



BUTTLE UK

Evaluation of the Buttle UK Chances for Children Grant in the West Midlands
Final Report

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Annex A: Research tools

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1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Introduction

- 1.1 Buttle UK is a grant-giving organisation that provides financial support directly to families with children and young people who are in financial hardship and are facing crisis.
- 1.2 In 2018 Buttle UK received funds from the National Lottery Community Fund and Comic Relief, and directed the funds into their Chances for Children Grant (CCG) grant fund. The fund was aimed at families suffering from the negative impacts of domestic abuse in the West Midlands and ran from March 2018 to March 2021.
- 1.3 In April 2020, Buttle UK commissioned Starks Consulting Ltd to deliver an evaluation of the CCG. The report provides key findings from the research undertaken with service providers and families.

Contextual Background

- 1.4 In England and Wales, two women a week on average are killed by their partner or ex-partner. In 2014, 149 UK women were suspected to have been killed by men¹. One in seven children and young people under the age of 18 will have experienced living with domestic violence².
- 1.5 An estimated 750,000 children and young people, across the UK witness or experience domestic abuse every year³ and a significant proportion experience abuse in their own relationships⁴. Domestic violence cases in the West Midlands have hit their highest ever levels – with more than 3,500 offences recorded in just one month. There were 54,583 domestic abuse-related offences and incidents reported to West Midlands Police in the year ending March 2018, according to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics.
- 1.6 Families fleeing domestic violence experience significant emotional and environmental problems caused by the break-up of their family and loss of home. Each year more than 100,000 people in the UK are likely to be victims of high risk or severe domestic abuse. Women are more likely than men to be the victims of domestic abuse with 95 per cent of the cases going to a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) being women⁵. The impact of domestic violence on children can be profound and long lasting. Children who grow up in violent homes are more likely to be victims of child abuse. They are more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety and are more likely to suffer from violence as an adult⁶.

¹ Office for National Statistics (ONS), (2015), citing the Homicide Index from the Home Office (cited Welsh Women's Aid website)

² Radford et al. (2011) Meeting the needs of children living with domestic violence, NSPCC/Refuge

³ Department of Health (2002) 'Women's Mental Health: Into the Mainstream: Strategic development of mental health care for women'

⁴ NSPCC - Radford, L. et al (2011) Child abuse and neglect in the UK today.

⁵ SafeLives (2015), Insights. Independent domestic violence advisor services National Dataset 2013-14.

⁶ Unicef (2006) Behind Closed Doors: The impact of Domestic Violence on Children.

- 1.7 Women and children who are victims of domestic abuse and are forced to leave home are at a particular crisis point in their lives. The effects of this are shown through stress and withdrawal of children who often exhibit the following behaviours: withdrawal, aggression, tantrums, problems at school, bedwetting, anxiety and depression. Services working with families with complex needs report that domestic violence is one of the most prevalent causes of family breakdown.
- 1.8 The CCG domestic abuse programme provided in the West Midlands supports children and young people who have been exposed to domestic abuse and are experiencing ongoing emotional, developmental or educational difficulties. The West Midlands domestic abuse CCG programme's core aims were to:
- ensure that the children live in a safe, healthy, well-equipped home.
 - allow the children to better engage in education and have the same access to education as their peers.
 - allow the children to access activities that promote their wellbeing and personal development.
- 1.9 The application for a grant is tailored by support workers working closely with families who are facing crisis as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse. CCGs can be accessed to fund necessary household or educational items, activities or services that will help improve the child's experiences and circumstances, and lead to improved outcomes.

Aims of the Evaluation

- 1.10 Starks Consulting was asked to conduct a research project with Buttle UK's referral partners and with the children, young people and families in receipt of a CCG.
- 1.11 The research aims, as specified in the invitation to tender, were to:
- capture the voice of the children, young people and families who have been supported by a CCG to ensure future support is shaped around their needs and aspirations.
 - develop and implement a method to assess whether the CCGs achieved the Theory of Change (TOC) outcomes.
 - develop and implement a method to assess the impact of CCGs on referral agencies, in particular, whether they are more child/young people focused.
 - design and deliver a cost study that evidences the cost-saving potential for agencies administering CCGs.
- 1.12 An evaluation framework was designed to evidence the extent to which the West Midlands domestic abuse CCG programme has delivered on Buttle UK's core aims. Key areas of investigation are shown in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1: Evaluation Framework

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Outcomes against the TOC</p> | <p>Ensure that the children live in a safe, healthy, well-equipped home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of addressing the need and the Grant being applied to address this need in the home. • Increased feeling of security and safety – the contribution of the Grant. • Any impact of other areas of need in the home not addressed and why. <p>Allow the children to better engage in education and have the same access to education as their peers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of applications focussing on accessing education (transport, uniforms, equipment, books, activities, hobbies, interest). • Strengthen the approach in determining educational interests. • Children, young people and families’ daily lives enhanced by the Grant and enable CYP to participate alongside their peers. • No evidence of impact in this – the reasons why this area was not addressed. <p>Allow the children to access activities that promote their wellbeing and personal development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of areas of interest determined between agency and children, young people. • Evidence of the Grant facilitating access to a breadth of educational activities. |
| <p>Referring agencies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on assessment practices. • Impact on trust and engagement of services from families. • Impact of the grant on throughput and case closures. • Potential/capacity among agencies to deploy the Grant. |
| <p>Cost-benefit</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost scenarios based on the estimates of Grant administration and potential increased efficiency of service delivery. • Future potential saving for the grants across the different organisations. |
| <p>Future planning</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential opportunities for the Buttle UK Chances for Children Grant. • Agencies where there is a greater capacity to adopt a grant-based approach to their support. Key factors which have influenced this. |

Method

- 1.13 A qualitative approach to data generation was used. Adopting a qualitative approach was considered to be the most appropriate method for gaining the views and experiences of children, young people and parents. In addition, the ethical considerations of this study meant that utilising a quantitative approach would be inappropriate. This was due to the need to act with sensitivity and to place the voice of families at the heart of the study.
- 1.14 Interviews included a series of questions with agency staff aimed at getting a confidence rating regarding the impact of CCGs on agencies' efficiencies. Potential efficiencies included: improved family engagement in support; families' capacity to move forward, and cases closures. One of the original intentions was to identify from agencies' case management system, whether there was a discernible difference in the amount of time a case remained open for families that had received a CCG. However, agencies responded that this was too onerous an exercise and would be unlikely to reveal any patterns. The reasons why cases were closed or remained open were complex and included multiple factors such as available housing and complexity of families' needs. Therefore, the costing section is based on perceptions only and can, therefore only be considered indicative of any potential savings.
- 1.15 All the interviews were conducted on the telephone. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic negated the possibility of doing face-to-face consultations with support workers and families safely. All support workers interviewed were working from home and all families were telephone interviewed in their homes.
- 1.16 Letters of engagement were forwarded by Buttle UK to agencies who had been actively referring families to the CCG. Families were recruited via the agencies where it was felt feasible and appropriate to engage them in the research.
- 1.17 To help engage the families, information was forwarded to agencies that explained the purpose of the research and gave assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. A £20 voucher was offered to each participating family who completed an interview. This was either in the form of a supermarket voucher or Amazon voucher to thank them for their time.
- 1.18 **Table 1.2** shows the type of agency (statutory, voluntary or Housing Association), number of applications, and number of participants interviewed.

Table 1.2: Number of completed interviews per agency type

| Agency Type | Number of applications | Staff interviewed | Parents interviewed | Children interviewed |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Housing Association | 15 | 1 manager 1 support worker | 4 | 2 |
| Housing Association | 33 | 1 manager 1 support worker | 3 | 0 |
| Statutory Service | 42 | 2 managers 3 support workers | 7 | 3 |
| Statutory Service | 7 | 1 manager 2 support workers | 0 | 0 |
| Voluntary | 186 | 1 manager 3 support workers | 3 | 3 |
| Voluntary | 8 | 1 support workers | 0 | 0 |
| Voluntary | 23 | 2 support workers | 0 | 0 |
| Voluntary | 43 | 1 support workers | 0 | 0 |
| Voluntary | 9 | 2 support workers | 0 | 0 |
| Totals | 366 | 22 | 17 | 8 |

1.19 In summary:

- Nine agencies were engaged in the study. These agencies were identified by Buttle UK as being particularly active in their applications for CCGs. Not all agencies responded to the call to participate. This was most probably due to the exceptional circumstances that agencies were operating under at the time of the research (i.e. during the Covid-19 pandemic).
- Twenty-two interviews were completed with managers (n=6) and support workers (n=16). Managers included team managers in statutory services and managers of housing associations, voluntary support agencies and refuges. Support workers included a mix of social workers and family support workers.
- Seventeen interviews were completed with parents.
- Eight interviews were completed with children and young people.

1.20 **Table 1.3** gives a breakdown of the ages and gender of young people engaged in the study.

Table 1.3: Children participating in the research

| | Number | Ages |
|--------------|----------|------------------------|
| Boys | 5 | 6, 9, (2x) 11,12 years |
| Girls | 3 | 12,14, 16 years |
| Total | 8 | |

1.21 The profile of families engaged in the research is shown in Table 1.4 and shows that there were a mix of ethnicities, number of children in the family, housing situation and whether or not their case was open or closed.

Table 1.4: Families engaged in the study

| Family | Ethnicity | Children | Current housing situation | Case open/closed |
|--------|-----------------|----------|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1 | African | 1 | Refuge | Open |
| 2 | White British | 3 | Refuge | Open |
| 3 | African | 1 | Refuge | Open |
| 4 | White British | 3 | Refuge | Open |
| 5 | African | 4 | Housing Association | Closed |
| 6 | White/European | 2 | Housing Association | Open |
| 7 | Black Caribbean | 4 | Housing Association | Closed |
| 8 | White British | 1 | Private/rented | Closed |
| 9 | Asian | 2 | Private/rented | Open |
| 10 | White | 2 | Private/rented | Closed |
| 11 | White/European | 1 | Housing Association | Closed |
| 12 | Asian | 1 | Housing Association | Open |
| 13 | White British | 2 | Housing Association | Open |
| 14 | White British | 7 | Housing Association | Open |
| 15 | White British | 2 | Housing Association | Open |
| 16 | African | 3 | Housing Association | Open |
| 17 | White/European | 1 | Housing Association | Open |

Ethical Considerations

- 1.22 Buttle UK, Starks Consulting and individual agencies worked together to ensure that the research participants were fully informed of the nature of the research and gave informed consent for their data to be shared with the evaluators.
- 1.23 All research participants including agency managers, support workers and families were provided with a full explanation as to the purpose of the interview and assured that their data would be confidential and feedback anonymised. No data has been shared with the evaluators without the participants' permission and all participation in the study was voluntary.
- 1.24 All case study data has been anonymised and throughout this report, all names have been changed to protect anonymity.
- 1.25 At all times, participants were treated with the utmost sensitivity when asking them to tell their stories. No questions were asked which would have led to the families recalling any traumatic experiences.

Challenges in delivering the research

- 1.26 The original research aimed to undertake four focus groups with parents, children and young people and four case studies of families. Holding focus groups has not been possible due to the safety constraints relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

- 1.27 To account for this, more interviews with parents, children and young people have been completed on the telephone. This has been a good way of hearing from parents about their individual accounts of the benefits of the grant. Some challenges were encountered when interviewing children on the telephone, who do not always express themselves well on the telephone – especially with those with whom they are not familiar. However, we have been able to generate a few case studies of the impact of the grant from children and young people’s perspectives, and parents and support workers have been asked to report on the impact of the grant on behalf of their children.
- 1.28 The timing of the pandemic meant that, for many children supported through CCGs, the potential to fund activities outside of the home have been significantly reduced. Therefore, capturing the breadth of impact relating to educational activities was somewhat limited.

Analysis

- 1.29 To ensure the study generated reliable and consistent findings, all research tools were designed to support the areas of investigation detailed in Table 1.1, and agreed with the Buttle UK steering group who supported the research. **Annex A** provides a copy of the tools designed for the study.
- 1.30 Qualitative data was analysed using a contribution analysis approach to review evidence against the outcomes in the Theory of Change (TOC).
- 1.31 Reports written using a contribution analysis⁷ are not definitive proof of impact. They draw on the evidence generated to add insight and a line of reasoning from which we can draw a plausible conclusion that the program or intervention has made an important contribution to the documented results.

Report Structure

The report is structured as follows:

- Section Two: Impact and outcomes of the CCG on children.
- Section Three: Impact of the CCG on agencies.
- Section Four: Cost Study.
- Section Five: Conclusions.

