

Camden and Islington VRU Funded Parenting Project

Evaluation

The Mayor Sadiq Khan and guests sitting at CAPVA event

Key information

Publication type: General

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The programme

The London VRU funded Camden and Islington councils to jointly deliver a comprehensive package of support for Parents and children at risk of experiencing violence.

Parents and children were supported through various life-course approach programmes and interventions, including primary to secondary school transition support, family support and online training.?

Methodology

The programme was evaluated by London Metropolitan University through a mixed methods approach.

As quantitative project outputs were already captured as part of the reporting requirements, the evaluation focused on generating qualitative insights to support a richer exploration of the project's implementation and outcomes.

Whilst the evaluation design limits conclusions on impact, the evaluation highlights positive indications around individual and systems outcomes. ?

Key findings

The programme has effectively provided appropriate support for young people and families and identified models of practice that can be applied more widely.?

- Participants reported feeling more confident, less anxious, and formed trusted friendships.
- Those with behavioural issues noted experiencing reduced trouble, due to support received.?
- Parents felt supported in dealing with secondary schools' slow responses.?
- Keeping cases open until processes like Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) assessments were complete, provided essential support during challenging periods.?
- The team's relational approach that placed parent empowerment at the centre of delivery, helped the families feel more confident to address the issues they faced.?

Although the family support intervention intended to provide low level support, 83% needed to be stepped up to other services. This suggests that the project was able to identify and engage with those who were missing out on vital support.?

Emerging best practice

- The E-training provided training that professionals typically receive, to parents and carers. The principle behind the approach was that parents and carers are experts on their children, and if supported to understand them better, they will be able to provide the best possible care for them.??
- The delivery team's responsiveness to local needs, including incorporating training topics suggested by parents, contributed significantly to the program's success. This flexibility empowered participants, equipped them with needed information and skills, and gave them a voice in the process.?
- This empowerment led to the development of a parent champions group which moved beyond disseminating information to other residents, to having the confidence to informally support friends and family, including attending meetings with education providers.?
- Unlike other services, families could stay open to the Parental Support programme whilst accessing other interventions. This helped ensure families were comfortable engaging with new services.?

Challenges and key learning

The report made some key recommendations to improve delivery and enable the programme to scale pan-London. Several recommendations are outlined below:??

- advocate for longer project funding periods to maximize outcomes
- actively involve fathers/male carers in parent empowerment projects
- allow services to keep cases open during transitions to other support
- ensure staff have manageable caseloads for agile and intensive support
- engage more fathers in project delivery and similar parental engagement initiatives
- provide opportunities for parents to build friendship networks during online training sessions

- ensure Parent Champions have access to group supervision and reflective practice spaces
- assess the suitability of the project's less formal approach in other settings, with clear boundaries established
- explore extended handover processes when referring families and young people to other services
- improve engagement with parents in schools and educational establishments.?

More specific recommendations for each programme deliverable can be found within the report (such as e-learning).?

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