The cost effectiveness of Action for Children’s Intensive Family Support services

This item was submitted to Loughborough University's Institutional Repository by the/an author.


Additional Information:
- This is a conference presentation.

Metadata Record: https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/2134/15964

Version: Published

Publisher: Action for Children; Centre for Child and Family Research, Loughborough University

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THE COST EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTION FOR CHILDREN INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

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The research method

- Two ‘sites’
  - Action for Children Intensive Family Support service
  - Local authority
- Sample of 20 families in each site
  - Selected based on commissioners aims
  - 43 families in total
- Data collected for three time periods
  - Six months prior to provision
  - During the provision
  - Six months after the provision ceased
- Family data bought together with unit costs
Key Findings

Highly complex

- Data Matching
  - Complexities of matching data between different teams and agencies
  - No family level data available on access to health services, receipt of social welfare or offending

- Multiple needs
  - Understanding the interplay between different factors

- Families on a variety of trajectories
  - Intensive Family support service may result in a short term increase in costs
Key Findings

- **Children on the edge of care**
  - Preventing entry into care as a key aim for commissioners
  - Estimated the hypothetical costs of placing children into care
  - Costs avoided ranged between £5,475 and £130,471 per family

- **School attendance**
  - Reduction in expenditure ranged between £108 and £9,357 per child

- **Return on investment**
  - Minority of children in the sample
  - May be higher in longer term
  - Ranged between £10,588 and £21,879
Where next:
Building on the evidence base

- The development of a tool
  - Estimate the costs for families across three time periods
  - Calculate realisable savings and costs avoided
  - Explore variations
- Designed to contribute to the evidence base
  - Inform planning
  - Explore how costs and savings are distributed across different agencies
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