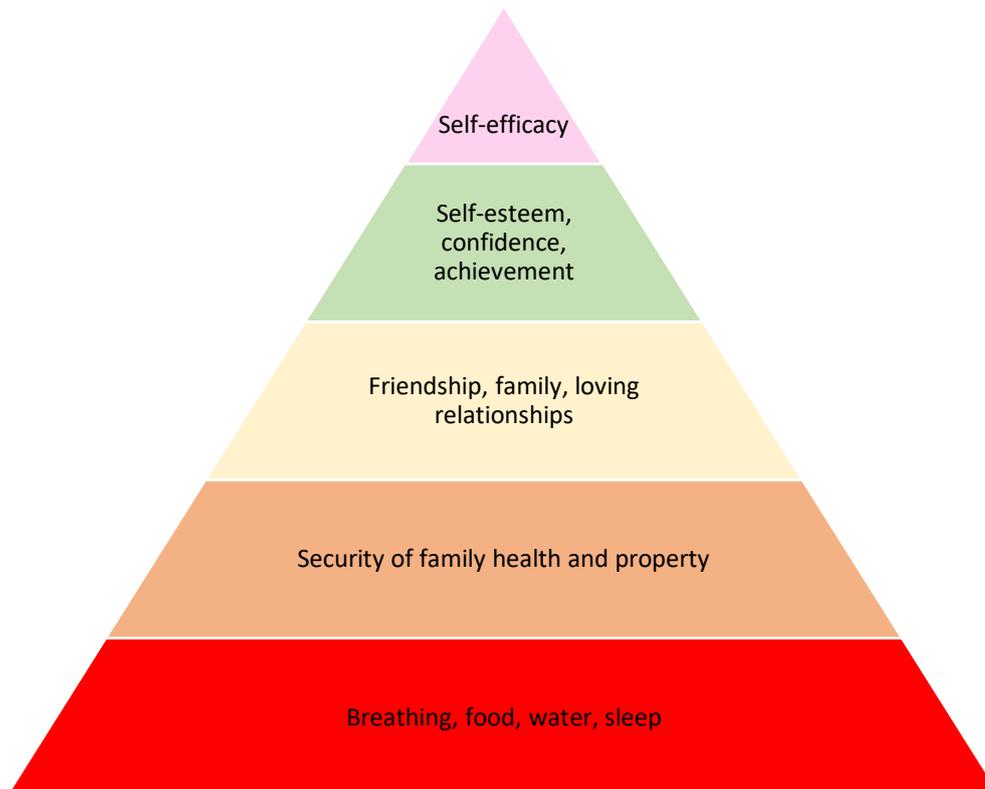
⁷ For more information on a Contribution Analysis approach see https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/contribution_analysis (last visited 11-06-20).

2 IMPACT OF THE CHANCES FOR CHILDREN GRANT ON CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Introduction

- 2.1 This section draws together the evidence generated from interviews with managers and support workers who made the applications to the CCG and from children and families involved in CCG activities. It begins with a look at the nature of the grants awarded to children/young people and their families to place the findings within the broader context of the scale and scope of the support provided by Buttle UK through the CCG.
- 2.2 Examination of impact was based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theoretical framework, shown in **Figure 2.1**.

Figure 1.1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs



- 2.3 This theory puts forward the idea that individuals move through a fundamental number of hierarchical motivations, in a unique order, based upon both physiological and psychological needs. These 'needs' to which Maslow referred, are: basic needs (relating to the home and including safety and security), psychological needs (relating to family, friendships, education and achievement) self-fulfillment (creativity and personal development).
- 2.4 According to Maslow, every person is capable and has the desire to move up the hierarchy towards a level of self-actualisation, but for some, progress can be interrupted by crisis events such as family breakdown, homelessness and loss of employment that can impact on a person's resilience and ability to motivate oneself to achieve self-actualisation.

- 2.5 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs was considered a highly relevant framework because of the synergy with the CCG offer of support and intended outcomes. The three priorities set by Buttle UK, are best seen as links in a chain which, when viewed together, represent an opportunity and a pathway to personal growth for children, young people and families.

Chances for Children grants awarded to children and their families

- 2.6 A total of 58 agencies in the West Midlands received a grant on behalf of 537 families. The demographics of 505 families was collected and this is shown in Table 2.1.⁸

Table 2.1: Families supported by the CCG

| Ethnicity | No/% | Recipient | No |
|------------------------|------------|--|------------|
| White | 212(42%) | Single Parent (Over 21) | 405(80%) |
| Asian or Asian British | 119(24%) | Single Parent (Under 21) | 82(16%) |
| Black or Black British | 62(12%) | Two parents with children | 8(2%) |
| Mixed heritage | 55(11%) | Young person (under 21) estranged | 5(1%) |
| Not disclosed | 12(2%) | Guardian with full-time care of child | 3(1%) |
| Other | 44(9%) | Grandparent with full-time care of child | 2(0%) |
| Chinese | 1(0%) | | |
| Totals | 505 | | 505 |

Source: Buttle UK demographic data

- 2.7 **Table 2.1** shows the diversity of families receiving a CCG, and the high percentage of ethnically non-white families accessing the support. This is not surprising given the area of West Midlands. West Midlands has the second highest level of ethnic diversity outside of London with the Asian population making up 14.3% of the population and Black/Black British making up 9.8% of the population.⁹ Just over three-quarters (78%) of the grants were awarded to families with British citizenship with the remainder being: refugees with either full refugee status or the right to remain indefinitely (12.2%), EU citizens (4.2%), refugees with discretionary leave to remain (2.2%), Asylum seekers (1.6%), or ‘Other’ (2%). The majority of families whom the CCG supported were single parents looking after their children (80%) and the majority were women (97%). Although there is an increase in awareness of a lack of support for men who are victims of domestic abuse¹⁰, the majority of people (75%) reporting to be victims of domestic abuse are women.¹¹

⁸ Data was only made available from Buttle UK for the 505 families shown here.

⁹ NOS Regional ethnic diversity (2018) Note: figures quoted are from the 2011 Census.

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/national-and-regional-populations/regional-ethnic-diversity/1.6>

¹⁰ See HM Government (2019) Position statement on male victims of crimes considered in the cross-Government strategy on ending Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

¹¹ ONS Domestic abuse victim characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2019.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabusevictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2019>

- 2.8 There are very few services providing support for male victims of domestic abuse and few men are aware of any services and support available¹². Therefore the infrastructure for Buttle UK to support male victims with a CCG is currently lacking.
- 2.9 The total value of the grants provided to the families was £754,757, with an average grant award of £1,405. Grants were awarded according to the list of items shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Items granted by types of item¹³

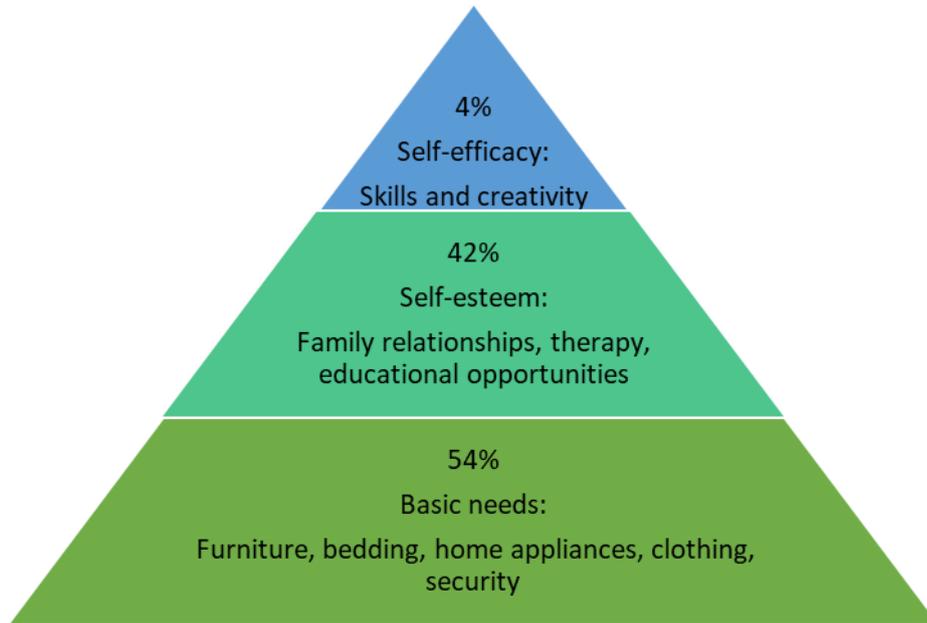
| Aspect of Need | Item/Activity | Number |
|----------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Basic needs | Bed/Bedding | 367 |
| Basic needs | Home Appliances | 333 |
| Basic needs | Storage Furniture | 214 |
| Basic needs | Home Furnishing | 194 |
| Basic needs | Clothing | 173 |
| Basic needs | Carpeting and Flooring | 123 |
| Basic needs | Children's Clothing | 89 |
| Basic needs | Safety and Special Equipment | 45 |
| Basic needs | Home Decoration | 29 |
| Basic needs | Discretionary Family Payment | 18 |
| Basic needs | Removal Costs | 5 |
| Sub-total | | 1590 |
| Psychological need/Relationships | Activities for the family | 71 |
| Psychological need/Education | IT Equipment | 423 |
| Psychological need/Education | Educational Toys and Books | 416 |
| Psychological need/Education | School uniform and equipment | 213 |
| Psychological need/Education | Travel Costs | 36 |
| Psychological need/Education | Tuition | 13 |
| Psychological need/Education | Course materials/school equipment | 5 |
| Psychological need/Education | School Trip | 3 |
| Psychological needs/Belonging | Therapy | 42 |
| Sub-total | | 1222 |
| Self-fulfilment | Sport, Art, Music and Leisure Activities | 66 |
| Self-fulfilment | After School Activities | 18 |
| Self-fulfilment | Art/music/drama activities | 16 |
| Self-fulfilment | Work Material and Equipment | 4 |
| Sub-total | | 104 |
| Total number of items | | 2916 |

¹² Huntley AL, Potter L, Williamson E, et al. *Help-seeking by male victims of domestic violence and abuse(DVA): a systematic review and qualitative evidence synthesis*. BMJ Open 2019;9:e021960. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2018-021960

¹³ Source: Buttle UK Chances for Children data

2.10 The range of items and activities funded have been ordered to determine how the funding mirrors Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. This is shown in **Figure 2.2**.

Figure 2.2: How the Chances for Children has supported the needs of children, young people and families



2.11 **Figure 2.2** shows how support workers prioritised the basic needs (54%) and self-esteem/education opportunities of children and young people (42%) with the funding. This is to be expected given the crisis that many families were facing with their housing situation and fractured home life as a result of domestic abuse. In addition, although there were examples of the grant being used to help children/young people engage with extra-curricular school activities and hobbies, the pandemic constrained support workers’ ability to fund these activities during most of the period from March 2020-21. Three government ‘lockdowns’ were imposed with subsequent requirements to home-school during this time.

2.12 Despite these constraints, interviews showed that support workers had tailored the applications as much as possible and was practicable to meet the needs of children and their families.

2.13 The following sections describe how the CCGs fulfilled the key aims of Buttle UK beginning with a look at how the grant helped ensure children live in safe, healthy, well-equipped home.

Ensuring children live in a safe, healthy, well-equipped home

2.14 The research was conducted with agencies working with families who were victims of domestic abuse. As a consequence, these included many families who were being resettled after a period of living in a refuge, families that had recently moved on from a refuge and were living independently, or families that had decided to stay at home with the abusive partner no longer in the home.

- 2.15 Nine of the 17 families interviewed had left their original home, leaving behind all their possessions apart from essential clothes and one or two children's items.
- 2.16 All support workers working on behalf of the families who had fled their homes due to domestic violence recognised the vulnerable position the families were in.
- "Families that leave home without anything are absolutely at rock bottom and have nothing. The Buttle grant helps them get back on their feet, furnishing the house and making it a home and getting the basics for the children such as beds, bedding, clothes, school uniforms and laptops."* (Support worker)
- 2.17 Many families reported that this sudden change of circumstances had a significant impact on the families' wellbeing and their sense of vulnerability.
- "When we came to the refuge, we had nothing. My children had no clothes to wear, no toys, nothing to look forward to. We were all very depressed, and stressed. There were too many things going on at once. I was very concerned for my daughter. She was very angry and wouldn't speak to me. She thought I'd split the family up."* (Mother)
- 2.18 The CCG was offered by agencies as a part of a suite of support to families in crisis. For some, this support was delivered at a refuge, and for others in their own home. Many support workers were responsible for finding families a more permanent home after a period in a refuge or in temporary (and often inappropriate e.g. bed and breakfast) accommodation. In addition to the CCG, families received expertise, advice and support on, for example, applying for a non-molestation order, accessing welfare benefits, financial/debt management, parenting advice, and emotional support. They also signposted or referred families to other support (e.g. doctors or solicitors) as needed. The case provided below is an example of the wrap-around support provided through agencies.

Figure 2.3: Family Case Study A

Early last year Sally was living in a hotel with her four children in one room. She explained that her mental health was very low at this time and that she had had suicidal thoughts. Three of her children had additional needs including autism and attention deficit hyperactivity order and this made living in this way very difficult. *"I was at rock bottom if I'm honest with you."* (Mother)

Sally's case was categorised high risk by MARAC¹⁴. She also accessed support from a charity in Birmingham who helped her apply for housing and secured new school places for her children. *"The support needed to be put in place quickly as Mum was very vulnerable and was deemed to be a high-risk victim of domestic violence."* (Support worker)

The family support worker agreed a plan to keep the family safe, to ensure the children's regular attendance at school and to stay healthy. *"We worked together to discuss the importance of routine, keeping positive and keeping talking."* (Support worker)

The support worker helped the family bid for and secure a new home. *"If it wasn't for [name of support worker] fighting my corner, I would never have got to where I am."* (Mother)

¹⁴ Multi-agency risk assessment conference held to discuss the support needs of families who are victims of domestic abuse and deemed at high risk of harm.

