



Community Planning Aberdeen

Progress Report	Project End Report 4.3: Family Support within Aberdeen City
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Report Author	Nicola Dickie
Date of Report	09/02/2023
Governance Group	CPA Board – 19 April 2023

Purpose of the Report

This report presents the results of the LOIP Improvement Project 4.3 which aimed to increase uptake of parenting & family support by 10% and seeks approval to end project as the aim has been achieved.

Summary of Key Information

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The COVID pandemic has had a substantial impact on our children, young people, and their families. Feedback from education & other early years workers is that there is an emerging gap in children’s development and the skills they have before they begin nursery or school compared to pre Covid 19. We need to ensure children have their development reviewed at the key HV pathway contacts to identify any issues and then receive the appropriate intervention they require at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure children’s developmental skills are at the best level possible when they enter early years/education system.
- 1.2 Within the LOIP refresh it was proposed that we continue to focus on children reaching their developmental milestones and that by providing early intervention & support to families in the first few years of their life would ensure that they meet developmental milestones & in turn achieve positive outcomes.

2 IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AIM

- 2.1 Against this background, on 23/02/2022 the CPA Board approved the [project charter](#) for the initiation of an improvement project which aimed to increase the uptake of parenting and family support by 10% by 2022.
- 2.2 Universal services (health & education) also provided feedback that during Covid almost all avenues for family support had decreased with those on offer being mainly virtual which parents did not engage with to the same level as face to face support.

2.3 Feedback indicated that the existing referral process for family support via submission of a Childs Plan was a barrier to referring due to the time needed to complete. Also when services opened up there would often be a scatter gun approach to referring in order to access support quickly.

2.4 The Fit like Family Wellbeing service (FLH) (started in Nov 2020) supports the mental wellbeing of children, young people & families in the community. It was recognised by the group that the FLH were already offering family support both individually and via group work via the use of a single Request for Assistance form (RFA).

3. WHAT CHANGES DID WE MAKE

3.1 The group agreed that there was a need to improve systems and processes to:

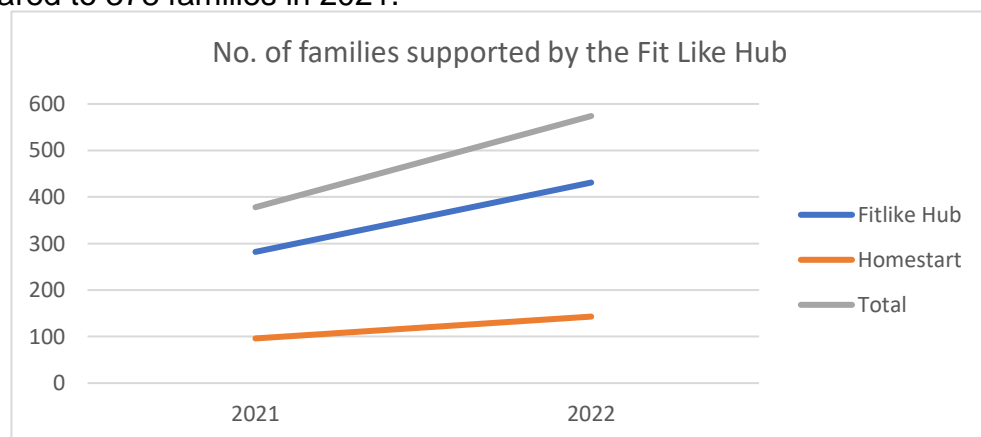
- Make the Request for Assistance process simpler and more easily accessible.
- Reduce the need for a “scatter gun” approach by professionals

3.2 In response to this the group tested the following change ideas:

1. Development of a single request for assistance form for family support from Homestart/Peep & Family Learning to replace the previous use of Childs Plan - This has simplified the request for assistance process for all professionals looking for family support.
2. Development of a Community Nursery Nurse referral form on MORSE – the form has included a priority referral system to ensure families are seen according to level of need.
3. Ongoing promotion of a multi-agency approach via the Fit Like Hubs with universal services & self-referrals which are supporting families accessing parenting and family support via 1:1 and group work.

4. HAVE OUR CHANGES RESULTED IN IMPROVEMENT?

4.1 Yes, our aim has been achieved with a 52% increase in the uptake of parenting and family support between 2021 and 2022, with 574 families supported in 2022, compared to 378 families in 2021.

