of working and the Policy Officer role is highlighted as a key factor in this. The role was an integral part of the Fund providing third sector organisations with a named point of contact within Scottish Government/Education Scotland. The main impact was evident in improved information sharing between Scottish Government/Education Scotland staff and the funded organisations. Although the Policy Officer role was viewed positively overall, variation in how the role was fulfilled was an issue.

## Policy Officers

Every organisation supported by the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund had a Policy Officer – a named point of contact within Scottish Government or Education Scotland. Overall funded organisations and Policy Officers reported they had fulfilled their role which involved the following:

- Building relationships with the funded organisation.
- Sharing relevant Scottish Government policy developments, events and consultations with organisations.
- Facilitating contact between organisations and other relevant areas of Scottish Government/Education Scotland.
- Reviewing the funded organisation's quarterly reports (and providing feedback to Corra Foundation), external evaluation reports and Corra's annual report.
- Organising at least one meeting per year with the funded organisation and Corra Foundation to discuss progress and address any issues. Where appropriate, lead on meetings with Scottish Government officials and Ministers.
- Make recommendations on annual funding allocations.

Throughout this evaluation, Policy Officers have consistently provided positive feedback on the role and this was confirmed during the final round of consultation with the majority of Policy Officers (12 out of 14) rating their experience positively.

Having a single point of contact was key to the success of the Policy Officer role. Funded organisations reported this was invaluable to them as they knew they could approach their Policy Officer for information, advice, or support in the first instance and even if they could not help directly they would be able to signpost them to other relevant staff in Scottish Government/Education Scotland. Policy Officers were equally aware of the importance of their role as the key point of contact when questioned about the benefits.

“Having a point of contact who they can speak to about the Fund”. (Policy Officer)



“Having a named officer to contact and one who has an understanding of the organisation's work”. (Policy Officer).

“Having a direct link and working relationship with relevant policy officials”. (Policy Officer).

Scottish Government and Education Scotland staff welcomed the separation of their policy related role from the administration and support role delivered by the Corra Foundation team. Staff who had experience of other Scottish Government funds, including those that pre-dated the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund, were particularly supportive of these separate roles and they felt there had been substantial efficiency savings as a result. More broadly, Policy Officers provided very positive feedback on Corra Foundation's staff highlighting their approachability, professionalism and specialist knowledge:

“All support from Corra has been specific, well informed and helpful”. (Policy Officer)

“Corra's support was very professional and efficient”. (Policy Officer).

“They have a great deal of knowledge and their support is invaluable”. (Policy Officer).

“I have found Corra to be very helpful whenever I needed assistance and they helped me and my manager to make decisions with their expertise and advice”. (Policy Officer).

The most significant impacts on internal Scottish Government processes and ways of working of the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund have been:

- Improved information sharing.
- A better understanding of third sector organisations and issues.
- Policy influencing.

## **Improved information sharing**

Improved information sharing between Scottish Government/Education Scotland and third sector organisations has been a recurring theme of this evaluation. It is particularly noteworthy that the improvement has been a two-way process involving information sharing and intelligence from Scottish Government/Education Scotland to third sector organisations and, vice versa, from third sector organisations to Scottish Government/Education Scotland. The following comments illustrate this.

“The allocation of a Scottish Government policy officer offers the opportunity to raise our profile and disseminate our evaluation work on current national policy priorities”. (Third sector organisation).

“We have no doubt over the last few years that our partnership with Scottish Government has improved to a position where we are much more involved in sharing and influencing. We see ourselves as a 'critical friend' whereas previously the relationship was more distant”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund has increased our capacity to interact with Scottish Government such as through consultation with, and representation of, our members, presence at national working groups/learning events/Corra events... this has increased awareness of our organisation by Scottish Government which has resulted in increased communication, information sharing and invites to input”. (Third sector organisation).

The majority of Policy Officers (11 out of 14) consulted during this final evaluation agreed the role had helped to enhance the sharing of information and intelligence between Scottish Government/Education Scotland and the third sector. The survey of funded organisations corroborated these findings. Marked improvements were recorded in the way the Scottish Government / Education Scotland disseminates information and intelligence to third sector organisations (+0.7) and the way third sector organisations share information and intelligence with the Scottish Government / Education Scotland (+0.5).

On a scale of one to ten, please rate...	2019 rating	2016 rating	Change 2016 to 2019
The way your organisation shares information and intelligence with the Scottish Government / Education Scotland	8.3	7.8	+0.5
The way the Scottish Government / Education Scotland disseminates information and intelligence to your organisation	7.4	6.7	+0.7

A benefit was also reported in terms of improving internal networking, communications and understanding among staff within Scottish Government and Education Scotland.