In June 2019, the support worker sat down with Sally and talked through the possibility of applying for a Buttle UK grant and what it could be used for. They determined that the most urgent needs were beds and bedding for the children alongside a cooker. They also applied for laptops, and a trampoline for the children that helped ensure they could access education and keep active during lockdown.

The mother was delighted with the support from the grant and agreed that her circumstances were so much improved as a result.

"We had nothing absolutely nothing, and this has given us a chance....the trampoline is really good, both boys have ADHD and they have a lot of energy and use it every day. I'm so grateful for all the support I've had from [name of support worker] and for this grant. It has really made a difference to me and the children." (Mother)

This case was still open to the support worker who said that the family is still very vulnerable. The children are in need of therapy which she was going to put in place after their home was settled.

Source: Starks Consulting family interview

- 2.19 This case report was typical of families that had received a powerful combination of the support from the agency and from the CCG. This was particularly the case where families had been supported back into independent living and helped them to set up a safe home.
- 2.20 There were other examples where the grant had been used to make a home more secure after the women decided to stay in their own home. Fencing and security had been paid for to make the home more secure.
- 2.21 Agencies agreed that the ability to support families financially using the grant and in practical ways made a significant difference to their early outcomes.
- "It makes moving on a lot easier, if mum has support in place with the children... and to create a family home and have creature comforts, when you have children you need to create more of a home."* (Support worker)
- 2.22 The case provided below also shows how the support made a positive impact on a family who was being supported in a refuge. This evidences the significance of the combination of the one-to-one support from support workers coupled with the financial support from the grant.

Figure 2.4: Family Case Study B

Claire left her family home where she had been living for seven years. She had four children ranging from 5 years to 17 years of age. Her partner had become violent and controlling and she was suffering with her health due to the stressful situation she was living in. She had concerns that her children were suffering emotionally due to the level of conflict in the home. She decided she had to leave for the sake of her children and their future.

"I left with only clothes, just what I could pack and take there and then. It was our safety that really mattered." (Mother)

The charity advocated on her behalf to help her to access a house through social housing. She had originally been refused accommodation, but due to her circumstances, she was prioritised. Once she was in her new home, she was helped to apply for a Buttle UK grant and was awarded financial support to purchase beds for her children, curtains, a wardrobe, and clothes for her children and a laptop.

According to the mother, the grant had made a significant impact on how the family feels. *“It made it feel like a home. The transition had a massive impact on us all; to leave all your stuff, the house was really empty, and we needed things to keep the kids busy. I was depressed with it all and this helped me feel much better.”* (Mother)

Since moving into a new home last year, the mother was able to start a course at university. She is aspiring to work with families who have suffered similar experiences as her own family. She stated she felt much more able to focus on her studies now as they were settled in their new home. *“I couldn’t have done this without the support I’ve received and I just want to say thank you very much to Buttle.”* (Mother)

Source: Starks Consulting family interview

- 2.23 For the children and young people too, there was evidence that the items they had received had resulted in them feeling happier and settled in their new home. There were many accounts of children/young people moving into their own bedroom for the first time, having new beds and bedding, and bedroom furniture (e.g. wardrobes and dressing tables). Some of the children spoken to were clearly very happy and settled in the home and were enjoying their new/improved surroundings.

“I love my room. I’ve got a new bed and I don’t have to share with my brother anymore.”
(Boy aged 6)

- 2.24 Other items bought for the children and young people (categorised as basic needs) included clothes. Families had purchased clothes for a mixture of purposes both leisure and school. One young person spoken to reported how her new clothes had made a difference to her.

“When we left home, I was gutted, I hadn’t had chance to take my clothes with me. I love my clothes. Going shopping with [name of support worker] made me feel so happy that I could get out of the same set of clothes I’d been wearing for weeks.” (Girl aged 14)

Allow the children to better engage in education and have the same access to education as their peers

- 2.25 Violence in children’s lives often causes disruption to their schooling and can also harm the quality of their educational experiences and outcomes¹⁵. For some families in this study, children’s participation in education had been interrupted because of the crisis concerning the family.

“We find that a lot of our children have had a certain amount of disruption to their schooling, some of it because they have moved away all of a sudden and some of it because of what’s been going on at home...children have missed out on quite a lot.”
(Support worker)

¹⁵ Lloyd, M (2018) *Domestic Violence and Education: Examining the Impact of Domestic Violence on Young Children, Children, and Young People and the Potential Role of Schools*. *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02094> (last visited 03/03/21)

- 2.26 Evidence from the case studies and discussions with support workers revealed a strong focus on ensuring children were able to participate in education after a period of crisis. The data provided by Buttle UK shows that 1109 items were awarded to children and young people to help them access education in the same way as their peers. Most of the items funded by the CCG were computers or mobile devices (phones and iPads), educational books and toys for younger children, school uniforms and educational equipment (including school bags, stationary/calculators).
- 2.27 The first lockdown (March to June 2020) saw school closures and resulted in many children/young people not being able to continue with their schoolwork due to having no laptop and sometimes no internet provision. The purchase of computers, printers, iPads and, in some cases, internet connections has had a significant positive impact on the ability of children and young people to continue to engage in their education. There were many accounts of children/young people using their parent's mobile phone to do homework during lockdown prior to the purchase of these items. Plans by the government to roll-out laptops during the first lockdown did not materialise in all areas which left families struggling during 2020 and this was a priority¹⁶.
- 2.28 Children/young people confirmed the importance of the grant in supporting them in their education. The case study provided below is a good example of how the grant in total has supported families to lead a more normal life and helped young people access education.

Figure 2.5: Family Case Study C

Annisa and her daughter Shana had been living in a refuge for six months at the time of the interview. The mother had left her husband *“very quickly”* due to persistent domestic abuse including violence. *“It was a very difficult situation, but I had to put a stop to it before something horrible happened.”* She left her city and came to Birmingham to seek refuge.

While at the refuge the family received considerable support. *“We’d suffered for many years and we needed help to get our lives back. We have both had a lot of support, and my daughter has had counselling...and [we’ve had support with] benefits and in getting a home to move to.”* The mother described the support from the refuge as a ‘lifeline’ without which she would not feel as positive about her future as she does today.

According to the support worker, the family were really struggling to cope with their situation when they came to refuge. The daughter had been traumatised over the years and the move to the refuge was another crisis of circumstance she was trying to adjust to. *“They arrived with nothing, just the clothes they were wearing and a small bag that mum had packed for her and her daughter.”* (Support worker)

The priority for the family was to get the daughter back into education. The support worker helped the 16-year-old daughter to access a place at college to continue with her education. Once this was organised, the mother, daughter and practitioner held a meeting and discussed the possibility of accessing the grant to support her education and to purchase some necessary college equipment and clothes.

The grant was used to buy a laptop, a printer, smart phone, college bag, clothes for college, stationary and gym wear.

¹⁶ See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfc-fails-to-meet-target-of-delivering-230k-laptops-by-end-of-june/>

The daughter confirmed that these purchases had made a real difference to her ability to engage with her education, but also to her self-esteem.

"It makes me feel much more comfortable. For the first week of college, I didn't have any clothes apart from what I was wearing, and I went to college in the same clothes every day which wasn't nice. I wasn't feeling comfortable around my friends...I didn't know people either and I felt embarrassed. When I got the new clothes, it made me feel equal with other people. I felt like I fit in more and felt like socialising more." (Young person)

Shana had aspirations to go into nursing. Having the laptop meant that during lockdown she was able to 'attend' all her lessons online and to complete her homework. *"For the first week, I didn't have this, and I got behind straight away, so when I got the laptop, I had a lot of catching up to do with the homework."* (Young person)

Also, having the phone, meant she could stay in touch with friends on evenings and weekends which was important for Shana as she was unable to invite anyone to her home at the refuge.

She has also recently joined the local gym and was able to *"put on my nice gym wear and trainers and go to the gym"* all bought with the aid of grant. When responding to a question about how she feels about her life, she replied *"really good, I'm much happier."* (Young person)

Source: Starks Consulting family interview

- 2.29 Some practitioners were keen to stress that the purchase of laptops and iPads were not always sufficient to ensure that children and young people will engage in their education at home. Extra parental support was needed in some families to help the parent support their child in their home education.

"There's a whole infrastructure that is needed for the kids to be able to do their school work at home, many families don't have the skills." (Agency Manager)

- 2.30 In some cases, particularly in the refuge there were examples of where support workers were proactively supporting the parent and child to engage in their homework.

"We've been organising homework clubs in the evenings to help families engage with their child's education and we've been encouraging parents to sit with their children and read to them." (Support worker)

- 2.31 In addition to meeting the educational needs of school age children, over 400 books and toys have been purchased to ensure that children live in a stimulating home environment. Demographics of the families supported by the CCG revealed that 394 children were under school age (under the age of 4) and research has shown the importance of books and toys for the development of children's motor and cognitive skills¹⁷. Support workers confirmed the impact of books and toys on how the family communicates and spends time with each other.

"Mum is spending more time with the child and taking an interest in her education...they are sitting down together, and this has an impact on both of them." (Support worker)

¹⁷ <https://www.educationalplaycare.com/blog/why-educational-toys-are-important-to-a-childs-development>

- 2.32 There were other examples of support workers helping families to develop their language skills where their first language was not English. Support workers have assisted the family in getting access to English lessons to help improve a child's performance in school.

"For one family who came from Eastern Europe, they all had limited English. We applied for and were granted extra lessons to help her with her English. The daughter who was in Year 6 has a few weeks of lesson and did well in her SATs. We were all so proud of her; there was no way she would have done this without this help." (Support worker)

- 2.33 Three families were also supported financially which allowed their child to attend school trips that may not otherwise have been possible without the support of the CCG. This helped ensure that children from low-income families had the same experiences and demonstrates how the CCG has been used creatively by support workers.

"We have tried as much as possible, within what we are able to do to make sure that the children here don't miss out." (Support worker)

Allow the children to access activities that promote their wellbeing and personal development

- 2.34 Support workers were very mindful of the wellbeing of all family members when completing the application to Buttle UK for support. One of the central aspects of caring for families suffering from domestic abuse was to ensure they felt safe and secure and that their mental wellbeing was being cared for. Workers reported that their assessment of need at the start of support covered a review of their personal and emotional support needs (see Section 3). All voluntary and statutory services included in this study had close working links with key health and wellbeing services (primary care, NHS, adult mental health and child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS)). Where parents and young people needed support with their health and mental health, support was normally delivered through their existing health/mental health partners.

- 2.35 However, in a few cases, support workers reported that waiting lists were sometimes too long to meet a child's mental wellbeing needs. In these situations, additional play therapy/therapeutic support has been sourced for 42 children using the CCG.

- 2.36 One family included in the research had a young child who had been self-harming and had recently received a series of therapeutic sessions. According to the support worker, school had concerns about the child's behaviour and a discussion was held between the family, support worker and school about accessing therapy for the child. A decision was made to apply to the CCG for therapy as the school felt support was unlikely to be available at the time the child needed it. The support worker spoken to was pleased that CCG was able to fund this type of support for young people who may be at risk of poor mental wellbeing due to the trauma experienced from domestic abuse.

"I have seen the difference this has made to the young child in just a few short weeks. I'm really pleased Buttle will fund this service. It's really needed for some children." (Support worker)

- 2.37 For the mother, the fact that her child had received these sessions was a great comfort to her.

“I know he has been through a lot and it breaks my heart to think what he’s been through. But it’s really good to know that he’s had this support...School says it has made a difference.” (Parent)

- 2.38 More generally, with regards to personal development, the Covid-19 pandemic limited the extent to which children/young people were funded to participate in extra-curricular activities. However, there were examples from support workers of applications being made for young people to access music lessons, boxing lessons and swimming lessons. One support worker provided an account of young boy she supported who had anger issues resulting from *“all the horrific things that Dad had done to Mum”*. The support worker applied for kick-boxing lessons which he attended every week (pre-pandemic). According to the support worker, *“the turn-around in the child’s behaviour was amazing.”* Before they closed the case they were able to get a year’s subscription for the sessions.
- 2.39 Another young boy spoken to as part of the study had learned to swim because of the CCG funded activity. It had clearly made a difference to him and to his father that he was able to pursue this.

Figure 2.6: Family Case Study D

Zac, aged 6 and his father had very little financial resources. His father had been supported by children’s services as Zac was registered as a Child in Need. The social worker confirmed that his father was struggling to cope with his parenting responsibilities and had some mental health issues which he was receiving support for.

The family had been referred to children’s services via the school with concerns about Zac’s attendance and behaviour at school. The social worker paid a visit to the home, and found it was sparsely furnished.

