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Author(s): Nissen, Sonja., Sampson, Alice.
Article Title: Barking and Dagenham's Childrens's Fund: Initial Research Findings
Year of publication: 2006
Citation: Nissen, S., Sampson, A. (2006) 'Barking and Dagenham's Childrens's Fund: Initial Research Findings' CIS Research Report 3, London: Centre for Institutional Studies, University of East London.
ISBN: 1-902494-52-0

Centre for Institutional Studies

Research Report

BARKING AND DAGENHAM'S CHILDRENS'S FUND: INTIAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

Sonja Nissen and Alice Sampson

University of East London
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BARKING AND DAGENHAM'S CHILDREN'S FUND: INITIAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

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March 2006

Published as CIS Research Report 3

ISBN 1-902494-52-0

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April 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank all those who have given up their time to contribute to this research. In particular we would like to thank Hugh Hill and Janene Miller for facilitating the research process.

We would like to thank the CIS administrator Irene Smith for preparing this report for publication.

Sonja Nissen and Alice Sampson
April 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Barking and Dagenham Children's Fund (BDCF) is a second wave partnership working with young people and their communities to alleviate poverty and to provide opportunities for young people aged 5 to 13 years to flourish and develop.

BDCF was allocated £1.6 million and an additional £250,000 for crime related work to spend between 2002 and 2004.

In a short space of time a total of 33 projects were commissioned under the four themes of Education, Health and Inequality, Disabled Children and Crime to cover the diverse needs of 5-13 year olds in the community.

The Research

The University of East London was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of the Children's Fund. This report represents the first of two evaluation phases and looks at the implementation of the programme.

Between the end of October and mid December 2003 17 face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted. Of these two were CF staff members, six were CF Committee members and nine were project managers.

Researchers from UEL attended CF Committee meetings, analysed minutes of meetings, collated the programme monitoring and financial information and undertook desk based/internet research.

The National Children's Fund (CF)

The CF is a key aspect of the government's strategy for addressing child poverty.

The intention of the CF is to improve services by improving the identification of children and young people's needs, providing accessible and attractive services and encouraging co-operative working between agencies to provide a holistic service to meet all the needs of a young person and their family.

The emphasis of the work with children and young people is to ensure that young people receive effective support in resolving their difficulties, that they are involved in the planning and delivery of services and that they are enabled to *'take responsibility and control of solutions for themselves'.*

Responding to local needs

A mapping exercise conducted in 2002 identified over 22,000 children aged between 5 and 13 years living in the borough.

High levels of non-earning households and low average income households, high levels of school exclusion and absenteeism in some schools, and a higher than average need for additional education support and educational needs of refugees were identified in the survey. A lack of regular health checks and a group of regular offenders were also identified as issues of concern.

The BDCF developed a programme of four key themes to reflect these issues: Education, Health and Inequality, Disabled Children, and Crime.

In developing the programme it was recognised that some young people 'in need' are not accessing services, that there are 'gaps' in services and therefore unmet needs, and that a holistic approach to meeting all the needs of young people was necessary.

It was also acknowledged that local people have the best insight into the problems and difficulties associated with the area, and that they have the potential to provide a continuity of services, and therefore it was decided to commission voluntary organisations to be the main providers of BDCF services.

It was recognised that to be successful, the voluntary and community sector would need to be supported and developed, and that proactive action was needed to bring the voluntary and statutory sectors together to work co-operatively.

Programme Management

The programme is overseen by the Children's Fund Committee (CFC). The local authority is the accountable body.

The CFC reports to the Children's Strategic Steering Group (CSSG) and its progress is monitored by two service users groups; the children's forum and the parents' forum and by the voluntary sector partnership for children and families.

Each of the CF themes and finance have their own sub-group to assess their progress, identify 'gaps' in services, and share good practices. Information from these meetings is passed on to the CFC.

The intention was to set up a community forum to inform the CFC and although this has been initiated and met several times this forum is currently not active.

Programme management was quick in putting a staff team into place and setting up a programme structure. Getting the programme up-and-running, particularly the variety of projects selected, took more time than expected but was fully operational during the second year of the programme.

Staff team

Social Services appointed a programme manager who was quick in complying with CYPFD requirements in interviewing and recruiting a staff team and setting up a programme structure as well as programme finances. BDCF currently employs a Programme Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Youth Crime Prevention Officer, Finance Officer, Liaison Officer and an Information/Administration Officer.

Financial expenditure

Up until December 2003 the BDCF spent £1,380,054.

Between July and December 2003 the cost per user (number of attendees/total spend on projects) was £217.

Project attendance

Thirty three projects received funding from the CF. Prior to March 2004 funding was withdrawn from six projects.

Between July and September 2003 1,349 young people attended CF activities and between October and December 2003 1,588 young people attended. Attendance at educational projects is significantly higher than for other types of projects.

Between July and September 2003 2,654 new contacts with young people and 608 with parents/carers were made. Not all these new young people or parents became attendees on BDCF projects.

Of those attending, 54 per cent described themselves as White, 15 per cent as African and around five to seven per cent as Caribbean. Slightly more males than females have attended the projects.

From the information available it is not clear whether the CF is reaching those most in need. This will be explored in the future research.

Progress of the CF programme

Representation on the Children's Fund Committee (CFC)

Young people have rarely attended meetings but the CFC is kept informed of the views' of young people by regular feedback on the work of the Children's Forum.

Two parent representatives have recently started to attend meetings.

Five voluntary sector representatives attend most of the meetings and five statutory sector representatives attend regularly which provides some continuity between meetings.

Views on the work of the Children's Fund Committee

Committee members interviewed for the research described numerous strengths of the Committee, such as members staying interested and committed and the success of the CF programme.

Some of the concerns expressed were about the unequal involvement of all partners due to differences in knowledge and understanding about being a representative and a member of a Committee, and how the parents and young people were disadvantaged by their late involvement in the Committee.

The central control, 'top heavy' and bureaucratic nature of the CF programme was also criticised as it led to too much administration and an inflexible programme.

Not all interviewees felt that CF Committee members are able to play a full and equal part on the Board. Whereas some interviewees felt that this was the case and parents as well as children were included (at least through the participation project) another respondent said the *'opportunity is there – but not all take it on'*. *'Voluntary sector members could become more active but they are not taking that opportunity'*. At the same time two members felt that Committee members are not able to play a full and equal part as not everybody *'accesses information in the same way'*.

CFC to consider:
- The CFC might want to discuss the role of the different members and draw attention to the issues raised in this report as well as allowing participants to have a say on this issue.

A Parents' Forum and a Children's Forum have been set up and meet regularly, feeding into the work of the CFC. Setting up a Community Forum has been difficult. Although several meetings took place across different organisations and faith groups this forum has not been active recently. However, the CF is continuing its efforts to engage local community organisations.

Experiences of project managers

The overall finding is that ten of the eleven projects which participated in the research are working to full capacity, and are unable to meet the demand for their services.

Most of these projects are unable to expand their services due to a lack of funds. The small size of venues limits the capacity of some projects to expand.

Picking up early signs of difficulty, identifying needs, and introducing young people and their families to services

Most of the young people attending the CF projects were already known to other services.

The projects all provided a service to meet specific needs for example by providing sports activities for those with disabilities, or activities for refugee children to assist them in school.

Managers said that attendance was high; outings and trips were organised as incentives and rewards for regular attendance and good behaviour.

Close co-operative working between all relevant agencies

Co-operative working between agencies remains uneven. Not surprisingly well-established voluntary organisations have had more opportunities to develop better relationships. Some voluntary organisations remain isolated.

Whilst some schools are co-operative, others have been resistant to working with CF projects. Similarly some local community groups have not assisted in the process of identifying young people and making accommodation available to run sessions, particularly if the activities are for young refugees.

There is little evidence of cross referrals between projects and from projects to other organisations.