“It has been a good opportunity to network with other policy officers that I would not meet in my policy work. Also learning a lot about how a large Scottish Government fund works”. (Policy Officer)

## **Better understanding of third sector organisations and issues**

Scottish Government and Education Scotland Policy Officers reported the role had enhanced their understanding of the organisations they supported and the third sector in general. They explained it gave them a real insight into the third sector organisations, the needs of their beneficiaries, and the financial and other challenges facing the sector.

“It has been a great experience visiting the organisations, learning about new resources, or training opportunities and linking key work to areas within the policy portfolio”. (Policy Officer).

“It has improved my understanding of CLD outcomes being delivered by national partners”. (Policy Officer).

“Seeing what funding support the organisations are receiving from other funders has been an important insight”. (Policy Officer).

“It has provided me with some additional information in different policy areas and general knowledge of some health conditions and how people deal these”. (Policy Officer).

“It has been good to get experience of some form of financial management and to learn about how organisations funded by the Scottish Government report on their progress towards outcomes”. (Policy Officer).

A particularly impressive legacy of the Fund comes from evidence that some Scottish Government and Education staff have formed long-lasting relationships with third sector organisations which have outlasted their formal relationship as a Policy Officer. For example, a funded organisation revealed that their previous Policy Officer had stayed in contact with the organisation.

“They came to one of our events which was celebrating participants’ achievements and they’re coming again to this event even though they’ve moved on just because they are really interested in what we do”. (Third sector organisation).

One of the Policy Officers described how they have also maintained links with one of the third sector organisations they previously worked.

“I have gained massively in confidence when dealing with external stakeholders which has ultimately culminated in me having a strong relationship with the organisation who I have responsibility for. I have recently moved teams in the directorate I work in and I am hopeful that [organisation] can hook in with the work I am now focussed on - they are very keen to assist”.

## **Policy influencing**

There was evidence that the Fund has improved policy development and use of evidence in Scottish Government/Education Scotland. Policy Officers explained that their knowledge and understanding of third sector organisations, and the issues they are addressing had directly informed their policy work.

“I have used the knowledge I gained from the organisations I work with to help inform the work that I do and call them whenever I need their advice or viewpoint”. (Policy Officer)

“Although the projects I am responsible for are not education focused, I have used evidence from CYPFEIF reports to support the direction of policy work”.  
(Policy Officer)

Funded organisations provided numerous examples of occasions when they had contributed to Scottish Government/Education Scotland meetings, working groups, committees and consultations. Generally, they rated their ability to influence the development of Scottish Government policy relatively high (7.4 out of 10) in 2019. It was noteworthy however that the rating had decreased from 7.8 from the baseline survey in 2016. There appears therefore to be a discrepancy, at least for some third sector organisations, in their view of their ability to influence policy and the reality of how officials including Policy Officers have utilised information and knowledge they have provided. Some funded organisations also felt they could have a stronger role in policy development if Scottish Government/Education Scotland gave them the opportunity. There were some examples given of how the Fund had enabled third sector organisations to influence policy

“It has also increased the voice of people we support and our ability to shape national policy”. (Third sector organisation).

“The Fund enabled us to create a job post within our Development Team which created capacity to respond to and influence government policy”.  
(Third sector organisation).

## **Policy Officer input**

Over the period covered by this evaluation it has been apparent that not all funded organisations have benefitted from the Policy Officer input described above. Where this issue has been reported it tended to coincide with a change in Policy Officer or when the Policy Officer had limited capacity because of other work commitments. There has been considerable turnover in Policy Officers with approximately three quarters of funded organisations having a different Policy Officer in 2019 to the one they had in 2016. Changes in policy responsibility for youthwork and adult learning within Scottish Government and Education Scotland added to the turnover of Policy Officers during 2018. In addition, the Interim Report found that the amount of time Scottish Government and Education Scotland staff spent fulfilling their role as Policy Officer varied with the monthly totals ranging from 25 minutes to three days and this was not directly linked to the number of organisations they supported. Not only does this issue have drawbacks for the support provided to funded organisations, it also means that the benefits in terms of information sharing, understanding and policy development will not accrue to Scottish Government and Education Scotland. On a practical level changes in Policy Officer have, at times, created challenges for the Corra Foundation team.