At the time of interview, Zac was not in school, but he easily recalled his swimming lessons and had clearly enjoyed learning to swim with his friends.

“It was really fun; we also went on the slides and did some diving... I love swimming...I want to go again. (Young person aged 6)

He was still very enthusiastic about his swimming lessons and he had continued to go swimming after the lessons had completed and his father had said it was something they had started to do together just before lockdown.

The family had also received a laptop to help Zac with his schooling which he also enjoyed playing on and searching the internet.

His father was grateful for the support he had received from children’s services and confirmed they were in a much better place and his boy was happy.

Source: Starks Consulting family interview

- 2.40 Other areas where the CCG has made a difference to children/young people’s personal wellbeing has been to improve relationships within the family. This has been achieved by giving families funds for days out at theme parks or leisure centres in order to give children/young people these positive experiences.

“Sometimes families don’t realise it, but they’ve not done anything together for years and this has affected their wellbeing as a family.” (Support worker)

- 2.41 Some families spoken to who had been on trips out reported how much this day had meant to them. In some cases, it had involved the children, their parents, and their grandparents.
- “We would never have been able to afford this without the support from Buttle. We had a really lovely day [at the zoo] and the children still speak about it now and their faces light up.”* (Parent)
- 2.42 Special days out like this, have, according to support workers, helped to repair some of the damage to familial relationships caused by domestic abuse.
- “We have seen the mother and child relationship impacted by what they’ve been through and by their circumstances. Sometimes children don’t understand why Mum has left [the family home] and they can withdraw or get very angry...It takes a long time to repair this.”* (Support worker)
- 2.43 A few mothers spoken to talked of the impact the grant had had on their relationship with their children. Being able to go out shopping with their child(ren), provided opportunities for them to come together over something happy. One mother reported it made her feel empowered to be able to arrange things for her daughter to buy.
- 2.44 A few support workers reported challenges in not being able to support young people over the age of 18 who were in college but still living at home, not being able to get clothes or IT equipment for those young people felt awkward.¹⁸

Reported limitations of the CCG

- 2.45 The research was asked to evidence how the grant could be improved for families in crisis. However, due to the size of the grant and the range of items/activities that could be purchased, there were very few suggestions as to how the grant could be improved. There were some frustrations reported by one or two support workers and one parent that their application had been refused.
- 2.46 Some applications were refused by Buttle UK (n=179 or 25% of the total fund) and/or some individual items were not approved. In addition, some applications for families suffering from historical abuse were unsuccessful although the family was still recovering and needed financial support.
- 2.47 On following-up with Buttle UK the reasons why applications were unsuccessful, this revealed that decisions to not award certain items were based on a lack of evidence as to how the items would directly improve the lives of children, or that the maximum value of the fund had already been reached.

¹⁸ The grant will help school-aged children only who live at home with their parent(s).

Summary

- 2.48 This section described how the grant made a positive impact for children/young people and families in all the three key priority areas set out in Buttle UKs' theory of change. It evidenced how the grant provided a flexible and holistic range of support for families, funding nearly 3,000 items/activities to over 540 vulnerable families.
- 2.49 Having a grant in place impacted positively by letting a family move past the basic inefficiencies of their home life and to concentrate more on looking at goals they needed to achieve personally. It evidenced how the CCG provided the foundations for children/young people to rebuild their lives after trauma. Without the grant, children/young people would not have been able to participate in education alongside their peers. They would not have been given the opportunities and experiences they have. All of these have contributed to helping children and young people feel safe and secure, and therefore more able to reach their potential.

3 IMPACT OF THE CHANCES FOR CHILDREN GRANT ON AGENCIES

Introduction

- 3.1 This section evidences the perceived impact of the Chances for Children grant to the agencies who work with families. The research was asked to focus on two key areas:
- changes in assessment practice – whether agencies were more child/young people focused
 - agencies' capacity to support families – whether the grant positively impacted on how agencies worked with families resulting in earlier case closure.

Impact of the grant on agencies' assessment practice

- 3.2 All agencies interviewed agreed on the importance of working with the whole family when assessing need. For the past ten years there has been a strong focus from government for agencies working with families to consider both the needs of parents and their children in assessment practice¹⁹. The government's Think Family Pathfinder programme²⁰ for families with complex needs was the precursor to the Troubled Families programme which currently operates in local authorities across the UK, including in the West Midlands today. A central tenet of this programme is whole family assessment. Taking a whole family approach to supporting families with multiple problems is also likely to help services (adult and children's services) meet their local priorities and objectives. Such an approach has been shown to reduce the demands on services from these families (for example the criminal justice system, the care system and health services)²¹. More recently the Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) guide²² which provides statutory guidance to organisations working with families states that early help assessments should:

"...involve the child and family as well as all the support workers who are working with them. It should take account of the child's wishes and feelings wherever possible, their age, family circumstances and the wider community context in which they are living"²³.

- 3.3 To this end, support workers were already working under the principle of assessing the child's needs within the context of the whole family. All support workers, bar one family support worker, held cases where they acted as the lead professional²⁴, and coordinated multi-agency support where necessary. As a consequence, all agencies had developed approaches to assess the needs of children and their families. Assessments included a combination of:

¹⁹ Kendall, S., Rodger, J. and Palmer, H. (2010) The use of whole family assessment to identify the needs of families with multiple problems. Department for Education.

²⁰ York Consulting (2011) Turning around the lives of families with multiple problems – an evaluation of the Family and Young Carer Pathfinder Programme.

²¹ Kendall, S., Rodger, J. and Palmer, H. (2011) Ibid

²² Department for Education (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Lead Professionals act as a single point of contact for the child or family. They co-ordinate the delivery of an agreed action plan, based on the outcome of the assessment, to ensure that children and families receive

- child and family assessments (Local Authority Statutory Services)
- early help assessment and planning (Local Authority and voluntary agency Early Help services)
- service-led assessment of need (Housing Associations or other voluntary organisations).

3.4 Understanding the wishes and feelings of children/young people within the context of the CCG application, did, according to support workers, add value to their conversations with the family. All support workers agreed that the timing of the application to Buttle UK was extremely important and depended on the needs of the child at the time, and their family's circumstances. For example, social workers working with children who were returning home after a period in local authority care, reported carrying out the assessment and CCG application early on in their support to improve the home environment ready for the child's return.

3.5 Other support workers reported it was more appropriate to complete the assessment and application at a point when the family was planning on leaving the refuge to support a smooth transition to independent living.

3.6 Approaches used to determine a child/young person's needs were a mixture of observation and conversations held between the support worker and the family together, and sometimes separately, with the children. A few support workers commented that having conversations separately with the child or young person helped them to build a positive relationship with the child.

"It does have a big impact on me. I am asking questions of the child or young person to understand them better. It helps me to know their true personality." (Support worker)

3.7 One support worker described the conversation was like "turning on a switch" in some young people.

"For the first time in a long time, you can see they realise there is a possibility that they may be able to do something different...like boxing or go to the gym. For many young people, this has not been a reality." (Support worker)

3.8 All support workers agreed that holding conversations with individual members of the family was a real aid to understanding how well they were coping with their current situations.

"The fact that we can buy almost anything including counselling sessions, or musical instruments, or computers, or something for the home, means that the conversations can be wide ranging, and people can really begin to open up." (Support worker)

3.9 A few support workers agreed that families and, particularly children, were not always transparent about their needs and some children did not know what they needed. In these cases, support workers reported using child-centred conversations including exploring children's wishes and feelings using specific tools and resources.

an effective service which is regularly reviewed. They reduce overlap and inconsistency in the services received.

“With some children, they can be really traumatised and not wanting any attention. For these children, I take my time to get to know them, and don’t rush the application. Then, as they become more comfortable with me, they begin to reveal themselves, and their likes and dislikes. One young child...was really into art, and so we were able to get her some lovely art and craft items, which she loved.” (Support worker)

- 3.10 Most families reported having in-depth conversations with their support workers when deciding how best to utilise the financial support. Most agreed they had the opportunity to shape how they wanted to use the fund. One mother reported hearing their child express what she wanted to do for the first time in six months.

“I don’t think she’s wanted to say anything to me about what she was feeling for fear of upsetting me...this was the first time I’d heard her say she wanted to learn to play a musical instrument.” (Mother)

- 3.11 There was, however, evidence that showed varying degrees of support worker engagement with families over shaping the application. Five of the seventeen families interviewed said they were told what they could apply for.

“I’m not sure how we decided [how to use the fund] to be honest, it was all done for me.”
(Parent)

“I was told there was a certain amount of money for certain things.” (Parent)

- 3.12 Support workers who had completed several applications were familiar with what Buttle UK would and would not fund through the CCG. They were more mindful of what types of applications were likely to be successful and, therefore, suggested to families how and in which ways the grant could be used. To this end, some families reported feeling restricted by what they could apply for. However, this did not result in families not getting what they needed, and support workers remained confident that the approach they adopted in these cases was appropriate.

“We have to be mindful of what Buttle will and won’t fund, and we have to make sure the family gets value for money...it can be very overwhelming for some families with this size of grant...” (Support worker)

Impact of the grant on services’ capacity to support families

- 3.13 One of the aims of the research was to test out an assumption that the CCG grant improved a service’s capacity and efficiency. A hypothesis was developed that the CCG grant, once awarded to a family, could improve families’ level of engagement in support, and therefore, increase their capacity to move forward with their lives and potentially lead to earlier case closures.

- 3.14 To help determine the impact on these key areas, support workers were asked to what extent they considered the CCG had impacted on:

- families’ level of engagement in their support: whether by receiving a grant they perceived that families were more likely to engage in the interventions or support offered;
- trust in their support worker: whether parents and children were more likely to see their support worker as someone they could trust and be open and transparent with;

- capacity to move forward, and subsequent impact on case closures: whether the grant helped families to invest in their future.

3.15 Fourteen support workers were able to provide a score against the impact questions. Managers were not asked the questions as it was considered they would not have a detailed enough knowledge of the impact of the grant on families. In addition, not all support workers felt able to generalise about the impact of the grant having only completed one or two applications. The questions and the responses given from 14 support workers is shown in **Table 3.1**.

3.16 Support workers were asked to respond using a scale of 1-4, where 1 is the CCG had 'no impact' on the area in question, 2 is 'had a little impact', 3 is 'had some impact', and 4 is 'considerable impact' (See section A: Agency Support Worker Interview Schedule for more detail). Responses from each question across all respondents have been totaled and a percentage confidence rating against each question has been calculated.

Table 5: Impact of the CCG on agencies

| Question: What impact do you perceive the Chances for Children grant has had on the following...? | Response Max =100% (n=56) |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Families' confidence in their ability to move on | 95% (n=53) |
| Families' engagement in improving their own circumstances | 84% (n=47) |
| <i>Families' trust in you and in your service</i> | 84% (n=47) |
| <i>Families' level of engagement with your support</i> | 80% (n=45) |
| <i>Your service's capacity to support families</i> | 73% (n=41) |
| <i>How quickly cases are closed</i> | 64% (n=36) |
| <i>Leads to sustainable changes</i> | 57% (n=32) |

Source: Starks Consulting questionnaire of support workers

3.17 This table indicates that practitioners perceived the CCG had the most impact on families' confidence in their ability to move on (95% confidence rating). They perceived it had a high impact on families' ability to engage in improving their own circumstances (84%) as they saw their physical circumstances improve. Practitioners perceived the CCG had an impact on how well families trusted their family support worker (84%). There was a 73% confidence rating in a service's capacity to support families more effectively and a 64% confidence rating that cases were closed quicker as a result of the CCG. There was less confidence in whether the CCGs led to sustainable changes, mainly due the fact that practitioners felt less able to comment about longer term outcomes as they do not monitor outcomes after cases are closed, although most agreed that the CCG had contributed to positive change.

- 3.18 These scores are best viewed as indicative of any impact on efficiencies. The sample size is small and no analysis of case data to substantiate support workers' views was possible. In addition, the average number of cases per agency was 6.3 (544 cases /66 agencies) which was considered too small to be able to evidence a discernable impact on service efficiencies. However, there was considerable qualitative data generated from agencies that the CCG grant did positively impact on key factors that contributed to increased efficiencies in service delivery. These were building trusted relationships with families and increased families' levels of engagement in support and propensity to move forward with their lives. These are explored in turn below.

Building trusted relationships with children and families

3.19 Negative life experiences and events, such as domestic abuse, adversity and being let down by others can leave people confused, bewildered, upset, depressed, powerless, despairing and mistrustful²⁵.

3.20 One of the key principles, therefore, of effective social work practice is to rebuild trust, a practice referenced as 'relationship-based social work'²⁶. There was solid evidence that support workers who had been trained to work with families who had been victims of domestic abuse, recognised the importance of building strong and trusted relationships with these families.

"Some of the women we work with have been through terrible events which have scared them and their children. It's essential we are able to gain their trust to help them move forward." (Support worker)

3.21 All support workers spoke about the significance of the CCG as being an aid to developing a good bond between themselves and their family. One social worker described the grant as *"a bridge that can provide a vital link between us and them."* (Social worker)

3.22 The CCG enabled support workers to demonstrate understanding, care and concern for their current situation, and provided a practical solution to a family trying to rebuild their life after a crisis. This was felt strongly among social workers or family support workers in the statutory sector where a family's engagement is not always voluntary (e.g. families engaged with child protection and looked after services).