CSSG and CFC to consider:
- Create opportunities for greater networking between agencies and encourage cross-referrals and joint working with families and young people.
- Provide incentives for project managers to spend time working with organisations reluctant to work co-operatively with other CF projects.

CF programme management team and project managers to consider:
- Collectively develop ways of trying to reach young people who are outside 'the system'.
- Consider how prejudices about refugees within the community can be addressed and the skills of refugees harnessed to the benefit of the local area.

Flexible and accessible services to secure informal and self-referrals

Project managers mentioned a number of restraints to the provision of flexible and accessible services, such as small venues, activities that can only take place in small groups, and inflexible funding structures that cannot provide extra funds on short notice.

CFC to consider:
- the CFC might want to raise this issue with the local authority and/or the CYPFD to make sure they are aware of the need for more services in the area.

Responsibility for the management of each child's or family's involvement

There appears to be no integrated system within the borough whereby a child or family has one key worker who has overall responsibility for a child or family irrespective of what service they use or which activity they may attend.

Increasing the provision of preventive services which increase children's life chances before they escalate

The CF programme has successfully increased the provision of services to provide more opportunities for young people. At the same time, these projects aim to prevent negative behaviours (i.e. criminality) and experiences of boredom or social exclusion. The expectation is that the young people's experiences at projects will bring about positive changes in their attitudes and behaviour and some changes have been observed by project staff and managers.

CSSG and CFC to consider:
- How the provision of preventive services can be further increased in the short term and maintained in the longer term.

CF programme management team and project managers to consider:
- How challenging behaviour can be best included in activities so that they are less disruptive for the rest of the group.

Accessible services to young people and their families, particularly those most in need

There are too few venues and there is a reluctance to allow projects working with young people to use community facilities.

Project managers have often employed staff/volunteers who speak foreign languages, making projects accessible to those whose first language is not English.

Lack of convenient public transport is a problem in accessing the projects.

CFC to consider:
- the CFC might want to raise the issue of transport with the local authority and/or the CYPFD to make sure they are aware of the need for more services in the area.

Actively involving young people and their families as service users in planning and delivering services and in creating individual packages of support

In most cases parents of young people do not have an in-depth involvement in the project. Although members of project staff mostly lead the planning and development of their projects, young people have been involved in developing activities and services.

Working within the CF framework and with the CF team

CF team and monitoring

The Children's Fund Barking and Dagenham is currently employing six members of staff: Programme Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Youth Crime Prevention Officer, Finance Officer, Liaison Officer and Information/Administration Officer.

Most projects commented positively on their working relationship with the Children's Fund team. Seven project managers said that they have been well supported sorting out the paperwork and with the monitoring data. Five projects criticised the huge amount of paperwork during the application and monitoring processes.

Two project managers said they have received capacity building assistance from the CF, beyond help with the necessary paperwork. Three project managers mentioned a training need for members of their project staff.

Increasing the capacity of local organisations

Seven out of nine project managers said that they use volunteers. Of the projects using volunteers, six said they had a training programme or at least 'occasional training' for them.

CSSG and CFC to consider:
- Having a strategy across the programme for attracting volunteers.
- Develop a common programme of on-going training for volunteers.

Changing local policies and practices

Whilst around half of the project managers felt that their project had influenced policies or practices in their *own* organisation the other half of the project managers felt that this had not been the case.

More than half of the project managers felt that they had influenced policies or practices within *other* organisations, i.e. influencing policies and procedures 'making sure that disabilities issues are taken into account'.

Future funding and mainstreaming

All project managers said that they would look for funding elsewhere once CF money is no longer available. One project mentioned that '*they [the CF] have enabled them to get into a different funding stream which was very difficult before'.*

General issues to be considered by the CFC:
- Young people have not been allocated a key worker. This is an issue to be raised across the different local agencies in preparation for the future Children's Centres as well as the Information Referral and Tracking scheme.

1 INTRODUCTION

Barking and Dagenham Children's Fund is a second wave partnership working with young people and their communities to alleviate poverty and social exclusion. It was allocated funding in April 2002 and is managed by a Committee with the local authority as the accountable body. The Children's Fund Barking and Dagenham had a budget of £1,600,000 for 2002 – 2004. In addition it was awarded £250,000 as part of the Street Crime Initiative. Commissioning is currently under way for 2004 – 2006 with a budget cut of 2.795 per cent (equivalent to £22,500) recently announced by Whitehall for 2004 – 2005. Further financial cuts have been announced for 2005- 2006.

1.1 The research

The research began with a meeting between the programme manager and UEL researchers in mid October 2003. Between the end of October and mid December 2003 a number of face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with:

CF staff: The programme manager and one member of staff to learn about the programme in general and the participation strategy in particular. We also met with the evaluation officer to find out about existing evaluation processes and the collation of the monitoring information.

CF Committee: The chair, two parents, one voluntary sector representative (plus the chair who also commented on her position as a voluntary sector representative) and one statutory sector representative.

The interviews with CF Committee members usually lasted around one hour and covered the needs and problems in the area, the role of Committee members, and the expected impact of the programme.

Project managers: Twelve projects were selected, three from each of the four CF themes. The project managers were contacted by email or phone and nine interviews were completed in time to be included in this report. Two managers were unable to meet with researchers within the time and the contact details for the other manager were out-of-date, probably because they no longer received CF funding. On three occasions an additional member of staff attended the interview. On one occasion two additional members of staff were present to answer questions.

Interviews with project managers lasted between 45 minutes and an hour and a half and covered issues relevant to the aims and objectives of the CF programme, their experiences of implementing their projects and the anticipated impact of the activities and services on the lives of the young people and their families.

Desk based/internet research: Information has been collated from several secondary sources including the CF programme, Barking and Dagenham CF business plan, CF Committee meeting minutes since January 2003 and observations made from one CF Committee meeting.

1.2 The sample

At the initial stages of this research few interviews have been conducted and those who have been interviewed are not necessarily representative of the views and experiences of all the stakeholders and partners of the CF programme.

As the research progresses and further interviews are conducted the sample will be more representative and robust. In this report a number of issues are raised which are relevant to the development of the CF programme and there are indicators about its progress. It is not however a comprehensive review and the findings should be understood within this context.

2 THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S FUND

2.1 Aim and strategic objectives

The National Children's Fund is an initiative managed by the Children, Young People and Families Directorate, which was established in November 2000 within the Home Office. The Children's Fund was launched in November 2001; wave two was rolled out in April 2002 and wave three in April 2003. There are now 149 Children's Fund partnerships nationally. The Children's Fund is a key aspect of the Government's agenda for children and families. In total the Fund was allocated £450 million over 3 years (2001-4) consisting of the Preventative Fund (£380 million) and the Local Network Fund (£70 million). Although funding until 2006 has been confirmed Children's Fund programmes have been warned by the government that some budgets will be cut in 2004-2005, and were told not to take on any new commitments for next year. (Zero 2 Nineteen, January 2004)[1].

'The Children's Fund is intended to provide a flexible and responsive approach to meeting needs and developing good practice for services for children and young people at risk of social exclusion, supporting them and their families in breaking the cycle of disadvantage'. (CYPU, March 2001).

In addition, *'It is hoped that this will achieve better outcomes for local children, including the use of services better designed to meet the needs of commonly excluded groups, black and minority ethnic minority groups, and young people with disabilities'.* (CYPU, Dec 2002).

And also that *'The preventative element of the Children's Fund is part of a range of measures to ensure that children and young people, between the ages of 5 and 13, get the best start in life, remain on track on their early years, flourish in secondary school, and choose to stay on in education and training at 16.'* (CYPU, Dec 2002).

The Fund bridges the gap between Sure Start and Connexions, providing services to children between the ages of five and thirteen years. The intention is that the projects will contribute to the development of a more efficient and comprehensive web of services and support systems by providing extra resources over and above those provided by existing statutory bodies and other specific programmes.

