

The Early Years Framework

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The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

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FOREWORD

It is during our very earliest years and even pre-birth that a large part of the pattern for our future adult life is set. The early years are therefore a key opportunity to shape a Scotland of the future which is smarter, healthier, safer and stronger, wealthier and fairer and greener.

This framework seeks to maximise positive opportunities for children to get the start in life that will provide a strong platform for the future success of Scotland. We know that children are the future of Scotland and we know that early years experiences provide a gateway to learning and skills that will power Scotland's knowledge economy. Equally importantly, it seeks to address the needs of those children whose lives, opportunities and ambitions are being constrained by Scotland's historic legacies of poverty, poor health, poor attainment and unemployment.

The concordat between the Scottish Government and COSLA sets a new context for policy development. It provides a new focus on outcomes and a new opportunity to tackle the big issues facing Scotland. National and local government are determined to seize this opportunity and this framework, alongside *Equally Well* and *Achieving our Potential*, represents a new dawn in social policy.

At the heart of this framework is a desire to see investment in early years focused on building success and reducing the costs of failure. This will mean a shift from intervening only when a crisis happens, to prevention and early intervention. In turn, that will mean providing a supportive environment for children and the earliest possible identification of any additional support that may be required. It is not about throwing new money at old problems, or narrow initiatives. It is about a fundamental shift in philosophy and approach that embraces the role of parents and communities and supports them with engaging, high quality services that meet their needs.

The Scottish Government and COSLA have worked together with a wide variety of partners to develop this framework. It represents a new approach – developing policy in partnership, recognising that different local areas have different needs and moving away from a centrally driven, inflexible approach, which has not delivered what is needed. Local partners will have a great deal of flexibility in implementing the framework, and we believe are already convinced of the case for action. Doing nothing is not an option if we are to achieve a step-change in outcomes.

We want to record our thanks to all those who participated in the task groups that supported this process and who contributed their expertise, either through membership of the groups or by providing the groups with material to support their discussions. We also want to thank the parents and children who participated in the research we commissioned to support this framework.

The publication of this document is not the end of the story. Rather, it is an important milestone in an ongoing partnership that we are determined to build on as we move forward with implementation. We look forward to doing so for the benefit of Scotland's children.



Adam Ingram
Minister for Children and Early Years



Councillor Isabel Hutton
COSLA Spokesperson on Education,
Children & Young People

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Why an early years and early intervention framework?

What happens to children in their earliest years says much about our society and is key to outcomes in adult life. This is now supported by a wide range of research evidence from education, health, justice and economic experts. This framework at its simplest is about giving all our children the best start in life and the steps the Scottish Government, local partners and practitioners in early years services need to take to start us on that journey.

Early years and early intervention

For the purposes of this framework, we are defining early years as pre-birth to 8 years old. This broad definition of early years is a recognition of the importance of pregnancy in influencing outcomes and that the transition into primary school is a critical period in children's lives. Many aspects of this framework are equally relevant to children beyond the age of 8.

At the heart of this framework is an approach which recognises the right of all young children to high quality relationships, environments and services which offer a holistic approach to meeting their needs. Such needs should be interpreted broadly and encompass play, learning, social relationships and emotional and physical wellbeing. This approach is important for all children but is of particular benefit in offering effective support to those children and families requiring higher levels of support.

Early intervention has relevance to a wide range of social policy but it is particularly relevant in early years, which will often be the earliest and best opportunity to intervene. We have identified 4 principles of early intervention. In short, these are:

- we want all to have the same outcomes and the same opportunities;
- we identify those at risk of not achieving those outcomes and take steps to prevent that risk materialising;
- where the risk has materialised, we take effective action;
- we work to help parents, families and communities to develop their own solutions, using accessible, high quality public services as required.

A new level of ambition in early years

This framework starts from an analysis of the type of experiences that will support positive outcomes for children, based on evidence from research and from work with parents and children. This provides the basis for a new vision for early years that reflects the high ambitions that the Scottish Government and local government have for early years.

The vision establishes a new conceptualisation of early years – that children should be valued and provided for within communities; the importance of strong, sensitive relationships with parents and carers; the right to a high quality of life and access to play; the need to put children at the centre of service delivery; to provide more support through universal services when children need it; and that children should be able to achieve positive outcomes irrespective of race, disability or social background.

Parents and communities play a crucial role in outcomes for children. That role needs to be valued by parents and communities themselves, but also supported by the community planning process. The vision also highlights the importance of high quality, flexible and engaging services delivered by a valued and appropriately qualified workforce in delivering the ambitions of this framework.

Putting the vision into action

These ambitions cannot be achieved by a business as usual approach. Transformational change is required, and 10 elements of transformational change have been identified. These are:

- a coherent approach;
- helping children, families and communities to secure outcomes for themselves;
- breaking cycles of poverty, inequality and poor outcomes in and through early years;
- a focus on engagement and empowerment of children, families and communities;
- using the strength of universal services to deliver prevention and early intervention;

- putting quality at the heart of service delivery;
- services that meet the needs of children and families;
- improving outcomes and children's quality of life through play;
- simplifying and streamlining delivery;
- more effective collaboration.

Moving forward

Single outcome agreements and the community planning process will be the key local mechanisms for putting this framework into practice. In doing so, the focus will remain on outcomes rather than inputs, and we will work to develop better indicators of outcomes from early years policies and services. The Scottish Government and local partners will continue to work closely in partnership in taking forward action, some key elements of which are likely to include:

- more help to develop parenting skills within antenatal and postnatal care and developing the capacity needed to deliver this;
- a renewed focus on 0-3 as the period of a child's development that shapes future outcomes;
- breaking down barriers between education and childcare through a move towards more integrated, flexible services;
- improving play opportunities and addressing barriers to play;
- more consistent access to intensive family support services in the early years;
- more help for informal support networks;
- nurseries, schools and childcare centres developing their role in family and community learning;
- adult services such as housing, transport and development planning putting a greater focus on the needs of young children and families;
- developing common values in the workforce, enhancing workforce skills and developing broader workforce roles;
- building on work already in progress through *Getting it Right for Every Child* and *Curriculum for Excellence* to provide child-centred, outcome-focused services

Resources

We recognise that these are high ambitions at a time when there will be no new money available for implementation. This framework can only be taken forward by realigning and prioritising resources to offer more effective support to all families and to enable help to be provided earlier to children and families requiring additional support. We believe that the improvements that are envisaged offer significant economic as well as social dividends for communities – in the short and medium-term helping to support employment and enhance productivity and in the longer term to improve a range of outcomes and reduce the need for costly crisis interventions. A simpler, integrated structure of services also has significant potential to deliver greater value for money. We do not underestimate the challenge of reallocating resources while continuing to help those who need our support now; but we believe that it is essential that we strive to do so.



