



Commissioning case study

Cheshire West and Chester's whole place community budget – 'Altogether Better, Safer Communities, Integrated Early Support'

whole place community budget # outcomes-based commissioning # transformation # leadership
community cohesion # early intervention # domestic abuse # service-user dialogue

The headlines

- An ambitious whole place project coordinating the powers and resources of all agencies, based on strong, collaborative leadership.
- Significant demand reduction/diversion has already been recorded, avoiding the escalation of problems to a state where much more expensive interventions would be required.
- £570,000 of savings attributable to the success of integrated early support have been built into future council budgets.
- The council were participants in pilot 1 and wave 4 of the Commissioning Academy's development programme.

The partners agreed on the challenges they shared and which, for them, made 'business as usual' unsustainable:

- public sector shrinkage – managing public services budget reductions of 15 to 20 per cent over the next five years, in a way that does not compromise quality;
- improving quality of life – driving responsive public services and delivering strong outcomes for almost 330,000 residents;
- community delivery – encouraging residents and communities to take more responsibility for the places where they lived; and
- private sector growth – supporting the private sector to grow to fill the gap left by public sector shrinkage

They recognised too that the necessary changes were beyond the powers and scope of any of them as individual agencies and that they therefore had to:

- pool with a purpose – pooling people, money and assets where this can drive improvement. Joint investment needs to align with joint priorities rather than being seen as an end in itself;
- be greater than the sum of their parts – eliminating duplication, silos and waste to deliver what customers really value; and
- innovate – being market leaders on public sector reform, driving power to civil society, individuals and localities

Safer Communities was one of the projects in this programme, now subsumed into the Integrated Early Support approach. It is designed to address the causes and impact of domestic abuse, advocating a partnership approach to case management and delivery, reducing risks, demands and costs while delivering improved outcomes for victims, perpetrators and children.

Domestic abuse is a major challenge for public services. It places significant, costly and increasing day-to-day demands on the police, the council, health and other support services.

What is the context?

Altogether Better is the programme adopted by public service partners in West Cheshire to implement the whole place community budget initiative for the area.

The initiative has 'provided the opportunity to accelerate all the things we were planning to do... to go further, faster', and the partners 'have been very clear that whole place community budget is about transforming public services, rather than a separate and specific pilot which sits outside of our mainstream delivery. We are clear that all of our services must be efficient, effective and customer-responsive.' (Operational Plan)

Importantly, Altogether Better is also about reducing the long-term demand for services by developing new delivery models that intervene early and encourage individuals and communities to do more for themselves. In the current economic climate this is not only desirable, but essential.

(Operational Plan)

At the end of August 2012 the identified costs of domestic abuse in West Cheshire were estimated at £16.5 million per year. The actual costs are likely to be nearer £20 million. It is estimated that at least 98 per cent of these costs are reactive. This is unsustainable in the current economic climate. In addition to the costs to the public purse, domestic abuse has profound long-term implications for victims and perpetrators.

(Operational Plan)

The new model

What commissioning and delivery model has been adopted?

The problems needing solution

The previous way of providing services to individuals and families affected by domestic abuse was flawed in a number of ways:

- governance and commissioning arrangements were complex, with a network of overlapping statutory and non-statutory groups and partnerships– there were six commissioning routes for domestic abuse;
- arrangements were effective at the highest levels of risk/need but multi-agency risk assessment conferencing could be bureaucratic and slow and accountability could be unclear;
- prevention and protection arrangements at standard and medium risk were fragmented and poorly sequenced;
- accommodation options were dated and inflexible with extended stays in temporary refuge accommodation and lengthy periods of floating support limiting throughput;
- data was not collected and shared by agencies in a manner that provided a whole-system view of abuse, particularly in respect of health data; and
- the limitations of responses at the earlier stages, coupled with inherent risk aversion, could result in victims being escalated into the high-risk, high-cost category inappropriately