The programme is designed to encourage involvement from a range of statutory, voluntary and community organisations, and to work in partnership with a variety of organisations from different fields of expertise and from each sector. A significant contribution from the voluntary and community sector and recognition of their expertise in their amount of spend dedicated to these sectors is a requirement of the programme.

[1] For more information you can find an online version of the Zero 2 Nineteen magazine on www.zero2nineteen.co.uk.

2.2 Strategic objectives

It is hoped that these aims will be achieved by the partnership through the following strategic objectives:

'ensuring that in each area there is an agreed programme of effective interventions that pick up on early signs of difficulty, identify needs and introduce children and young people and their families to appropriate services, ensuring:

- close co-operative working between all relevant local agencies,
- clear responsibility for the management of each child's or family's involvement,
- services that are sufficiently flexible and accessible to secure informal and self-referrals.

And in addition,

'ensuring that children and young people who have experienced early signs of difficulties receive appropriate services in order to gain maximum life-chance benefits from educational opportunities, health care, and social care and to ensure good outcomes by':

- increasing provision of the right kind of preventative services which will increase the children's life chances through combating problems before they escalate,
- ensuring services are accessible to children and young people and their families, particularly those most in need,
- actively involving children, young people and their families as service users, in planning and delivering services and in creating individual packages of support,
- empowering children, young people, families and communities to take responsibility and control of solutions for themselves.

3 RESPONDING TO LOCAL NEEDS AND PROBLEMS

3.1 Identifying local needs

The Children's Fund Barking and Dagenham conducted a mapping exercise in 2002 giving an overview of needs in the borough. This exercise outlined that there are over 22,000 children aged between 5 and 13 years in the borough. Poverty, education, health, crime were identified as problematic and that refugees were experiencing particular difficulties.

Poverty: High rates of deprivation and low average incomes were identified. In addition, the number of children in non-earning households is above the London average, in some wards quite significantly.

Education: Although improvements have been made in educational achievement, the pattern of achievement differs according to location within the borough and according to social group. Higher than usual 'special educational needs' for secondary schools were identified, as well as high levels of exclusion and rates of absenteeism. Local research has pointed out the importance of improving young people's behaviour as a pre-condition for change.

Health: Lack of regular health checks, nutritional information and high numbers of disabilities are some of the issues covered. Research showed a lack of information and support to families, access to out of school activities and respite care.

Crime: In 2001 over 15,000 crimes were recorded as being committed in the borough, with almost nine per cent of the total recorded offences committed by young people. Almost two thirds of these were committed by young people aged 15 or younger. Research showed the importance of distracting activities, specifically sport, music and IT for young people to divert them from crime and to encourage pro-social activities.

Refugees: A growing number of asylum seeking families are living in the borough, with a total of 332 children between four and fourteen years of age. Many children experience educational difficulties, for which more effective support is requested.

3.2 Responding to local needs

3.2.1 The intentions of the CF programme

The role of the CF and how it is going to benefit young people in Barking and Dagenham is well thought through. There is a clear approach under-pinning the implementation of the programme and an understanding of how the programme is going to make a difference.

3.2.2 The approach

The following problems or issues were taken into account in developing the programme:

- The nationally set key objectives and seven sub-objectives
- In most wards young people are living in disadvantage and meet the criteria for the CF programme
- Some groups of young people have multiple needs; for example those with disabilities and refugee children
- Some young people who would benefit from participating in activities are not accessing any services
- There are 'gaps' in existing services and therefore unmet needs
- Ensuring that there is no duplication of services
- There should be a 'holistic approach' to meeting all the needs of young people; that is services as a whole should address all the difficulties experienced by young people
- Services for young people should be available locally; that is in their immediate area
- Local people have the best insight into the problems and difficulties associated with the area and that they have the potential to provide sustained and appropriate services
- The CF should leave a legacy; the services should continue and the activities be sustained
- The voluntary sector is under-developed and on the whole the statutory and voluntary sector do not have a history of working well together.

3.2.3 The practice: responding to the problems

To put this approach into place the following has either taken place or is taking place:

- A review of statistical information on factors related to disadvantage, lack of opportunities and social exclusion, and the objectives of the CF; for example household income, those out of work, crime, truancy, educational attainment levels has taken place
- Setting up a statistical database to enable an ongoing review of indicators of social and economic disadvantage
- A review of services, an identification of the gaps in services, and the commissioning of services to fill these 'gaps' has taken place
- The commissioning of services to provide a holistic approach to the identified problems and needs of young people; for example four different projects to meet the various needs of refugee young people have been implemented
- Three CF sub-committees (Parents', Children and Community Forum) have been set up to ensure that there are links between projects, particularly to ensure that there are referrals between services. However, the Community Forum is currently not active.
- The voluntary sector has been commissioned as the main provider of services, encouraging them to employ local people, assisting them develop the skills of their staff and work with them to gain access to further funding.

3.2.4 Using the findings from the mapping exercise

Based on this mapping the Children's Fund developed the following priorities:

1) Support to vulnerable children at risk of exclusion from primary school
2) Help to children (and their families) facing a key change in their life which is likely to disrupt their education
3) Encouraging younger children and their families to understand good health care and take more responsibility for promoting their own well-being
4) Support, particularly information and advice, to the families of children with disabilities to help them continue to care for their child
5) Increase the range of activities available for children with disabilities, particularly outside of school hours
6) Increase the access of children in need to affordable local activities, particularly during school holidays
7) Better integration of refugee children into mainstream services
8) Diverting young people at risk from offending
9) Support young victims of crime and encouraging community safety.

These priorities have been broken down into specific commissioning intentions, Children's Fund objectives for Barking and Dagenham alongside with respective measures to be achieved.[2]

The initial Steering Group of the CF opted to commission individual schemes; tailored to local needs and the targets set. The financial plan and resulting projects thus closely reflect the needs identified by the programme.[3]

[2] We will look at the local measures in more depth in the impact report, during the second part of the evaluation.
[3] The theme 'Reduce Inequality' has been broken up into 'Health and Inequality' and 'Disabled Children'.

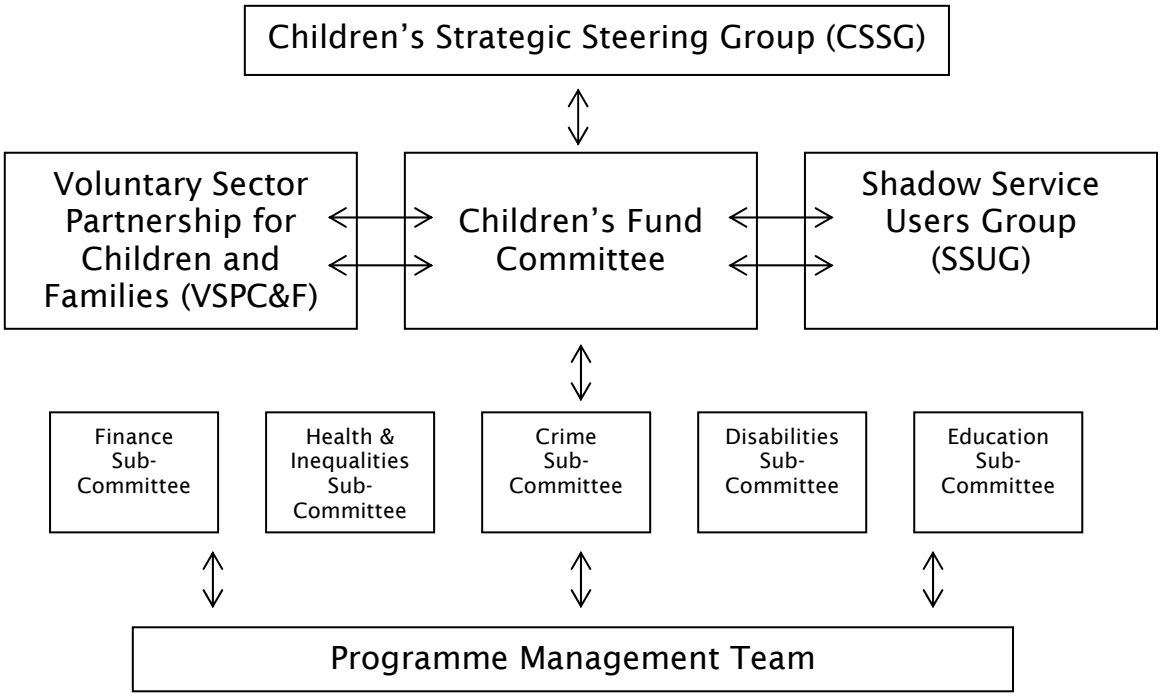
5 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

