

BETTER breaks

Evaluation report on Round One of Better Breaks

April 2012 – March 2013



Supported by:



The Scottish
Government

Short
breaks fund



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Foreword

In March 2012 the Better Breaks programme awarded over £1.1 million to 51 projects across Scotland to deliver quality short breaks for children and young people with disabilities. These breaks are tailored to the individual needs of the children and young people and give their families a break from caring. As chair of the grants panel for the programme it was challenging but inspiring to consider the range of applications for this funding and to work with other panel members to try to ensure this money had the biggest impact possible in line with the programme aims.

If the only thing this funding delivered was grants to enable third sector organisations to deliver short breaks for children and young people with disabilities, and in particular those with complex and multiple support needs, that would be a very significant achievement. This report, however, shows the intention to deliver something beyond funding which will have a lasting legacy by informing the work of anyone engaged in supporting families with disabled children.

Evaluation is high on the list of requirements of funders, with an emphasis on third sector organisations being able to demonstrate the impact of the work they deliver. Reporting against outcomes - the difference actually made – as opposed to outputs – what is delivered – is an important one as it develops understanding of what actually works. For individual organisations this helps them develop services that make as big a difference as possible to the people being supported.

Too few funders, however, insist on the same level of accountability for their own funding programmes and yet evaluation can deliver so much at this level. For a funding programme it enables learning from all the funded projects to be shared so others working in the same area can use the findings to inform and improve their own practices. It also helps the programme be developed to ensure it continues to achieve what it was set up to do. This report is a very significant step in ensuring a legacy beyond the funding. By drawing together what has been learnt from the Better Breaks programme this evaluation shows that the whole really is greater than the sum of the parts when it comes to learning what works and what doesn't.

Everyone at Shared Care Scotland and the Grants Allocation Panel wish to extend thanks to Dr Eleanor Logan who undertook this external evaluation. The evaluation process has benefited enormously from her forensic eye and rigorous approach. We all hope that you enjoy this report and draw inspiration from the stories and insights it contains.

Mary E. Craig OBE
Chief Executive Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland
Chair of Better Breaks Grants Panel

Section 1:

Background to the Better Breaks programme and this evaluation

In the beginning

In July 2010, the Scottish Government announced funding of £1 million per year over five years to support the provision of additional short breaks and respite care, specifically to help support and sustain carers. The funding was made available in recognition of the important contribution which carers make in caring for a loved one and the vital role breaks play in sustaining carers and those they care for.

The Scottish Government approached the National Carer Organisations (NCO) group to help design and manage the fund. Subsequently the NCO group appointed Shared Care Scotland to manage the fund on their behalf. Shared Care Scotland reports to an Oversight Group consisting of representatives from the National Carer Organisations and from Scottish Government.

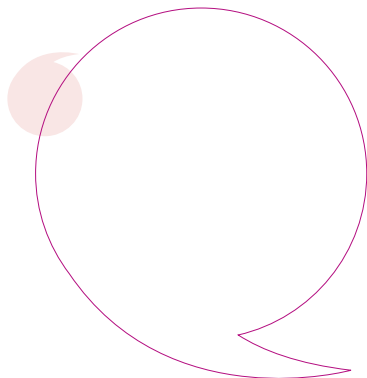
The Short Breaks Fund was subsequently launched in November 2010 with the overarching aim of increasing the accessibility, availability and range of short break and respite opportunities for carers living across Scotland. The first funds were awarded in March 2011, with further funding allocated in March 2012 and March 2013. To date 169 grants totalling £2,901,825.000 have been made under the umbrella of the Short Breaks Fund. And more importantly 8,556 carers and 5,596 people they care for have benefited from short breaks.

What happened next?

The first rounds of the Short Breaks Fund successfully generated an increase in short break provision for carers and those they care for. Feedback from carers and their families confirmed the positive impact a short break can make, but also pointed to the level of unmet need. This was particularly evident among families caring for children and young people with disabilities.

In 2011 the Scottish Government announced a further £2 million would be made available specifically to improve short break opportunities for disabled children, young people and their families. £700,000 was allocated to the Family Fund to administer small grants directly to individual families. The remaining funding was allocated to the Better Breaks programme which was launched in October 2011.

The overarching aim of the Better Breaks programme is to develop new, responsive and creative short break opportunities for disabled children, young people and their families – especially where children and young people have multiple support needs.



The Short Breaks Fund portfolio

The Short Breaks Fund now comprises three main funding programmes:

CREATIVE breaks

Creative Breaks provides grants of between £5,000 and £50,000 to third sector organisations to develop short breaks which promote choice and personalisation to carers of adults, carers of older people, kinship carers and young carers. Through local support organisations it is also able to channel funding directly to carers and people with support needs so that they can design and fund a break that suits them.

BETTER breaks

Better Breaks provides grants of between £ 5,000 and £50,000 to third sector organisations to develop short break opportunities for disabled children and young people and their families. The programme has a particular focus on short breaks for children and young people with complex and multiple support needs.

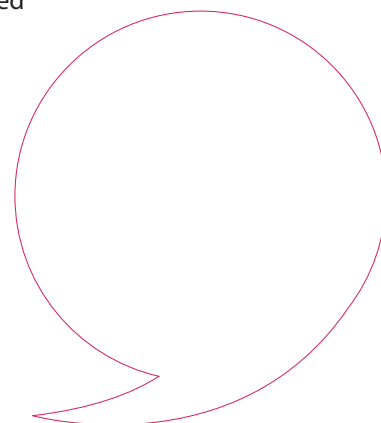
take a Break

Take a Break provides direct grants to families of disabled children and young people to fund personalised leisure activities or holiday breaks. This grant programme is administered by the Family Fund.

learning↔CHANGE

Funding has also been ring fenced for a **Short Breaks learning exchange**. The purpose of the learning exchange is to encourage shared insights, knowledge and expertise about short breaks, and to inspire new ways of delivering and evaluating successful breaks.

As part of the learning exchange, Better Breaks organisations benefited from being able to take part in a **Shared Stories Project** - a digital media project designed to help services share their own stories on the benefits of respite breaks while highlighting good practice and innovation. Production company Media Education was commissioned to support projects funded by the Better Breaks programme to produce their own films of the impact of the breaks they provide. A collection of videos made by funded projects can be viewed on the Shared Stories website: <http://www.sharedstories.org.uk/>



The aim of this report

Better Breaks programme awarded its first grants in March 2012. 51 grants, totalling £1,121,602 were distributed to projects across Scotland, so that these projects could deliver quality short breaks for children and young people with disabilities which would be tailored to their needs whilst giving their families a break from caring.

The Scottish Government, Shared Care Scotland and the National Carer Organisations (NCO) group are keen to make sure that there is a legacy from this investment, not simply in the form of additional or new short break services, but through better knowledge about what works well in short break services, and about what carers and those they care for need and value. Accordingly, this evaluation has been commissioned to:

- review the individual Better Breaks projects and explore their achievements and challenges
- consider how well the funded projects have contributed towards delivery of the outcomes (the differences) set for the Better Breaks programme
- consider how well the funded projects delivered the principles of the Short Breaks Fund
- capture and highlight examples of innovation, good practice and learning
- make recommendations for improving the reach and impact of the Better Breaks programme

The evaluation was based on information provided by the funded projects through their applications, their End of Grant reports, any supporting materials provided, selected telephone calls and review of the Shared Stories films.

Layout of this report

Section 2 describes the Better Breaks programme and the principles and outcomes that the National Carer Organisations group established for it. Outcomes are the differences which projects will make to carers and the people they care for. Grants were allocated to organisations who could demonstrate a capacity to deliver these, through a well planned project.

Section 3 describes the funded work on a cluster-by-cluster basis, based on different types of activity, illustrated with real life 'vignettes'.

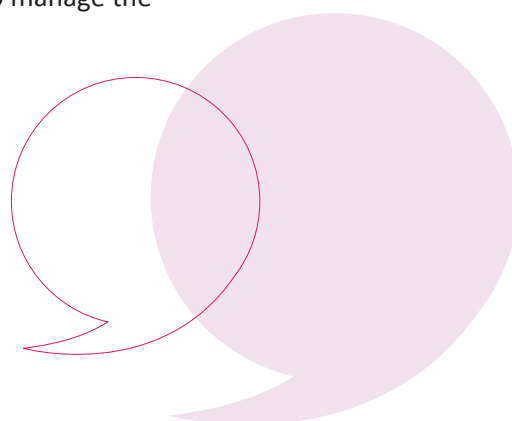
Section 4 summarises the achievements in relation to the numbers who benefited across Scotland and within individual projects; the different categories of carers who benefited (and those they care for) and the projects' success in reaching children and young people with additional multiple support needs.

Section 5 examines how well the projects have collectively contributed towards delivery of the outcomes and the principles of the Better Breaks programme.

Section 6 explores the common challenges and learning emerging from the individual projects.

Section 7 contains recommendations for the future.

Section 8 describes the work that Shared Care Scotland has done to manage the fund and to support the development of the funded projects.



Section 2:

About the Better Breaks programme

For most families, being able to enjoy the occasional short break - either together or apart - is something that they can take for granted. Families with disabled children should be able to experience the same. The purpose of the Better Breaks programme is to improve the range and availability of short break provision for disabled children and young people, particularly those with multiple support needs.

Breaks give disabled children, young people and their families the space to rest, to be themselves, and be refreshed through outside interests, holidays and other fun activities. Having a regular break can help to strengthen families by sustaining the ability of parents and carers to continue to care.

Accordingly The Better Breaks programme established the following **principles**:

- Funding should provide positive outcomes for carers and those children and young people they care for equally, improving their quality of life, opportunities and well being.
- Funding should support the personalisation agenda, providing opportunities for carers and the children and young people they care for, to be at the centre of planning and decision making about their short breaks.
- Funding should complement but not replace statutory short break provision.
- Funding should provide opportunities for children and young people to enhance their growth and development.

To help deliver these and ensure a difference is made where it matters most, the Better Breaks programme established the following **outcomes**:

- Disabled children and young people, especially those with multiple support needs, will have more opportunities to take part in activities which are fun, stimulating and rewarding..
- Carers of disabled children and young people (and those they care for) will have improved well being.
- Carers will have more opportunities to live a life outside of caring.
- Carers will feel better supported to sustain their caring role.
- More organisations (including providers of mainstream children's leisure and recreation services) will have the capacity, skills and confidence to provide age-appropriate and imaginative short break activities to disabled children and young people with multiple support needs.

Only voluntary (or third sector) organisations operating in Scotland could apply to the fund. Organisations could apply for more than one grant, provided the grants were for different areas and beneficiaries.

Applications to the fund were assessed against the following **criteria**:

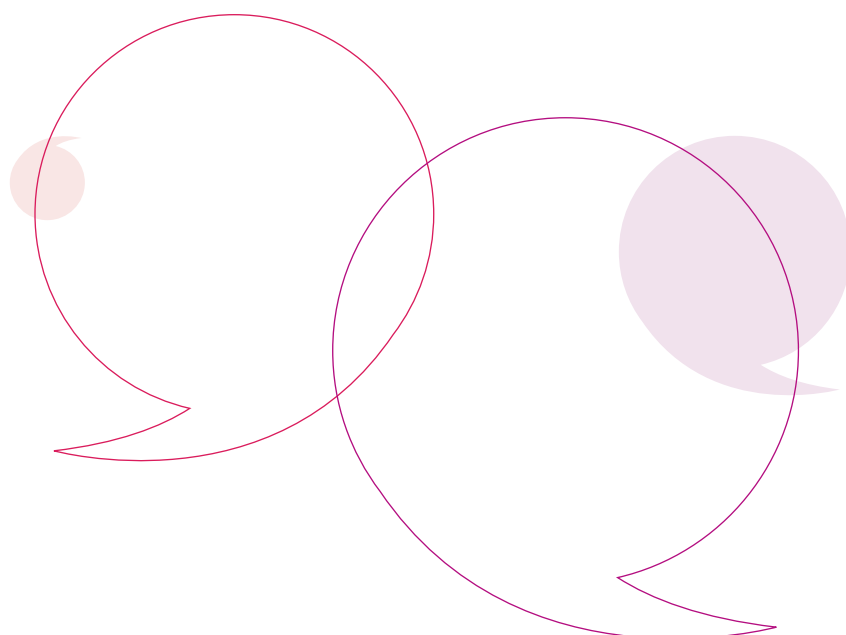
- The competence and capacity of the organisation to deliver the project and manage the grant.
- The quality of project planning and design, including how well the need had been established; and evidence of the involvement of disabled children/young people with multiple support needs and their carers in the project design.
- The capacity of the proposal to deliver the outcomes of the fund, contribute to relevant Government strategies relating to disabled children and carers, and to contribute to the evidence base about short breaks.