1. EARLY YEARS: THE CASE FOR ACTION

Early years policy will contribute strongly to a range of outcomes and also to quality of life in early childhood.

Effective approaches to early years and early intervention policy will contribute strongly to promoting and upholding children's rights as defined by the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** and indeed those rights must underpin all policy for children.

As set out in the *Government Economic Strategy*, 2 of the key elements in delivering an **economically successful Scotland** are learning skills and wellbeing, and equity. Scotland's first Skills Strategy, *Skills for Scotland*, highlights that the early years of a child's life lay the foundations of **skills for learning, life and work** and have a major bearing on wider outcomes including **employment**. The Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman has set out an economic case that shows the rate of **economic return on early years investment is significantly higher than for any other stage in the education system**.

The recent OECD review of quality and equity of schooling highlights the huge influence of social circumstances on **educational attainment** in Scotland. Other UK research highlights that the **home learning environment in the early years is the largest factor in attainment and achievement** at age 10, bigger even than the effect of pre-school and primary school. The Millennium Cohort Study provided evidence of significant inequalities in development at age 3 that can persist throughout people's lives. Supporting parents to provide a stimulating and supportive home environment, particularly in the early years, combined with high quality pre-school and school education is therefore a key element in delivering **solidarity and cohesion** and improving **participation and productivity** within the Scottish economy.

Scotland's Chief Medical Officer set out the evidence of the connection between early years and a range of **physical and mental health** outcomes in his 2006 Annual Report. He particularly emphasised the importance of pregnancy and parenting in defining health outcomes. Parents' interaction with children in the first years of life is critical in developing relationships and laying the foundations for **positive physical and mental health development**. We know that high-risk behaviour such as substance misuse, smoking and poor diet during pregnancy and the early years can have a serious impact on a child's health, development and outcomes. Effective engagement with parents is an important first step in addressing problems, yet **those parents most in need are often the least likely to access services**.

From the child's perspective, there is evidence that exposure to high levels of parental stress, neglect and abuse can have a severe effect on brain development. There are clear gaps between the development of children whose parents face such stresses and those being brought up in less stressful households. These gaps continue through life. At age 3, children at higher risk of poor outcomes can be identified on the basis of their chaotic home circumstances, their emotional behaviour, their negativity and poor development. These children face many risks and improving early years support is key to **improving child protection**. By the time such children reach adulthood, these children are more likely to have poor health outcomes, be unemployed, have criminal convictions, have substance misuse problems and have experienced teenage pregnancy. Improving the early years experiences of these children is therefore a central element of our strategy for **regenerating communities, reducing crime, tackling substance misuse and improving employability**. It will also help us to break the repeating cycle of poor outcomes often associated with teenage pregnancy.

As well as the lost childhoods and the damage to children, families and communities, the **financial costs of failure are enormous**. For example, the annual costs of providing intensive secure care for a teenager can be in excess of £200,000 per annum. The costs of impaired health, lack of employment and criminality throughout life could be many times that. There is evidence of a **positive economic return from early years investment**, i.e. spending on programmes that are targeted, high quality and based on an effective methodology can save more than they cost over a number of years. The studies which show a positive rate of return rely on **effective targeting** of programmes and resources, implying a need for better risk assessment and matching of resources to need within universal services, as well as the availability of more targeted services where needed.

Early years investment is not a magic bullet. There is no single programme or approach that can deliver the improved outcomes we seek. Instead, it will take a **concerted and long-term effort** across a range of policies and services to achieve a transformation in outcomes. The scale of the changes which will be required to bring about these improvements is massive and complex. Service planners and providers may have to take difficult decisions, for example in respect of resource allocation, to **shift the focus from crisis management to prevention, early identification and early intervention**, whilst realistically recognising that crisis management will still be needed.

There is **life beyond early years** and some children and families will need long-term support throughout childhood and beyond. We can, however, hope to reduce the numbers of such families through supporting the capacity of children and parents to secure positive outcomes for themselves to the point where it can be self-sustaining within the universal services that are available and by building community capacity so that the wider community is empowered to provide a supportive environment for children and families.



2. GIVING CHILDREN THE BEST START IN LIFE

This framework starts from a series of vision statements that articulate what the best start in life looks like for children. Many of these reflect the rights of children enshrined in the UNCRC. The framework then goes on to set out how parents, communities, services and the workforce can support children and deliver those entitlements.

Our Vision

Children and families are valued and respected at all levels in our society and have the right to have their voices sought, heard and acted upon by all those who support them and who provide services to help them. (Article 12 of UNCRC)

Children with disabilities and from minority communities have their individual needs recognised and responded to. (Articles 2 & 23)

Children grow up free from poverty in their early years and have their outcomes defined by their ability and potential rather than their family background. (Article 27)

Children have good infant nutrition and a healthy diet. (Article 24)

Children are not harmed by alcohol, tobacco or drugs during pregnancy.

Children have a safe and warm place to stay. (Articles 19 & 20)

Every child fulfils their potential as a successful learner, confident individual, effective contributor and responsible citizen. Every child has access to world class learning and healthcare services that meet their individual needs and which promote resilience and wellbeing. (Articles 24, 28 & 29)

Children have safe, stable, stimulating and nurturing relationships with parents that develop resilience and a sense of security and trust in the relationship. Where birth parents are unable to provide those conditions, children are entitled to expect the state to move swiftly to address these needs, including alternative care that fulfils these requirements. (Articles 3, 5, 19 & 20)

Children and families are given the support they need to help them build resilience and confidence about dealing with their problems themselves, wherever this is possible, and to have the confidence to approach services for help where this is needed.

Young children are protected from harm and have their rights respected. Children have their welfare put at the centre of decisions made by parents and services, including adult and community services. (Articles 3, 4, 12 & 19)

Children are entitled to take part in physical activities and to play, including outdoors, and have an opportunity to experience and judge and manage risk. (Article 31)

Transformational change is needed in order to deliver the vision and a step change in long-term outcomes. The sections below set out what transformational change would look like in relation to parents, including anyone who plays a parental role in the life of a child, communities and the workforce.

Parents

Parents are given appropriate support to help them understand the responsibilities and sustained commitment associated with bringing up a child and to develop the skills needed to provide a nurturing and stimulating home environment free from conflict.

Parents have access to world class antenatal, maternity and postnatal care that meets their individual needs.

Parents are involved in their children's learning and are given learning opportunities that will help them support their child's learning and development.