5.1 Children's Fund structure

The Children's Fund is overseen by the Children's Fund Committee (CFC), which is supported by the Children's Strategic Steering Group (CSSG). The CSSG is an inter-agency forum consisting of a range of members from the, Health Services and local government departments (Housing, Education, Leisure and Social Services). It works to ensure consistency in the work of the CFC.

The Committee (CFC) meets approximately every two months and is responsible for overseeing the programme, and is accountable to the CSSG. The Committee is responsible for the implementation of the CF programme, ensuring it is responsive to the needs of young people and that projects are selected to address the identified needs. The Committee also has a role in facilitating the development of a coherent preventative strategy which is consistent with the Borough's Children and Families Preventative Strategy. The requirement of the CF Committee to have representatives from the statutory and voluntary sector as well as involvement of service users and local community representatives, ensures that there is a wide range of knowledge and experience which can be drawn upon to develop the programme. The Committee is made up of four members from the statutory sector, six members from the voluntary sector, and a total of six representatives from three different forums: two representatives from the Children's Forum, Parent's Forum and Community Forum respectively. In addition, it has non-voting representation from EYDCP, Sure Start, Connexions, Regeneration and the Ethnic Minority Partnership Agency (EMPA).

The structure of the Children's Fund Partnership:



As part of the participation strategy two Shadow Service User Groups (SSUG) have been set up: the Children's Forum and the Parents' Forum. A third SSUG, the Community Forum, is to involve the wider local community such as different faith groups. Although several meetings took place across different organisation and faith groups this forum has not been active recently. However, the CF is continuing its efforts to engage local community organisations.

It was also planned to set up community representation through a Voluntary Sector Partnership for Children and Families (VSPC&F). This was delegated to the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) but to date has not been set up.

Five sub-committees, made up of project representatives have been set up for the following thematic areas: Crime, Health and Inequalities, Disabilities, Education plus an additional Finance Steering Group.

Each sub-committee has its own terms of reference. With regards to the CF the role and responsibilities of sub-committees are to:

- Feed back into the CF Committee (each discipline gives an update at every meeting)
- Learn about current programme and comment upon future direction through feed back from the CFC
- Be directly involved in the evaluation and monitoring the programme at key stages
- Assist with the ongoing mapping of current service provision and identification of gaps
- Share good practice and ideas to further improve service delivery.

Committee Board members can have a vital role in creating a vision for the programme, establishing strategic links with other services and programmes, and enabling the programme manager and the staff team to deliver quality services.

Regular attendance ensures continuity, and typically results in good working relationships and clear leadership. Below we have analysed attendance at six Committee meetings between January and November 2003.

Social Services appointed a programme manager who was quick in complying with CYPFD requirements in interviewing and recruiting a staff team and setting up a programme structure as well as programme finances. Getting the programme up-and-running, particularly the variety of projects selected, took more time than expected but the programme was fully operational during its second year.

5.2 Staff Team

The Children's Fund Barking and Dagenham has successfully set up a full staff team located within the Social Services Department and currently employs the following members of staff:

- Programme Manager
- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
- Youth Crime Prevention Officer
- Finance Officer
- Liaison Officer
- Information/Administration Officer

A Community Liaison Officer who was a social services employee was placed in the CF team to liaise more closely with CF staff, specifically the CF Liaison Officer.

The Participation Officer left his post in November 2003. Since then, this position has been filled by two part-time Participation Posts.

Although we have conducted two interviews with CF staff, we are unable to assess the contribution of the staff to the effectiveness of the CF programme. Assessing the impact of the programme is the focus of future research.

5.3 Financial plan

The CF Barking and Dagenham was allocated a total of £1,600,000 to be spent between April 2002 and March 2004. Table 5.1 shows the original financial plan. The local CF allocated the funding by theme.

TABLE 5.1
ORIGINAL FINANCIAL PLAN (2002 -2004)

Commissioning Intentions	Spend in first year (2002-2003)	Spend in second year (2003–2004)	Total spend (2002–2004)
Education	£ 112,738	£ 171,400	£ 284,138 (17.8%)
Health and Inequality	£ 246,944	£ 439,240	£ 686,184 (42,9%)
Crime	£ 56,840	£ 100,000	£ 156,840 (9.8%)
Total spend on project themes	**£ 416,522**	**£ 710,640**	**£ 1,127,162 (70.4%)**
Participation	£ 53,649	£ 57,312	£ 110,961 (6.9%)
Innovation	£ 66,840	£ 60,000	£ 126,840 (7.9%)
Project Management Team	£ 74,868	£ 117,132	£ 192,000 (12.0%)
Evaluation	£ 9,999	£ 24,999	£ 34,998 (2.2%)
Infrastructure	£ 2,020	£ 6,020	£ 8,020 (0.5%)
Total	**£ 623,897**	**£ 976,103**	**£ 1,600,000** (100.0%)

Source: CF business plan, 2002.

Table 5.1 also shows the cost of management, evaluation and infrastructure. The CYPFD[4] does not allow the local Children's Fund to allocate more than 15.5 per cent on central costs, of which no more than 12 per cent can be allocated to core staff (Programme Manager, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer and Information/Administration Officer).[5]

[4] Formerly the Children's and Young Person's Unit (CYPU).
[5] Further members of staff are allocated under the respective project themes.

TABLE 5.2
PROFILE AND ACTUAL SPEND (2002 -2003)[6] [7]

Commissioning Intentions	Profile spend in first year ('02-'03)	Actual spend in first year ('02-'03)[8]	Profile spend in second year ('02-'03)	Actual spend to date (Quart. 1-3) ('02-'03)
Education, Health and Inequality and Disabled Children (incl. Innovation)	£ 980,165	£ 280,565	£ 989,664 (67%)	£ 670,307 (67%)
Crime (incl. Participation)			£ 335,000 (23%)	£ 246,439 (25%)
Total spend on project themes	**£ 980,165 (87%)**	**£ 280,565 (73%)**	**£ 1,324,664 (90%)**	**£ 916,747 (92%)**
Management, Admin, Evaluation	£ 142,132 (13%)	£ 101,863 (27%)	£ 144,132 (10%)	£ 80,879 (8%)
Total	**£ 1,122,297 (100 %)**	**£ 382,428 (100 %)**	**£ 1,468,796 (100 %)**	**£ 997,625 (100 %)**

After setting up the original budget the CF was granted extra funding as part of the Street Crime Initiative, leading to a total budget of more than £1,850,000. In line with this a new requirement was placed on the Children's Fund: to allocate 25 per cent of its resources on programmes on crime related projects.