The Scottish Government and the other stakeholders (including carers) involved in the design of the Better Breaks programme were keen to prioritise funding towards families caring for a child or young person with multiple support needs. Organisations applying to the fund were expected to describe the support needs and caring responsibilities faced by their proposed beneficiaries to assist prioritisation of funding to those families who need support most. To assist applicants the following guidance on multiple support needs was provided:

“The child or young person’s condition must be long term or life limiting. By long term we mean lasting or likely to last 12 months or more. Children and young people would require a high level of support in three or more of the following areas:

- The physical environment
- Education
- Communication/social interaction
- Access to social activities
- Personal care and supervision/vigilance
- Specialist resources required, including information and communication technology
- Medical or therapeutic treatment and condition management”

Applications to the Fund were assessed by independent, external assessors. A grants allocation panel comprising individuals with expertise and knowledge met to review all applications and select those which would receive funding.

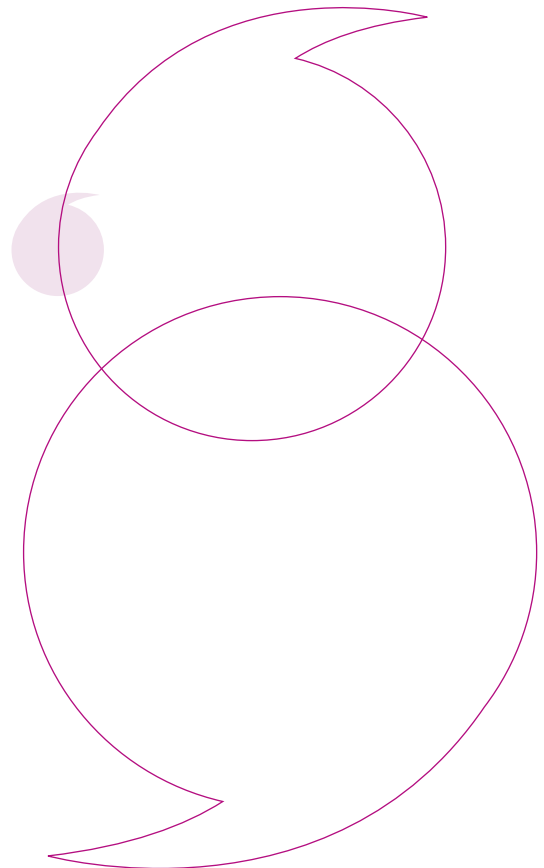


Section 3:

The work of the projects

67 applications were received for the Better Breaks programme with a total value of **£1,595,068.00**. The maximum request was for £75,585 and the minimum request was for £3,894. The average grant request was £23,800. The Grants Allocation Panel reviewed all applications and made final recommendations to fund **51** projects totalling **£1,121,612**. The smallest grant was for £5,730 and the largest £44,978. The average grant size was £21,992.

The NCO group identified a number of service categories that they wanted applications to cover and which would help to define individual applications. The funded projects are presented as groups of projects delivering a particular type of service for children and young people with disabilities.



3.1 Activity and holiday breaks (6 projects)

This kind of break includes overnight to week long residential breaks, often at a pre-booked holiday venue or an activity centre. In this category the breaks were designed specifically to benefit children and young people, often with a view to building their self confidence through the opportunity to be away from home, be with other young people, try new things and just to have fun. The whole family benefited from having a natural break from caring while the young person enjoyed their holiday. Many provided evidence of lasting benefits because the young person had grown in skills and self esteem.

Buddies Clubs and Services

Mrs A has to balance the competing demands of caring for her daughter, Karen, who has complex disabilities with those of her husband who had a major stroke. Mrs A admitted she was at 'the end of her tether' with ° episodes of challenging behaviour which Mrs A felt was due to being bored at home and reluctant to try any new activities.

With help from Buddies staff Karen was persuaded to go on an activity break. Despite initial reservations she participated in all the activities on offer including horse riding which she had never tried previously.

Exposure to these different experiences has increased Karen's confidence and she now regularly attends the Friday night girls outreach service enjoying Karaoke, meals out and dancing. As a result of Karen being happier - Mrs A feels more positive about the future and now recognises her own need for regular respite.

Table 1: Activity breaks for children and young people

Organisation	What was funded	Amount awarded	Number of Carers	Number of children and young people
Reality Adventure Works in Scotland Ltd	Funding provided activity breaks, including residential breaks, for young people aged 9-18 who experience social interaction difficulties, principally due to Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The first level of break was a day's activities at an outdoor centre, rising to a week away.	£15,541	26	18
Buddies Clubs and Services (Glasgow West Ltd)	Funding enabled Buddies to deliver six residential adventure holidays running over five days with disabled children living with a range of disabilities including autism. Activities included, climbing, biking, water sports, fishing, horse-riding as well as trips and outings.	£44,978	71	36
Fife Action on Autism	Funding was awarded to run a residential short break for young people with autism and their carers. The group went to Yorkshire where they visited many local attractions including a petting farm.	£5,730	9	10
The Action Group	Funding enabled the organisation to provide a mix of residential adventure weekends and monthly social groups for disabled young people from Midlothian and Falkirk.	£42,123	100	100
Barnardo's Scotland	Funding was awarded to support two groups to access specialist activity breaks at Wiston Lodge. The groups were a siblings group, comprising children with disabilities and their siblings, and a Transition Group comprising young people making the transition to adult services.	£22,495	45	22
The Mallard - Crossreach	Funding enabled the organisation to provide residential holidays of four nights each for children with physical and learning disabilities. This provided short breaks for carers during the Easter and Summer holidays.	£16,124	20	12

3.2 Befriending projects (2 projects)

Befriending projects involve recruiting and training volunteers or sessional workers who either 'sit' with or support the cared for person which allows the carer to have a break; or support carers to enjoy time out from caring. Befriending is not about providing care: it is about providing a buddy to do things with, usually providing an extra dimension of social contact.

Table 2: Befriending

Organisation	What was funded	Amount awarded	Number of Carers	Number of children and young people
Interest Links Borders	Funding supported the development of a project for disabled children in the Scottish Borders involving volunteer befrienders aged 16-25. Befrienders supported disabled children to take part in a wide range of activities in the community or at home. They also supported group activities in Hawick, Galashiels and Peebles such as film nights, pottery, parties and talent shows.	£15,541	26	18
National Autistic Society	Funding established a befriending service for children and young people aged 8-16 with autism in South Lanarkshire. This service helped to alleviate the isolation and improve the social skills of the young people.	£19,692	27	16

Interest Link Borders

Josh is a 14 year old boy with learning disabilities who lives with his family on a farm in a rural and isolated area. Josh has no friends who visit him at home. He has been linked with a young volunteer Patrick, who is in sixth year at the local secondary school, and plans to do medicine at university. They meet every two weeks at Josh's home and play with Lego, play board games, the Wii and other computer games, have fun with the family dogs and generally chat.

During the early stages of the link Josh gradually became less shy and more confident to talk. Josh now likes to tell Patrick about things that are important to him. Recently, Josh was diagnosed with a brain tumour and with staff support Patrick has continued to visit him which has meant as little disturbance to Josh's normal life routine as possible.

Josh's mum explained how it cheered her son up to know that Patrick was coming to visit. She also said to me how Patrick's visit gives her a little time to herself and that she was pleased and grateful that someone as friendly as Patrick was around for Josh.

3.3 Clubs / day facilities and playschemes (16 projects)

These projects provided fun activities for disabled children and young people at weekends, evenings and during school holiday periods when young people can often experience social isolation. The dual aim of these projects was to provide positive and enriching opportunities for the children while their carers had a break from their caring routine.

The Saturday Cafe and Associated Clubs

Derek lives with his grandmother and his brother who has been diagnosed as autistic. Derek has a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Global Developmental Delay and Severe Learning Disability and spends most of his day in his wheelchair.

Derek particularly enjoyed his time in the supported canoe, an activity his grandmother stated she thought would be impossible. The programme made a difference by encouraging Derek to experience new sensations such as the water all around him, the rain on his face which he clearly enjoyed and it was particularly noticed that he enjoyed watching the other young people and being in their company.