Parents are supported to access employment and training to help reduce the risk of child poverty, including through the provision of flexible, accessible and affordable childcare.

Parents and children have integrated support from services to meet a range of needs they may have. This includes help for parents to develop relationships to their child and to address stresses which may impact on their ability to perform their parenting role.

Communities

Children, young people and families are regarded as assets to our communities.

Communities accept the benefits of play for children and encourage play.

Communities feel empowered and responsible about supporting children and families and parents take responsibility for their children.

Communities are enabled to develop their own aspirations and challenged to deliver their own outcomes.

Services

Historic cycles of poor health, poor attainment and other inequalities are broken by shifting the balance of support from crisis intervention to prevention and early identification and intervention.

Universal services are empowered and confident about identifying needs and assessing risks. Service providers use their skills to address individual needs and bring in more specialised support where that is necessary.

All services for children, young people and families are planned and delivered in an accessible, flexible and affordable way where providers feel confident about working together to provide a holistic service and sharing information to bring about improved outcomes for all.

Services are ready and able to deal with children and families whatever their circumstances.

All service providers engage with service users and the wider community to ensure that their needs are identified, assessed and addressed.

Access to services is not restricted by disability or additional needs, by ethnicity or language, by where people live or their social or economic circumstances.

All service providers develop and implement services which take account of and learn from research evidence and evaluation, best practice and the outcomes from pilot and test projects.

Workforce

Children and families are supported by a workforce which is highly skilled, well trained, appropriately rewarded, well supported, highly valued by all and with attractive career paths.

All those who work with children in the early years, whether in the statutory, voluntary or private sectors, are committed to delivering the highest quality provision for children and families. They are outward looking; confident about working together across organisational and professional boundaries; share information and resources; and have strong interpersonal skills and understanding of relationships.

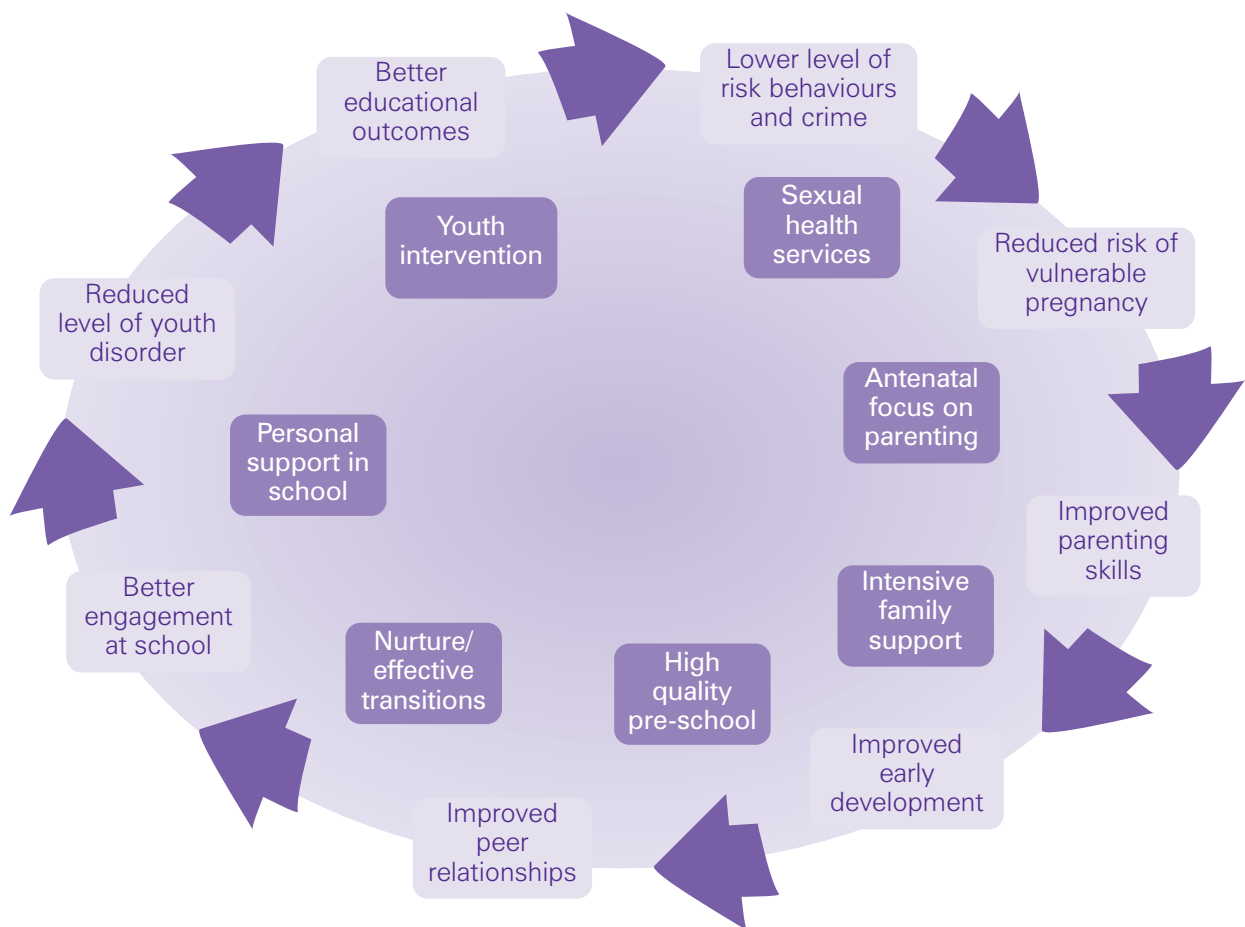
Those who work with children and families in the early years are committed to their own continuous professional development to improve their knowledge and skills. Employers provide resources, advice and support to deliver this effectively.

People working in adult services recognise the contribution they can make to outcomes for young children and make this a priority within their service planning and delivery.

Personalising the Vision: David's Story

David was born in one of the most deprived areas of Scotland to a mother who used drugs, drank and smoked throughout the pregnancy. He was brought up in an extended family none of whom have ever worked; 3 "uncles" have convictions for serious violence. Before he was 9 David moved or was rehoused 8 times, 4 times due to domestic abuse. David is one of the smallest boys in his year when he starts high school, in an area with high crime levels. He is soon truanting, involved in gang activity and identified as "outwith parental control"; he is known to various agencies including the police and social work. At 14, after a series of exclusions, he has left mainstream education. He drinks, takes drugs and abuses solvents. His family resist offers of help. At 15 he commits 3 assaults, theft, breach of the peace, robbery, steals 2 cars, commits various road traffic offences and is charged with attempted murder. While awaiting action to be taken for these offences, David visits the nearby city centre. David has been drinking and is carrying a knife. David bumps into complete stranger John and stabs him once in the upper torso. John dies 15 minutes later. David is sentenced to 7 years for culpable homicide.