"The grant ...shows a real commitment to the family. For some of our clients, there is a natural distrust. They think we are going to take their children away. The Buttle grant [CCG] makes such a difference to how we could work together...it reminds me of why I am there." (Social worker)

"I've had a family that didn't communicate with me well, but after this, they knew that I was on their side and was there to help make a difference." (Support worker)

3.23 Support workers also agreed that the CCG was often awarded very promptly which meant they could move forward with their restorative work with the family more speedily.

"It makes a huge difference for us and how we can bond with the child. If they see us as someone who can make their life better...have more fun, that's a win-win situation for us." (Support worker)

²⁵ Bauer, P.C. (2014) *Negative Experiences and Trust: A Causal Analysis of the Effects of Victimization on Generalized Trust*. European Sociological Review.

²⁶ See: Biestek F (1957) *The casework relationship*. Loyola University Press. Bryan A, Hingley-Jones H and Ruch G (2016) *Relationship-based practice revisited*. Journal of Social Work Practice, 30, 3, 229-233 and Beresford P, Croft S and Adshead L (2008) 'We don't see her as a social worker': a service user case study of the importance of the social worker's relationship and humanity'. British Journal of Social Work, 38, 1388-1407.

- 3.24 There was evidence from some families, particularly those families supported by children's services that the application and subsequent award of funds, had made a positive impact on the relationship with their social worker. "This was my first time having a social worker. You always hear really bad things about social workers. I didn't trust my social worker at first...When she said do you need help and then she came back and said we've got this money, this allowed me to let my guard down. I knew then she was trying to help me, this was proof that she wanted the best for me." (Parent)

"It demonstrates that they are here to help, I thought I'm not going to say anything and I'm going to keep them away from me and not have them involved...she's now the best social worker I know." (Parent)

- 3.25 There was also evidence from interviews with the children/young people that they felt warmth towards their support worker as a result of what they had been able to do for the family.

"She put a smile on my face...I think she's very kind." (9-year-old)

"She has really helped me and my Mum feel better." (12-year-old)

- 3.26 There was also evidence from families of an overwhelming sense that the CCG grant had not only helped develop trust with their support worker but had restored in them a connectedness with the wider community. Many families wanted to communicate to Buttle UK their gratitude that this life-changing grant was made available to help people like them.

"I can't believe it really, it's so heartwarming that people would do this, it restores your faith in other people and in the wider society." (Parent)

Impact of the CCG on engagement and families' capacity to move forward

- 3.27 Recent research published by the Child Poverty Action Group²⁷ evidenced that poor living standards are a barrier to families engaging in support and feeling they have the capacity to deal with their challenges. Common experiences ranged from the practical challenges of families not being able to afford travel to appointments, through to the emotional barriers arising from the stress experienced by parents facing financial strain trying to meet their children's needs with insufficient financial resources²⁸.

- 3.28 Practitioners in this study reported many families experiencing high levels of stress and emotional strain caused by domestic abuse that had resulted in a loss of financial control, hardship and sometimes homelessness.

"I wanted to highlight that we need to be mindful about the cycle of deprivation and close link between poverty, domestic violence, child abuse/neglect which can only be resolved if families can be supported to improve their living conditions." (Support worker)

²⁷ Child Poverty Action Group (2020) *Understanding the impact of child poverty on the lives of children and families in England: a survey of social workers.*

²⁸ Child Poverty Action Group (2020) *Ibid.*

3.29 Previous research has also shown that families’ levels of engagement in support increased once their home and living standards were raised. Particularly during the early phases of support, such support facilitated family engagement and helped develop trusting relationships between staff and families²⁹.

3.30 Agency managers and support workers from this study agreed that the CCG improved families’ engagement with their own circumstances (84%) and families’ confidence in their ability to move on (95%).

“This is where I find it most useful...it can really help focus the family on what life is going to be like for them when they leave. It can be very daunting for them [to leave refuge], but this helps them to see there is a future.” (Agency Manager)

“It’s really empowering, they have choice and a voice and Buttle UK has given them this opportunity.” (Support Worker)

3.31 Parents reported feeling more able to move forward with their lives due to the improved living circumstances and improved opportunities for their children/young people.

“This has made such a difference for us. We are in a completely different place...I never thought we could achieve this. It’s so nice to think where we were a year ago and where we all are now...my children are so much happier and settled. I can see they’re really thriving.” (Parent)

3.32 Interviews with the families clearly evidenced how they felt a significant weight had been lifted because of the support they had received through the CCG. Most families would not have been in such a strong position to move forward without the financial assistance from the CCG. Most could not afford to buy the basics (e.g. beds, sofas, carpets) needed for their children to begin to thrive.

3.33 A detailed case study of an agency that had accessed the CCG is provided below to illustrate their view of the power of the grant to their families and to their wider service.

Figure 2: Agency Case Study

Agency background and context

This third sector agency offered a range of support for vulnerable people including housing advice and referral, welfare benefit checks, debt relief, support to improve health and wellbeing, and advice, support and guidance to reduce the risk of harm from abusers. It does not provide refuge facilities but will refer families into refuge if they need this.

The team supporting families suffering from domestic abuse included one service manager, two team leaders and 24 staff who worked a mix of part-time and full-time. Each staff member had a full-time (FT) equivalent case load of 13 clients. Their live caseload was 250. Support workers operated a mix of face-to-face and telephone support. More recently support was delivered remotely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

²⁹ Department for Education (2011) *Turning around the lives of families with multiple and complex needs – an evaluation of family and young carer pathfinders programme*. Research Report DFE-RR154

The domestic abuse support team was largely funded through the Troubled Families programme which set a range of targets that the organisation has to meet with each client (family). The targets were set out and explained to the client by way of a client-led support plan. Typically, they would prioritise five outcomes over the period of the support, which could be up to 12 months. According to the service manager, they had to achieve three mandatory outcomes which were:

- 1) maintaining/seeking suitable accommodation.
- 2) accessing primary care services (e.g. doctor/dentist/opticians).
- 3) to stay safe (this was a direct domestic abuse outcome involving understanding how to be safe and secure for themselves and their children and what provisions can be put in place like non-molestation orders).

A further two outcomes were identified, and the support worker and family agreed these to make sure they were realistic and achievable. These may be around maximising income, addressing debt or arrears issues or addressing any substance misuse or mental health issues or looking to return to paid employment either through initial re-education, employment sustainability options or initial volunteering to get back into a daily routine.

Use of Buttle UK Chances for Children Grant

Over the duration of the fund, the organisation had made just over 30 successful applications Buttle UK. According to the manager the rate at which referrals were made increased quite rapidly from December 2020. This was due to an increased level of need for support among families affected by domestic abuse. The agency spent time raising awareness of the CCG programme across the teams to ensure that children and families had equal access to the support regardless of which support worker was assigned to the case.

The organisation carried out a detailed assessment of need for the child and family. Some families remained in their home, and therefore, did not have immediate need for a CCG. The agency was keen to stress they were mindful of using the CCG wisely to ensure its sustainability.

“Sometimes we will apply to other grant holders and some local grants, for one off items like a fridge, but where families have nothing...with Buttle you can apply for so much all at once...and it’s much more efficient for us.” (Agency Manager)

The agency manager described how the grant had helped one family and reduced the burden on the agency to find the range of items from other grant holders.

This grant (total £3,500) was for four children all under 16 [years of age] and they were in temporary accommodation and had nothing. We were able to get them a permanent tenancy and they were moving into a three-bedroomed property with nothing...so the lead worker sat down [with the family] and made a list of everything they needed. And they got everything: beds, wardrobes, dining table and chairs, carpets, curtains and a lot specific to the children’s needs, for the bedrooms. Then books, toys and electric equipment. It did a huge amount for their self-confidence... In addition, some of the funds were used to pay for after school clubs for the children and this allowed the mum to seek part-time work. The mother wrote a letter to the agency letting them know how grateful she was for the support.” (Agency Manager)

According to the agency manager the use of the CCG created efficiencies due to the support workers being able to step back from the family sooner. *“If the family did not have this, there would have to have been a combination of applications from other grants and we still would not have been able to access all that. In addition, the family would have to have purchased this over time and this would have to have been supported by the worker.” (Agency Manager)*

More generally, the agency manager stated that the availability of CCGs contributed to case closures as *“We are there to try and remedy the situation in certain areas and this helps utterly to make our work easier...Everything is in place within five or six months.” (Agency Manager).*

Typically, each worker will provide up to four hours of support a week and, when a family is settled, this will reduce to one hour a week.

The agency manager confirmed that CCGs also helped to demonstrate outcomes achieved for their Troubled Families programme, particularly in the areas of daily living skills, debt reduction, liaising with schools and social services in regard to childcare responsibilities. *“All of the above outcomes are improved by having basic living conditions improved and clients having less anxiety around daily living issues, especially where children are involved. Wherever we can show that someone has a more stable home life and settled environment, this always impacts positively and allows the family unit to address other social issues like further education, employment possibilities for the parents and an overall higher standard of living.”* (Agency Manager)

As a result of the benefits and impact of the grants on the families and on the service, CCGs have become a core part of their offer to families.

Source: Starks Consulting Case Study

Impact on resources

- 3.34 Support workers in the study agreed that the impact on their time of managing the application and the spend was considerable. Some support workers found this timescale stressful particularly with recent events relating to Covid. Items were often sold out, requiring support workers to make multiple trips to shops, and recently, shopping restrictions meant that goods had to be ordered online. Managing this process had become more labour-intensive and there were reports from one or two support workers of declining to make applications due to the impact on their workload.

“The problems come when I am trying to manage multiple applications as well as support all the other families. It’s too difficult and puts me back on my caseload and paperwork.”
(Support Worker)

- 3.35 Support workers agreed that this process had to be managed, and that there was a limit as to how many applications individuals could make without it having a significant impact on their general workload. The limit, it was suggested, was between two to three applications per worker at any one time.
- 3.36 However, there were reported benefits/efficiencies in some organisations (who were awarded multiple grants) of having a central coordinating function, where individual grants from Buttle UK were paid directly to the finance team and the spend was then managed jointly with the support worker.

Impact of the CCG on case closure

- 3.37 Key to case closure was ensuring the family were in a stable, comfortable and safe family home which was well equipped, and that the family was in recovery and the children were thriving. Five families spoken to as part of the research were no longer receiving direct support from their support worker and their cases had been closed. Support workers working with some families who had remained in their home, acknowledged that the grant could be used to improve their living conditions, which then enabled them to work more effectively on all the other aspects affecting their family.

“The grant is turned around very quickly, we can be applying one week and hear the next week that we have been successful. The allows us to move forward quickly with some families.” (Support worker)

3.38 A 64% confidence rating indicated that support workers perceived the CCG played a part in the decision to close a case, but no performance data was made available to substantiate this.

3.39 Agencies reported supporting families for between 6 to 12 months. All support workers were keen to stress that support was tailored to the needs of families and could be extended if necessary.

“We’re not governed by timeframes, we close a case when we know they don’t need us anymore, it’s very dependent on the family and their unique circumstances.” (Support Worker)

3.40 In addition, there were no ‘quick-fixes’ for these families and most needed a significant amount of one-to-one support alongside the CCG:

- four families in this study were living in a refuge.
- one family had recently been found accommodation following six months in refuge.
- one had recently spent six months in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- seven families were in statutory support at the time of interview, and three of these had been known to social services for many years.

3.41 Many families had suffered from coercive control, verbal and physical violence, financial control and isolation, and some were suffering from the long-term impact of the trauma following their decision to leave.

*“We have been through a nightmare. It was the most horrible situation looking back.”
(Parent)*

3.42 For some agencies working with families who were effectively homeless, (living in a refuge or temporary accommodation) their ability to close a case was often largely governed by the availability of suitable accommodation. In particular, support workers in Birmingham reported significant challenges in acquiring properties for some of their families. Most families were being housed outside of Birmingham. In some cases, support workers were delaying applying for the grant until they knew the family had somewhere to move to.

3.43 For other services and, in particular for statutory services, getting support from the CCG for a family was a key part of the solution to stepping families down from high level safeguarding concerns (e.g. edge of care or child protection) or closing cases where risks had been removed.

“Some children are coming home from foster care after short periods in local authority care. It is important to make sure the child can stay at home and some of this is ensuring the home is adequate, the child has a bed, and they have a cooker and a fridge.” (Support Worker)

3.44 Social workers reported how in core group meetings and case conference meetings it was often shared that the family had improved their home circumstances.