Table 5.2 shows that for year 2002 – 2003 87 per cent of the funding was intended to be spent on the different project themes. However, the actual spend on both projects and central costs were 66 per cent below the profile spend. Seventy-two per cent less than estimated were spent on CF projects, probably due to difficulties that projects had in getting up and running. This also means that central costs made up 27 per cent of the total and were therefore above the allowed level of 15.5 per cent. From the information available to us we calculated that the total underspend for 2002 – 2003 was £739,869. While some of these funds could not be carried over into the next financial year a large part of the underspend was carried over into 2003/2004.[9]

Table 5.2 also shows the allocation on crime related projects for 2003-2004.[10] To date 25 per cent of the total has been spent on these projects and the programme

[6] Please note that numbers in table 5.2 have been rounded.
[7] Actual spend at the time when this report was written was only available for the first three quarters of the financial year 2003-2004.
[8] Work on actual spend of providers has not been finalised. This table thus only provides preliminary information.
[9] As actual spend for this year has not been confirmed more detailed information on underspend and how much of it was carried over is not available.
[10] Information on crime related spend for 2002-2003 was not available to us at the time this report was written.

is therefore fulfilling its requirements. The underspend for 2003-2004 appears to be considerably less as 69 per cent of the profile spend have been funds in quarters 1-3. This indicates a slight underspend to date which might be levelled during the last quarter.

5.4 Projects by theme

A total of 33 projects were funded by the CF. Of these, 27 continue to receive funding while support terminated for six of the 33 original projects for a number of reasons. Whilst most of the six projects had only applied for funding for a short time period, continuous lack of responsiveness from one project led to the termination of funding in mutual agreement between the project manager and the CF staff.

Table 5.3 shows the number of projects established according to theme:

TABLE 5.3
NUMBER OF PROJECTS BY THEME

Theme	Number of projects
Education	11
Health and Inequality	9
Disabled Children	7
Crime	5
Holiday Clubs	1

Source: CF Monitoring data, November 2003.

5.5 Project attendance

During the last quarter (October – December 2003) 1,588 young people between 5 and 13 years of age attended CF funded projects. Some young people just below or above this age group also participated in CF projects. A total of 1,631 young people attended one or more projects.

TABLE 5.4
PROJECT ATTENDANCE BY AGE
(JULY TO DECEMBER 2003)

Age	Attendance July – Sept 2003	Attendance Oct – Dec 2003
Under 5's	6	8
Year 1	54	562
Year 2	71	76
Year 3	119	138
Year 4	183	155
Year 5	180	140
Year 6	355	133
Year 7	197	153
Year 8	130	184
Year 9	35	47
Year 10	19	35
Overall project attendance	**1,349**	**1,631**
Total (5-13 year olds only)	**1,324**	**1,588**

Source: CF Monitoring data, January 2004.

Between July and September 2003 the majority of attendees were in year 4, 5, 6 or 7 with the largest number in year 6. As can be seen in table 5.4 project attendance increased by 282 (17.2%) from the second to the third quarter in 2003/2004. The age of attendees also changed markedly. Between October and December 2003 most attendees were from year 1 whilst the number of attendees of year 6 decreased markedly.

TABLE 5.5
ATTENDANCE BY THEME[11]

Theme	Attendance (April to June 2003)[12]
Education	698
Health and Inequality	192
Disabled Children	102
Crime	205
Holiday Clubs	43
Total attendance by theme	**1240**

Source: CF Monitoring data, November 2003.

Attendance levels also varied according to programme theme. Table 5.5 demonstrates that educational projects had a much higher number attending than any of the other themes.

[11] This data is only available for July – October 2003.
[12] The data for later quarters was not available at the time of writing the report.

In general, slightly more males than females have attended the projects (see table 5.6).

TABLE 5.6
PROJECT ATTENDANCE BY GENDER[13]

	July – Sept 2003	Oct. – Dec 2003
Male	746 (55.3%)	898 (55.0%)
Female	603 (44.7%)	733 (44.9%)
Total	**1,349 (100%)**	**1,631 (100%)**

Source: CF Monitoring data, January 2004.

Table 5.7 demonstrates that a large number of new contacts with young people (2654) and parents/carers (608) were established between July and September 2003. Whilst these are project contacts that did not involve project participation, a large number of young people actually attended a project for the first time between July and September 2003. This is likely to be due to attendance at the summer activities supported by the CF as the idea of the summer scheme was to identify young people in need.

The number of initial contacts with projects decreased in the next quarter (October - December 2003) suggesting that summer activities are a valuable way of making new contacts but that many of these young people probably only attended summer activities.

TABLE 5.7
CHANGING ATTENDANCE PATTERNS

	July – Sept 2003	Oct. – Dec 2003
Initial contact with child/young person[14]	2654	342
Initial contact with parent/carer[15]	608	301
Regularly supported child/young person[16]	1452	1284
Child/Young person supported prior to this quarter[17]	252	66

Source: CF Monitoring data, January 2004.

[13] This data includes some children below or above the age restriction of 5-13 years of age.
[14] Project contact with child/young person but no project participation.
[15] Project contact with parent/carer but no project participation.
[16] Number of children supported for the first time.
[17] No of children/young people supported prior to quarter who do not attend a project in the current quarter.

5.6 Cost/user ratio

We have calculated the cost/service user ratio for the second and third quarter in 2003.[18]

TABLE 5.8
COST/USER RATIO

	Project attendance	Total spend on projects	Cost per user
July – Sept 2003	1,349	£ 342,015.97	£ 253.50
Oct. – Dec 2003	1,631	£ 293,410.50	£ 179.90

From July to September 2003 the total of project attendees was 1,349 going up to 1,631 for the following quarter. Although purely quantitative calculations do not always reflect the intention of the programme and good quality work, the data might serve as an indicator for value-for-money of the programme. From July to September 2003 the cost per user was £253.50, going down to £179.90 for each user between October and December 2003. These costs exclude any central costs that occur for the management and administration of the Children's Fund. Including these would increase the cost per user.

5.7 Ethnicities

Experience from other local government schemes shows that collecting information on ethnicities can be difficult to achieve. Overall projects of the Children's Fund in Barking and Dagenham regularly collect monitoring information and the data is comprehensive. However, the total number of attendees between July and September (by ethnicity) adds up to more than the total number of project attendees due to difficulty with data collection. Although this problem is known to Children's Fund staff these duplicate entries make the overall data somewhat unreliable.

TABLE 5.9
CONTACT BY ETNICITY JULY – DECEMBER 2003[19]

	July – Sept 2003	Oct. – Dec 2003
White		
White British	695 (51.2%)	852 (53.2%)
White Irish	22 (1.6%)	10 (0.6%)
Any other White	13 (1.0%)	46 (2.9%)
Mixed		
White/Black Caribbean	54 (4.0%)	68 (4.2%)
White/Black African	22 (1.6%)	50 (3.1%)
White/Asian	18 (1.3%)	9 (0.6%)
Any other mixed	16 (1.2%)	27 (1.7%)
Asian		
Bangladeshi	19 (1.4%)	13 (0.8%)
Indian	60 (4.4%)	65 (4.1%)
Pakistani	54 (4.0%)	49 (3.1%)
Other Asian	5 (0.4%)	32 (2.0%)
Black		
African	210 (15.5%)	224 (14.0%)
Caribbean	94 (6.9%)	90 (5.6%)
Other Black	16 (1.2%)	29 (1.8%)
Other backgrounds		
Chinese	27 (2.0%)	2 (0.1%)
Other	25 (1.8%)	26 (1.6%)
Refused	7 (0.5%)	10 (0.6%)
Data missing	More than total	29 (1.8%)
Total	**1357 (100%)**	**1602 (100%)**

Source: CF Monitoring data, January 2004.

Table 5.9 shows that the majority of attendees were White British, constituting more than 50 per cent of all registered young people. This is followed by around 15 per cent of attendees categorising themselves as 'African'. Around five to seven per cent said they were Caribbean. Another four per cent said they were White/Black Caribbean. Just over four per cent were Indian, and just under four per cent said they were Pakistani. In addition attendees stated other ethnic backgrounds as can be seen in table 5.9.