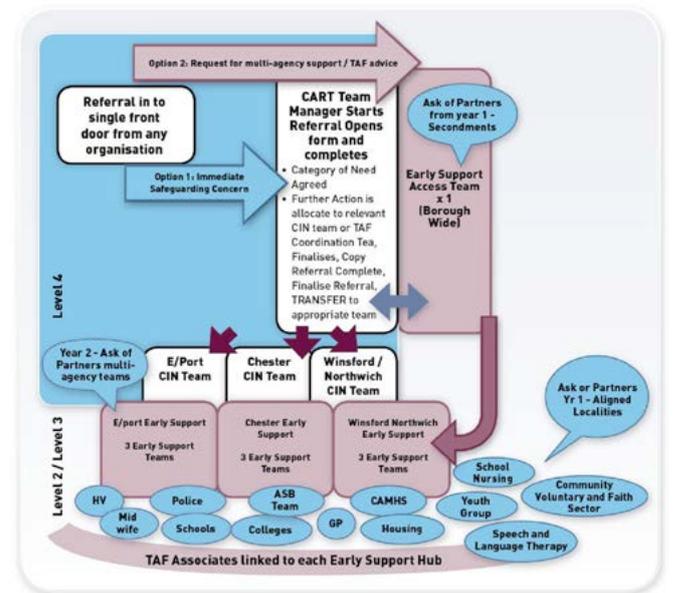
The options

The partners considered two options for a new delivery model: (1) a distinct, specialist domestic abuse service which would work alongside, but not be part of, locality-based multi-agency commissioning teams, and (2) an integrated whole-system approach with specialists as part of the case management and commissioning teams.

On a balance of risk and potential benefit, and drawing on experience of integrated offender management and multi-agency public protection arrangements, the partners decided that the integrated option should be adopted.

| The new delivery model | Instead of: |
|--|---|
| A new approach focused around families with a single family assessment, the TAF | Multiple individual assessments |
| A single point of access the Access Team enabling better access to the right services, a common understanding of need across agencies and further sharing of information through integrated case discussions. | Multiple front doors and varying assessment processes leading to a fragmentation and duplication. |
| Integrated Early Support Teams aligned to Children's Centres - bringing together health, CWAC Children's and Young People's services and other professionals-enabling joint management of cases and interventions across organisational boundaries | Silo based approaches to children, young people and families not always rooted in the needs of a specific community, often leading to an escalation in need and unsustainable demand on more costly acute services. |
| A Children's Investment Unit jointly commissioning services for children and young people across both health and Local Authority | A fragmented set of commissioned services resulting in duplication in some areas and gaps in others |
| The scale-up of evidence based interventions which reduce demand for more costly services following evaluation of 'what works' during year one | Interventions often not taken to full scale, not always evidenced based and commissioned on an organisational basis |

This diagram shows entry and referral routes in the new model:



The partnership approach to tackling domestic abuse in West Cheshire benefits from being part of a much broader framework of Integrated Early Support for families and vulnerable individuals.

Following the submission of the Safer Communities business case to government in 2012, which focused on domestic abuse, the delivery model has been enhanced by linking it to a holistic approach tackling complex dependency. Practically, this means that low-level domestic abuse is tackled early as part of a 'Team Around the Family' approach to preventing need from escalating.

The new delivery model is designed to help prevent violence from happening by challenging the attitudes and behaviours that foster it. Agencies are able to intervene

earlier and provide appropriate levels of support more rapidly when domestic abuse occurs. Partners are better placed to address risk and harm before this escalates to high-risk and crisis situations, requiring costly responses including the protection of victims and the bringing of perpetrators to justice.

The model represents an integrated, coordinated, whole-system response:

- equipping those at risk with the right information to support them to make informed choices about their lives;
- empowering front-line workers to better identify, manage and reduce risk;
- multi-agency risk assessment at locality level with intelligence-led problem solving;
- locality-based multi-agency specialist case commissioning teams working with complex medium- and high-risk victims, brokering and sequencing appropriate interventions based on risk and need;
- integrated offender management ('Navigate Safer') to provide wraparound services and 'grip' to high- and medium-risk perpetrators; and
- specialist domestic abuse services, commissioned jointly and strategically, covering accommodation, recovery programmes, outreach support, and other evidence-based interventions

Navigate Safer is a joint scheme in which the police and probation services work together to address domestic abuse in the highest risk or most complex cases in West Cheshire. It works alongside children's social care and the Integrated Early Support case management teams to support individuals who are motivated to stop being abusive. The scheme helps such people to develop the skills for a healthy relationship and supports them in accessing services to help with substance misuse, housing or employment, as well as completing specific work to address their abusive behaviour. For those who are not currently motivated to change, Navigate Safer continues to offer support and closely monitors their behaviour, ensuring that swift action is taken to bring them to account.

Who are the key partners?

