GUIDANCE FOR MEASURING COST EFFECTIVENESS OF PARENTING PROGRAMMES

Accompanying this paper is guidance developed to support commissioners to assess cost – effectiveness of parenting programmes. The guidance includes a practical assessment tool that can be completed as part of the commissioning or decommissioning process to aid decision making. In addition, it can be used to assess and improve the effectiveness of local “home grown” programmes across the Kent Children’s Trust

BACKGROUND

a) Commissioning of parenting programmes in Kent, occurs at universal, targeted and specialist levels of intervention by a range of agencies.
b) Whilst we are embedding evidence based programmes in Kent, local variations of need means that additional commissioning may be required.
c) The national commissioning toolkit held by the Children’s Workforce Development Council (CWDC) gives a good indication of effectiveness and whether a programme is evidence based. However the national toolkit does not include all parenting programmes, and some are still “unassessed”.
d) We recognise that “home grown” programmes can meet local needs, but we require a method of assessing how effective the programme is, or where improvements can be made.
e) This guidance will enable a common approach across all commissioning agencies, and offer a fair and equitable way for programme owners/developers to understand how they might be assessed.
f) In terms of cost- benefits, due to the range and variety of programmes, it is impossible to match “like for like”. However it is possible to give a cost-weighting against a weighting of effectiveness. It should also be noted that the number of criteria for effectiveness a programme meets is broadly an indication of the intensiveness of the intervention. Interventions that meet almost all the criteria are by definition more expensive. Universal programmes, designed to reach greater numbers of parents at lower levels of need, would be expected to be less expensive and meet less of the criteria for effective parenting interventions than programmes delivered at Tiers 2 and 3 of need.
g) A report was commissioned by Kent County Council’s parenting team in late 2009 that looked at the cost- effectiveness of range of programmes across Kent. This is available on Kent Trust Web via: http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/community/parents_evaluation.cfm#delivering. The report looked at a sample of existing programmes run across Kent and gave us a clearer view on how to move forward. The tools used in the report have been adapted to inform the guidance.
h) There are considerable budget pressures on commissioners and a fundamental need to invest in what works. This tool will enable commissioners to make cost effective informed decisions about commissioning or decommissioning of parenting programmes. It allows us to understand how a programme might work, and where at the outset. This does not negate the need for rigorous evaluation to review impact, but will provide the ability to quality check and build on existing practice as part of the “understand” process of the commissioning cycle.
i) This guidance has already been shared with other parenting commissioners in the south east and is being used as part of their commissioning.

KEY DETAILS AROUND THE GUIDANCE

- Provides a set of 16 standards that determine the criteria for effectiveness of a parenting programme. These are based on National Institute of Clinical Effectiveness, Research on “What works in parenting support” (Moran) and Kent practitioner feedback.

- Provides a weighting system to look at cost implications. Questions cover a range of delivery areas. For example
- Length of training
- Ability to cascade training
- Cost of materials
- Licence/mandatory support costs
- Time per course for facilitator or admin
- Accreditation costs

The document also provides a cost-benefit scoring tool that can be completed to pull together the scores of effectiveness versus the cost weighting.

Users of the scoring tool will be asked to email their conclusions to the parenting commissioning officer so that we can increase our knowledge and information across Kent.

Programme effectiveness can change over time, both positively and negatively. Therefore we would recommend that programme developers are encouraged to self-assess themselves yearly.

“Delivering cost effective parenting programmes in Kent” has provided a cost effectiveness weighting for a sample of programmes in Kent. This tool will be used to cover those not included in the document and in addition, those not currently included, or assessed in the CWDC parenting commissioning toolkit.

If you have any questions on how to use this guidance or require support please contact Joanna.Hook@kent.gov.uk

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