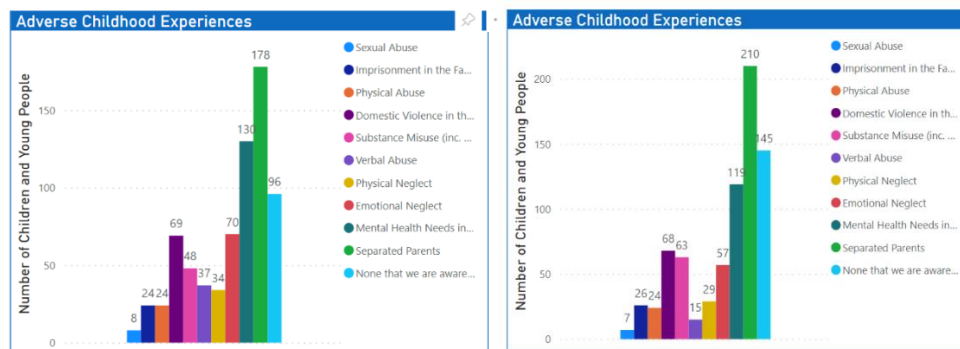


4.2 We have seen an increase in the number of families supported both via the Fit-Like Hubs and Homestart, with a 53% increase via Fitlike and 50% via Homestart.

4.3 The project measured the impact of the changes tested as described below.

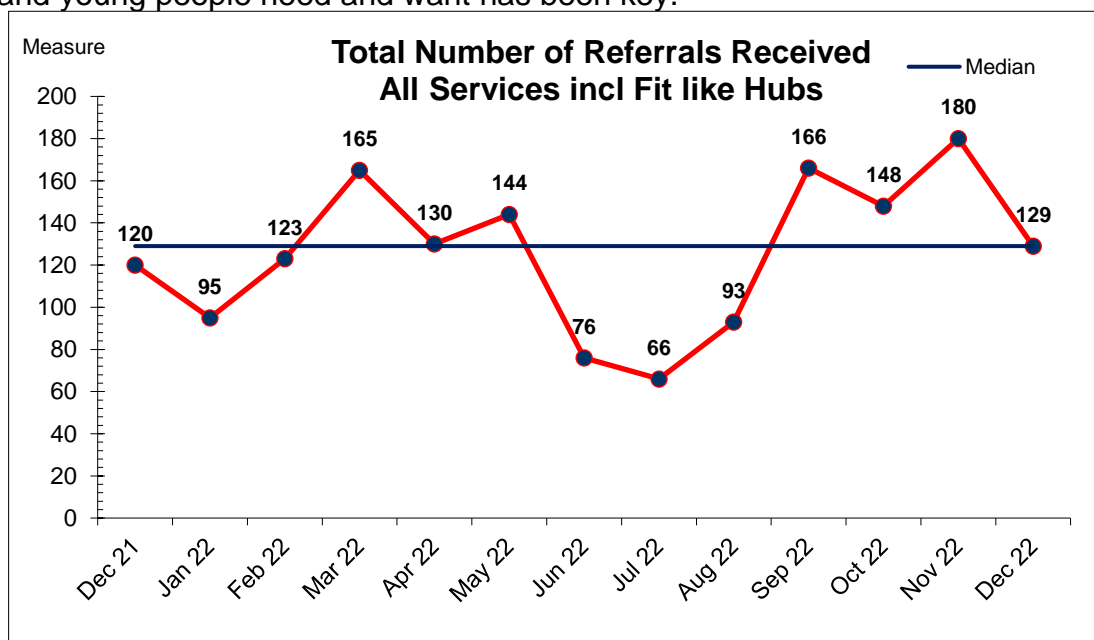
4.4 Through, our change ideas we have also seen a substantial increase in the number of referrals for support, with a 77% increase in multi-agency support referrals for family and parenting support to the Fit Like hubs between 2020/21 (335) to 2021/22 (433). Whilst, initially most referrals came from education as a result of the multi-agency approach to supporting families accessing parenting and family support increasingly referrals are coming from from other agencies.

Fit-Like Hubs - Multi-Agency Support Referrals Overview



4.5 Over 2022, a total across all services of 1515 referrals for parenting and family support were made, an increase of 49% since 2021.

4.6 Working collaboratively has meant that the offer of supports have been more effective, timely and provide earlier intervention and prevention. The building of confidence in the systems of support and removal of barriers and lengthy timescales for response, being open to new ideas and listening to what children and young people need and want has been key.