David's story is a true story. It highlights a downward spiral from poor parenting and family environment into disengagement, youth crime, substance abuse and eventually murder. The diagram below highlights some of the opportunities to support the family and break the cycle of poor outcomes that David's story represents.



3. ELEMENTS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

It is clear that no one programme of work or action will be successful in turning around lives affected by complex and ingrained social problems. It will take a concerted and long-term effort across a range of policies and services to deliver the transformational change in early years described in the previous section. We have therefore set out 10 overlapping elements that need to come together over the 10 year timeframe of the framework to deliver the vision and a radical improvement in outcomes. These accord closely with the priorities identified by managers, practitioners and experts from across local government, the NHS, private and third sectors and beyond who provided their expertise during the development of the framework. The expert analysis is set out in Part II.

At a national level, the Scottish Government will work alongside partners on all 10 areas. At a local level, Community Planning Partnerships have flexibility to combine these elements in a way that best meets local needs and circumstances, and will be responsible for translating these elements into local action. In order to help partners with this work, the accompanying action plan highlights a number of ingredients that are intended to support local partners in developing a cohesive policy on early years. However, it should be stressed that successful delivery of transformational change will be demonstrated by improvement in outcomes, and not implementation of individual elements or actions.

1. A coherent approach

The current early years service landscape is quite fragmented in terms of service delivery and workforce, and often does not fully take account of the contribution of parents, families and communities to outcomes. A fundamental shift is needed to re-conceptualise the influences on children in the early years to see them as complementary parts of a whole system around the child. This is a major challenge for Community Planning Partners in future developments of their Single Outcome Agreements. Improving children's services planning and delivery and the *Getting it Right for Every Child* agenda will play key roles here.

2. Helping children, families and communities to secure outcomes for themselves

There is a danger that ever greater involvement of public services directly with children simply transfers responsibility away from parents to the state in a way that will not deliver improved outcomes. While there will continue to be cases where the best interests of children will mean finding alternative care, for almost all children responsibility for parenting must lie with parents, supported by communities and services as required. Within this model, we need to pay attention to the role of fathers as well as mothers. Where services do work with children directly, they must focus on building resilience and see part of their role as supporting parents to provide a positive environment for children. Improving the capacity of antenatal and post-natal support for parents and developing a culture of family and community learning are important aspects of this.

3. Breaking cycles of poverty, inequality and poor outcomes in and through early years

A renewed emphasis on the period between early pregnancy and 3 years old is needed to reflect the evidence that this is the period with the greatest bearing on outcomes and a critical period in terms of breaking cycles of poor outcomes. Risks of poorer outcomes for children and families are strongly correlated to underlying factors, mainly poverty and lack of parental skills and knowledge as well as education. The early years framework has to work alongside other key policies which address underlying factors, particularly *Achieving our Potential*, *Curriculum for Excellence*, *Equally Well* and *Skills for Scotland*. Wider stresses on parents and families such as substance misuse, debt, poor housing and lack of employment can also affect the quality of early years experiences and therefore impact on development. An understanding of the impact of adult services on outcomes for children, particularly in early years, and embedding the needs of children at the forefront of the thinking of those services is therefore also an important element of the approach.

4. A focus on engagement and empowerment of children, families and communities

A central issue for children and parents in the research conducted in support of the framework is the way that services engage with them, in terms of patterns of delivery and relationships with the people delivering those services. This implies a desire for a stronger and more personal relationship with a smaller number of people delivering services that meet a wider range of needs. This in turn, implies a need for service redesign and new roles within the workforce.

5. Using the strength of universal services to deliver prevention and early intervention

The power of universal services in securing engagement is key. Too much of recent investment has gone into small scale projects bolted on to universal services rather than building the capacity of the core services that children and families come into contact with on a regular basis. This has to change. The majority of future investment should be focused on making sure antenatal care, postnatal community nursing, childcare, pre-school and school are equipped to identify needs and risks, and able then to deliver a service that meets the different needs identified within mainstream services as far as possible. This does not mean a public sector solution and new and innovative models of collaboration will be required. There will undoubtedly still be a role for more specialised services. Where these are required they should be brought to the child and family in line with *Getting it Right for Every Child* principles.

6. Putting quality at the heart of service delivery

Early years research consistently highlights the quality of services and relationships as being the single biggest contributor to outcomes from early years services. Poor quality services waste resources and are a missed opportunity. Evidence from HMle highlights the continuing variability across pre-school education provision. The skills, knowledge, attitudes and qualifications of the workforce are a key focus in improving quality, and the mix of those skills is also critical. We want the best people working in early years where they can have the biggest impact on outcomes.

7. Services that meet the needs of children and families

Accessibility, flexibility and affordability are key priorities that came through in research with parents. We need to concentrate on developing integrated education and childcare services and developing a progressive scheme for supporting parents with the costs of childcare. We also need to make sure we pay attention to other barriers to access, particularly transport.

8. Improving outcomes and children's quality of life through play

Play is central to how children learn, both in terms of cognitive skills and softer skills around relating to other people. It is a fundamental part of children's quality of life and a right enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Outdoor play in particular can also be a major contributor to outcomes around physical activity and healthy weight. Developing play spaces, and play opportunities for children and removing barriers to play is therefore a priority. This has wider implications for development planning and particularly provision of open space and green space.

9. Simplifying and streamlining delivery

At the moment, there is clear lead from health in antenatal services and from 3 upwards through education. The situation for 0-3 services is less clear and this has been identified as an area requiring additional support. This will involve developing multi-agency pathways of care, based on robust evidence and integral to this will be the need to develop strategic leadership where it does not currently exist.

10. More effective collaborations

Delivery of early years services relies increasingly on partners in the private and third sectors, who provide a mix of universal and very targeted services. Indeed, some of the most flexible, engaging, innovative and holistic services are provided through these sectors. There is an almost universal view that partnerships between the public sector and private and third sector providers could and should work better. There are several difficult issues to resolve in moving this forward, but the key areas are around developing more strategic partnerships, developing models of joint delivery involving public and private/third sector providers, establishing long-term funding arrangements and funding that reflects the real cost of delivering high quality services.