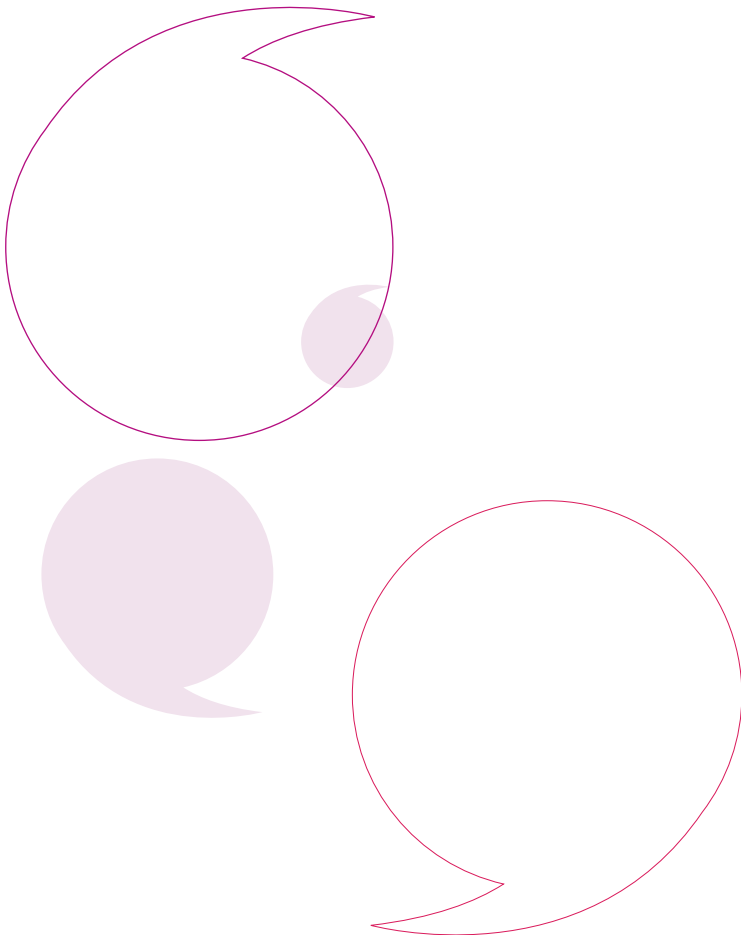


Table 3: Clubs / day facilities and playschemes

Organisation	What was funded	Amount awarded	Number of Carers	Number of children and young people
The Saturday Cafe & Associated Clubs	The funding enabled the running of Café Play schemes which provided fun sessions and days out for children with additional support needs from age 5-18. These ran from April -October 2012.	£35,845	51	50
PLUS (Stirling)	Funding was used to establish a new play scheme in Stirling for young disabled children aged 3-5 which offered 2/3 hour play sessions and a regular break for parents	£18,682	17	12
Corseford School Parent Council	Funding provided a two week summer club, including transport, for 24 children with complex support needs. The club comprised one week for older and younger children respectively and was activity and play based.	£18,386	51	24
Sleep Scotland, TEENS +	Young people with very challenging needs took part in a varied programme of mainstream sport and leisure activities across Edinburgh.	£21,944	22	15
Aberlour Child Care Trust (Ardfin Road)	Funding established a new pre-school playscheme for children with disabilities and multiple support needs.	£24,323	18	18
Lothian Autistic Society	Funding established a new youth club for 8-12 year olds with autism in West Lothian.	£10,206	18	9
SENSE Scotland	A pilot programme of themed holiday period activities for young people aged 16-20 with sensory and other disabilities living in Dundee.	£38,205	25	15
The Yard Adventure Centre	Established a new weekly youth club for young people aged 8-12 with additional support needs in Edinburgh, which ran for 3 hours per week.	£12,569	21	12
The Butterfly Club	A summer holiday playscheme which provided a range of activities for disabled children with complex needs in Ayrshire.	£8,000	55	30
Action for Children, Tayvalla Respite Unit	Funding established a Saturday activity club for disabled children who use Tayavalla Respite Unit.	£6,605	49	33
Star Youth Club	A new youth club for 14-18 year olds with multiple support needs in East Lothian.	£8,000	18	10
East Lothian Special Needs Playscheme	Funding enabled 20 days of playscheme activities for young children with severe and complex needs in East Lothian.	£17,280	37	21
Cosgrove Care	A summer playscheme for young people with multiple support needs.	£26,000	41	23
ENABLE Scotland	A summer activity scheme for disabled children in East Dunbartonshire.	£22,162	53	44
Grampian Children's Respite Care Project	The establishment of a new playscheme for disabled young children living in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.	£13,866	83	48
One Parent Families Scotland	An afterschool programme for children aged 5-18 with additional support needs living in Aberdeenshire.	£15,029	145	81

3.4 Carer arranged or self identified break (3 projects)

These projects provided funding or vouchers which enabled carers or whole families to purchase a one off break of their choosing. Support was often provided to identify and access a suitable break. The types of breaks taken varied and depended on the needs of the carer and those they were caring for.

Table 4: Funded projects carer identified / self identified breaks

Organisation	What was funded	Amount awarded	Number of Carers	Number of children and young people
Carers of West Dunbartonshire	Funding was awarded to enable families with a disabled child to purchase their own, personalised, short break. These varied from activities in the community such as swimming lessons to days out and short holidays.	£6,850	55	47
Renfrewshire Carers Centre	Funding established a voucher scheme for families with a disabled child in Renfrewshire which enabled them to purchase respite care from registered providers. Carers were then able to build a own break around the needs of the whole family.	£20,000	25	14
The PRT Inverclyde Carers Centre	Funding enabled carers of children with disabilities and their families to purchase their own personalised short break or holiday.	£17,000	58	38

“The voucher scheme has given me much needed respite and allowed me to spend time with my other children and husband. This service also allows Oliver quality time away from his family which helps to promote independence and social skills. Also it allows us, instead of going our separate ways to meet the needs of Oliver and his brothers we can actually spend time together which hugely relieves the stress and pressure of trying to juggle them all. It means that Oliver’s brothers now have no restrictions on their Sunday activities and have both parents available to meet their needs and spend time with.”

Renfrewshire Carers Centre

3.5 Supported leisure and activities (17 projects)

These projects provided disabled children and young people with days out, weekend and week-long breaks. The breaks were structured to allow young people to try activities they might not have been able to access before and some used the outdoors. Whilst the emphasis was on fun in a group setting, the opportunities were used to encourage growth and development. They also allowed the young person to spend time away from home which provided a break for the young person and their families or time for the family to be together in a fresh and supported setting.

Table 5: Supported leisure and activities

Organisation	What was funded	Amount awarded	Number of Carers	Number of children and young people
Tourette Scotland	Funded 18 weekend activity breaks in specialist outdoor centres for children with Tourette's and their families, befriending sessions and support group days.	£21,177	203	245
Achievement Bute	A programme of support and fun for young people with disabilities living on Bute including weekend away days and family group trips.	£ 18,741	37	25
Aberlour Childcare Trust	A programme of day activities and overnight short breaks for disabled young people, who are preparing to make the transition to adulthood.	£24,978	43	26
RNIB Scotland	Funding enabled four residential 'Transition' weekends, a sailing camp and an after school programme for visually impaired young people aged 14-18.	£36,967	310	183
Cornerstone	Funding was awarded to establish a Dundee Activity Club which provided a range of activities for children with multiple support needs four times a week during term times.	£24,750	47	34
Action for Children – Silverton Short Breaks	Funding enabled young people with a learning disability who attend the Silverton Respite Service to access outdoor leisure activities at week-ends and during the summer holidays.	£22,600	24	24
Action for Children - Lisalanna Support Service	Funding provided helped young people with learning disabilities who use the Lisalanna residential respite service to access weekend leisure opportunities in the community.	£23,145	76	76
Action For Children - Whit Ye Daen Saturday	Funding enabled young people who use Silverton Respite Service to access leisure activities in their own community at weekends.	£23,805	76	76
Kindred Advocacy	Funding provided a range of days out and new activities for a group of young people with disabilities, aged 14-20 living in Edinburgh.	£10,877	56	38
Action for Children	Funding supported the Stoneside Youth Group to provide social activities and a residential weekend for disabled young people who were preparing to leave children's respite services.	£20,041	15	12
Enable Scotland	Funding enabled a summer activity programme for children and young people aged 6-10 with learning and physical disabilities, living in central Scotland.	£25,246	53	80

Table 5: Supported leisure and activities (continued)

Organisation	What was funded	Amount awarded	Number of Carers	Number of children and young people
Crossroads (East Banff & Buchan)	Funding enabled a mix of holiday, weekend and evening activities for disabled young people in Aberdeenshire and Moray.	£12,678	390	48
Tweeddale Buddy Bank/Tweeddale Youth Action	A new buddy scheme for disabled children and young people in the Scottish Borders, to reduce their isolation and provide new opportunities to take part in youth activities.	£39,223	47	15
Girvan Youth Trust	The development of a support project for disabled young people involving evening and weekly clubs, social outings and outdoor adventure weekends.	£14,558	47	6
East Renfrewshire Carers Centre	Funding allowed exclusive access to sessions at a local authority sports centre and its facilities for families of disabled children.	£24,450	80	12
Quarriers	Funding established 'Brave Breaks' which provided activity days for young disabled people approaching transition from school to adulthood in North Ayrshire.	£18,562	14	8
Children's Hospice Association Scotland	A series of family days and parents evenings in Aberdeen which supported families with severely disabled children or those with life shortening conditions.	£9,014	30	9

"We have seen lonely, shy children who are tied up in their condition, with severe tic attacks, taking on new challenges, expressing themselves, and extending their skills beyond their expectations. Such as Danny, who hadn't climbed a tree before; who also learned about management techniques for his severest tics; and who was able to talk to his mum for the first time about his fears, whilst at camp. He is now a bright boy who helps others and is keen on fixing bicycles and playing music with non-TS neighbourhood children."

3.6 Family holiday break (3 projects)

These projects enabled families to have quality family time away together. Families benefited from having a break from routine and from caring at home, the chance to have a 'normal' family holiday and the chance to do and see different things. One project provided the opportunity to attend a residential family conference, where the focus was on peer support and building capacity to manage a long term condition, while the children and young people were attending their own activities.

Table 6: Family holiday break

Organisation	What was funded	Amount awarded	Number of Carers	Number of children and young people
Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme	The project provided seven day, caravan holidays to families with a disabled child at their accessible caravans at Wemyss Bay.	£10,746	219	80
Dumbarton District Disabled Children's Forum	The Forum provided a long weekend break for its members and the children that they care for. This included activities, entertainment and therapies.	£20,292	34	23
Scottish Spina Bifida Association	Funding enabled young people with spina bifida and their families to come together for a weekend residential conference where they could socialise, attend workshops and get peer support.	£30,000	50	44

Danielle aged 9 is cared for by her grandmother, step grandfather and aunt. All have cared for Danielle since 2009 when she came to live with them because her parents could not cope. Danielle has cerebral palsy, complex learning needs and double incontinence issues and requires 24 hour care. Following a major operation in 2011 Danielle had barely been out of the house. The family enjoyed a week at the caravan site in August 2012. Danielle finally got a holiday, enjoyed visiting new places and all the entertainment available on the site, with the reassurance and security of her gran and family around her.

Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme

3.7 Home based services (four projects)

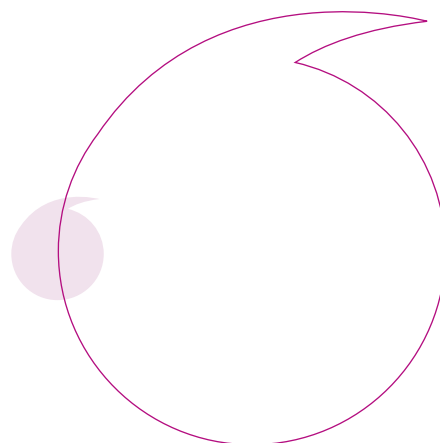
These projects predominantly provided sitter services for families where there was a disabled child or young person. The sitter service allowed carers to have a break from caring while providing one to one support for the child or young person. This involved activities in the home or out in the community.

Table 7: Home based services

Organisation	What was funded	Amount awarded	Number of Carers	Number of children and young people
Geeza Break	Funding provided a home based sitter service to families in Glasgow with a disabled child, along with supported attendance at a playscheme during the school holidays.	£21,068	36	26
Perth and Kinross Association of Voluntary Service	Funding enabled the Minority Ethnic Access Development Project (MEAD) to make contact at home with families with a disabled child from the BME communities in Perthshire, to help them to identify their needs and to take up opportunities for support.	£28,560	26	15
Firsthand Lothian	A sitter service for children and young people in Edinburgh including those from BME families. This service allowed carers to have a break and young people benefited from play and fun.	£44,057	26	25
Carr-Gomm	Home-based respite care which provided extended breaks of several hours, days or weekends. These supported families in the Highlands caring for children with a range of complex needs.	£34,458	65	41

“With one BME family, we discovered that the young person with cerebral palsy (AA) whose mobility was reduced, loved music and dancing. The worker introduced dance and gentle movement which, over time, lead to dancing being a part of their weekly activities. AA had also become reluctant to walk up stairs in their house, which was causing stress for his Mum who had thought that they may need to move house. Over time the sitter was able to incorporate games which encouraged using the stairs resulting in greater ease in walking up stairs. There is now no need for the family to contemplate moving house.

First Hand Lothian



Section 4:

Overall achievements of Better Breaks

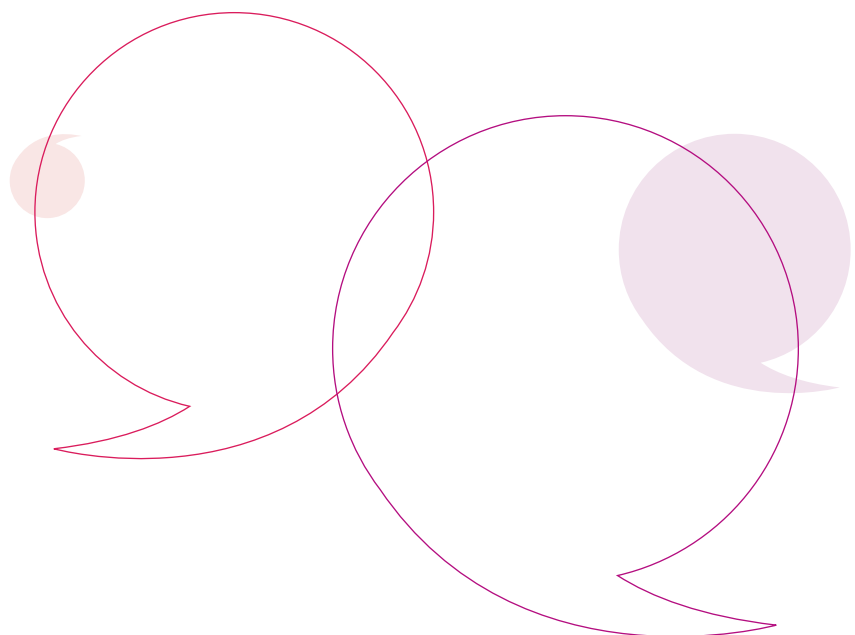
4.1 Overview of beneficiaries

The Better Breaks programme delivered excellent value for money. The value of the programme was £1,121,612 which funded 100,806 hours of service. The average cost of each hour of service was therefore £11. **Table 9** provides details of the hours of service and the numbers of beneficiaries.