Although most Policy officers reported the time commitment was manageable and the benefits made it worthwhile, there were others who were concerned about the demands of the role. The following example demonstrates how big an impact the Policy Officer can have although the circumstances involved were atypical.

“Time was something I didn't have a lot of when my organisation looked like they could fold. I couldn't do my own job for all the work that it entailed over around eight months”. (Policy Officer).

“Time given to do the role has not been forthcoming and the spreading/sharing of the organisations has not been the best”. (Policy Officer).

Since the start of the Fund, there have been calls from Policy Officers for the role to be acknowledged by line managers and senior staff within Scottish Government and Education Scotland. This has been partly met as the role has now been recognised in the staff appraisal process by some line managers. This welcome addition values the time input and potential benefits of the role. Notwithstanding this, there was a view among a handful of Policy Officers that the role should be a dedicated one.

“The role is taken on by staff who already have substantive roles - a dedicated role would help improve quality ensuring the right amount of time is given to carry out the role effectively” (Policy Officer).

Overall, Policy Officers were positive about the support provided by Scottish Government/Education Scotland to fulfil their role. There were some suggestions on potential improvements particularly around training:

“It would be helpful to have ongoing central training or resources on the Policy Officer role and engaging with stakeholders, especially for new starts, and regular updates or group catch ups”. (Policy Officer).

“Some training on what's expected of you in the role and the process. I feel that I just had to learn from others in my directorate who had done the role previously and people have slightly different views on what the role entails”. (Policy Officer).

# Conclusions

The CYPFEI & ALEC Fund has provided valuable support to 118 third sector organisations during the period 2016 to 2019. The organisations have not only benefitted from significant financial support worth approximately £14 million per annum, they have also benefitted from a comprehensive Support and Engagement Programme delivered by the Corra Foundation, as well as the support of a named Policy Officer within Scottish Government or Education Scotland. The Fund has helped sustain and strengthen the third sector organisations and the services they deliver in the areas of children, young people, families, adult learners and communities. The key successes and learning points from the evaluation are summarised below.

## Successes

The funded organisations have successfully delivered on the outcomes they defined at the outset and we therefore conclude that the Fund has contributed at a national level towards improving outcomes for children, young people, families, adult learners and communities. The extent of the Fund's contribution at a national level should, however, be viewed in the context of its inputs relative to other initiatives, funding streams and organisations.

Throughout this evaluation, the funded organisations identified the availability of core funding, which could be applied with a degree of flexibility, over a three year period (subject to satisfactory progress) as the most significant benefit of the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund. The funded organisations emphasised that the impact of the funding was far greater than the financial value of the awards as they repeatedly stated the Fund enhanced organisational capacity and provided a degree of security which aided planning, development and sustainability. For some organisations improved capacity involved taking on additional staff in a variety of operational and strategic roles, for others it involved improved systems, back office functions or training which freed up time for existing staff including frontline workers.

Alongside enhanced organisational capacity, benefits were also evident in terms of the skills and knowledge available within funded organisations. The CYPFEI & ALEC Fund enabled many funded organisations to recruit, retain and develop staff with the additional skills and knowledge they sought. Several organisations noted that enhancing skills and knowledge helped improve service delivery and their focus on early intervention and prevention. In addition, Corra Foundation's Support and Engagement programme was highlighted as an important factor in improving skills and knowledge through attendance at training sessions, seminars and the annual conference.

The evaluation has also shown that the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund helped to sustain and improve formal and informal partnerships between third sector organisations. In some cases these were new relationships, often facilitated by the Corra Foundation or Policy Officers, and in other cases they built on existing relationships between

third sector organisations. Funded organisations reported that the partnerships helped improve services, raise awareness and the profile of organisations, and enhanced knowledge sharing and learning.

Early intervention and prevention has been a priority for the third sector organisations for a number of years, driven by the overarching policy context which promotes a preventative approach to reduce demand on public services and tackle inequalities. The evaluation demonstrated that CYPFEI & ALEC funding has helped to sustain and improve the embedding of this ethos in the third sector organisations supported by the Fund. Some funded organisations were able to develop new services focused on early intervention or prevention whereas other funded organisations refined or added to existing services focused on these issues. It was noteworthy that intermediary organisations reported the benefits of CYPFEI & ALEC funding on early intervention and prevention as well as funded organisations working directly with children, young people and families.