The key members of the partnership supporting this project, as part of the whole place philosophy and the Altogether Better programme are:

- Cheshire West and Chester Council;
- Cheshire Constabulary;
- Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service;
- West Cheshire Clinical Commissioning Group;
- Vale Royal Clinical Commissioning Group;
- Local Health Trusts;
- Cheshire and Warrington Housing Alliance;
- Third Sector Assembly;
- Cheshire Probation Trust; and
- Cheshire Children's Trust

Specifically on the issue of domestic abuse, the model took into account feedback from three focus groups, one consisting of victims, one of perpetrators and one of an expert panel of academics and practitioners. These yielded valuable insights such as:

- the importance for victims of only having to tell their story once;
- the fear of disclosure because of the perceived risk of children being taken into care;
- the need for work in schools to educate young people about healthy and non-healthy relationships;
- the need to act at, or before, the 'turning point' of arrest, when most perpetrators realise they need to change; and
- the value of a perpetrator rehabilitation programme based on peer support

What has been the impact?

These quotes illustrate how things have changed for the better for both service users and staff:

I just wasn't coping: I thought I was, but my coping mechanisms were slowly shutting down and I wasn't being a very good mother to the children. I don't know where to begin - I don't think I'd be the person I am today if I hadn't had the help.

A mother of two

The coming together of agencies has provided a wealth of knowledge and current information about children and families, it has cut down duplication and stopped silo working

A front-line worker

Case study: Integrated Early Support

Harry lives with his mum and younger brother. He also has three brothers and one older sister. Both his parents and all his siblings have had some involvement with public services and the family has been known to social care since 1997. Police involvement is evident, along with a history of domestic violence.

Harry is described as being abusive, defiant and unwilling to respond to instructions at school. He is on a behavioural improvement plan but is not engaging; has repeated exclusions from school, is currently at risk of permanent exclusion, has been reported missing from home several times and has started to commit crime.

Harry's dad is currently on bail pending a case of assault and is alleged to be responsible for domestic violence towards Harry's mum. There have been several police visits to the home address after bricks were thrown through windows

and three of Harry's older siblings have historic convictions (assault, possession of Class A and C drugs and possessions of offensive weapons). Harry's younger brother is receiving support from school regarding self esteem.

Initial management with Harry's mum revealed that she recognised she was struggling to cope and expressed a willingness to engage with integrated Early Support. The 360° process provided a comprehensive understanding of the case, including an understanding of family dynamics, which helped to identify where to focus support for the most benefit and potential avenues of engagement.

A Taf (Team around the Family) was initiated and the issue of anti-social behaviour and education became the initial focus, working with Harry's school with support from Education Welfare.

As for the impact on demand, efficiency and expenditure, there is extremely positive evidence of integrated early intervention reducing both the demand on services and the escalation of problems to levels requiring more complex and expensive interventions:

- analysis of the integrated offender management approach (Navigate Safer) focusing on domestic abuse since full launch in October 2013 indicates a reduction in arrests of 35 per cent;
- estimated 20 per cent reduction in demand on Cheshire Constabulary (incidents) for a sample of people whose

- cases were managed through integrated early support; and
- on average, there has been a 23 per cent reduction in inappropriate referrals to children's social care each quarter through diversion to the new model's early intervention 'front door'. This is releasing the statutory social care staff to focus on high risk cases

To put these figures into context, consider the following average unit costs of having to handle these issues without early intervention:

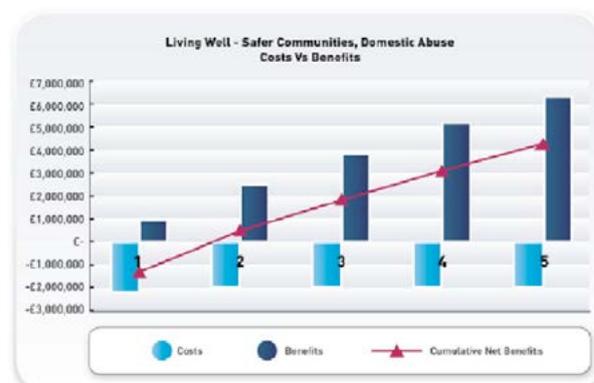
- average national cost of a domestic abuse incident **£13,160**
- average local cost of arrest and prosecution of such an incident **£ 6,000**
- average national cost of holding perpetrator in custody **£ 9,180**

If the reductions in incidents and arrests as a result of Integrated Early Support are sustained the above costs will be significantly and permanently reduced.