3,208 carers and **2,064 children and young people** benefited, giving a total beneficiary figure of **5,272**. Thus it cost an average of £212 to support each person. 359 volunteers were involved across the 51 projects. The average number of hours support provided to each young person was 49 hours.

Table 8: Total numbers benefitting and hours delivered from Better Breaks

Achievement	Total Across Projects
Hours of Service Provided	100,806
Number of Overnight Breaks Provided	1728
Number of Carers Supported	3208
Number of Children and Young People Supported	2064
Number of Children and Young People With Multiple Support Needs	1433
Number of Volunteers Involved	359



4.2 More about the children and young people who benefited

Of the children and young people supported **70%** were described as having multiple support needs. **Table 10** presents a further analysis of the categories of disabilities and care needs that affected the children and young people. Predominantly, children and young people were affected by physical disabilities or long term conditions and / or learning difficulties. Autism was also prevalent. Of the 'other' category, disabilities included Tourette's Syndrome, mental health issues, Dyspraxia, Global Development Display and Gilbert's Syndrome.

Table 10: Types of disabilities affecting beneficiary children and young people

Achievement	Total for each disability	% of total children & young people
Physical disability or long term condition	1443	70%
Learning disability	1444	70%
Autism	870	42%
Behaviour disorders	545	26%
Sensory impairment	321	15%
Other issue or impairment	152	7%

The evaluation process included an email to applicant organisations which asked: "What multiple support needs did the children and young people from the project have?" 31 of the 51 funded projects replied. Most of the projects listed a range of conditions rather than describing what the support needs were. We already knew from the End of Grant Form what conditions were prevalent. We wished to know more about support needs, the caring needs and from this ensure the Better Breaks programme was reaching those who were most in need. An example of a useful response was returned from Glasgow Children's Holiday Scheme:

"These included combinations of the following; mobility needs varying from almost total paralysis and muscle weakness, inability to walk, requiring constant wheelchair use to balance problems or lack of stamina, needing help with basic dressing, feeding, including peg fed, tube fed, care needs due to associated learning difficulties, lack of awareness of danger, self harming, visual disability, hearing, help to drink, toilet, communicate and feed, help to administer medication and ongoing care / supervision due to tendency to fit, or other illnesses such as diabetes."

4.3 Targeting hard to reach carers

In the Better Breaks programme guidance for applicants there was a specific call for "proposals which will help to improve short break provision for harder to reach groups such as black and minority ethnic families, or single parent families caring for disabled children and young people."

As can be seen in **Table 11** the funded projects supported 152 black and minority ethnic carers. Whilst these represent only 5% of the whole group of carers supported by the funding, it is slightly higher than the percentage of minority ethnic populations in Scotland. In 2011-2012, the Scottish Government reported that 3.7% of the Scottish population is from a minority ethnic group.

Table 11: target groups of beneficiary carers

Achievement	Total for each group	% of total carers
Carers living in a rural area	720	22%
Young carers	466	17%
Single parent carers	457	14%
Kinship carers	310	10%
BME carers	152	5%
Carers from gypsy and traveller community	8	0.2%

The Scottish Government predict that around £1million people live in rural areas. This represents 20% of our population. The Better Breaks programme supported 720 carers living in a rural area which was 22% of the total population of carers assisted. As such the Better Breaks programme has made good progress in supporting carers affected by rurality.

17% of the carers were young carers. There was no dedicated young carers support project funded, but many projects included sibling carers in the activities or support provided and this funding has supported a good number of young carers due to this.

In Scotland, just over a quarter (26%) of households with dependent children are single parent families. The Better Breaks programme has supported 457 carers who are single parents, which is 14% of the total numbers of carers supported. As such, this round of the Better Breaks programme has made some progress in supporting this target group. It is however worth considering further how to encourage projects to reach out to lone parents caring for a child with a disability.

It is hard to judge how well the fund has performed in meeting the needs of kinship care families where there is a child with a disability as it is not clear how many kinship carers there are in Scotland. Only a couple of Better Breaks projects provided breaks to kinship carers of children with disabilities. Like single parents they have particular needs and in the future the Better Breaks programme may need to consider how to reach out to this group of carers and the children they support. It is worth noting that the Creative Breaks Programme has identified kinship carers as a priority group and has been successful in funding projects which meet their needs.

Very few families from the gypsy and traveller community received support from the Better Breaks programme. There were no specific projects supporting this community and those who have been recorded were accessing services along with non travellers. Like the other under-represented groups it is clear that some dedicated work in this area may be needed as the support needs will be very specific.

4.4 Reaching out to families who most need support

Scottish Government and the National Carer Organisations group are keen to ensure that Better Breaks reaches families who most need a short break. It is clear that progress has been made in supporting 'hard to reach' families (as described in section 4.3) but it was not clear from the evaluation materials how projects prioritised support to those who needed it most eg perhaps those who had not had a break before or where there were particular multiple support needs.

This evaluation review therefore requested additional information from funded projects. They were asked to describe how many families who had benefited were new to the organisation and how many were receiving support already. They were then asked how they target families or the children and young people who most needed a service.

31 of the 51 funded projects returned a response. Of those who returned a response:

- 9 delivered their Better Breaks project with families they were already supporting. No new families were involved
- 19 delivered their Better Breaks project with a mix of existing families and new families
- 3 delivered their Better Breaks project only to families whom were new to the organisation

Of the 19 who were working with a mix, there was a dominance of existing families within this. This dominance of delivering breaks to existing families is not surprising. Funded projects were required to conceive, plan and deliver a Better Breaks project within a short timescale and were required to evidence need for a break. Reaching out to new families in a short timescale was challenging for many.

The Action Group

“The challenges that we faced in relation to the project were trying to reach a wide range of young people and their families, especially those that have very little or no other support in their lives. The majority of families that we worked with are those who are in the know or who have access to other services. We publicised our service with letter drops in school bags and provided a consultation and open night.”

However, three projects did achieve this, with two in particular showing considerable success in delivering their service to new families.

First Hand Lothian

“We had identified that BME families with children with disabilities were least likely to access services for a number of reasons but had a high level of need as many were isolated with no support networks of their own. We were proactive at establishing clear and open lines of communication and developing good working relationships with other agencies. We did this through visiting other projects / attending their team meetings, focused networking and developing links with organisations who specifically worked with BME children and young people or which had a dedicated team / worker(s) who worked with this client group.

We also promoted the service to existing referring organisations to ensure they were aware of a different referral route and criteria as despite having a high level of need many families were not in the Social Work system and daunted by referral processes which involved Section 23 Assessments and having to go through the local authority Allocations Panel to see if their family’s needs were critical enough to be allocated a service. Better Breaks allowed referrals to be responsive and meet needs before they became critical.”

From the evaluation materials and from the responses to the additional question about how to target families in greatest need, it is difficult to be fully confident that enough has been done by the projects to establish priority criteria. Of the 31 responses many reported that their project used existing client lists or waiting lists and relied on the usual referral pathways. A few responses provided additional insights but not enough to really assess how well projects targeted families most in need or indeed those who would be ‘hard to reach’. Now that the Better Breaks programme is running on an ongoing basis and potentially funding projects for more than one year, there needs to be a higher expectation on reaching out to young people and their carers who are not already being supported and indeed how they encourage those who are ‘hard to reach’ to access their services.

4.5 Geographical reach

Tables 12 and 13 below illustrate the geographical spread of the work of the projects. These demonstrate that some areas of Scotland and hence families in these areas, have not benefited from Better Breaks programmes including Angus, Dumfries and Galloway, Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland (highlighted in yellow in Table 13). These areas represent rural and island communities where there will be particular challenges in the delivery of services which may lead to the potential isolation of young people with disabilities and their carers.

The 2010 Setting the Scene report published by For Scotland's Disabled Children highlighted that (based on data available at the time) there were nearly 45,000 young people with additional support needs in Scotland and of these, nearly 11,500 are declared or assessed as disabled. Disability Living Allowance is payable in respect of those with complex needs and is therefore a potential indicator of the numbers of disabled young people which the Better Breaks programme might wish to be targeting support towards. In 2010, there were 28,190 recipients of Disability Living Allowance between the ages of 5 and 17 in Scotland.

2,064 children and young people with disabilities benefited from Round one of the Better Breaks programme, along with 3,208 carers. Thus is a good number to reach with limited one year funding and the funded projects have demonstrated considerable energy and effectiveness. However there are many more that have not been reached across Scotland.

Table 12: Geographical spread of projects with multiple geographical spread

LA Area	Number of Funded Projects	Total Number of Carers Benefitting
Aberdeen City, Aberdeenshire	1	83
Aberdeenshire, Moray	1	390
Clackmannanshire, Stirling	1	17
Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Stirling	1	49
East Dunbartonshire, Glasgow City	2	91
East Lothian, Edinburgh, Fife, Midlothian, West Lothian	1	21
East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, South Lanarkshire	1	51
East Renfrewshire, Glasgow	1	41
Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire, West Lothian	1	45
Falkirk, Midlothian	1	100
Fife, Perth and Kinross, West Dunbartonshire	1	53
Scotland Wide	5	644
Total	17	1,585

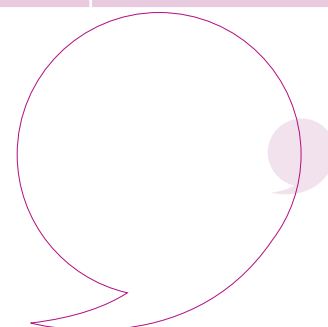
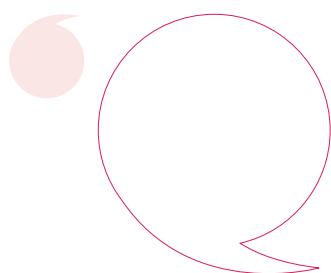


Table 13: Geographical spread of the funded projects

LA Area	Number of Funded Projects	Total Number of Carers Benefitting
Aberdeen City	0	0
Aberdeenshire	1	145
Angus	0	0
Argyll & Bute	1	37
Clackmannanshire	0	0
Dumfries & Galloway	0	0
Dundee City	2	72
East Ayrshire	1	76
East Dunbartonshire	1	74
East Lothian	2	55
East Renfrewshire	1	80
Edinburgh City	3	104
Eilean Siar	0	0
Falkirk	0	0
Fife	2	52
Glasgow City	3	269
Highland	2	91
Inverclyde	1	58
Midlothian	0	0
Moray	0	0
North Ayrshire	2	69
North Lanarkshire	0	0
Orkney	0	0
Perth & Kinross	1	26
Renfrewshire	1	25
Scottish Borders	2	91
Shetland Islands	0	0
South Ayrshire	2	65
South Lanarkshire	3	127
Stirling	0	0
West Dunbartonshire	2	89
West Lothian	1	18
Totals	34	1,623