The impact of the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund has also been evident in internal Scottish Government/Education Scotland processes and ways of working and the Policy Officer role was highlighted as a key factor. The role was an integral part of the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund providing third sector organisations with a named point of contact within Scottish Government/Education Scotland. The main impact was evident in improved information sharing between Scottish Government/Education Scotland staff and the funded organisations. For example, Scottish Government/Education Scotland staff reported sharing information with funded organisations on relevant consultations, policies or initiatives, and funded organisations shared information on service developments as well as research and evaluation findings. Some Policy Officers suggested their knowledge and understanding of third sector organisations, and the issues they are addressing had directly informed their policy work.

## **Learning points**

The evaluation identified learning points in terms of monitoring. The number and variety of outcomes set by the funded organisations hindered efforts to evaluate the overall impact of the Fund at a national level. This task would have been improved if Fund-specific outcomes had been set at the outset by the funder. Given the Fund's focus on strengthening third sector organisations, it would also have been beneficial, in our view, if the outcomes related to organisational issues rather than beneficiaries. In addition, smaller organisations, and those receiving relatively small grants, questioned a monitoring regime that did not take issues of scale into account. Organisations of varying size and grant funding also raised concerns about the time required to collate and report monitoring information. A more proportionate and streamlined monitoring regime should therefore be considered in the future.

Although the Policy Officer role was viewed positively overall, variation in how the role was fulfilled was an issue throughout the evaluation. Some funded organisations experienced changes to their named Policy Officer over the life of the

Fund and some had limited contact with their Policy Officer(s). A consistent approach to the role and continuity among Scottish Government/Education Scotland staff would therefore be beneficial in the future.

### **Concluding remarks**

Overall, this evaluation has demonstrated the benefits of financial and non-financial support provided by the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund to 118 third sector organisations. The Fund has helped sustain and strengthen the third sector organisations and the services they deliver in the areas of children, young people, families, adult learners and communities.



# Appendix 1 – Self-Assessment Form

An online self-assessment form has been an important research tool throughout the evaluation of the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund. It was initially distributed to all 118 funded organisations in May 2016 and the exercise was repeated in November 2017 and May 2019. The survey covers the following key aspects of third sector organisations and the CYPFEI & ALEC Fund:

- Knowledge, skills and capacity
- Prevention and early intervention
- Third sector partnerships
- Local groups and national structures
- Interaction with Scottish Government / Education Scotland
- Financial sustainability
- Equality issues

Each theme consisted of between two and four questions. For each question, respondents were asked to rate their response to a statement on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 was the highest/most positive response. An open-text question was also included for each theme to enable respondents to provide additional comments or further detail on their responses. An example is shown below.

## Prevention and Early Intervention

Q1. On a scale of one to ten, please rate the importance of prevention and early intervention to your organisation.

- 1 - Prevention and early intervention are not at all important to my organisation
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 - Prevention and early intervention are very important to my organisation

Q2. On a scale of one to ten, please rate the extent to which prevention and early intervention are embedded in the delivery of your organisation's core services.

- 1 - Prevention and early intervention are not at all embedded in the delivery of my organisation's core services
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

7

8

9

10 - Prevention and early intervention are fully embedded in the delivery of my organisation's core services.

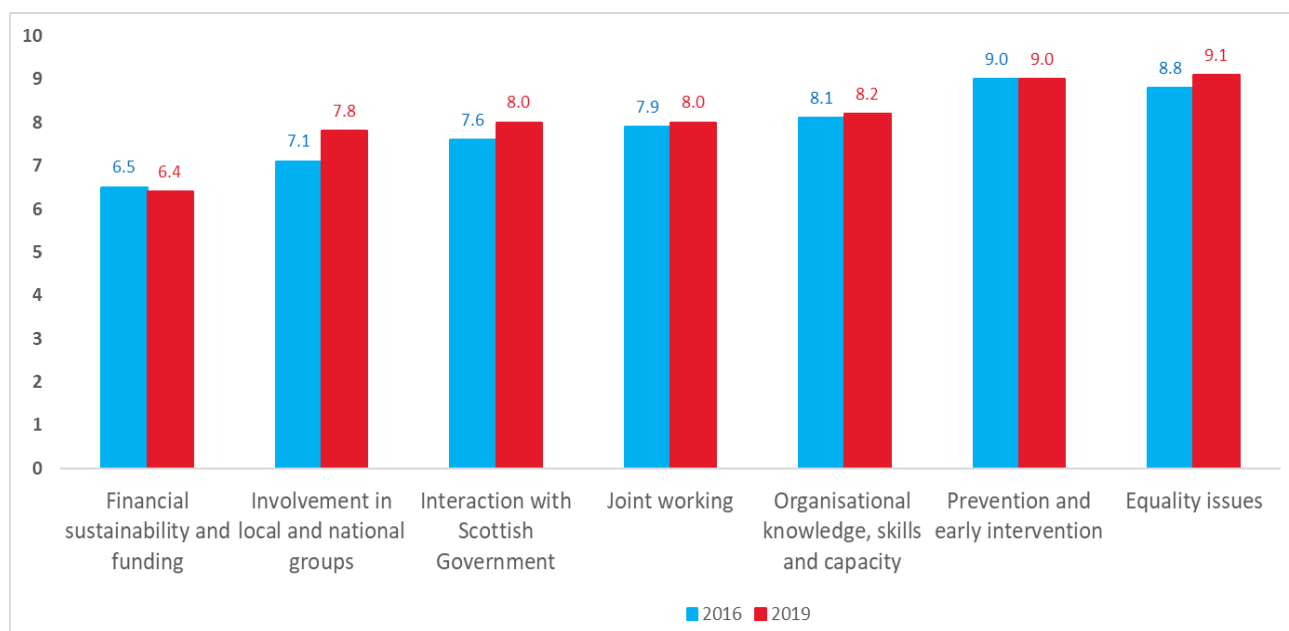
Q3. Please use the space below if you want to make any comments on prevention and early intervention in your organisation.