4.7 Examples of feedback from families regarding the support they have received
“Gained confidence in dealing with my son’s meltdowns. Provided courses to help extend my knowledge on emotion training & sleep”

“Family Learning for me has been having someone non-judgmental and supportive during a time of struggle with family life, to listen and give advice and also reassure you’re doing the best you can”

“The support you’ve given has been invaluable”

“This is like a bespoke service for me & my family, it’s the first time support has felt right for me and fits for what we actually need”

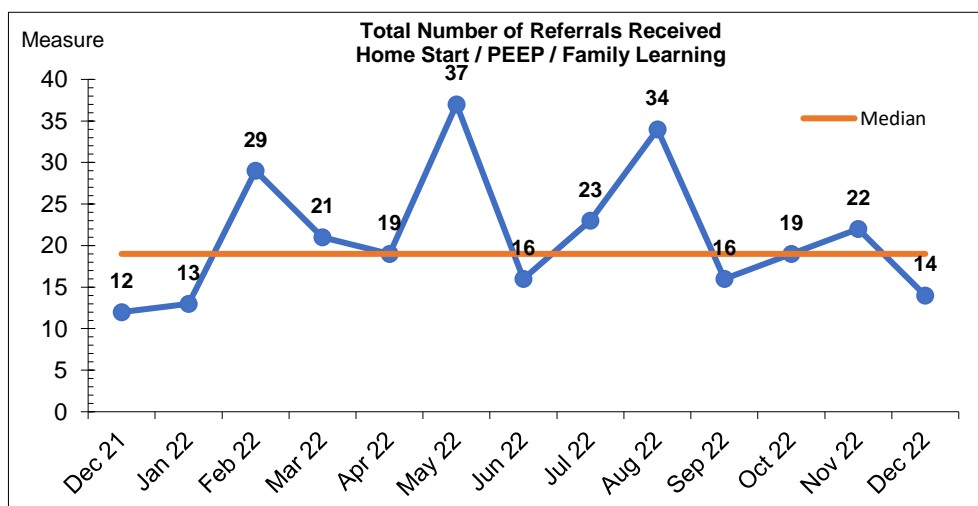
Development of a single request for assistance form for family support from Homestart/Peep & Family Learning to replace the previous use of Childs Plan –

4.8 This has simplified the request for assistance process for all professionals looking for family support. The Single Request for Assistance (RFA) form has been completed & is in use by all agencies. There have been some challenges with health services from an information governance aspect with regards getting the form added into MORSE, but that is being progressed. Homestart reported an 80% uptake & Peep reported 51% uptake of RFA’s during 2022.

4.9 Feedback from staff using the new single RFA

“The single referral form for PEEP / Homestart / Family Learning has made the referral process much simpler and easier to complete. Before with the Child's Plan I was never always sure how much information to put in for Homestart / PEEP referrals however with the new form it is made very clear what information is required”

“The single referral form for Homestart, Peep and Family learning is more user friendly, easy to navigate and allows quicker and more efficient referrals to be made. I would refer more often now using the single form, it enables a clear referral pathway to the services.”



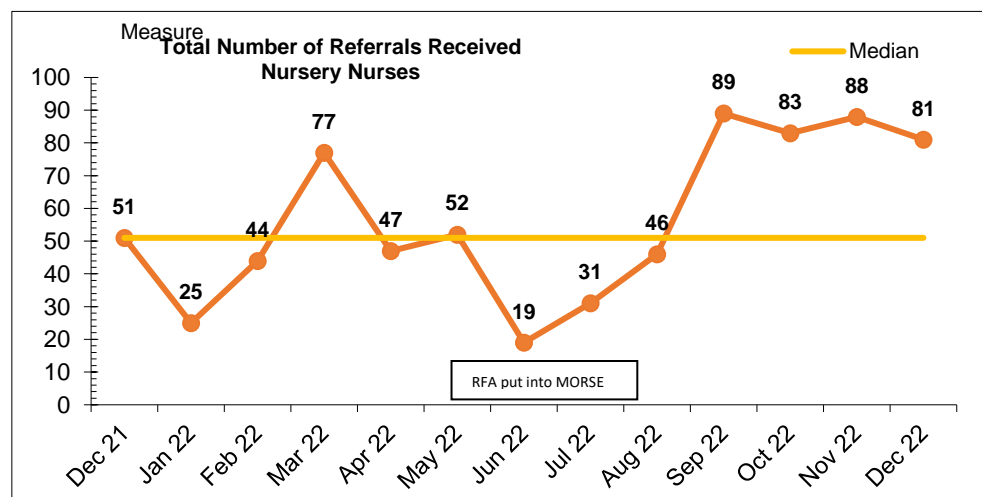
4.10 Development of a Community Nursery Nurse referral form on MORSE – the form has included a priority referral system to ensure families are seen according to level of need.

4.11 Community nursery nurse RFA was rolled out onto their system (MORSE) in June 2022 and we have seen a continual increase in the numbers of referrals since this happened. We have managed to streamline the referral system to the Family support team as well as the Community Nursery nurses within the Health Visiting team which has resulted in a quicker referral system. Of the referrals to community nursery nurses since the form went Live on Morse in June 2022 up to December 2022, 90% have been supported.