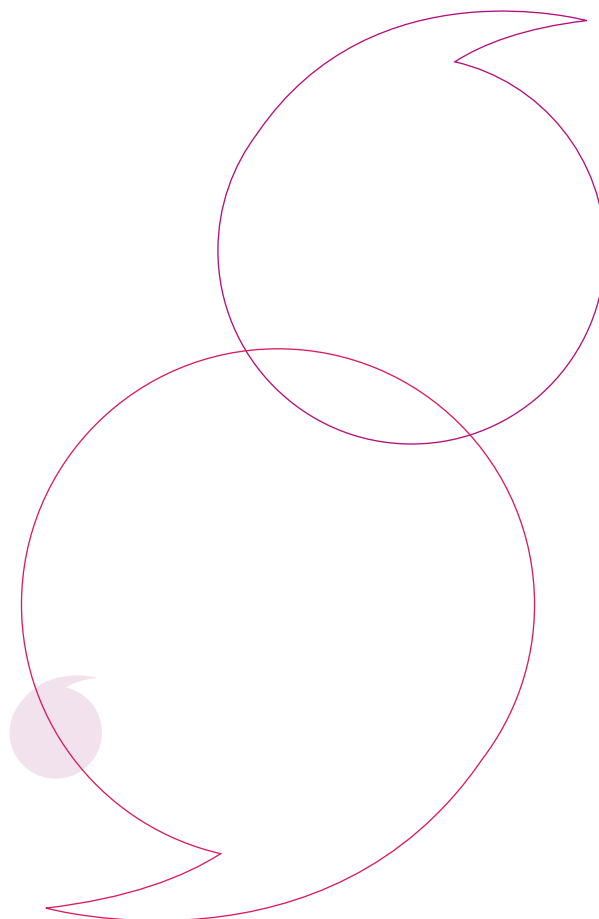
4.6 Project performance

44 out of the 51 funded organisations delivered evidence of strong projects that fully achieved their individual targets. These projects delivered significant benefits for their beneficiary disabled children and young people and their carers. The majority of projects exceeded their targets in terms of the number of short break hours delivered with the funding, and the number of young people and carers who benefited from a break. In addition, the organisations returned a wealth of insight and information which will populate the remainder of this report and continue to inform practice and learning for some time to come.

Five funded projects returned very poor evaluation reports which provided limited evidence of benefit and about what difference their work had made. One of these projects experienced numerous operational challenges which inhibited their ability to deliver the work that the project was funded to do. They were honest about these challenges to Shared Care Scotland, and returned an unspent balance when it became evident that the project could not fully recover.

Three of the five projects were delivered by the same organisation. There appears to be a surprising lack of management capacity or appetite to return adequate monitoring and evaluative information. Shared Care Scotland will follow this up with the organisation. In contrast, most organisations embraced the opportunity to demonstrate their successes and delivered a rich seam of insight.

Two of the funded projects reviewed were unable to demonstrate balanced benefits to disabled children *and* their carers. These projects provided one-off events or support sessions to carers. The focus of these projects was not on the children and although some benefits can be assumed, the primary beneficiaries were their carers.



Section 5

Making a difference: delivering the outcomes and principles of the fund

A key purpose of this evaluation was to review how well the Better Breaks projects delivered the outcomes and principles of the fund. As a reminder, the principles underpinning the Better Breaks programme and the corresponding outcomes are as follows.

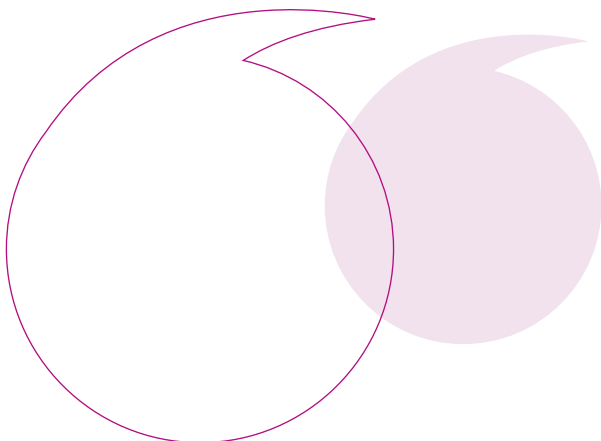
Principles

1. Funding will provide positive outcomes for carers and those children and young people they care for equally, improving their quality of life, opportunities and well being
2. Funding will support the personalisation agenda, providing opportunities for carers and the children and young people they care for, to be at the centre of planning and decision making about their short breaks
3. Funding will complement but not replace statutory short break provision
4. Funding will provide opportunities for children and young people to enhance their growth and development

Outcomes

1. Disabled children and young people, especially those with **multiple support needs**, will have more opportunities to take part in activities which are fun, stimulating and rewarding
2. Carers of disabled children and young people (and those they care for) will have improved well being
3. Carers will have more opportunities to live a life outside of caring
4. Carers will feel better supported to sustain their caring role
5. Core organisations (including providers of mainstream children's leisure and recreation services) will have the capacity, skills and confidence to provide age-appropriate and imaginative short break activities to disabled children and young people with multiple support needs

The **difference** that the projects have **collectively** made through delivering these principles and outcomes is explored within this section. Principles one and four will be considered in tandem with the outcomes. Principles two and three will however be considered separately in the following section.



5.1 Outcome 1

“Disabled children and young people, especially those with multiple support needs, will have more opportunities to take part in activities which are fun, stimulating and rewarding.”

Principle four will also be considered here which states that “Funding will provide opportunities for children and young people to enhance their growth and development.”

This outcome and the associated principle it is drawn from, is a core outcome for the Better Breaks programme. The Fund was established “to improve the range and availability of short break provision for disabled children and young people, particularly those with multiple support needs”.

43 out of 51 projects met this outcome and the principle, with some providing excellent evidence to demonstrate strong delivery. Those projects which did not meet the outcome were focussed on supporting carers. As such the benefits to children and young people were not well captured.

However, the vast majority of projects put children and young people at the heart of their project and had an emphasis on fun aligned to the growth and development of the young person. This led to some sustained outcomes for children and young people and their families. But most of all children and young people truly had a “better break”. Some examples are presented here.

The Fife Short Breaks project run by Aberlour Childcare Trust organised Teen Slumber Parties, tea parties, overnight stays, days out and activity day for teenagers with a range of complex needs. Elisha said “I don’t want to go home”.

Sense Scotland ran two themed short break days during the school holidays in summer and winter 2012 for up to 15 disabled young people aged 16-20 with severe and complex disabilities. All the young people had little or no short break provision and were on the cusp of transition to adult services. Sense set out to offer a stimulating programme of activities which would give the young people access to activities many of us take for granted. The aim was to give them the opportunity to interact with other young people, make friends and through these and having fun have improved health and wellbeing.

DD lives with his grandmother and his brother who has been diagnosed as autistic. DD has a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, Global Developmental Delay and Severe Learning Disability. His laughter and smiles allowed us to evidence his enjoyment of some activities. DD particularly enjoyed his time in the supported canoe, an activity his grandmother stated she thought would be impossible. The programme made a difference by encouraging DD to experience new sensations such as the water all around him, the rain on his face which he clearly enjoyed and it was particularly noticed that DD enjoyed watching the other young people and being in their company.

This young man, who spends a large amount of his time strapped into his wheelchair for his own safety, spent a total of 7 days with us during the October programme. He was part of the Art Group, part of the Cycling Group, part of the Music Group but ultimately he was a star participant in the Rock Climbing Group. We were unable to climb the rock face due to the weather conditions and the slippery surface of the rock face. However, this did not restrict our activities and we were able to abseil down. With substantial support from the staff team, DD walked up the path to the top of the cliff and was strapped into a harness with one of the professional instructors who then abseiled down with DD. The photographs capture this adventure and on being given a copy, DD’s grandmother stated that she would cherish this (the photograph) for the rest of her life as she never ever thought she would see him doing something like abseiling.

5.2 Outcome two

“Carers of disabled children and young people (and those they care for) will have improved well being.”

With the majority of the projects having an emphasis on the provision of better breaks to children and young people, the impact on carers was on occasion less well recorded. This outcome which looked at ‘well being’ was less well reported compared to the other two outcomes regarding the impact on carers. It was not imperative that evidence be provided to support all outcomes, but it is interesting to note that projects were better able to evidence the impact on children and young people and were not as attentive to capturing the impact on the rest of the family.

One explanation could be that ‘well being’ is difficult to define and for some people to capture. It is also perhaps difficult to evidence where the short break has been a one off break or holiday. Despite this, a good proportion of the projects (33 out of 51) provided narrative across their reports which showed how well being of carers - and the children and young people - had been assisted through the support provided by Better Breaks.

“Finding time for myself helped me to renew my sense of self, it allowed me to have head space which in turn reduced my stress and anxiety levels and therefore helped our home life.”

FirstHand

FirstHand established a sitter service for families of children with disabilities. The project reported: “I was struck by how many of the single parents who had fled situations of domestic abuse and still manifested signs of trauma - edginess, hyper vigilance, exhaustion, mental health issues. Through having regular respite we saw signs of these parents being able to rest and take care of themselves, get extra support for themselves from other agencies etc with a view to being able to better manage their stress and anxiety.”

“FT’s mother has not long suffered from the loss of her mother and this had an impact on her well-being and emotional state, as she was still recovering from the sudden loss her father. She found it difficult to leave the house. FT is a very active young person who has a very bubbly sense of fun. This increased mum’s anxiety as she felt unable to respond to his positivity and sense of fun. FT was able to participate in a range of activities through Better Breaks and allowed mum some time to grieve. Mum said that FT expressed how much he enjoyed the sessions with Better Breaks and this helped her knowing he was able to have fun times away from the home during this time.”

Carer Case Study from The Fife Short Breaks project run by Aberlour Childcare Trust

5.3 Outcome three

“Carers will have more opportunities to live a life outside of caring.”

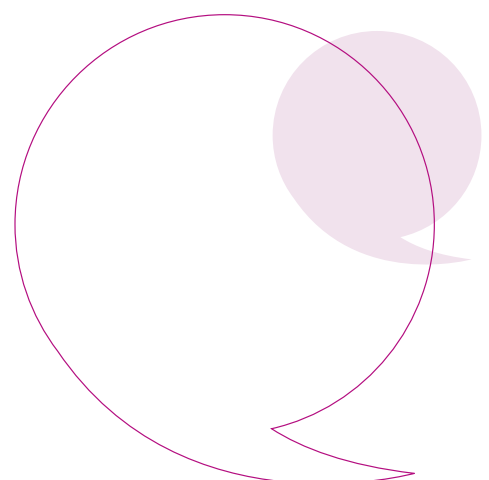
Similar to outcome two, the ability of carers to lead a life outside caring was not always captured well in the End of Grant Reports. 34 out of 51 recorded some evidence of this, many providing some case study narrative as illustration. For some carers, the delivery of services over the long summer holiday period provided a significant lifeline, especially when there were other children in the family who also needed a break from being the sibling of a child with a disability. Importantly parents need a flexibility of provision which enables them to sustain employment. Parents with a non disabled child struggle to cope with the summer break, but a child with additional needs has even less opportunities available to them. These two case studies are typical in capturing the relief provided by the projects funded.

The Butterfly Club provided a summer holiday playscheme for disabled children with complex needs living in Ayrshire. One of their carers reported:

“The club is such an essential service that I cannot imagine the summer without it. I have two children Glen is ten and Grant is seven with complex multiple needs, being profoundly autistic with bipolar disorder. Without the club we would be unable to do “normal” activities like take Glen to the cinema, banking etc - activities that Grant finds very difficult to take part in. Grant was able to spend time with his peers in a safe and secure environment. He engaged in amazing activities that we would not have been able to offer him eg speedboats and canoes..”