4. THE CONTEXT

Government in Scotland at national and local level has already taken forward a number of initiatives and policies that provide the wider context for this framework. It has:

- established a clear *Purpose of Government, National Performance Framework* and *Government Economic Strategy* that set a coherent policy framework;
- published a joint policy statement that establishes a set of principles for early intervention that can apply to a range of frameworks and strategies. These principles have already been embedded in a number of policy documents;
- through the *Getting it Right for Every Child* programme, underlined the need for appropriate, proportionate and timely support for children through integrated multi-agency intervention where necessary and begun to develop tools to aid this;
- published the anti-poverty framework *Achieving Our Potential*;
- published *Better Health, Better Care* and *Equally Well* and their implementation plans, which show how early years can contribute to addressing health outcomes;
- made significant progress with *Curriculum for Excellence* which will bring coherence to learning experiences for children from 3-18 and build skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life from the outset. Published *Skills for Scotland*, the first cradle to grave skills strategy;
- published *National Standards for Community Engagement* to help in the process of building community capacity. Launched a joint statement on community learning and development (CLD) setting out the outcomes that CLD can contribute to and how they can be maximised;
- developed new SCQF level 9 awards in Childhood Practice, strengthening leadership and the status of early years managers/lead practitioners;
- made a commitment in the Concordat to substantial progress towards a 50% increase in pre-school entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds. The entitlement to pre-school provision will be maintained at the new level of 475 hours per annum (equivalent to 38 weeks at 12½ hours) in 2008-09 and 2009-10. This will increase to 570 hours (equivalent to 38 weeks at 15 hours) in August 2010;
- made a commitment in the Concordat to, as quickly as is possible, reduce class sizes in P1 to P3 to a maximum of 18. Taking into account retirements, the capacity of universities to train new teachers, changing demographic trends, and the different circumstances across local authorities, including accommodation pressures, it is recognised that the pace of implementation of class size reduction will vary across authorities depending on local circumstances and needs;

- made a commitment in the Concordat to, as quickly as possible, improve early years provision with access to a teacher for every pre-school child;
- made a commitment in the Concordat to provide nutritious free school meals for all P1 to P3 pupils in pilot areas. Following a successful evaluation, introduced legislation to Parliament to assist local authorities to meet this Concordat commitment;
- made a commitment in the Concordat to extend entitlement to free school meals to all primary school and secondary school pupils of families in receipt of both maximum child tax credit and maximum working tax credit from August 2009, subject to the necessary legislation being passed by the Scottish Parliament;
- made clear our commitment to Gaelic and to Gaelic medium education;
- announced an intention to introduce a Bill in Parliamentary session 2008-09 to protect rural schools which are key to accessibility of services in many areas;
- pressed the UK Government to simplify support for parents with the costs of childcare and to improve the level of support available for larger families and families with disabled children. Started work to promote uptake of childcare supports that are available;
- started developing joint roles which can span a number of services to provide a more integrated service, starting with a joint health and social care role;
- improved support for family members, including grandparents, who have the care of looked after children;
- developed a National Delivery Plan for Specialist Children's Health Services;
- commissioned baseline research with Inspiring Scotland with a view to establishing a fund to support play;
- issued Scottish Planning Policy 11: Open Space and Physical Activity and an updated version of the relevant Planning Advice Note, strengthening protection for existing open space and ensuring future needs of communities are planned for;
- developed *Good Places, Better Health*: a 3 year project which aims to ensure we create physical environments which nurture good health;
- by awarding each Community Planning Partnership an allocation from the Fairer Scotland Fund, Partnerships have been enabled to make early interventions to tackle the poverty and inequality experienced by the most vulnerable people and communities.

5. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Within the 10 elements of the model for transformational change, there are a number of actions and objectives which local and Scottish Government consider to be important factors for success. These actions and objectives are not ends in themselves, but are our analysis of the steps which in time are most likely to lead to improved outcomes.

In order to provide a sense of direction and to build momentum, the priorities are broken down into short, medium and long-term steps. Progress can be made on short-term actions within the spending review period 2008-11, although some will need continuing work over the longer term to ensure they are fully embedded within service culture and practice. The medium-term priorities may require work to be started now, but are likely to involve effort over a number of years to put into practice. Long-term objectives are those that will take the most time to achieve.

Many of the actions have a local and national component, and will require input from a range of partners. Some will be for Scottish Government to lead, others will mainly be the responsibility of local authorities and Community Planning Partners.

On their own these actions are not a full description of transformational change or of what will be required to improve outcomes. This is why the table below should not be read as prescriptive – partners are encouraged to innovate and to join up the elements of transformational change in the way that best meets local needs.

Ultimately, improving outcomes will be the test of success.

	Short-term actions	Medium-term priorities	Longer-term objectives
A coherent approach	<p>Local partners will start implementing this framework as part of the development of the 2009-10 round of single outcome agreements.</p> <p>Local partners will start the process of aligning resources to local priorities for action.</p> <p>The Scottish Government will ensure Directors involved in the SOA process are fully briefed on the framework and will work proactively to support Community Planning Partnerships as they develop local priorities and plans.</p>	<p>A clear view of how families, communities and services can work together to improve outcomes.</p> <p>Early years and childcare has a strategic role within community planning structures, building on the existing statutory obligation for integrated children's services planning. Ensuring the approach is centred on children's needs rather than processes.</p>	<p>A continuum of support from pregnancy through to primary school.</p> <p>Resources used more effectively.</p>
Helping children, families and communities to secure outcomes themselves	<p>The Scottish Government will work with partners to design and commission a social marketing campaign that supports parenting skills and promotes the value of parenting.</p> <p>Local partners will work to develop a parental capacity-building model for antenatal and postnatal services.</p> <p>HME will publish a review of what works in community learning and development to support positive outcomes in early years.</p> <p>HME will also publish a report on good practice in early years services in involving and supporting parents.</p>	<p>Developing mutual support networks for parents and other carers.</p> <p>Nurseries, schools and childcare services develop their role in supporting family and community learning.</p> <p>Community development programmes include parenting and early years as one of their priorities.</p> <p>Opportunities for parents to get involved in services as volunteer helpers or similar roles.</p> <p>Supporting grandparents and informal carers who spend significant amounts of time with care of children.</p>	<p>Parents feel better supported and have improved parenting skills.</p> <p>Greater capacity amongst parents to improve outcomes for themselves.</p>