The total of the White population (including White Irish and Other White) represented in the projects adds up to 53.8 per cent. This data compares to a general average of 85.2 per cent White population in Barking and Dagenham. The largest minority ethnic groups are Black African (4.4 %), Indian (2.3%) and Black

[18] The quality of the monitoring data may be flawed for a number of reasons, such as irregular monitoring, problems in project set-up, etc. The figures presented in table 5.8 are therefore approximate.
[19] Please note that percentages in this table have been rounded up or down to the nearest number.

Caribbean (2.1%) (National Statistics, 2001). It is not clear from this information if the CF is reaching those most in need. However, the initial scoping study of needs of young people mentioned the higher needs of some minority ethnic groups, in particular the growing number of asylum seeking families and unaccompanied minors living in the Borough. The monitoring data shows that many minority ethnic young people are attending CF projects. Further work is required on the extent to which the CF is reaching the most disadvantaged and this will be addressed in the second phase of the research.

6 PROGRESS

6.1 Parent and young people representatives

Parents only started attending meetings in autumn 2003 and therefore were not well represented at the CFC meetings. Parents attended two of the six meetings we looked at. One meeting was attended by one parent; the other meeting was attended by two parents.

The two parent representatives are British White women. They have established different channels through which local parents can inform them of any problems and issues they would like to be voiced at the CFC. Information is exchanged between parents/carers at the well established Parents' Forum and through the newsletter, anonymous ideas/question boxes etc.

It is not clear from the minutes of meetings whether young people attended any Committee meetings. However, the CF Participation Officer regularly updates the CFC and one young person attended the same meeting as a UEL researcher, for example, and fed back on the activities which take place at the Children's Forum.

The Children's Forum seems well established, making use of different ways of disseminating information, such as a newsletter, website, etc. The CF Participation worker project announced its inception to the CFC in June 2003 and since then the Participation worker has fed back information on the project to the CFC. In addition, one young person attended a CFC and told Committee members about the project.

6.2 Voluntary sector representatives

Overall, the voluntary sector has been well represented with up to seven representatives on two occasions. Two other meetings were attended by five representatives, and a further two by at least three representatives.

Some continuity in attendance was given by one voluntary sector representative attending all six meetings and a further delegate who attended on five occasions. Three representatives attended at least three meetings. Six representatives attended only one meeting each.

UEL researchers attended one Committee meeting during which a number of voluntary sector representatives actively participated and felt confident enough to air their concerns.

6.3 Statutory sector representatives

The statutory sector has had regular representation; four out of six meetings were attended by four statutory sector representatives. At one meeting three representatives were present.

Continuity was given by two statutory sector representatives who attended all meetings, one representative who attended three meetings and another representative who attended two meetings. In addition to this regular attendance a variety of statutory sector representatives attended irregularly with eight different statutory sector employees attending one meeting each.

6.4 Views on the work of the Children's Fund Committee

Interviews with Committee members demonstrate that members do not necessarily have a common vision of the problems the CF Barking and Dagenham is aiming to tackle. Problems addressed were described as isolation of disadvantaged children, i.e. children with disabilities, identified needs/gaps in service provision, social exclusion, street crime, attainment levels, health issues, etc.

We asked interviewees whether they felt the Committee has a shared vision.[20] Only one interviewee felt the Committee has a shared vision which was clearly defined as they were answerable to the CYPU. This person felt, however, that there is a clash between the direction of the CYPU and local needs. Although this person felt that the Committee was doing its best within the restricted framework of the CYPU, a different interviewee said the fact that Committee members were also service providers was a *'catch 22'* leading to *'conflicts of interests'*. For example when deciding on future 'funding agreements' one interviewee said: *'I ultimately voted for the option that would have furthered my own interests and don't think that this would be any different with any of the Board members.'*

Similarly, other respondents felt that some professionals had an attitude of *'it's our way or no way*'. They also described the vision as *'too wide'* and *'one size fits all*'. These interviewees said that the Committee was not taking on board specific parental/children's needs by *'putting disadvantaged children all under one umbrella'.*

6.5 Achievements

Interviewees described numerous strengths and successes of the Committee, such as

- Membership has stayed interested and committed
- There is a general understanding of what the CF is trying to achieve
- Mutual understanding
- Keeping it in the voluntary sector

[20] One respondent did not answer this question.

- Multi-agency approach
- CF opened up far and wide – everyone is being consulted
- CF Committee setting up a participation plan which was a success '*because encouraging and imposing*' participation on those funded by the CF has encouraged the project to come together and think about how they involved the community
- The Committee has been addressing difficulties that service providers are experiencing by providing training
- *'They are doing a good job in the borough'*

6.6 Challenges

Some of the concerns expressed in the interviews were:

- Public sector is not used to the way the voluntary sector works in terms of money: *'public sector and CF staff couldn't grasp that the voluntary sector had to receive the money on time'*
- Larger organisations are more likely to be represented and to participate as they are more experienced than smaller and/or new organisations
- It was felt it was *'very wrong that parents and children are becoming involved very late'*
- Complicated application forms/procedures and further requirements
- Too much evaluation required (i.e. self-assessment, UEL, Ofsted) which makes the programme *'top-heavy'* and time-consuming
- Funding is temporary which makes it difficult for organisations to plan, and for children in projects who can only be involved on a short term basis
- Tight CYPU deadlines for funding bids meant that *'what had to be done in certain amounts of time was very big'*
- To change they need to become *'inclusive and to look at needs'*
- The organisational needs of the voluntary sector are not taken into account enough – statutory sector has more flexibility
- Meeting times are inconvenient for parents

Not all interviewees felt that CF Committee members are able to play a full and equal part on the Board. Whereas some interviewees felt that this was the case and parents as well as children were included (at least through the participation project) another respondent said the *'opportunity is there – but not all take it on'*. *'Voluntary sector members could become more active but they are not taking that opportunity'*. At the same time two members felt that Committee members are not able to play a full and equal part as not everybody *'accesses information in the same way'*.

CFC to consider:
- The CFC might want to discuss the role of the different members and draw attention to the issues raised in this report as well as allowing participants to have a say on this issue.

6.7 The Parents' Forum

A Parents' Forum has been set up by the CF Participation Worker and all CF projects were asked to send two representatives. Parents were asked for their feedback on the projects they were attending and the forum was developed around the vision of the group. It was said that 'parents working as a unit to voice concerns, issues and to gain information were stronger than parents working individually'. Interviewees stated that parents were insecure and a lot of work had to be done to encourage them to speak-up for themselves and their children.

The forum is held bi-monthly and although not all projects have sent representatives it is well attended, with 12 parents (representing seven organisations) attending a meeting in January 2004 and nine parents (representing five organisations) attending a meeting in November 2003.

6.8 The Children's Forum

A Children's Forum has been set up by the CF Participation Worker in summer 2003 and all CF projects were asked to send two representatives to the forum. All children and young people were asked for their feedback about the projects they were attending and what they would like to do in the forum. The young people play games and eat together and have developed a work programme around three core activities: a CF newsletter, a CF website, and a Youth Bank. These have been set up and the newsletter and the website have reported on the activities of the Children's Forum.

To date, four Children's Forums have taken place every 2-3 months. However, one interviewee reported that it has been difficult to engage and capacity-build the same young people over a longer time period. Although we do not have full information on attendance levels, the newsletters indicate good attendance. At one forum in November 2003 a total of nine young delegates from nine organisations attended.[21]

6.9 The Community Forum

Interviewees noted that, despite repeated work, setting up the Community Forum has been difficult because the primary interest for community groups is obtaining funding and this had already been allocated prior to establishing a forum. Although several meetings took place across different organisations and faith groups the forum has not gathered momentum to date. By joining forces with other local organisations the Children's Fund is continuing its effort to engage local organisations and to run an active Community Forum.

[21] To date the newsletters have served as minutes of these meetings but do not always contain full information on attendance levels. This meeting is therefore given as an example.