Meanwhile, the average cost of looking after a child in care per year is £44,676 and £2,400 for a child protection plan over six months, compared to an average cost of a common assessment framework under Integrated Early Support for six months of £1,500. So when cases are diverted from higher-level interventions as early indications suggest then, once again, substantial savings can be forecast.

This reduction in demand is reflected in council budget proposals for 2016/17 which include £570,000 of cashable savings from staff reductions attributable to the approach.

The domestic abuse strand of the Integrated Early Support project made the following estimate of costs and benefits over five years:



Notes:

1. The above financial tables have not been discounted to account for devaluing of money and inflation
2. The benefits included non-cashable and cashable efficiencies

What have been the key elements of success?

Strong, consistent and collaborative leadership successfully established a culture of mutual trust at all levels, encouraging the taking of calculated risks and building confidence that one agency was not simply shifting activity and cost to another.

The council believes that among the keys to success were:

- partnership involvement in business case development;
- full commitment by strategic leaders on the public services board;
- willingness to share information;
- co-located teams;
- a jointly-developed evaluation framework; and
- acknowledgement of the need for upfront investment

At the outset of the Altogether Better programme it was recognised that a new approach was required, which saw elected members, non-executives and officers working together in a new model of collaborative leadership to lead programme developments. This new collaborative leadership model built upon excellent partnership relationships that had existed in West Cheshire, focusing on how these could be taken to the next level based on the need for joint action, intervention and investment.

Chief officers from the public, private and community, voluntary and faith sectors implemented new leadership and management arrangements to steer the development of the programme. This consisted of the public services board providing overall strategic and management direction during the proof of concept stage; an operational steering group providing expert practitioner input to operations; and five thematic management groups taking responsibility for ensuring that all key requirements of thematic and project development were completed to time and agreed standards. An informal partnership arrangement was introduced to capture the new working arrangements, with all members of the public services board and operational steering group signing up to this.

In addition, the programme has worked closely with existing governance mechanism such the shadow health and wellbeing board, the children’s trust, the community safety partnership, and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

What has been learnt?

Adopt a whole-system approach

A whole-system approach to integration is needed to intermesh the projects in a broad programme like this and to identify the common components of new delivery models which could be shared. The benefits of this approach where ‘the whole is greater than the sum of the parts’ are:

- a more streamlined customer journey;
- reduced costs for new delivery models;
- better management and mitigation of risk;
- ability to rapidly scale up the approach to tackle new issues; and
- a coherent culture of collaboration across public services

An outcomes framework

The delivery of savings and improvements arising from the Altogether Better partnership will be measured using a new outcomes framework. This will capture the outcomes which underpin business plans and monitor the delivery of both the improvements for customers and the savings which follow. This extract from the framework sets out the relevant outcomes for the safer communities and early intervention projects:

| Overall outcome | Project | Detailed outcome |
|--------------------|-------------------|---|
| Crime has reduced | Safer communities | Reduction in reported domestic abuse incidents |
| | | Reduction in re-offending by known perpetrators |
| | | Reduced prison costs (from tagging) |
| Children are safer | Early support | Reduction in antisocial behaviour |
| | Safer communities | Reduced incidence of children subject to a child protection plan |
| | | Reduced numbers of children with a child protection plan having domestic abuse as a primary cause |
| | | Reduced numbers of children under Children in Need having domestic abuse as a primary cause |
| | | Reduced numbers of children going into care having domestic abuse as a primary cause |
| | | Reduced numbers of children in custody |
| | Early support | Reduced numbers of children coming into care |

| Overall outcome | Project | Detailed outcome |
|--|---------------|---|
| | | Reduced instances of children being taken into residential care |
| | | Reduction in Children in Need plans |
| | | Reduction in Child Protection plans |
| | | Reduction in the level of safeguarding needed |
| People are healthier | Early support | Reduction in instances of parental mental health problems |
| | | Reduced A&E attendances |
| | | Reduced hospital admissions |
| | | Reduced unscheduled antenatal presentations |
| People are less dependent on the state | Early support | Reduction in job seeker allowance |
| People have better skills | Early support | Reduction in language delay at 21 months |



Who can I contact?

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Other useful information

www.altogetherbetterwestcheshire.org.uk for the Whole Place Community Budget programme.

For more case studies from the points of view both of service users and public services, see <http://www.altogetherbetterwestcheshire.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/5.-IES-Case-Studies.pdf>