4.12 Feedback from Health Visitors re use of form

“The CNN referral form on Morse has simplified the referral process and enables record of the referral and the support provided”

“CNNs are such a valued part of the team and really help provide so many of our families with additional parenting support around routines, behaviour, sleep, feeding. The work CNNs do within the nursery settings I feel has strengthened our relationship with Education and helped provide collaborative working across agencies. The referral forms on Morse are very clear and I find the traffic light system is a beneficial way of identifying the priority of work that needs completed. Getting feedback from the CNN Morse form is also very useful in evidencing improved outcomes for the child / family.”



Ongoing promotion of a multi-agency approach via the Fit Like Hubs with universal services & self-referrals which are supporting families accessing parenting and family support via 1:1 and group work.

4.13 There are more opportunities for family support on offer with the introduction of the Fit-Like Family Wellbeing hubs who are offering 1:1 support and group work. The Fit-Like hubs promote families to access them directly and as a result have

also received 88 self-referrals for support. By sharing information and recognising the mutual benefits and values of partnership working, practitioners pulled together collective knowledge and skills which enabled them to develop a shared understanding and ethos that is embedded within the framework of the promise and ensuring support is available for families. Collaboration and Co-production has brought about cultural changes with shared leadership resulting in strong multi-agency partnership working to co-deliver effective and early intervention supports to children young people and families.

5 HOW WILL WE SUSTAIN THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

- 5.1 The improvements tested have now been embedded and moved to business as usual. We will continue to use the single Request for Assistance form as the key tool for managing the process. The process will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that it continues to achieve the outcomes provided to date. Any changes required will be actioned. The review will include feedback from families and relevant staffing groups.
- 5.2 Ongoing development of the form to include feedback to the referrer has now been implemented to help with managing the whole process.
- 5.3 Continue to review the number of referrals compared to uptake to ensure that demand on services is considered and action taken should demand exceed service provision.

6 HOW WILL WE MONITOR THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

- 6.1 We have robust monitoring system in place with the following embedded:
 - Dashboard has been created for the family support team to submit data on
 - Collection of data via MORSE
 - Feedback from professionals & families regards availability and uptake of support via the RFA
- 6.2 Should it be agreed that the project is ended, the data recorded will also continue to be monitored and reported to the Best Start in Life Sub Group of the Children's Services Board, as well as added to the Outcomes Framework/Improvement Programme Dashboard to ensure that performance continues.

7 OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCALE UP AND SPREAD

- 7.1 Development of a single system and agreeing on a multi-agency basis the key data to be collected and developing a system to allow us to do that, has given us a strong understanding of families' needs and how the services involved in the project can address these. This is an approach which could be beneficial in other areas and projects.
- 7.2 The changes will be scaled up as part of the development of a Family Support Model and a Barins Hoose which will offer earlier and preventative support with a particular focus on kinship carers and preventing children and

young people from entering care. These areas are key outcomes proposed within the revised Children's Services Plan for 2023-26.

Recommendations for Action

It is recommended that the CPA Board:

- i) Agree that testing is concluded and that this Improvement Project is brought to an end on the basis that the aim has been achieved and changes have been embedded as business as usual;
- ii) Note that the data set for the overall aim will continue to be reported via the improvement programme dashboard to ensure progress is monitored; and
- iii) Note the plans to scale up and spread the changes tested.

Opportunities and Risks

Opportunities: -

- Better communication in partnership working
- Learning opportunities across multiagency – Homestart currently monitor engagement of referrals which we could look to replicate
- Working collaboratively means the offer of supports can be more effective, timely and provide earlier intervention and prevention.
- To ensure the supports provided are sustained, at the heart of this is the strength of relational approaches, building confidence in the systems of support and removal of barriers and lengthy timescales for response, being open to new ideas and listening to what children and young people need and want.

Risks: -

- If the offer of support from universal & 2nd tier services were not present then there would be a risk to the health & wellbeing of children & families. Parents would not get the ongoing support needed to promote their child reaching developmental milestones.
- The electronic version of the referral form being put on MORSE has stalled due to NHSG Information Governance's concerns around the use of the .org email address from Homestart. This is currently awaiting a decision from them which is impacting on practitioners being able to complete with families in their homes.

Consultation

Project Team
Children Services Board
Best Start in Life group
CPA Management Group

Background Papers

The following papers were used in the preparation of this report.
Refreshed Aberdeen City Council Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26
Charter 4.3 Family Support within Aberdeen City

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