“We share information about the family...if the family’s living circumstances are much improved and they’ve responded well to support, this is taken into consideration and can be a real influencing factor [in case closure].” (Support worker)

Summary

- 3.45 This section described the impact the CCG on how agencies were able to work with families. Although assessment practice was already child-centred, there was qualitative evidence from support workers that the CCG application process helped them as practitioners to demonstrate empathy and understanding, and facilitated a different conversation with children and young people and their parents. The CCG in its entirety was a highly valued tool by which support workers could engender trust and engagement in support. Families also perceived they were in a better position to move forward with their lives, and feel more confident in their future. As a consequence, there was a perception from agencies that the CCG made a positive contribution to decisions on case closure and, in some circumstances, increased the likelihood that cases could close due to increased levels of security and stability in family life. However, there are a range of factors and different agency perspectives which must be taken into account when considering the CCG as a measure of effect in case closures.
- 3.46 The next section looks in more detail at the potential efficiencies and the potential in terms of cost benefits from the CCG for agencies.

4 COST BENEFIT OF THE CHANCES FOR CHILDREN GRANT

Introduction

- 4.1 Buttle UK were keen to understand the cost and benefits to agencies of the CCG programme. This was in order to demonstrate the potential for CCGs to create efficiencies for agencies and to encourage agencies to reserve budgets to provide their own CCG programme. This section of the report provides an economic assessment of the potential costs to agencies of providing support similar to a CCG. It explores economic estimates of the benefits to agencies caused by increased efficiencies and the potential cost benefits of providing the grant to families through achieving a range of outcomes.

Approaches included in a cost benefit analysis

- 4.2 There are three primary steps involved in performing a cost benefit analysis:
- **identifying costs:** estimating the full costs to agencies in terms of providing and administering a grant similar to a CCG. This would include the cost of the grant itself, the cost of managing the fund centrally (e.g. IT, finance, fund raising), and the time required by family practitioners to administer and manage each grant;
 - **identifying benefits:** estimating the benefits in terms of cost saving derived from increased efficiencies and early case closure;
 - **comparing costs and benefits** – by dividing the costs of providing a grant by the benefits accrued to the agency, agencies can make informed decisions on future investment.

How much did it cost agencies to work with Buttle UK to administer CCGs?

- 4.3 The Buttle UK CCG programme only operates through agencies that deliver support to families. Families themselves cannot make an application for a grant. Support workers, employed by agencies, applied for the grant and position the money in a wraparound package of support for the family. Therefore, there are cost inputs to the agency associated with making CCG applications and managing the award.
- 4.4 Data from interviews with support workers suggests that staff spent a total of 10-15 hours on each successful CCG award (this includes application and management time). There was some variation in how support workers reported this aspect. Some reported Covid-19 had increased the time input, and some reported challenges in getting information from the family.
- 4.5 Estimated time input per application is broken down as follows:
- assessing the family – 2 -3 hours
 - planning and allocating the spend – 2 hours
 - submitting the application - 2 hours
 - managing the spend (ordering goods online or going shopping) up to 3 hours
 - submitting the receipts - 2 – 3 hours.

- back-office support – 1 hour.
- 4.6 An average salary for a support worker was reported to be £23,000, which equates to approximately £11 per hour. However, to calculate a true cost estimate in terms of time input, there are ‘oncosts’ to take into account, which include employer National Insurance and pension contributions and any other benefits. This calculation is supported by HM Treasury Green Book³⁰ guidance states that: *“The opportunity cost of labour should include the total value of the output produced by employees. This is the cost of employees’ time, based on Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) costs and includes pension costs, National Insurance, allowances, benefits and basic salary.”*
- 4.7 Oncosts can typically vary between 10% and 40%³¹ depending on the level of these contributions. The largest variation is likely to result from differences in pension contributions. This means the real cost of support workers’ time is between £12 and £17 per hour. Applied to 10-15 hours per successful application, this equates to between £120 and £255 as the cost to an agency of each successful application.
- 4.8 The research found that economies of scale can be expected to be generated for agencies generating multiple applications, and particularly if administrative or business support staff can take on responsibility for submitting applications on behalf of practitioners. For example, multiple grants dealt with by the same agency could be dealt with simultaneously, and therefore, time per grant would be lower as staff become familiar and efficient with the processes.
- 4.9 Economies of scale appear commonplace: analysis of project data showed an average of nine applications per organisation³² (including unsuccessful applications), ranging from 201 applications from one organisation, to just one application from another. Importantly, once an organisation was set up and verified on Buttle UK’s system, other staff (including administrative staff) could make further applications, reducing any burden on individual workers. In addition, support from Buttle UK helped applicants to understand how to make a successful application, making the overall process more efficient. Some agencies completing a higher number of applications had their own finance support teams, and so the grant money was paid directly to the agency’s account.
- 4.10 However, these efficiencies in terms of time per application need to be assessed against the simple fact that more applications were inevitably more time-consuming overall than fewer applications. Some support workers interviewed said they decided that they simply did not have the time to apply for another grant at the time of interview. This was felt particularly by support workers managing multiple applications.
-

³⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-green-book-appraisal-and-evaluation-in-central-government> (p.57)

³¹ See for example this link, which has a comprehensive breakdown and explanation of oncosts: <https://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/employment/payandconditions/payroll/salariesandoncosts>. The 10-40% chimes with salary oncost estimates in the latest PSSRU Unit Costs of Health & Social Care; for example, social worker (children’s services) salary oncosts are an additional 26% of salary (p.139): <https://www.pssru.ac.uk/project-pages/unit-costs/unit-costs-2020>

³² 699 applications across 82 organisations, for which data on referral agency was available (referral agency data was not available for a further 24 applications).

What are the average costs of providing the grants across all agencies?

4.11 In the scenario that agencies become grant-holders and manage and administer the grant scheme themselves, the total cost per grant can be estimated using the annual costs provided by Buttle UK to administer the CCG. These costs are added to the average input from support workers, and the cost of the grant itself. This is shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Total costs to agencies of providing a grant

| Cost of administering a grant | £ |
|---|----------------------|
| Administration costs (total Buttle UK spend divided by total number of cases) in year 2019/20 | £308 |
| An average grant | £1,405 |
| Support worker costs to manage the application and spend. | £120-£255 |
| Total cost | £1,833-£1,968 |

4.12 These figures showed the total costs of administering the grant were between £1,833 and £1,968.

4.13 We have discussed the costs (in terms of time and financial cost to the agency) to the grant-holder and practitioners; the next sub-section discusses the benefits that this time can generate for agencies.

What are the potential benefits to agencies of accessing the grants?

4.14 The grant awarded to families could result in cost savings for individual organisations, both statutory and non-statutory, and the wider sector supporting families at risk of domestic violence. This is not only through improved outcomes for children, but also through causing a reduction in additional support needed by families in the future, and saving agencies the costs associated with repeat referrals. These benefits may include:

- Cases closed quicker.
- Increased rate/efficiency of throughput of cases.
- A reduction in repeat referrals.
- Reduced dependency on frontline workers.

4.15 Where they arise, these benefits were thought to have been achieved because of an improvement in living circumstances, and an increase in the safety and security of families, which allowed families time to concentrate on self-development and achieving goals (for example moving into employment).

- 4.16 It was not possible to evidence the extent to which a CCG was attributable to the increased efficiencies listed above. However, as Section 3 detailed, there was a perception across all agencies that the award of a CCG had contributed to case closures in some families. The following Table 4.2 estimates some potential cost savings with an earlier case closure of just one month.
- 4.17 It should be borne in mind that a constraint applied by Buttle UK relating to case closure is that cases must remain open three months after the grant is awarded. This can reduce the impact of case closure if the case is otherwise ready to be closed within that three months. However, research also concluded that support was less intensive once a family was settled into their home and were able to move forward.
- 4.18 Achieving benefits of this kind has added benefits for agencies. These will now be discussed in turn.

Potential savings to Children's Social Care

- 4.19 Agencies reported that the grants had increased families' engagement in support, particularly with children's social care, which had contributed to decisions about cases being 'stepped-down'. This included:
- families with children moving from a Child Protection Plan to Child in Need/edge of care status, or to universal services/case closure.
 - families with children moving from Child in Need/edge of care status to universal services/case closure.
- 4.20 Table 4.2 details the annual cost savings to agencies if cases are prevented from escalating or where cases can be stepped down or closed earlier.

Table 4.2: Potential cost savings to the statutory service

| Outcome (per year, unless stated) | Unit cost, i.e. potential annual cost saving | Monthly saving |
|---|---|-----------------------|
| Benefit of a 'step-down' from Child Looked After to Child Protection Plan | £52,834 | £4,402 |
| Avoiding temporary foster care | £35,628 | £2,969 |
| Benefit of a 'step-down' from Child Protection Plan to Child in Need | £2,104* | £175 |
| Benefit of a 'step-down' from Child in Need status to universal services/case closure | £3,062* | £255 |

Source: All unit costs are sourced from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (formerly New Economy) Unit Costs Database (<https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/research/research-cost-benefit-analysis>), apart from the cost of a Child Protection Plan which is National Audit Office (2019) Pressures on Children's Social Care.

*It should be noted that these costs are being reviewed as they are considered to be an underestimate of the actual total figure for assessment and support.

- 4.21 The benefits of step downs can be significant. The total annual cost of looked after children is on average over £58,000. This can rise to over £250,000 for children in residential care. The cost of a Child Protection Plan is estimated to be £5,166 and Child in Need is £3,062.
- 4.22 Interviews with agencies found there was a perception that grants had an impact on step downs and preventing young people from returning to care where they had just come from temporary foster care, as their house was better equipped with items such as beds and cookers. Stabilising the family can remove the need for temporary foster care, at a cost of £685 per week, which equates to over £35,000 per year. Where a child is registered as a Child in Need, the grant can help to close cases due to improved home conditions and increased engagement in support such as parenting programmes, leading to improved family functioning.
- 4.23 Table 4.2 shows how the award of a grant that results in preventing children from going into care or enabling children to come home from care can result in a monthly saving of £2,969. Similarly, an award of a grant for a child registered as a Child in Need could result in a monthly saving of £255.
- 4.24 Clearly, potential cost savings vary depending on the type of care a child is receiving, and how earlier cases are closed. For certain families where children are on the edge of care, the costs of providing a grant (up to £1,968) can be realised within less than one month. For children on a Child Protection Plan and stepping down to Child in Need (cost saving of £175 per month), the costs of the agency providing a grant (maximum £1,968) would only be recompensed if cases were closed 11 months earlier than normal (e.g. $\frac{£1,968}{£175} = 11.2$).

Potential savings to voluntary sector agencies

4.25 Calculating the potential cost savings for agencies working with families who are victims of domestic abuse requires consideration of the costs of managing a domestic abuse incident and the ongoing costs of support to families in refuge or through other tailored support programmes. Details from the interviews with agencies supporting families recovering from domestic abuse showed that funding was provided through the Troubled Families programme of support. This has been used as an estimate of the ongoing costs for supporting families. No costs were determined for a family's residence in a refuge.

4.26 Two costs are available for consideration. These are shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Potential cost saving for the voluntary sector

| Outcome (per year, unless stated) | Unit cost | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| | Potential annual cost saving | Monthly saving |
| Domestic abuse incident | £2,968 per incident ³³ | |
| Troubled Families support costs | £5,493 ³⁴ | £457 |
| Total costs | £8,461 | |

4.27 Clearly, if cases are resolved quicker, the cost of the incident remains, but there are potentially cost savings available to agencies from earlier case closures. For example, monthly cost savings to agencies are available of approximately £457. Therefore, cases would need to be closed four months earlier to realise any cost saving against the cost of the grant (up to £1,968). Although not a considerable saving and not likely to be realisable given the complexity of some families' needs, any early case closure would enable agencies to support a higher number of families, and therefore draw down more funding from programme funders (e.g. Troubled Families) to deliver their support.

What are the potential cost savings derived from positive family outcomes?

4.28 It is helpful also to include a summary of the potential cost savings to the public purse realised by the CCG through its range of support for families. These cost savings are not insignificant and can have relatable savings to agencies.

4.29 The full nature of grants is outlined in Section 2 of this report. A review of individual grants to families outlines the extent and holistic nature of the support provided. One such example is provided in Table 4.4.

³³ Sylvia Walby (2009) *The Cost of Domestic violence*, update 2009.

https://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/id/eprint/88449/1/Cost_of_domestic_violence_update_4_.pdf.

³⁴ House of Commons Briefing Paper (2020) *The Troubled Families Programme* (England).

Table 4.4: Example of one family's grant awarded

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Tablet | £140 |
| Toys/games/books | £130 |
| Educational items | £45 |
| Clothes and footwear | £200 |
| Carpet | £365 |
| Table and chairs | £150 |
| Curtains and poles | £100 |
| Bedding | £20 |
| Kitchen utensils | £50 |
| Wall painting board | £60 |
| Cooker | £270 |
| Washing machine | £250 |
| Dance lesson | £220 |
| Total | £2,000 |

Source: Buttle UK Full list of applications data for West Midlands

4.30 This grant awarded demonstrates the extent to which a grant of this size would make a difference to a family's home circumstances, their wellbeing and their capacity for personal growth.

4.31 A previous evaluation report for Buttle UK³⁵ showed estimated savings of over £8,000 over a 15-year period for every £1,500 grant awarded to each family. Based on our latest research, the most significant benefits for families in terms of potential cost savings were evident in:

- Housing.
- Education.
- Employment.
- Wellbeing.