The Saturday Cafe and Associated Clubs ran fun sessions for children with disabilities over the holiday periods and this provided essential support for some carers:

Peter is a young 12 year old with multiple complex disabilities including a painful skin condition. Peter’s mum had tried to enrol Peter in a summer programme which would allow her to continue to work. Peter’s siblings were enrolled in another providers summer programme, but this programme were unable to offer Peter and his mother the support they both required during the summer break; one to have a project of activities that Peter could comfortably and confidently be engaged with – he has a real passion for football - and two, a project which provided adequate respite to allow Peter’s mum to continue in her employment over the long summer break. The outcome of this was that over the summer break Peter engaged in his passion for football, developed skills and enthusiasm for other sports and even (at times) engaged in our outdoor gardening almost with some zest. For Peter’s mum she explained that the Café Playscheme was a ‘life-line’ to her. Without our extended opening times (9am – 5pm), she could not have continued in her employment at this time.



5.4 Outcome four

“Carers will feel better supported to sustain their caring role.”

This outcome was particularly well demonstrated in the projects which provided either a regular, predictable service (eg a weekly sitter or play session) or a substantial service over several weeks such as a summer playscheme. Some of these projects made a deep impact on the caring relationship. Because many of the projects were able to build an on-going relationship with the families they were well placed to record the evidence of impact over time.

However, a short break can help to sustain the caring relationship in other ways from simply having time-out. Even a one-off break – a holiday or a weekend away – can help deliver a sustained benefit to the family.

- Building circles of support: enabling the parents to build up support networks or the disabled young people to build up friendships.
- Building the independence and capacity of the cared for young person: being away in a different setting with different people can help young people grow in capacity in lots of different ways. The support staff might encourage more responsibility and independence or tackle issues around personal care which are more difficult to deal with at home. This can help break negative patterns of behaviour which help the families when the young person returns home.
- Helping identify where further support to a family might be needed.

Buddies Clubs and Services provided week long residential activity breaks to children with disabilities. They were able to capture the impact on the wider family and the case study below illustrates how carers can reach breaking point.

“One lone parent a widower could not believe that both his sons who have autism were able to have a trip with other young people. Since his wife died he had some familial help but the boys spent all their free time with adults. Mr B felt ‘embarrassed’ at admitting he was struggling to cope and had been reluctant to approach agencies for assistance with his sons. Since coming to Buddies Clubs and participating in the short breaks programme both boys have met a new peer group reducing their social isolation and have tried different activities such as fishing. Mr B is now able to have some ‘chill-time’ during the five day break and increase the quality time spent with his oldest son”.

Barnardo's ran an activity break for young people with disabilities and their siblings. This case study illustrates well how this can give a sustained impact through peer networks and encouraging independence:

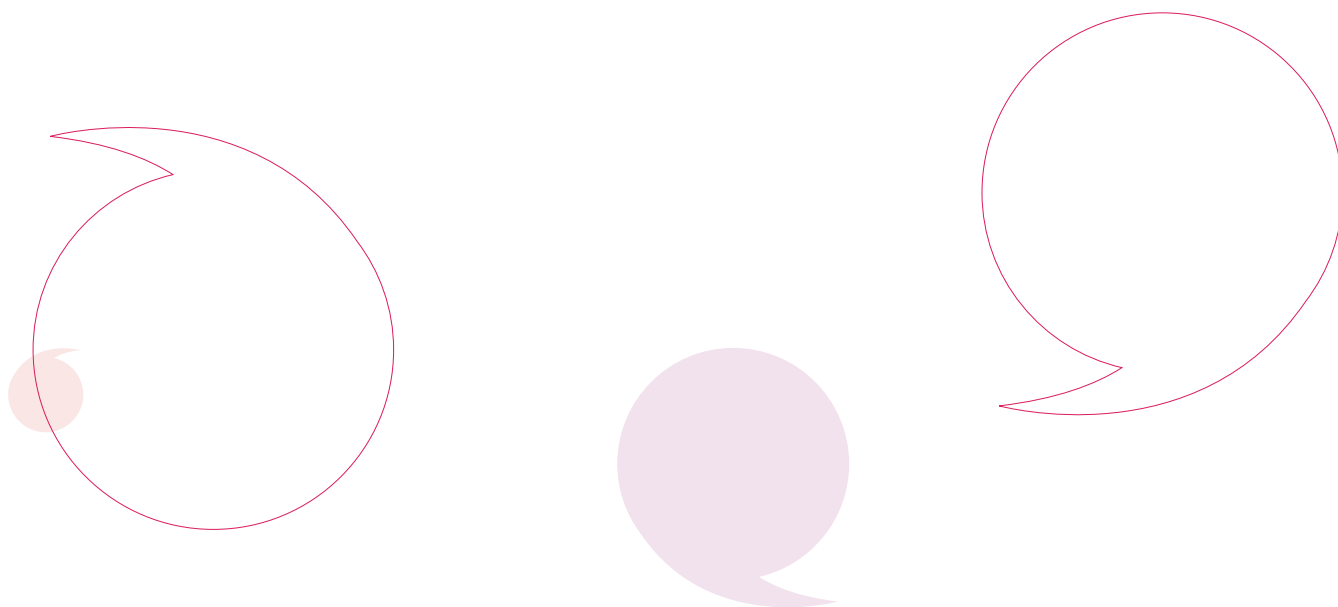
"Two young carers were able to form a positive bond and develop a friendship which was not based solely on the fact that they both had a sibling affected by autism but because they had similar interests in music and fashion which was out with their caring role. It was important for the siblings to be seen as individuals and not as young carers.

What was also an important breakthrough for our young carers was their reactions to the skills and abilities demonstrated during the activity breaks by their siblings. One young carer said "I can't believe he can wait patiently and did exactly what the instructor asked him to do". When she was asked what surprised her the most about her brother she responded "he can sleep through the night!" At the start of the break staff observed that siblings were overprotective and would try and anticipate what their disabled brothers were trying to do and intervene by offering physical and / or verbal guidance. As the break continued siblings began to relax and intervened less as their confidence in their siblings abilities increased. This experience has hopefully highlighted the strengths and abilities of a child affected by disability and given siblings an insight to these skills. We would hope that the respite breaks would help children and young people transfer this knowledge to the home environment to promote independence for the child affected by disability."

Lothian Autistic Society set up a new youth club for young people aged eight to twelve on the autism spectrum and were able to record benefits to the parents from this:

"With regards to unexpected benefits of the club, it has given parents the opportunity to meet each other and quite a few parents have swapped contact details to arrange car sharing and "play dates" for their children. The establishment of social networks has been an excellent lasting outcome and indicates a need for parents of children with autism to have more opportunities to meet.

An additional unexpected benefit of the project is that three parents who have children attending the club have also been identified as needing further support by West Lothian Council and are attending the 'Getting Through the Day' programme that they run for parents. This means that they are gaining respite from the Social Club and they are also gaining support with their parenting skills via the parent training and support offered through the council."



5.5 Outcome five

“More organisations (including providers of mainstream children’s leisure and recreation services) will have the capacity, skills and confidence to provide age-appropriate and imaginative short break activities to disabled children and young people with multiple support needs.”

The projects set out to benefit children and young people through providing breaks for them and their carers. In doing so, many pushed boundaries and helped mainstream providers have a better understanding of the needs of children and young people with disabilities.

“The partnership between LAS and West Lothian Council Disability Services had developed significantly over the lifetime of this project. We are now working jointly extending the benefit of the programme to inform and transit five of the children to mainstream services. This is likely to involve informing and training leaders of mainstream clubs in autism. We expected the list to include Brownies, Scout and a swimming club. This will take place in May and June.”

Lothian Autistic Society

“Though this was not one of our targets, all of our events have brought our children and young people into direct contact with organisations that have little or no experience in supporting sight loss. These include service providers such as the Citizens Theatre staff, Curling coaches, Stenhousemuir Football Club, Swimming and Judo coaches, Ocean Youth Trust sailing staff, etc. Many of our families have taken the experiences of our events forward with a determination to encourage their children to participate within their local communities, such as youth clubs, Scouts and Guides, sporting clubs, etc.”

RNIB

“We discovered that the Forestry Commission team had not catered for young people with similar needs to our group. Our staff worked closely with them looking at such areas as securing accommodation, location of accommodation, adapting outdoor pursuits, discussing potential risks posed by young people etc. The team at Strathyre fed back that the preparation and planning around this residential activity had really widened their perspective on being more inclusive in relation to holiday makers with a range of needs and abilities.”

Action for Children

One funded project set out specifically to increase access to mainstream leisure facilities. East Renfrewshire Carers held a discussion session with carers prior to making an application to find out what a better break for them might be. Carers highlighted the challenges of being able to do 'what normal families do' at the weekend and in particular things like going for a swim or taking part in fitness classes. Existing mainstream provision was not accessible to them and clearly not meeting their needs. The funded project therefore set out to meet these needs and enable families caring for a child or young person with disabilities to get out at weekends and evenings and access a range of sports and leisure activities from swimming and sensory play to drama and drumming. Specialist support staff were on hand to enable parents to take a break if they wished, or they (and siblings) were able to use this as family time. The sessions took place at a local authority run leisure centre and in local community facilities such as schools. 46 young people and 80 carers benefited from regular monthly sessions where a wide range of activities were on offer. As well as the clear benefits to the families which they were able to record there was other key learning emerging from this experience:

"We needed to bring many service providers on a journey and help them develop their capacity to be able to deliver sessions involving children with a disability. It's fair to say that the services provided by community / voluntary groups were much better at this than the services we sourced by the local authority. The sports coaches originally did not provide opportunities for all particularly taken into account the mixture of abilities, but after speaking with our staff and parents they completely changed their approach and the sessions they ran became much more productive and rewarding. The arts group we used had no experience of working with additional support needs groups but liaised with staff about what sessions would work well and went on to provide sessions such as plant pot painting and planting seeds, decorative and pottery figures.

The social work department provided the bulk of the support staff for the sessions and their ability to support the families improved over the course of the project.

What is interesting is that the dance classes provided by the Dance company we used – Indepen-Dance – are now being provided by the local authority. So we helped create a little bit of change.

What has not changed is the accessibility of mainstream facilities. The rental costs of the PFI funded schools are too high for most groups. Also, whilst we did help to break down some barriers it is work in progress. It needs to be continually thought about. Without understanding and support, families caring for a child with disabilities cannot access the facilities which are supposed to be there for us all."

5.6 Meeting the principles of the fund

“Funding will support the personalisation agenda, providing opportunities for carers and the children and young people they care for, to be at the centre of planning and decision making about their short breaks.”

The Better Breaks programme (and all of the Short Breaks Fund programmes) expects funded projects to put those being cared for and their carers at the heart of the planning, delivery and evaluation of projects. In doing so, these projects would help to demonstrate how personalisation can be achieved in a range of settings. This principle could be viewed as ‘work in progress’ and in particular around the involvement of children and young people. Often it was limited to ‘what the child wanted to do’ at a session, usually from a menu of options rather than an inclusive model of working which put them at the heart of the project. However, some good examples did emerge.

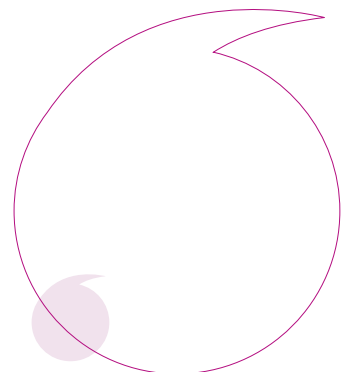
Conversely, some projects which were very focussed on involving children and young people in planning and delivery involved carers less. The gold standard for personalisation would be for organisations to consider all the stakeholders and include them all in the planning, delivery and evaluation. In doing so, projects will be better able to anticipate and meet need alongside delivering lasting outcomes for carers and young people.