	Short-term actions	Medium-term priorities	Longer-term objectives
Breaking cycles of poverty, inequality and poor outcomes in and through early years	<p>The Scottish Government and local partners will work together to develop a co-ordinated approach to early years, health inequalities and poverty at national and local level.</p> <p>The Scottish Government will develop a pilot of Nurse Family Partnership.</p>	<p>A renewed focus on services from pregnancy through to age 3 as a key opportunity to build resilience and break cycles of poor outcomes.</p> <p>Services such as housing, substance misuse treatment and development planning recognise and promote the needs of children.</p> <p>More consistent access to intensive family support for those who need it.</p> <p>Sexual health advice and services integrated into services for high risk groups such as substance misusers and looked after children.</p> <p>Accessible drop-in sexual health services for teenagers.</p>	<p>Taking opportunities to break into cycles of poor outcomes at key stages.</p>
A focus on engagement and empowerment of children, families and communities	<p>The Scottish Government will lead development of a common values statement for the early years workforce. This will involve a wide range of interested parties and be based on work already commenced through <i>Getting it Right for Every Child</i>.</p> <p>NHS Education Scotland (NES) will take forward new educational developments for roles in the children and young people's workforce at SCQF levels 7 and 8.</p> <p>The Scottish Government and the Scottish Social Services Council will work with NES to ensure that, over time, we can develop joint roles across health, education and social services.</p>	<p>Embed the values within initial training, induction, CPD, professional standards and service culture.</p> <p>A focus on engagement skills for all early years practitioners.</p> <p>Joint appointments between health, education and social work services.</p> <p>Developing a strategic view of where workers with broader skills can add value to existing services.</p>	<p>Improved engagement with children and families.</p>

	Short-term actions	Medium-term priorities	Longer-term objectives
Using the strength of universal services to deliver prevention and early intervention	<p>The Scottish Government will commission NHS Quality Improvement Scotland to develop integrated care pathways for antenatal, maternity and postnatal care.</p> <p>Local partners will develop capacity to meet a range of health and wider social needs in maternity support services.</p> <p>The Scottish Government and local partners will work together to implement concordat commitments which increase the capacity of nurseries and the early stages of primary.</p> <p>The Scottish Government and local partners will work together to implement <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i>.</p> <p>The Care Commission will develop early intervention as an inspection focus for daycare of children services in 2009-10.</p> <p>HMIe will include early intervention and good practice as part of its report on aspects of the early years framework.</p>	<p>An enhanced programme of antenatal, and postnatal support that meets a range of medical and social needs, based on a parental capacity-building model, with the health of parents at the core.</p> <p>Enhanced early intervention, particularly in areas such as communication, literacy and numeracy. This will be supported by a continuing HMIe focus on these areas within inspections.</p> <p>Making use of universal services to better meet the needs of vulnerable children and families.</p> <p>Equipping all young people to make positive choices about pregnancy and parenthood through <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i>, based on a mix of academic skills, skills for work, sex education, parenting skills and broader life skills matched to individual needs.</p>	<p>Early intervention becomes a core value across a wide range of services in and beyond early years.</p>

	Short-term actions	Medium-term priorities	Longer-term objectives
Putting quality at the heart of service delivery	<p>The Scottish Government will commission an analysis of skills and skills gaps across the different professions in early years, as the first in a series of research and analysis projects.</p> <p>The Scottish Government will use the Common Values Statement and the analysis of skills and gaps to identify core skills needed to deliver <i>The Early Years Framework</i> and <i>Getting it Right for Every Child</i>.</p> <p>The Scottish Government and local partners will enhance management and leadership skills, by continuing to support SCQF Level 9 courses in childhood practice.</p> <p>The Scottish Government will work with Teacher Education Institutions to develop courses which will offer more specialised early years teaching skills.</p>	<p>Reflecting priority areas in local CPD and training programmes.</p> <p>Build on developments such as the <i>Continuous Learning Framework</i> in social services and essential shared capabilities which have been developed for the health and social services workforce.</p> <p>Study the characteristics of successful workforce models in other countries. This will help us shape a long-term workforce development options in Scotland.</p>	<p>Early years services aligned to evidence of what works.</p> <p>CPD and training aligned to those skills and qualities that will have the greatest impact on outcomes.</p> <p>Improving the quality of services by having every early years and childcare centre led at graduate level or equivalent.</p> <p>Improved early years teaching skills and improved quality in early years education.</p>
Services that meet the needs of children and families	<p>The Scottish Government will promote the benefits of a single, accessible and progressive means of supporting parents with the costs of childcare. We will also promote uptake of the UK childcare vouchers scheme with employers and employees.</p>	<p>A strategic view of childcare accessibility and how to start addressing gaps.</p> <p>A single gateway to a range of advice and information for children and families. Marketing this proactively.</p>	<p>Access to integrated pre-school and childcare services in every community matched to an assessment of local demand.</p> <p>A new and more progressive means of supporting parents with the costs of childcare.</p>

	Short-term actions	Medium-term priorities	Longer-term objectives
Improve outcomes and children's quality of life through play	<p>The Scottish Government is currently working with Inspiring Scotland on a possible venture philanthropy fund to support play. If research shows that such a fund can improve outcomes, then the Scottish Government is prepared to invest £4m over the first 2 years.</p> <p>The Scottish Government, in partnership with the Care Commission, Play Scotland and the police will lead a debate on understanding and balancing the benefits of play against risk.</p> <p>Through <i>Curriculum for Excellence</i>, the Scottish Government and local partners will continue to promote play-based learning, including in early primary.</p> <p>HMIe will continue to focus on the quality of energetic and outdoor play on all inspection activities. Evidence and reports will continue to include evaluations of outdoor learning and developments in such areas as Forest School Initiative.</p>	<p>Developing local play and green space policies and improving play opportunities.</p> <p>Promoting positive environments for children and families through planning, regeneration and transport policies.</p> <p>Nurseries and schools supporting outdoor learning and outdoor play. Trying out innovative approaches such as nature kindergartens.</p>	<p>High quality play opportunities in every community. Increased play and physical activity.</p>

	Short-term actions	Medium-term priorities	Longer-term objectives
Simplifying and streamlining delivery	Community planning partners to commission a locally-developed plan and change programme for providing a more co-ordinated set of supports for children and families, building on integrated children's services planning.	Developing clear strategic leadership for 0-3 services.	A simplified and streamlined early years service landscape.
More effective collaborations	A local review of partnership arrangements to align them with outcomes and start developing longer-term and more strategic partnerships.	Developing models of service delivery that combine public sector and partners working alongside each other to common objectives.	Seamless integration between public sector and partnership services.



6. MOVING FORWARD

The previous sections have set out what we want to achieve and a number of elements that will take us towards those goals. This section moves on to look at how the Scottish Government and local partners will move forward in partnership to deliver this agenda and measure our success in doing so.