6.10 Experiences of nine project managers

The interviews with the nine project managers gathered information on 11 different projects. The purpose of the interviews was to find out how the projects are working within the CF framework.

The overall finding is that ten projects are working to full capacity, and are unable to meet the demand for their services and one is still establishing itself. Some projects have waiting lists, whilst others rotate young people so that everyone *'gets an opportunity to join in'*. Project managers said that there are many more young people who fit the CF criteria who are not accessing CF services as *'there are not enough services of this kind in the borough'*. Most of the projects are unable to run more sessions and expand their services due to a lack of funds, and the problem of finding suitable venues is also limiting the expansion of some projects.

The issues discussed in this section reflect the objectives of the national CF as outlined earlier in the report. These are:

Picking up early signs of difficulty, identifying needs, and introducing young people and their families to services

All the projects except one have young people referred to them by schools, education and health services, youth clubs, the Youth Offending Team or other agencies. The 'early signs of difficulty' are identified by these referring agencies and they introduce the young people to the CF projects which are perceived to meet the needs of the young people. The young people attending these 10 projects are therefore already 'known' to services.

Since projects by and large are set up to meet clearly specified needs, for example by providing sports activities for disabled children, assistance for children with low self-esteem transferring from primary to secondary school, or activities for refugee children, the extent to which young people are introduced to the CF services depends on the knowledge of staff about the CF projects by referring agencies. The willingness of the referring agencies to make a referral and the appropriateness of the referral is discussed in the following section.

One of the challenges for project managers is developing strategies which attract young people to their project and since attendance is voluntary to ensure that they regularly attend. Engaging young people and encouraging their regular attendance is less of an issue for school-based projects but for five project managers with projects based in community centres this is more of a challenge. Through consultation exercises with the young people activities are offered which are attractive to them. Outings and trips are organised as incentives and rewards for regular attendance and good behaviour. The majority of project managers said that they have high attendance rates, suggesting that their strategies are effective.

6.11 Close co-operative working between all relevant agencies

Projects managers had different experiences setting up projects; co-operative working at the implementation stage has been, and remains, uneven. The working relationships between CF projects, referring agencies and local community groups can be characterised as:

- Where there are well-established groups who have received CF monies and who already had close working relationships with other agencies, these links have been maintained
- Some schools have been co-operative, welcoming, and assisted with the development of projects by feeding back the educational attainment levels of CF young people, and talking to parents about the progress of their children attending CF activities. Gaining access to other schools has been more difficult for project managers and has led to delays in getting activities started
- Some referrals to projects have been inappropriate and managers have had to turn away some young people
- Projects working with refugees have particular problems finding venues due to *'hostility'* towards refugees; young people have also experienced racist abuse going to and coming back from sessions
- Where project managers have visited local community groups to attract young people to their project, they have not always been particularly welcoming or receptive

In addition where projects are trying to attract young people directly from their particular community (two projects), project managers have found that there are few local, grass roots groups to work with, making it more difficult to get the project *'off the ground'*. One project manager said that it took a *'long time to find a local organisation'* to link in with. Another project manager encouraged his staff to go to two local primary schools at the end of the school day to *'talk to parents about the project'.*

The extent of joint working varies significantly; approximately half of the projects collaborate with one agency and possibly have some other CF involvement (sub-group meetings or board meetings), whilst the other managers said they are working with a large number of agencies, saying that networking was a *'massive part'* of the work. Nevertheless only three projects mentioned that they referred young people onto other agencies when they identify needs which they could not meet suggesting a tendency to work in isolation and to perceive attendees as *'our children'*. Closer working amongst the groups with responsibilities for young people with disabilities is apparent.

CSSG and CFC to consider:
- Create opportunities for greater networking between agencies and encourage cross-referrals and joint working with families and young people.
- Providing incentives for project managers to spend time working with organisations reluctant to work co-operatively with CF projects.

CF programme management team and project managers to consider:
- Collectively develop ways of trying to reach young people who are outside 'the system'.
- Consider how prejudices about refugees within the community can be addressed and the skills of refugees harnessed to the benefit of the local area.

6.12 Flexible and accessible services to secure informal and self-referrals

Whilst the idea of providing flexible and accessible services is attractive, in practice there are often real constraints to achieving this. Five out of the nine project managers said that they accepted self-referrals. Project managers gave various reasons for not accepting self referrals including:

- The size of the venue is too small to expand
- The type of activity, for example, art therapy, discussion groups or story telling, only lends itself to having few young people at any one time, otherwise the work with the young people is unlikely to be effective
- Rigid funding structures do not allow over subscribed projects to receive additional funds at a *'week's notice'*, a problem mentioned by the majority of project managers. This creates three problems in particular; firstly there are insufficient funds to provide ongoing support over a sufficient time period for some young people; secondly young people who attend with multiple problems are in need of intensive support which cannot be responded to as they are *'too resource intensive'*; thirdly there is insufficient staff capacity to take on new referrals

Furthermore where a project has contact with parents – parents bring their children to the activity or come to see their children's work, for example – the staff find that *'parents come to talk to the project manager about their own problems'* and whilst staff listen and assist parents where they can, this flexible approach adds further strain on staff who are already over-stretched.

Three projects have waiting lists; in one project this consists of 50 young people and in another 30 young people. Two projects have responded to the problem of being over-subscribed by finding extra funding to employ more sessional staff and having additional time for activities. Other projects respond to the problem by 'rotating young people', and taking young people on the waiting list on outings.

CFC to consider:
- the CFC might want to raise this issue with the local authority and/or the CYPFD to make sure they are aware of the need for more services in the area.

6.13 Responsibility for the management of each child's or family's involvement

There appears to be no integrated system within the borough whereby a child or family has one key worker who has overall responsibility for a child or family irrespective of what service they use or which activity they may attend. Within each CF project a member of staff has responsibility for a particular child; they may be a key worker, a mentor or the project manager. Each project completes their own assessment needs of a young person; this ranges from a formal approach where forms are completed with the young person to an informal approach of observations.

6.14 Increasing the provision of preventive services which increase children's life chances before they escalate

The CF programme has clearly been successful at increasing the provision of services to provide more opportunities for young people, 33 projects were allocated funding at the outset of the Children's Fund. Of these, funding has terminated or been withdrawn for seven projects. The remaining 26 projects continue operating, providing more than 1200 places for young people.

The projects are trying to prevent:

- Negative behaviours: including criminality, anti-social behaviour, truanting, racist and sexist attitudes and behaviour
- Young people from experiencing boredom and feelings of social exclusion

The projects are trying to increase the opportunities of young people by:

- Improving their self esteem
- Increasing their motivation
- Raising their expectations
- Broadening their perceptions of what opportunities are available to them
- Providing them with new experiences
- Teaching them new skills
- Providing them with the opportunity to make new friends and to have fun
- Providing them with a safe, warm, and friendly environment to relieve some of the stresses and uncertainties of their everyday lives
- Assisting them find their own solutions to their problems and difficulties

The young person's contact with the staff and the activities and services they provide are the vehicle for preventing unacceptable behaviour and providing new opportunities. The expectation is that the young people's experiences at projects will bring about positive changes in their attitudes and behaviour and provide them with improved coping skills. Some changes in attitudes and behaviour have been observed by project staff. These include:

- Improved self-confidence and having a sense of achievement
- Being more positive
- An improved awareness of other people's feelings, taking more responsibility for their own behaviour, and being more respectful
- Positive relationships with staff and making new friends

Four project managers said that they have been able to positively engage all the young people referred to them and are having success in working with those with low self-esteem and poor confidence. Others found it hardest to engage with those who have *'more difficult problems'*, with the older boys who are *'not so attentive and disruptive'* and those with behavioural needs which are *'too challenging for the project'.*

CSSG and CFC to consider:
- How the provision of preventive services can be further increased in the short term.
- How the increased provision of preventive services can be maintained in the longer term.