4.32 These are dealt with in turn in the paragraphs below.

³⁵ <https://www.buttleuk.org/research/turning-points-report>

Housing

- 4.33 It is worth returning to the need to secure housing as a pre-requisite in many cases for achieving positive outcomes. A crucial factor was stabilising a family in a new home and helping to address the family's experiences to prevent them developing into chronic issues. Few if any outcomes were possible without adequate housing, and indeed, this was a mandatory outcome for Troubled Families-funded services.
- 4.34 Costing the direct impact of the grant on savings related to stable housing is complex. A constraint on case closure for families at risk of domestic violence and needing to be rehoused can be the availability of suitable accommodation, where this is needed. As a result, our research found some evidence of support workers delaying applying for a grant until they had secured housing for the family, since they had more confidence closing the case when families had left refuge, because of issues with securing housing. However, once a family was settled into new accommodation and this was furnished and made into a welcoming and stimulating home environment using the CCG, many other benefits (and cost savings) are derived from this. In particular, helping to ensure that the victim does not return to her/his abuser can have a cost saving of £8,461 per annum (Table 4.3). There could also be other cost savings to agencies and the public purse with a reduction in the cost of re-referrals: re-referrals in social care have increased year-on-year from a rate of 15% to nearly 50% in children's services³⁶.

Education

- 4.35 The CCG funded clothing including school uniforms, iPads, computers and printers to assist children to continue in their education. This was particularly important as many families had to move away from their original home, and required placement at a new school that necessitated new school uniform.
- 4.36 Continued engagement in education can reap significant benefits. For example, persistent truancy costs around £3,000 per year to taxpayers and the individual, or exclusion from school is equivalent to an annual cost of almost £13,000.³⁷ If the grant contributed to a fraction of impact in reducing truancy or risk of exclusion, the resultant benefits from continuing in education and gaining qualifications can benefit the individual, taxpayer and society by tens of thousands of pounds over a lifetime.

Employment or Training

³⁶ Troncoso , P. (2017). Analysing repeated referrals to children's services in England. The University of Manchester.

³⁷ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (formerly New Economy) Unit Costs Database.

- 4.37 Some families reported that a grant had enabled them to free up their time by providing after-school placements, which in turn enabled them to look for and actively secure part-time employment. Again, this can have long-term positive consequences over an individual's lifetime, though longer-term cost savings are subject to much uncertainty as they can be affected by external factors. However, even if a grant was to contribute only in part to achieving this outcome, a parent moving off benefits into work is thought to generate around £20,000 to the taxpayer and the individual in the first year³⁸, should their employment be sustained over the first year. If sustained longer than a year, further cost savings could be generated.

Wellbeing

- 4.38 There were many accounts of how the grant had made a difference to the lives of children and young people through the purchase of clothes, days out with the family, educational resources and IT equipment. There was also evidence of the CCG being used to provide play therapy for children recovering from trauma. As a therapeutic intervention, play therapy is highly effective for a variety of presenting problems, particularly anxiety and behaviour/conduct problems; for a range of young populations, but particularly primary-aged children. Although these were short injections of therapeutic support (with longer term support being referred through CAMHS), supporting children immediately after they have suffered a trauma has been evidenced to reduce long term negative impacts on mental wellbeing.³⁹
- 4.39 It is quite conceivable that the CCG grant will make a positive impact on the wellbeing of children moving forward from this trauma. Cost savings for this can vary, but has been estimated at a potential cost saving to society of over £10,000 per year⁴⁰.

Potential for agencies to become grant holders

- 4.40 Agencies were asked about the possibility, when considering the benefits of the CCG grant to families and to their work, that their agency would consider holding a portion of their core budget aside in order to provide a similar level of support for families.
- 4.41 Unsurprisingly, this was not thought possible or likely, particularly within the current climate with services being financially stretched and demand for support from victims of domestic abuse increasing. According to the Office for National Statistics, the police saw an increase of 758,941 domestic abuse related crimes in England and Wales⁴¹.
- 4.42 The main reason for agencies not feeling able to provide their own similar grant was insufficient funds. In addition, agencies lacked the confidence they would be able to plug any drop-in financial support from Buttle UK through their own fundraising initiatives.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ McLaughlin, C., Holliday, C., Clarke, .B. and Ilie, S. (2013). Research on counselling and psychotherapy with children and young people: a systematic scoping review of the evidence for its effectiveness from 2003-2011.

⁴⁰ Greater Manchester Combined Authority (formerly New Economy) Unit Costs Database.

⁴¹ Office for National Statistics (2020) Domestic abuse prevalence and trends, England and Wales: year ending March 2020

“We don’t have the national profile that Buttle has, we just couldn’t generate that amount funding through our fundraising activities.” (Agency Manager)

- 4.43 For statutory services too, it was thought to be unlikely that such a high level of funding as that provided through Buttle UK CCG would be matched by the local authority.

“Our budgets are already so stretched that we have to beg and borrow to get anything for our most vulnerable families. As a result, many of our families in real poverty do go without. It’s very challenging.” (Support Worker)

- 4.44 Buttle UK provided a reliable service to agencies working with families in a crisis. Agencies valued the independence of Buttle UK and perceived it would be very difficult for agencies to deliver the same level of scrutiny and independence in deciding how to use funds if those funds were sourced internally.

“Buttle are so well respected in our field...we have received really good support from them I’m just not sure we’d be able to offer the same level of support and independence...I think it would put us in quite a difficult position [if agencies held their own grant budget] to make decisions on who gets what.” (Agency Manager)

- 4.45 Although respondents were keen to stress they only applied for the grant when it was absolutely necessary, there was evidence that those that had accessed it multiple times were becoming reliant on it as a way of helping families out of a crisis.

“Before this it was really hard, we used to use Open Door⁴², but the application took a really long time and they could only apply for small amounts of around £250.” (Support worker)

“We were struggling before, and looking back we wondered how did we manage. As soon as we started using the Buttle Trust it was such a relief and a breath of fresh air.” (Support worker)

- 4.46 There was evidence from family interviews that support workers had combined support from local welfare grants for white goods with the CCG for support for children. However, the majority of support workers admitted that many local welfare funds had ceased to exist and there was little chance of accessing similar levels of support from within their own service.

“We do have small emergency funds we can apply to, but we could not afford to provide this level of funding from our budget.” (Support worker)

- 4.47 According to support workers, the flexibility alongside the generosity of the CCG is what made the Buttle UK grant stand out from the others.

⁴² The Open Doors Programme provides cash grants alongside intensive support delivered to recipients by a range of partner organisations. It is administered by Family Action

“Most charities are not like Buttle, they will give you one item per year. For example, one local welfare fund gave me £45 for a family to buy coats for two children when the family had nothing... but Buttle lets you get several things, to cover emotional development, for the home, and education. It’s an absolute lifesaver for many families.” (Support worker)

- 4.48 Some support workers reported how they had given their own items to families, and applied to other Freecycle sites for support for families as there were no other options available.

Summary

- 4.49 This section illustrated the potential costs and benefits to agencies of the CCG. It estimated the costs to the agency of administering each grant and the potential cost savings that could be realised with an early case closure. For statutory and voluntary agencies these estimates differed and depended on the initial cost outlay for the intervention. For some agencies and against some interventions, there was realisable cost saving potential from administering a grant similar to the CCG. For voluntary organisations, this was more complex to evidence and depended on the needs of the family and the ability to move the family into safe, secure and long-term housing.
- 4.50 Grants can be delivered more cost effectively with a centralised support function and where support workers hold multiple smaller grants. This would be advisable to ensure that support workers feel in a position to provide the same level for support for families going forward.
- 4.51 This section has only been able to make estimates based on agencies’ perception of impact on efficiencies. It is recommended that grant-holders monitor outcomes to assess the effectiveness of their grant giving processes. It is also important to consider attribution: that is, to what extent it was the grant that made any difference and led to outcomes being achieved, as opposed to other influences. It is likely that input from other strands of a family’s support package and from other agencies will have also contributed to the extent of outcomes achieved and therefore not all costs savings could be attributed to the input of Buttle UK’s grant.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

- 5.1 This section draws together the evidence presented in this report and provides a summary reflection on the findings.
- 5.2 The research focused on three key areas:
 - The impact of the CCG on children/young people and their families.
 - The impact of the CCG programme on agencies.
 - The cost benefit of the CCG programme.

Impact on children/young people and families

- 5.3 Considerable support to children/young people and their families was delivered by the Buttle UK CCG programme over the period from 2019-2021. Data shows that over 540 families and over 1,200 children/young people were provided with support through a CCG in the West Midlands. Nearly all the parents supported were women, and the majority were single women over the age of 21. The ethnic diversity of families supported through a CCG was evidenced through the demographic data which showed that just under one-half of families were non-white, and just over one-fifth had a non-UK National status. The total value distributed through the agencies applying on behalf of the families, was over £750,000.
- 5.4 There is clear evidence of how the CCG programme made a significant difference to the lives of children/young people and their families across the three priority areas: creating a safe and secure homelife, participation in education, and wellbeing.
- 5.5 Support workers tailored applications with families to meet the needs of the children/young people within these three priorities. Reviewing the CCGs through the lens of Maslow's hierarchy of needs shows how a CCG contributed to a family's recovery:
 - it helped raise families' basic living conditions by improving the home environment.
 - it helped children/young people return to education and socialise with their peers.
 - it provided opportunities for children/young people to enjoy time together with their family, and, for a few, to pursue personal development activities such as boxing or dancing lessons.
- 5.6 Crucially, at a time of national crisis when children/young people have had their education significantly disrupted, the support of a CCG enabled them to participate in online learning in the same way as their peers. They have been able to talk with friends while not in school, which for those children living in refuge, was a key aspect to maintaining their wellbeing.
- 5.7 The challenge posed by the recent Covid-19 pandemic was evident during the research: support workers were unable to organise and purchase out-of-school activities for young people. As a result, the bulk of the CCGs have been spent latterly on household items or establishing a home (54%) and psychological needs including education, relationships and wellbeing (42%). Just 4% of the fund was spent on self-fulfillment activities such as boxing, swimming lessons and dance classes.

Impact of the CCG programme on agencies

- 5.8 Agencies engaging in the research included children's services, voluntary agencies providing refuge services, and other voluntary organisations supporting families to rebuild their lives in the community.
- 5.9 All agencies, managers and support workers recognised the added value of CCGs to their work and its significant potential to improve outcomes for their families. As such, CCGs had become a central part of support workers' assessment practices. There was a consensus among agencies that CCGs added to the quality of their conversations with families when assessing children/young peoples' needs. The act of providing practical support or positive activities for children/young people to do, helped them to vision a more positive future. It also fostered better relationships between staff and young people that helped them to open up more about what they wanted to achieve in their lives.
- 5.10 Support workers reported CCGs had an impact on families' propensity to engage in their support. This was particularly notable in families involved with statutory services where engagement was not voluntary. In addition, because the support worker was able to make a significant improvement in the family home environment, families began to trust in, and engage with their support worker. For social workers, developing strong relational practice is a central tenet of good social work and applying for a CCG was viewed as a key tool in fostering this process.
- 5.11 Agencies were asked about the extent to which they considered CCGs had contributed to early case closure. There was a perception among all support workers that CCGs did contribute to decisions to close a case by preventing risk/needs from escalating or becoming chronic. Social work teams working with children on the edge of care agreed that it helped to bring children/young people home from periods in temporary foster care. Similarly, for children on the Child in Need register, it helped to close cases where risks related to inadequate housing/accommodation had been significantly addressed (through provision of the grant funding). For support workers working in refuges, the impact on case closure was less clearly evident. This was due to challenges related to securing appropriate housing. In addition, the Buttle UK rule for cases to remain open three months following a grant being awarded largely negated decisions for early case closure.
- 5.12 Positive impacts of the grant were also realised by voluntary agencies. This included their ability to demonstrate outcomes being achieved. This was particularly apparent in relation to the Troubled Families programme where outcomes were related to suitable accommodation and increased levels of security needed to be evidenced in order to draw down the funding. Agencies considered the CCGs aided them in achieving and evidencing their outcomes.

Cost benefit of the CCG to agencies

- 5.13 The study was asked to provide cost benefits estimates of the CCGs for agencies. This was in order to demonstrate the potential for CCGs to create efficiencies for agencies and to encourage agencies to consider providing their own form of a CCG.
- 5.14 The cost of providing one grant was estimated to be between £1,833-£1,968, determined through Buttle UK administration costs and time input costs of support workers.

- 5.15 Potential cost savings were estimated by looking at the cost of interventions across the statutory and voluntary sector that had been deployed for these families. A unit cost was established using standard unit costs established in prior research; a potential monthly saving from earlier case closure was then estimated by dividing the interventions cost by 12. This demonstrated that for the higher-cost interventions, for example in statutory services, the cost to the agency of supplying a similar grant would easily be recuperated within one month of an early case closure. For less costly interventions, however, the cost to a voluntary agency of supplying a similar value of grant would take much longer to recoup through earlier case closure. The range of complex needs among some families and the challenges in finding suitable housing limited the extent to which the grant could institute early case closure.
- 5.16 The potential for cost savings for each family supported were significant with greater stability in home life, improved access to education and improved wellbeing. It is feasible to see from the evidence presented here, how such improvements in children/young people and families' outcomes would reduce the need for future support from agencies, so reducing the cost of re-referrals into both statutory and voluntary sector agencies. More detailed examination of longer-term outcomes for individual cases within agencies would be needed.