“Throughout the grant we have always engaged the children and young people in the development of the club and have given them a central role in deciding what happens at the club and what activities we provide. We did anticipate that children would enjoy this and would be happy to tell us their thoughts and feelings, but we did not expect such an enthusiastic response. Children and young people have relished the opportunity to have their say and be able to influence their club. We have several participants who help staff out during the club and staff have observed the positive impact being able to do so has had on them and their behaviour. We did not anticipate that giving children the opportunity to have their say would result in them being so active within the club.”

Cornerstone

“Hand in Hand is a close knit group with the young people always being involved throughout the decision making process when it comes to activity planning. So much so that we are now at a point where many of the young people are now actively involved in the organising and delivery of activities. Meeting informally on a regular basis with parents, we are also able to gain their perspective and an honest insight in to the development of our activity programme.”

Girvan Youth Trust



5.7 Meeting the principles of the fund

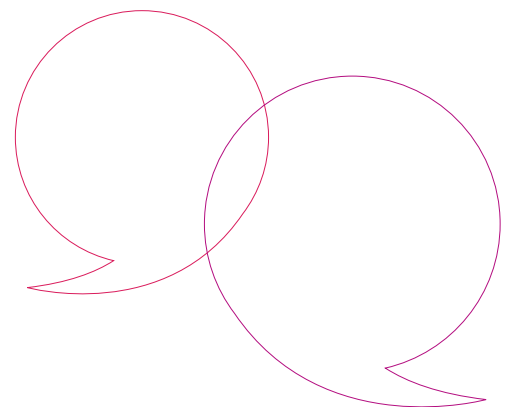
“Funding will complement but not replace statutory short break provision.”

It can be said that all of the funded projects were additional and complementary to statutory short break provision. Many worked with families they had never supported before and whom had no provision. Some extended the provision they already provided. In these cases some of the core provision was funded by local authorities. The Better Breaks funded work was clearly additional to this and provided an enhanced service.

There are however grey areas in relation to being additional to statutory provision which Shared Care Scotland may wish to be mindful of when assessing future grants.

In some of the funded projects it was evident that the referral process was dominated by statutory services. Some of the larger service providers are preferred providers of respite services. All of the places provided to families are controlled by quite a defined referral process. As such services are not open to all who may need it due to a statutory gate keeping process. Whilst this is absolutely understandable for statutory funded respite provision it is not within the spirit of this funding which is to be delivered by the voluntary sector and be for the benefit for those who need it most. Those who need it most may not be in receipt of any service.

“The Better Breaks programmes were used within the local ENABLE Scotland Perth and Stirling services to complement the current support services received by the children and young people from local services. By accessing this funding, families, young people and staff have been given the opportunity to work creatively in engaging individuals in activities that would otherwise be inaccessible due to time or financial constraints.”



Section 6:

Collective challenges and learning from individual projects

The End of Grant Report Form included two sections, one asking the funded organisations to report on challenges and the other to report on any learning. As highlighted above, the majority of funded organisations reported well and embraced the opportunity to share their insights. These have been analysed and the common themes and threads presented here.

6.1 Understanding the challenges

6.1.1 Challenge one. Plans, planning and more planning

The delivery of any project is dependent on a robust project plan. Analysis of this is central to the grant assessment process. Despite this, many of the projects were new projects and the funded organisations had not anticipated some of the issues which would affect their project planning and delivery. Most of the organisations overcame the challenges and have learnt from these, taking the learning into the ongoing running of projects or new projects they have been developing. The common issues included the following;

Timescales for project delivery

The Better Breaks programme grant funding announcements were made in March 2012 and projects were expected to begin in April 2012 in order to make good use of one years funding. Whilst all who applied knew this (and capacity to deliver on this basis was part of the assessment) it was still a logistical challenge for many projects. This is especially the case for new work and the tight timescale clearly underpins all the challenges presented here.

“As we were arranging the holidays during school holiday time and we could not confirm bookings until the grant was confirmed, we had limited time to identify suitable accommodation.”

The Mallard -
Crossreach

“The main challenges were the time it took to do the ground work and get the service established and employ workers who could speak a range of other languages, such as Arabic. This took longer than expected which was frustrating given the limited time frame for funding.”

First Hand

Staff recruitment

Funded projects highlighted the challenges of recruiting appropriate staff. In two projects they failed to recruit the key post of project coordinator and in both cases this significantly hampered progress (although these projects also experienced other operational challenges). In other situations organisations had trouble recruiting support staff.

The Saturday Café & Associated Clubs

“It was a more complex a recruitment process than anticipated to ensure that we had the right staff on duty at the right time to cover all the needs of the programme and the children / young people involved. This became apparent in relation to additional hours for the current staff who work in the term time clubs. Keeping continuity for our service users was essential, but this was a real planning challenge due to the other commitments staff had over the holiday periods, but we also had to recruit in time to induct staff and to register any staff who were new to the organisation. To overcome some of the recruitment challenges we had some assistance from our local job centre and an added benefit to this was the opportunity for our young people to go along be torch-bearers in the Job Centre Olympic Flame Events across the entire district. This was a fabulous opportunity which promoted our Café Playscheme and The Saturday Café & Associated Clubs to a wider community.”

Management capacity

Some organisations had not considered the management time involved in delivering the project and had not budgeted for this. So this placed undue stress on other areas of their organisation.

“Another challenge was the amount of staff time and resources that we had to put to each session to co-ordinate activities, signpost parents and deal with enquiries. Towards the end we had three or four members of staff from the carers centre attending each activity.”

East Renfrewshire
Carers

“I completely underestimated the amount of time and energy that would be required to produce and deliver such a wide-ranging initiative. Booking venues, conducting risk assessments and working at Family Days and residentials, etc significantly ate in to my workload and main job role within RNIB Scotland.”

RNIB

Support needs of the young people

Some of the funded projects had to be flexible in their staffing complement due to the unexpected support needs of the children and young people.

“Due to the needs of some of the young people we had to bring in more staff to ensure their needs were supported. Next time we would increase staffing levels slightly to accommodate this possibility.”

Enable Scotland

“Appropriate staffing was one of our biggest considerations as we had to ensure that we had enough staff members to support children and young people without overstaffing groups”.

Barnardo's

“The number of service users requiring 1-1 support remains a challenge. By redefining our offering we will be more able to plan our workforce (and workforce budget) to meet the daily (or even session by session) needs of our service users over 2013.”

Saturday Clubs

Making partnerships work

A couple of the funded projects experienced real difficulties in making their proposed partnerships work and in one project this seriously hampered delivery. Previous evaluations of the Short Breaks Fund have shown that partnership working is challenging. This is not a new finding. Reassuringly it did only affect a few projects and only seriously affected one. It does however continue to highlight the need for organisations to consider carefully the nature of any partnership and have well established systems and protocols in place to underpin this.

The reality of meeting the needs of carers or children

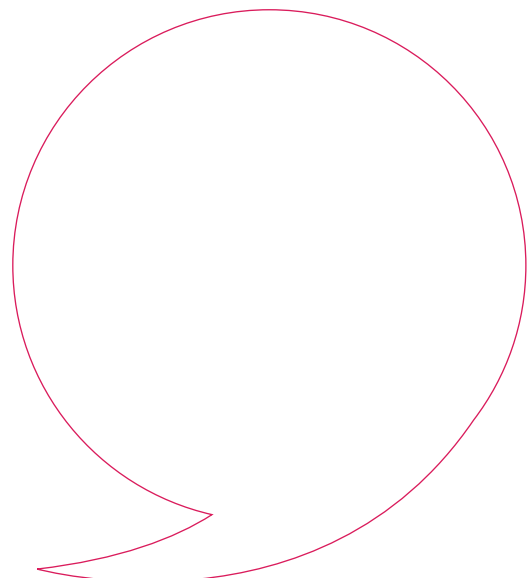
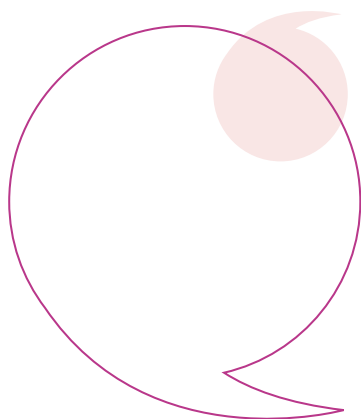
The section on learning covers in more detail what projects learnt about meeting the needs of children and young people, and their families. In relation to project planning the organisations had to be flexible in the delivery of services which met particular support needs within the short timeframe of the funding.

Carr Gorm

"As a short term project, some reluctance was encountered from some parents that it would not be in the best interests of the child. The parents wanted something with more consistency so that support workers were not turning up for a few months and then disappearing, which they felt could be counterproductive for their child. Difficulties were also encountered in explaining the nature of a short break to some families. There were several who only wanted something additional to the respite they already received."

Barnardo's

"We were surprised that some families did not want the opportunity to attend the respite break. Three families who were approached by the different services did not want to participate and this did hinder our initial progress for the siblings group as we had to give these families time to consider the offer before we could approach other families. The learning for us from this experience was to approach families earlier; provide them with information and allowing them time to consider their options. What we had to consider was having a list of suitable families that could take up a place if another family did not want to the opportunity. We faced further challenges with planning as we realised to meet the needs of children / young people and their families we had to be flexible and take into account individual needs but to ensure the success of the project we had to make firm arrangements to ensure consistency of staff, transport provision, dietary considerations for young people during their visits to Wiston Lodge and accommodation / sleeping arrangements based on level of need and support."



6.1.2 Challenge two. Targeting “hard to reach”

In the Better Breaks application pack guidance given to applicants, the NCO group were clear that they wished the Better Breaks programme to reach families who face particular challenges in caring. These included the following:

- Proposals which help to improve short break provision for ‘harder to reach’ groups such as **black and minority ethnic families**, or **single parent families** caring for disabled children and young people.
- Proposals which support breaks for **families caring for very young disabled children** (0-5 years of age) where it is likely these children will be highly dependent and need high levels of supervision. The impact on the family that a child has additional needs is often very high, even if the disability is not severe.

First Hand Lothian has already raised the observation that minority ethnic families are least likely to access services and addressed this by taking a dedicated approach to the promotion of their services as well as putting into place sitters who could work appropriately with families and their cultural and ethnic background. They did this as part of their general work, which was there for all families who needed support – regardless of ethnic background.

The Minority Ethnic Access Development Project (MEAD) which was run by Perth and Kinross Association for Voluntary Service applied for funding to employ three BME multilingual sessional Care Assistants to identify and support BME families of disabled children and support the development of culturally appropriate short breaks which would provide relief to these families. The emphasis was on providing culturally sensitive solutions. Even with a dedicated approach they highlighted the barriers to accessing and supporting families from minority ethnic communities.

“One of the first things that MEAD discovered was that minority ethnic community members needed time to get assured about using services they didn’t previously know about. This was not only due to a language barrier but also due to a cultural view of disability in back home countries and lack of availability of similar services in their countries of origin. MEAD found that BME families preferred not to show their disabilities / special needs; they hid it away from the community, and found this more prevalent among South Asian and especially Chinese families. MEAD’s Chinese Development Officer managed to identify one family with a disabled child, but they weren’t willing to take part in it or even admit there was a disability.

MEAD also found that the families they were in touch with were not comfortable with using other services (apart from school, hospital, friends and family members) for taking care of their children. For them taking care of children should be natural to their role and it was less culturally acceptable to ask others and especially services for respite as a short break for fear of being seen by their wider community as not managing in their role or being a bad parent.” MEAD, Perth and Kinross Association for Voluntary Service

Tackling these barriers takes time and once again, we cannot expect to see significant changes over one year of funding. Like many of the Better Breaks projects, MEAD has applied successfully for Round 2 funding and it will be interesting to note how they continue to break down barriers through their work. Despite these challenges they did manage to support 26 carers across 14 families across the year.