For each question the average (mean) and distribution of responses were calculated. An average was also produced for each theme to provide an overview of responses.

To try to aid continuity in responses, the 2017 and 2019 surveys were distributed to the same organisational contact as the baseline survey, where they remained in post. In some cases, the contact had changed and the form was completed by a different member of staff. It is possible that their interpretations of the question, as well as their personal views and experiences, may differ and this could be a factor in change in the findings over time.

## Appendix 2 – Self-Assessed Ratings 2016-19

The graph below presents an overview of how funded organisations rated the seven themes in 2016 and 2017. Generally, the themes that were rated highly at the start of the Fund were also rated highly in 2019, such as prevention and early intervention, and equality issues. Similarly, financial sustainability was the lowest ranked them in 2019 as it had been in 2016 – it was also the only theme to be rated lower at the time of the final evaluation than it had been at the start, albeit the decrease was minor.



The most notable change in rating was recorded in involvement in local and national groups. There was an increase in the rating of this theme from 7.1 out of 10 in 2016 to 7.8 out of 10 in 2019.

A more detailed breakdown of the survey results is shown in the table below. It presents the ratings for each specific question for 2016 and 2019.

<b>On a scale of one to ten, please rate...</b>	<b>2019 rating</b>	<b>2016 rating</b>	<b>Change 2016 to 2019</b>
Your organisation's involvement in local groups.	7.5	6.5	+0.9
The way the Scottish Government disseminates information and intelligence to your organisation.	7.4	6.7	+0.7
The way your organisation shares information and intelligence with the Scottish Government.	8.3	7.8	+0.4
The extent to which equality issues are integrated in the planning of your organisation's core services.	9.0	8.6	+0.4
Your organisation's involvement in national structures.	8.1	7.7	+0.3
Your organisation's formal partnership working with other third sector organisations.	7.6	7.2	+0.3
Assess your organisation's ability to influence the development of Scottish Government policy.	7.4	7.0	+0.3
Your organisation's capacity to deliver your core aims.	7.2	6.9	+0.3
Your organisation's informal partnership working with other third sector organisations.	8.6	8.4	+0.2
The extent to which your organisation's staff understand equality issues.	9.3	9.1	+0.2
The knowledge available in your organisation to deliver your core aims.	8.9	8.8	+0.1
The skills available in your organisation to deliver your core aims.	8.6	8.5	+0.1
Your awareness of alternative sources of funding for your organisation's work.	7.2	7.1	+0.1
How equipped your organisation is to apply for alternative sources of funding.	7.2	7.1	+0.0
The extent to which your organisation's core services align with Scottish Government National Outcomes for children, young people, and families, or adult/community learners.	9.0	9.0	+0.0
The importance of prevention and early intervention to your organisation	9.3	9.3	+0.0
The extent to which prevention and early intervention are embedded in the delivery of your organisation's core services.	8.6	8.7	+0.0
The way your organisation shares information with other third sector organisations.	7.9	8.0	-0.1
The extent to which your organisation has been successful in securing external funding to date.	6.8	7.0	-0.2
The financial sustainability of your organisation.	4.5	4.9	-0.4



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