CF programme management team and project managers to consider:
- How those with particularly challenging behaviour can be best included in activities so that they are less disruptive for the rest of the group.

6.15 Accessible services to young people and their families, particularly those most in need

Project managers who do not work in schools and use their facilities discussed the problem of finding suitable venues in the community. The problems are:

- Too few venues, particularly in some areas
- A reluctance to allow projects working with young people, particularly refugee young people, to use community facilities
- Community venues which have inappropriate facilities for young people, particularly for those with disabilities; eight youth clubs do not have toilets for disabled people for example
- Restrictions on the use of community facilities so that young people are unable to play outside the buildings

Project managers have often employed staff or have volunteers who speak community languages, making projects accessible to those who have English as an additional language.

By having projects based in different areas, the intention is to make them accessible. Nevertheless parents/carers do have to use cars to transport the young people to and from sessions. The lack of convenient public transport is a problem across the borough.

CFC to consider:
- the CFC might want to raise the issue of transport with the local authority and/or the CYPFD to make sure they are aware of the need for more services in the area.

6.16 Actively involving young people and their families as service users in planning and delivering services and in creating individual packages of support

In most cases parents of the young people have no further involvement in the project beyond being asked for parental consent, some involvement in assessing the young person's needs, giving feedback on changes in the young person and possibly attendance of project meetings or assemblies.

Two projects explicitly said they actively involve parents. In one case this is to empower them through giving them training. The second project has a parents' working group looking at the project's progress and recommends improvements. About 9 parents work voluntarily with project staff to run the activities, and plans are being made to start up English Language classes for parents. Of the six projects which have volunteers, two use parent-volunteers and two use ex-service users. Most of these projects have two or three volunteer workers.

Due to the framework of the CF programme it is very difficult for projects to involve young people and their families at the initial planning phase. Time constraints and the lack of funds for pre-project consultations made it almost impossible to have a service user involvement approach from the start.

Once projects received CF funds, project staff have involved the young people in developing the activities and services. The scope for changing activities varies between projects; for example, a Saturday club can respond more flexibly to the requests of service users than a football project with professional football coaches, who cannot suddenly switch to running a boxing club! In most projects the members of the project staff lead the planning and development of the project. Only one project said that these activities are young person led. Two of the projects gave examples of how they had changed their direction through the feedback they received from young people and parents; both are now less education based and *'more fun'*.

All project managers said that the children and young people's feedback is sought to measure the impact of their intervention. This usually involves asking questions about satisfaction with the activities. Feedback sessions varied in frequency. Whilst some projects seek the young people's feedback in every session, others conducted less regular evaluations. One project said they ask for the young people's feedback once.

In addition, seven of the project managers seek parental feedback and five take into account staff observation and feedback. Five project managers liaise with the referring agency to enquire about changes in the young people, and two monitor the young people's 'attendance at school'. Three project managers have individual attainment plans for children and track the changes to 'measure' the impact of the intervention. Two counted child attendance as a measurement of the young people's satisfaction with the activity.

The information collected from the consultation with young people, parents/carers, and members of staff is used by project mangers/workers in a number of ways. For the majority of projects the information is used to ensure that the activities and services are meeting the needs of the young people. Four project managers explicitly stated that their project has developed and *'grown a lot on the changes made from the feedback'.* One project has a more formal feedback or de-briefing session once every 4-5 months to *'acknowledge the progress with the child so that they feel more confident'.*

Five project managers mentioned using the feedback information in discussions about their progress with the Children's Fund staff. One manager mentioned using the information as evidence to raise additional funds.

6.17 Working within the CF framework and with the CF team

6.17.1 The local CF team

Most projects commented positively on their working relationship with the local Children's Fund team. Seven project managers said that they have been supported very well sorting out the paperwork and with the monitoring data. One project manager praised the CF and said '*the Children's Fund was supportive when we started late'* describing their financial system as *'not too rigid'*.

Four project managers did not have any further comments about what the CF could have done better suggesting that they were happy with how the project-programme collaboration has worked out. Five projects criticised the large amount of paperwork during the application and monitoring processes. It was suggested that the application process should give projects more time to work on their application and that paperwork for the application as well as the monitoring should be simplified.

6.17.2 Monitoring requirements

Most projects commented on the huge amount of ongoing paperwork. One project, for example, commented: *'if we knew how much there was we would not have applied for funds and we will not be applying for it again'*. Other comments said that the structure of the funds *'would not allow for rolling over of funds [and although they] don't want to lose funds it can be difficult to employ staff etc'*.

Two projects complained about the amount of paperwork leaving 'no time for planning'.

6.17.3 Increasing the capacity of local organisations

We asked project managers about the support they had been offered by the CF and the training offered to members of staff or volunteers.

Two project managers said they have received capacity building from the CF, beyond help with the necessary paperwork. Five projects said they did not need any further capacity building.[22]

Three project managers mentioned a training need for members of their project staff that they have not been able to satisfy due to lack of funding. In all other projects staff had already been trained, or have received the training they needed.

Six out of the nine project managers said they have employed 'local people', one mentioning they had a 'local first' policy. Two projects are working with non-local staff.[23]

Seven out of nine project managers said that they use volunteers. Most use two or three volunteers and two projects use between 8 and 10 volunteers. Of the projects using volunteers, six said they had a training programme or at least 'occasional training' for them.

CSSG and CFC to consider:
- Having a strategy across the programme for attracting volunteers.
- Develop a common programme of on-going training for volunteers.

[22] Two projects did not comment on this issue.
[23] The remaining project had not yet recruited staff.

6.17.4 Changing local policies and practices

We asked project managers whether they felt their project has influenced policies or practices in their own organisation or within other organisations.[24]

Around half of the project managers felt that the project funded by the CF had influenced policies or practices in their own organisation.[25] Examples given were that *'it identified that they want to work on similar projects in the future'* or *'it has helped the development in terms of the materials used'*. The other half of the project managers felt that their policies/practices had not been influenced by the CF funded project. Project managers commented that the *'project is more coming out of our own organisation rather than the project influencing the organisation'* or saying *'the Children's Fund does not bring anything new'*.

More than half of the project managers felt that they had influenced policies or practices within other organisations, i.e. passing on working practices to teachers in collaborating schools or influencing policies and procedures 'making sure that disabilities issues are taken into account'. One project manager said that their scheme had been replicated in a partner organisation abroad. Another project manager said they had had requests from local organisations that were interested in running similar projects.

A few project managers felt that they had had no influence on policies or practices in other organisations, for example saying that they are *'working at a lower level than politics'.*

6.17.5 Future funding and mainstreaming

All the project managers said that they would look for funding elsewhere when CF money is no longer available. One project manager has already submitted a funding application to a different organisation whereas the others mostly saw this coming up at some point in the future. Some managers mentioned that they had received specific advice from the CF about where to apply for funds. One project said that CF funding was good for them to be able to *'show what they are doing is working'.*

One project mentioned that '*they [the CF] have enabled them to get into a different funding stream which was very difficult before'.*

General issues to be considered by the CFC:
- Young people have not been allocated a key worker. This is an issue to be raised across the different local agencies in preparation for the future Children's Centres as well as the Information Sharing and Assessment (ISA) scheme.

[24] One project manager did not answer this question.
[25] Note that some organisations run more than the CF project whilst others are smaller and set up based on CF funding.

6.18 Assessing the continuing progress

Researchers at the Centre for Institutional Studies, UEL are continuing to assess the progress of the programme. The focus of the current research is on the outcomes of the programme for its users.

CIS Research Report 3

Published by
Centre for Institutional Studies
School of Humanities and Social Sciences
University of East London
Docklands Campus
4-6 University Way
London
E16 2RD

2006

ISBN 1-902494-52-0