Potential for agencies to deliver their own grant

- 5.17 Agencies were asked about their potential to provide a grant similar to the CCG programme. No agencies felt this could be something they would consider currently due the financial constraints they were operating under. In addition, there was a lack of confidence in being able to raise sufficient funds to deliver a grant of similar flexibility and value as a CCG grant. Agency also valued the independence in decision making about whether a grant should be awarded and trusted that the grant was used to benefit many families.

Concluding Remarks

- 5.18 This research evidenced the impact of the CCGs for some of the most vulnerable children/young people and their families suffering from domestic abuse in the West Midland.
- 5.19 The research was completed during significantly challenging times and there was evidence that the scope of interventions was curtailed as a result of the lockdowns. However, there was also clear evidence that the CCGs had created stability and security for many families and had helped to rebuild many children/young people's lives.
- 5.20 Each grant was carefully administered and managed by Buttle UK in partnership with its network of agencies. Support workers carefully planned the grant and delivered it as a suite of support they offered to families. As such, the cost benefit of the CCGs to families and agencies was difficult to measure due to the challenges in attributing the impact of the CCGs alone to families and to agencies. However, the qualitative data generated from agencies and families very clearly evidenced the significant and positive contributory impact on the lives of the children and young people.

Annex A: Research Tools

Interview Schedules

Agency Support Worker Interview Schedule

Introduction

Starks Consulting Ltd has been commissioned by Buttle UK to undertake research to evidence the impact of the **Chances for Children** grant on children and families in the West Midlands. We are interested in how agencies perceive the impact of the grant on families, how families perceive the impact of the grant and whether agencies perceive the grant has a positive impact on the delivery of their services.

All the evidence gathered through this research is being anonymised and is held confidentially in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Are you happy to proceed and do you have any further questions regarding the purpose of this interview?

.....
.....

Background to your roles and responsibilities

1. What services does your agency provide to children and families?
2. How long have you been in your role?
3. What are your roles and responsibilities?
4. Do you work with both children and parents/carers?
5. What type of support do you deliver to children and/or parents/carers?
6. Which other support workers work with your children and families?

Administration of the Grant

1. How did you become aware of Buttle UK's Chances for Children grants?
 - had you applied to Buttle UK in previous work or did you become aware of the grant through this organisation?
2. How long have you been making applications to the Chances for Children grants programme?
3. For how many children/families have you accessed a Chances for children grant?
4. What is the main reason you applied to the grants – generally for what purpose?
5. What other items – more unique items have you used the grant for?
6. How do you determine the needs of the children for the grant? (e.g. face-to-face interviews with parents and children, using previous case notes, team discussions?)
7. Is determining need to support the application for a grant part of a wider assessment of needs? Is it standard practice? If not, why not?
8. How/if since administering the Grant have you changed your assessment approach and if who, how and why?
9. How are decisions made on what to ask for? (e.g. are these influenced by local service providers, other relationships with services?)
10. To what extent are families (parents and children) involved in the decision in deciding what to ask for?
11. How long does it take to identify needs, to complete an application and to source the item/activity (answer to be provided in hours/minutes).

12. If I may, I would like to know your hourly rate of pay so that we can calculate how much it costs each worker to administer the grant. Are you happy to tell me your hourly rate of pay/or your salary? Are you a fulltime employee?
13. Are there any other activities involved in providing the grant to families that take up your time or resources?
14. Are there items or activities you would like to be able to provide through the grant which you cannot?
15. Are there any other limitations relating to the grant application or ways the grant could be improved for children and families?
16. What if any are the barriers/challenges for agencies in accessing a grant on behalf of families? (e.g. awareness of grants, capacity to complete administration, technical support issues)

Impact of the Chances for Children grant

1. Do you perceive the chances for children grant process has influenced wider discussion around children’s individual needs and aspirations and if so, in what way? Could you provide an example of where you feel it has done this?
2. How has the grant more generally changed how you assess the needs of individuals within the family?
3. As an organisation, has the grant influenced assessment practice more generally?
4. How many of your other colleagues are aware of and access the grant on behalf of children and families?

Now I am going to ask you a series of questions which we will use to identify the impact of the grant on the families and on your services.

On a scale of 1-4, where 1 is ‘no impact’, 2 is ‘a little impact’, 3 is ‘some impact’, 4 is ‘considerable impact’, where you have accessed the grant for a child/family, what impact do you perceive the grant has had on the following (please also explain why you have rated each statement. If you do not know, please say ‘don’t know’ (DK):

Score 1 – 4 or DK

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| families’ level of engagement with the service? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| families’ trust in you and in your service? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| families engagement in improving their own circumstances? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| families’ confidence in their ability to move on? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| parents’ understanding of their child(ren)’s needs and aspirations? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| children/young people’s access to educational opportunities? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| improved the home environment? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| improved children’s wellbeing being and personal development opportunities? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

your service's capacity to support families?

how quickly cases are closed?

1. Do you think the Chances for Children grant helps lead to sustainable changes among the families with whom you work or is there no evidence of this?
2. Are there any other areas where you feel the grant may have had an impact on either the child or family or on your role?
3. Does your agency provide any other access to similar grants through your own funding?
4. Do you perceive the agency as a whole understands the value of providing grants for children and families as part of their core offer of support to families?

Thanks and close.

Agency Manager

Introduction

Starks Consulting Ltd has been commissioned by Buttle UK to research the impact of the **Chances for Children** grant on children and families in the West Midlands. We are interested in how agencies perceive the impact of the grant on families, how families perceive the impact of the grant and whether agencies perceive the grant has a positive impact on the delivery of their services.

All the evidence gathered through this research is being anonymised and is held confidentially in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Do you agree to your participation and do you have any further questions regarding the purpose of this interview?

.....
.....

Background to the service and your roles and responsibilities

1. What is the nature and extent of support provided through your service?
2. Do you/your staff work one-to-one with children as well as adults?
3. What are your roles and responsibilities?
4. How many staff are directly involved in supporting families?

How many families do you support in one year?

Applications to the Chances for Children grant in your service?

1. How aware are you of the Chances for Children grant applications that are made in your service?
2. How many staff are engaged in making Chances for Children grant applications?
3. Does the organisation actively encourage staff to make Chances for Children grant applications for the families you support?
4. If 'YES', why do you do that?
5. How do you do it? Is it part of the assessment of family's needs?
6. If 'NO', why not?
7. What affects whether or not applications are made to the Chances for Children grant?

8. What if any are the barriers/challenges for agencies in accessing a grant on behalf of families? (e.g. awareness of grants, capacity to complete administration, technical support issues).

We are now going to ask you some questions on the capacity of your service

1. How many families can you support in one year?
2. Has this changed at all over the last three years (2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20) and can you provide any figures?
3. What is this level determined by? (budgets, staff ratios, accommodation etc?)
4. How many families can each support worker work with within one year?
5. How long on average do support workers work with your families?

Impact of the Chances for Children grant on families and on your service

1. Since staff have been providing the grant, have you seen an impact on the way families engaged in your service?
2. Have you seen an impact in the way that families engage in your services as a result of accessing the Chances for Children Grant (e.g. client engagement levels, trust in the practitioner/family relationship, commitment to changing their circumstances, confidence in moving on?).
3. Do you perceive any impact of the grant on other services with whom you work? (If yes, which services and what type of impact?)
4. Do you think the Chances for Children grants helps lead to sustainable changes among the families with whom you work? (If yes, what are the long-term changes you see?)
5. Is there any evidence that would demonstrate that the Chances for Children grant has had an impact on the effectiveness or the efficiency of your service? (e.g. increased throughput of cases, reduced number of re-referrals)

Future delivery of grants

1. Do you perceive the agency as a whole understands the value of providing grants for children and families as part of their core offer of support to families?
2. Does your service currently offer any form of grants or subsidy to families similar to the Chances for Children grant?
3. If the funding was available to your organisation, do you perceive your agency would consider providing their own grant funding to families?
4. What would assist you in being able to provide access to a grant as part of your offer of support to families? (e.g. technical knowledge on how to administer the grant, administration requirements, budget constraints)
5. Are there any further comments you wish to make about the grant or this research?

Thanks and close.

Interview with parents

Introduction

Starks Consulting Ltd has been commissioned by Buttle UK to undertake research to evidence the impact of the **Chances for Children** grants on children and families in the West Midlands. We are interested in how families have used the grant and how they perceive the impact of the grant on their children and their families and their home environment.

All the evidence gathered through this research is being anonymised and is held confidentially in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. Your anonymity will be fully protected.

Are you happy to proceed and do you have any further questions regarding the purpose of this interview?

I will be asking you a few questions about your circumstances and the support you have received. If at any time you do not wish to continue, please do let me know and we can finish the interview or reschedule for another time.

We will send you a £20 voucher as a way of thanking you for your time. For this reason, I will need your address, but if you prefer you can have it posted to you from the agency that supported you or you can collect it from them.

Finally, I would like to have a short conversation with your son/daughter if that would be possible and you agree to them being interviewed. We will be asking them about their views on the grant, what they used the grant for and what difference it has made to them. All of the information we gather from them will also be anonymised. How old is your child? (If under the age of 11 arrange to speak with them as part of the interview with the parent, if not, arrange to speak separately at a time convenient, either now or later). Are they available now or when would be the best time to get to speak with them/can I call back? They will also receive a £20 voucher to thank them for their time.

.....
.....

Background

1. Firstly can I confirm that you remember receiving a Chances for Children grant for your family?
2. How many children do you have and what ages are they?
3. Which agency applied for the grant for you?
4. How would you describe the relationship you had/have with **insert support worker and agency name**? (Prompt: what did they do for you and how long did they work with you?)
5. What were your particular needs or concerns at the time that led to you working with this agency?

Assessment and application

1. How involved were you in applying for the grant?
2. How did you and the agency identify what you should use the fund for? Was the conversation you had with the agency part of a broader conversation about your needs at the time?
3. Were your children involved in identifying what the grant should be used for?
4. How could this process have been improved?

Impact of the grant

1. What type of support or item was provided?
2. For the home?
3. For the child/young person-specific?
4. For the parent
5. For the whole family?

6. How did this support make a difference to your or to your child(ren)? (Prompts: did it improve your child's wellbeing, or personal skills, or access to educational opportunities or your home environment?)
7. What were the child(ren's) views of what you/they received?
8. Has the grant had any longer-term impact?
9. Is there any way the impact of the grant could have been improved?
10. What other support would your child/ren have wanted to access?
11. Do you have any other comments you wish to make about the impact of the grant you received?
12. Is it possible to speak with your child/young person to get their views on the item/activity?

Young people's interview

Introduction

Hello, and thank you for agreeing to speak with me. I would like to talk to you to get your thoughts about the grant you received, you (mum/Dad etc told me you received (*insert what they received). I am interested to know what you used the grant for and if it made any difference to how you felt, and maybe any hobbies you developed.

Does that sound okay?

All the evidence gathered through this research is being anonymised and is held confidentially in line with the Data Protection Act 2018.

Are you happy to proceed and do you have any further questions regarding the purpose of this interview?

.....

1. Can you remember receiving [item/intervention]
2. Were you involved in making a decision about what you would like to receive? (Do you remember speaking with someone about what you would like to receive or was the decision made for you?)
3. What did you use the [item/intervention] for?
4. How often did you use it/go to the class etc
5. How did you feel when you were using the item/attending the class etc?
6. Was it what you were expecting?
7. How would you describe what impact this had on you? Did it help you meet friends, learn something new?
8. Did the item/activity help you learn anything new or develop any new skills or hobbies?
9. Did the item help you be more creative or active?
10. Was it anything that you could share or do with your parents or other siblings?
11. Is there anything that has prevented you from using or enjoying the item/activity.
12. What other things may you have wanted to receive?
13. Were you given the opportunity to have a discussion about this?

Children (aged 7-11) Interview Schedule

Hello and thank you for speaking to me, it's really nice to talk with you. I am doing some research with children about some activities or items that they have received to understand what they thought about them.

I would like to ask you a few questions about the *item/activity you received recently. Do remember this? Are you happy to talk to me a little about the *item/activity?

.....

.....

(Adapt questions as necessary)

1. Did you remember when you received the *item/activity – how you felt?
2. What difference has it made to you to have this/have done this activity or played with the item?
- 3. (If an activity)**
4. How long did you do the activity for?
5. Did you make any new friends doing this?
6. Did you enjoy it/learn anything new?
7. What did you learn and do you still do this? (If not) why not?

(If an item)

1. Why did you want this item?
2. What have you done with it?
3. Has it helped you to do things that you may have not have done before? What things?
4. Has it made a difference to how you feel going to school or being at home or with friends (explore as necessary)
5. Anything else you want to say about the item/activity?