Single Outcome Agreements

Single Outcome Agreements are the key mechanism for bringing local partners together to identify priorities and actions to improve outcomes. They are also a key mechanism in the relationship between national and local government through which shared priorities can be developed and progressed. We therefore need to define how the early years framework will relate to Single Outcome Agreements in 2009-10 and beyond.

The Scottish Government and COSLA have developed guidance for Community Planning Partners that will support the preparation of SOAs from 2009-10. A key principle is that SOAs are agreements between local authorities and the Scottish Government. There will therefore be a high level of engagement between the Scottish Government and local partners during this process.

The Scottish Government supported the first round of Single Outcome Agreements through a set of Directors who worked alongside local authorities. This approach will be extended for the 2009-10 SOAs by doubling the number of Directors involved to provide scope for a greater level of engagement.

Single Outcome Agreements are necessarily pitched at a strategic level as they cover the wide range of responsibilities that reside with community planning partnerships. It will therefore be important for the SOA process to set out clearly what those strategic priorities and actions are, and to link effectively to more detailed local plans for children's services.

A continuing partnership

This document is an important milestone in the partnership between the Scottish Government and national and local partners that has given new impetus to the early years agenda. That partnership will need to be sustained as we move forward into implementation if we are to achieve the improvement in outcomes that we seek.

A priority area for ongoing partnership will be developing a systematic way of recording, reviewing and learning from innovation and evidence. A particular area that partners are keen to see developed is the evidence base around parenting support and parenting interventions.

There is also a need for an ongoing partnership to support and develop the model of resource alignment and transfer set out in Section 7. This is recognised as being one of the most challenging parts of this framework and we need to ensure that all partners have an opportunity to share and work through challenges and solutions in this area.

Development of indicators and data collection and dissemination to support those is also an area where continuing partnership will be essential. In particular, work is needed to define how national and local data collection will complement each other. The Scottish Government and COSLA will therefore develop a joint proposal for an ongoing structure which will sustain and develop the model of partnership established in the development of this framework. This will be refined and agreed with a range of national and local partners.

Measuring progress

As highlighted in previous sections, measures of success will be based on outcomes and appropriate indicators, rather than on implementation of specific actions.

Sitting at the top level of the outcomes framework is the Scottish Government's Purpose, which is to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. Sustainable economic growth does not just mean building up a rich economy – it will also mean building up a rich and responsible society.

The case for action highlights the contribution that early years policies and services can make to the learning, skills and wellbeing and equity strands of the *Government Economic Strategy*. Early years will also support the participation, solidarity and cohesion targets within the *Strategy*. In the longer term, we also believe that improving early years development can contribute to productivity and growth. It will be important, in taking forward the priorities of this framework, to maintain a focus on how they contribute to these top level objectives and targets.

Participation, Solidarity and Cohesion Targets:

- Maintain our position on labour market participation as the top performing country in the UK and close the gap with the top 5 OECD economies by 2017
- Increase overall income and the proportion of income earned by the 3 lowest income deciles as a group by 2017
- Narrow the gap between Scotland's best and worst performing regions by 2017

The National Performance Framework supports the purpose and sets out 15 national outcomes and 45 National Indicators.

***The Early Years Framework* supports at least 11 of the National outcomes:**

- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens
- We have improved life chances for children, young people and families at risk
- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation
- We live longer, healthier lives
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society
- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
- We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity
- Our public services are of high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

Relevant National Indicators:

- Increase the proportion of schools receiving positive inspection reports
- Increase the overall proportion of area child protection committees receiving positive inspection reports
- Reduce the number of working age people with severe literacy and numeracy problems
- Improve people's perceptions of the quality of public services delivered
- Decrease the proportions of individuals living in poverty
- 60% of children in Primary 1 will have no sign of dental disease by 2010
- Increase the proportion of pre-school centres receiving positive inspection reports
- Improve the quality of healthcare experience
- Reduce the rate of increase in the proportion of children with a body-mass index outwith a healthy range by 2018
- Reduce the percentage of the adult population who smoke to 22% by 2010
- Increase the population of school-leavers from Scottish publicly funded schools in positive and sustained destinations (FE, HE, employment and training)

Within the first round of Single Outcome Agreements, a number of local indicators have been developed. Several of these have specific relevance to the early years:

Local indicators relevant to early years:

- Proportion of live singleton births of low birth weight
- Proportion of new born children exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks
- Proportion and number of obese children in Primary 1
- Pregnancies amongst under 16 year olds per 1000 relevant population
- Life expectancy at birth
- Proportion of children that are living in households that are dependent on out of work benefits or Child Tax Credit more than the family element
- Number and percentage of children with dental cavities in Primary 1
- Numbers and percentage of children walking or cycling to school

A number of other local outcomes concerning regeneration, health and domestic violence are also relevant to early years in that they are strongly correlated with higher risks of poor outcomes for children living in households or communities where such vulnerabilities exist.

Improving local indicators

These national and local indicators have been built up from existing datasets rather than from first principles. A first step must therefore be to go back and ask what kind of indicators we need to measure in early years in order to be confident that early years policies are supporting progress towards higher level national outcomes. Our current indicators are too focused on measuring deficits and trying to reduce these. Ideally, we want to have a more balanced approach which allows us to measure both positive elements that support resilience as well as targeting negative indicators that highlight increased risks.

An ideal set of early years indicators would encompass the following:

- incidence of vulnerable pregnancies;
- measures of child development and reducing development gaps;
- breastfeeding, nutrition and healthy weight, including at birth;
- measures of the quality of parent/child interaction;
- measures of children's physical and mental health and reducing health inequalities;
- children's involvement in play and physical activity;
- children's engagement in pro-social activities and behaviour;
- numbers of children living in poverty;
- inclusion/outcomes for disabled children and those from minority communities.

It can be seen that comparing the ideal data set with the existing set of indicators that some elements are already embedded within existing performance management frameworks. However, there are also significant gaps. The Scottish Government and local partners will jointly launch a process to develop new indicators for early years that will fill this gap. New measures that are developed through this process will replace existing local indicators. Local indicators are not mandatory but they will provide a guide to local partners as to how they can measure both the success of early years policies and start to assess whether they are on course to improve a range of higher level outcomes in the longer term.

Input and process indicators

Improving outcomes is our first priority but achieving this relies on changing inputs and processes which contribute to outcomes. There is still therefore a role for indicators that measure inputs and processes where these are seen as key to delivering improved outcomes. Some input and process measures already feature in the national indicators and related performance management frameworks such as HEAT targets. Beyond these existing national indicators, it will be for local partners to decide which input and process indicators are most relevant to their local area.

