



Work-Focussed Services in Children's Centres Pilot

The role of local partnerships

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Structure of this presentation

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- i. About the pilot
 - ii. About the evaluation
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- 1. Which partners are involved at the local level?
 - 2. Partnership working between Jobcentre Plus and Children's Centres
 - 3. What do partners say about the pilot?
 - 4. What do parents say about the pilot?
 - 5. Key learning around partnership working



i. About the pilot

- Pilot aims to test whether Children's Centres (CCs) can offer an effective means of engaging parents in labour market
- Focus on supporting the 'journey to work'
- Dedicated Jobcentre Plus (JCP) provision in Children's Centres (CCs)



ii. About the evaluation

- Mixed methods impact study spread across two years
- Due to finish Summer 2011



1. Which partners are involved at the local level?

- Local authority (LA)
- Pilot Children's Centres
- JCP

- Other partners (varies from area to area)



2a. Partnership working

- Partnership working evident through:
 - Flexibility on all sides to make pilot work
 - Regular communications between CCs and JCP
 - Ongoing referrals to pilot from CC services (and vice versa)
 - Responses of parents and pilot staff

'I don't feel if you went into the centre, you would pick them out. I think you would see a member of the Children's Centre team, and that's quite crucial to the whole concept' (LA lead)



2b. Partnership working

- Challenges

- Little prior understanding of each others organisational culture

'I'm an integrated Children's Centre person at heart and the rules and regulations are, I find, extremely challenging' (LA pilot lead)

- Lack of flexibility and communication
- Lack of physical space to accommodate JCP PA
- Differing expectations of PA role and pilot outcomes

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3. What do partners say?

- They are reaching a broader 'customer' base
- Better able to progress customers towards employment, training or education
- Increased/better links with other organisations and partners
- Opportunity to embed work-focused services (WFS) in multi-agency setting

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4. What do parents say?

- JCP PA is friendly, informative, helpful, approachable
- JCP PA is seen as part of CC team of staff
- Convenient and accessible

'It's nice to be able to just pick the phone up and say, "oh, hello, can you just work this out, this job has come up". I've come over with a few applications and she's gone through them to check if I needed to write something else and she's offered to help with my CV and everything.' (Parent)

- CCs offer more comfortable environment to access WFS



5a. Key learning - partnership working

- Pilot-specific:
 - Levels of pre-pilot JCP resource in a CC not necessarily a precursor of successful JCP PA integration
 - Pre-pilot 'familiarisation' of partner's work environment can facilitate partnership working
 - Some CCs offer a potentially good outreach setting for JCP services



5b. Key learning - partnership working

- General:
 - Communication at the operational level is key
 - Flexibility required by all
 - Takes time to build up working relationships with partners and embed WFS in a multi-agency setting
 - Partnership working is key to addressing multiple barriers to work



... thank you



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