Specific commitments and actions

As part of the Concordat agreed between the Scottish Government and COSLA, a number of specific commitments relevant to early years have been agreed. Similarly, specific targets, actions and commitments have also been developed for the NHS and other public bodies with an interest in early years policy.

A key objective of this framework is to provide the broader context for the implementation of those specific commitments. In essence, those specific commitments have value in themselves in improving children's experiences, but they should also be implemented in a way that makes the greatest contribution to improving outcomes.

Local early years profiles

The development of Single Outcome Agreements starts from an assessment of local needs. To assist local partners in doing so, the Scottish Government will work with local partners to develop local early years profiles highlighting how each local area is positioned relative to others on a number of key early years outcomes and indicators. This will also provide a baseline against which local partners can measure progress.

One Nottingham – Nottingham as an Early Intervention City

Why?

One Nottingham's mission – 'early intervention, pre-emption and prevention' – has led to an extensive and potentially ground-breaking Early Intervention Programme, aiming to break the cycle of intergenerational underachievement and deprivation in Nottingham.

The purpose of the early intervention approach is to involve all Partners in the City in a coherent and systematic attempt to improve outcomes for children, young people, adults and families who are very likely to experience difficulties and to break the inter-generational cycle of problems in the long-term.

The initiative involves a long-term shift to focusing on the causes rather than symptoms within cycles of challenge. The aim, through investment in prevention and early intervention, is to reduce the demand on specialist services, reducing costs in the long-term. The number of children, young people, adults and families with high needs at present is significant. Success will therefore require continued work on access to integrated services at universal and preventative levels. Part of the plan is the development of a holistic, early warning system that will facilitate more effective targeting of services at an earlier stage.

How?

The early intervention programme has a whole-City approach. The Programme Team, who work across all of the Strategic Partnerships, are funded by One Nottingham, the local strategic partnership, and hosted within Children's Services. A number of scoping days were held at the beginning of the Programme to scope the remit and to collect information around what the barriers were to this as a way of working, in the different organisations and contexts across the City. A high-level strategic scoping day was held, which was facilitated by the University of Nottingham's Business School, which was replicated in-house with colleagues from as many organisations and levels as possible. There was a lot of enthusiasm in the City to get involved and shape this. These sessions provided a valuable insight into the experiences of colleagues across the City, from front-line to strategic.

A definition of the remit of the Programme was formed from these scoping sessions and the lead for each Strategic Partnership was asked to write a personalised 'statement of intent' for their partnership, to personalise their own vision within the Programme.

Early intervention has become an important focus within Nottingham's Local Area Agreement. The LAA identifies a set of first tranche projects that:

- focus on inter-generational issues;
- focus on activities that can reduce the number of specialist interventions;
- focus on bringing partner resources together to make this happen;
- target work at those individuals at highest risk of poor outcomes without effective support and intervention;
- focus on coherence for children and families within the delivery model.



7. RESOURCES

This framework sets out high ambitions for early years and early intervention at a time when overall growth in public spending is projected to be modest. Within that context, we cannot rely on large amounts of new money being available to implement the framework.

Much is achievable in the short and medium-term through changing what we do with existing resources, but there are also elements of the framework, particularly the medium to long-term priorities, that are likely to involve an element of new capacity.

The scale of the challenge

Expenditure on early years services is already significant. For example, around £300m per annum is spent on pre-primary education and childcare, several hundred million on the early stages of primary, and £350m on maternity services. When we add in other health expenditure and social work services, the total spend on early years services is likely to be at least £1.5bn per annum.

Within this context, adding in a few £million here or there is not a realistic means of delivering the ambitions of this framework. Those can only be achieved by a realignment of the existing resource combined with a transfer of resource into prevention and early intervention.

Creating a virtuous cycle

Over time, we believe that a focus on early years preventative and early intervention services will reduce the need for crisis interventions. We know that crisis interventions are very costly and that saving even a fraction of those costs could release significant resources for reinvestment in prevention and early intervention.

- A family evicted for anti-social behaviour with 3 or 4 children requiring custodial care, residential care and foster care can cost £250,000 – £330,000 in a year. The cost of an intensive family support project intended to reduce ASB range from £3,954 for an outreach programme to £36,580 for a project with a core unit.
- By the age of 28, cumulative costs of public services over and above basic universal provision for individuals with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties were 10 times higher than for those with no problems – on average £70,019 for the SEBD children compared with £7,423 for the no problem group.

Through such a model, there is the potential to create a virtuous cycle whereby progressively greater savings support increasing investment in early years and early intervention which in turn further reduces the need for crisis intervention.

There are significant challenges in creating the virtuous cycle above. The first is the time lag between prevention and early intervention and any measurable difference being seen in demand for crisis intervention services. International research would suggest that the greatest savings come in the long-term through reduced dependence on benefits, better employability and reduced crime. Savings in the short-term may be much more modest.

The second issue is around realising savings from crisis intervention services. In many areas, demand for such services may exceed supply at present and there may be a strong case for improving the quality of those services as well. We cannot simply write off those who need our support now.

A realignment towards early intervention services is not simply a case of transferring resources. A reorientation in the philosophy and design of services is needed alongside the transfer of resources to achieve the ambitions of this framework.

Where to start

There is no simple solution which allows resources to flow immediately and without consequence from acute services to pay for early intervention. It would be difficult if not impossible to come up with a solution to early intervention which would work in every local area. However, there is a broad agreement that, over a period of years, there is a strong case for a shift of resources into early years and early intervention.

By far the biggest elements of current spend are on health services and pre-school and school education. The first priority must be to make these resources support outcomes more effectively. There are elements of the action plan that are deliverable through universal services at relatively modest cost, such as providing a greater focus within existing services on the development of parenting skills, developing broader roles in the workforce and enhancing the role of childcare, pre-school and school in family learning.

The review of processes and reduction in overlap and unnecessary bureaucracy being promoted through *Getting it Right for Every Child* also has the potential to support the proposed transfer of resources, by supporting the above process. A second priority should therefore be to use the learning from the *Getting it Right for Every Child* Highland Pathfinder to streamline processes and resources.

The Scottish Government must play its part too. Any additional spending pressures will form part of discussions on the overall local government finance settlement as part of the next spending review.

Meeting the challenge in partnership

While some progress can be achieved through alignment of resources, the resource shift needed to achieve the ambitions of this framework will need a concerted and long-term effort. It should not simply be a case of the Scottish Government handing the challenge to local partners to sink or swim. The Scottish Government is committed to supporting and working alongside local partners as they start to address this challenge, and will work with COSLA and local authorities to define the form of support that local partners would find most useful.

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