Another challenge in accessing families came across from those who set out to support families of pre-school children with a disability. PLUS Stirling was one of just two funded projects designed specifically for these children and their carers. They set up a new project called Opportunity Plus which provided weekly play sessions for children with disabilities, which would not only enable these children to grow and develop but give their parents or carers time to have a break away from the child. Initially they struggled to fill the places.

PLUS had to work at promoting the project across pre-school networks, across referral agencies, and through existing families. Like MEAD they discovered that parents needed time to have confidence in the service, see how it worked, and how it could benefit them. PLUS took time to meet with families and build up their confidence and trust and also had to build up confidence through showing families how it can benefit them and their child.

A further challenge they faced was accessing families at a time when they might still be coming to terms with a child's disability or may still not have a firm diagnosis. Supporting parents at this time can be quite complex. PLUS were aware that some families could not face 'another round of form filling and questions' from another agency and had to work quite sensitively with parents who were still coming to terms with what their child's disability might mean for the family and the child's future.

Now that they are in the second year of the Better Breaks programme (being successful in round two) PLUS are finding that ground work in year one has borne fruit and they now have a waiting list for this project.

6.1.3 Challenge three. External factors, facilities and operators

The summer of 2012 brought some very poor weather. With many of the projects involving outdoor activities and trips this had an impact on many of the programmes put in place.

"Travelling off the island in the winter was problematic and some trips had to be postponed or cancelled due to adverse weather conditions. Alternative island-based activities were planned instead, and these had unanticipated benefits, in that many non-disabled children were able to take part alongside disabled children in a range of arts-based activities."

Achievement Bute

"We have learned to always have a plan B and a plan C and as we previously said, we have learned that the rain itself can indeed add a lot of fun to an activity."

The Saturday Café & Associated Clubs

Some of the projects reported that facilities or services were not accessible or adapted to the needs of children and young people. This meant that in some cases projects had to choose different facilities or providers.

The Mallard – Crossreach

"The accommodation required to be wheel chair accessible and accommodate young people and staff. This was difficult as there is limited accommodation suitable and the accommodation that is available is quickly taken by families during school holidays. It was our initial plan to use the same accommodation for the 4 holidays, allowing staff to become familiar with the accommodation and the surrounding area. We eventually identified different accommodation providing different experiences".

In some cases the organisations worked with the providers to bring a positive change.

Buddies Clubs and Services

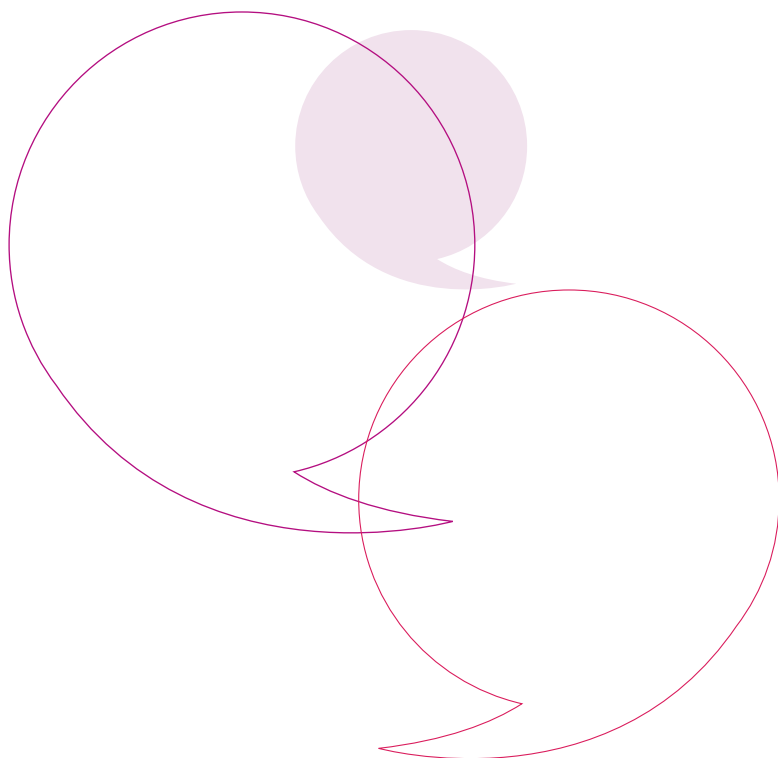
“On arrival the group found the accommodation was not sufficiently adapted for one of our wheelchair users. Staff had to deal with senior management on site to rectify the situation and since then we have received an apology from the hotel chain and recognition that they would look at opportunity of access for wheel-chair users within their chalets”

Kindred Advocacy

“One of the members of the Saturday Night Club is blind and, in working to ensure that he was included at our events - through booking audio described performances and assigning a support worker - we encountered technical challenges. At all three audio described performances (two films and one musical), we missed part of the performance because the equipment was faulty, incorrect or not available. On the whole, the attitude of staff at the venues was helpful and apologetic however, these issues changed the experience for the young person and was challenging for staff on the night who wanted to make sure that he was included and respected. More clarity around equipment at venues will be a learning point that we take on to future events.”

East Renfrewshire Carers

“Some service providers were quite “rigid” in their delivery style which did not suit. For example the organisation providing the drama wanted people to register and attend workshops relevant to their ability while we and the parents were looking for a short fun session. Similarly it took the sports coaches a number of sessions to get used to delivering multi-sport sessions to children of mixed ability.”



6.2 Learning from experience

The funded projects were generous in sharing their learning and indeed there was a significant degree of enthusiasm presented in this section of the End of Grant Report. The learning presented here will be useful for all involved in supporting children with disabilities and their families.

6.2.1 Learning point one. Consult with carers and children before, during and after

The most reflective of the organisations involved with the Better Breaks programme realised that involving children and young people, and their carers, at an early stage made for a better project as it was aligned to the needs of the young person.

“More time has to be allowed for the 1-1 meetings with service users to align the service provision to the individual.”

The Saturday Café & Associated Clubs

“There are many different ways to support carers and children / young people and if you put them at the heart of your plans, you will not go far wrong.”

Sleep Scotland

Kindred

“We took time to identify the support needs and possible triggers in the early stages so that we could do everything possible to make each individual feel included. An example of this is a young person with autism whose mum got in touch half way through the project to say that she thought her son might like to be involved but was feeling very unsure about participating when he didn't know any of the staff or young people. A member of Kindred staff went to his house to meet with him in a familiar setting and to give him an overview of the events and the group. This small gesture of inclusion resulted in him engaging with the group and going on to make lasting connections with peers. He was also signposted to another project locally that was in his interest area and is also engaged very positively with that work. His mum has reported that he loves both groups and it has helped smooth the way for his transition to another school in the local area”

For many organisations this dialogue was ongoing and helped to ensure the projects continued to meet needs and be responsive to the development of children and young people.

The Yard

“Having regular contact and informal feedback at the start and end of our Club nights is also very important to the families and to the success of each night. Sharing information and tactics with the parents/carers is so valuable to the staff’s ability to provide consistency for each child and also to be aware of any changes in behaviour/issues that may impact on their behaviour both in and out with the Club. Also for the parents, it is crucial that they feedback on how their child is adapting, discussing progress made etc.”

6.2.2 Learning point two. Flexibility is important when working with children and young people with multiple support needs and their carers

Every project faces unexpected challenges or barriers and the challenges section highlighted how flexible and adaptable organisations needed to be. This came across in the learning points raised too.

Star Youth Club

“When we started the project we underestimated how difficult it would be for our young people to identify hobbies and interests they would like to pursue. Our initial aim was to identify mainstream provisions we could support our young people to access, gradually withdrawing the support until the activity could be attended independently. We realised quite quickly that we had missed an important step before our children could make decisions about their own leisure choices, and our support changed to allow our young people to explore leisure opportunities within a group, getting the support and encouragement they needed from other members and volunteers to participate in new and challenging activities.”

PLUS Stirling

When asked about the sessions becoming more structured with parents having the opportunity to meet with professionals, listen to guest speakers or attend training during the session, parents were not particularly interested in this. The option to be flexible was preferred, without feeling that they are offending someone if they have to briefly leave. We have also learnt that parents / carers of younger children with disabilities do not necessarily want to spend time away from their children. By providing a comfortable space where parents / carers can meet up and watch their children play is a much more rewarding experience. Parents / carers and children with disabilities value the opportunity to just be together.”

“We felt that “flexibility” was key to the success of the project, in that we were constantly adapting service provision to meet the individual needs of the young people and their families.”

Ardfin Project, Aberlour Trust

6.2.3 Learning point three. You can never do enough planning

Many projects faced challenges and had to amend their project plans. Consulting with and putting service users at the heart of services will undoubtedly help to form suitable project plans with the right resources in place.

Key to this is ensuring core staffing and management capacity is built in. Many organisations learnt the hard way and those who have not returned adequate monitoring returns or not evidenced strong outcomes can be linked to lack of management capacity.

Alongside this transport emerged as a theme. Getting children and young people to and from projects was often a resource issue.

Transport provision is essential for maximum carer respite and reassuringly, the social element of the journey appears to add to the enjoyment of the young people. Here is a quote from a parent:

Corseford School

“Transport made a huge difference. It was a routine Mark was used to. I would have had to haul his brothers out of bed early every morning for a 45min drive two ways... Times did not coincide with some activities they had which would have meant organising babysitters. Transport is vital for those children with siblings.”

Enable

“We under-estimated the demand for transport. We did provide to meet demand but had to meet the additional costs out with this budget.”

However, transport could also be a wholly positive experience, which links to the next learning point about the unexpected capacity of children and young people:

Kindred

“One of the strongest unanticipated benefits was that of the independent travel. The young people and parents alike reported that this was a positive element of the Saturday Night Club... It further instilled the sense of independence in the young people attending. There was the added benefit of the taxis being another social space and due to the wide geographic area that SNC was drawn from (and therefore, quite long travel times), there were many young people who spent a considerable amount of time with their peers in the taxis and looked forward to chatting with each other on the way to and from events. By providing taxis, we were also increasing the amount of respite time granted to families which was also well received.”

6.2.4 Learning point four. Anticipate, respect and enjoy the ability of children and young people with multiple support needs

The funded projects were generous in sharing what they learnt about supporting children and young people with multiple support needs. Most were very experienced practitioners yet were still refreshingly enthusiastic about what they were learning about and from children and young people with disabilities and multiple support needs.

Cornerstone

“We have learned that there is no one perfect way to engage children with multiple support needs in a new activity and instead you have to approach each child as an individual and work with them. For some children this means that for a couple of weeks their carer stays at the club with them, for others it means that they are given a designated member of staff who will support them during the club. These measures are then gradually reduced as the child becomes more comfortable attending the club.

Staff members have also been surprised by the level of peer interaction at the club... Even children who previously wanted to play alone are happy within the group setting now and are engaging with their peers and making new friends. This is an unexpected outcome as we would have anticipated that some children, though happy to attend the club, would only want to play alone and would reject any peer interaction, or at most would interact with a couple of their peers at once. This has not been the case, instead many of the children we support, and had anticipated would not react particularly favourably to group interaction, have surprised us and enjoyed being part of the group and have developed socially to a greater extent that we would have ever anticipated.

Our staff members have found it inspiring watching children become more confident and active with the clubs. Even the most reluctant child has developed and is now more than happy to wave their parent off at the door and go play with their friends.”

“Prior to the short breaks programme some of our young people had difficulties with their personal care as they had been discouraged at home from becoming independent in their toileting or washing / bathing. Others could not make simple snacks. Time has been spent on the adventure breaks reducing dependence and increasing young people’s ability in their self care / life skills and to have this recognised by their parents / carers. One young man with Autism went on a break wearing pads and has never needed them since.”

Buddies

Section 7

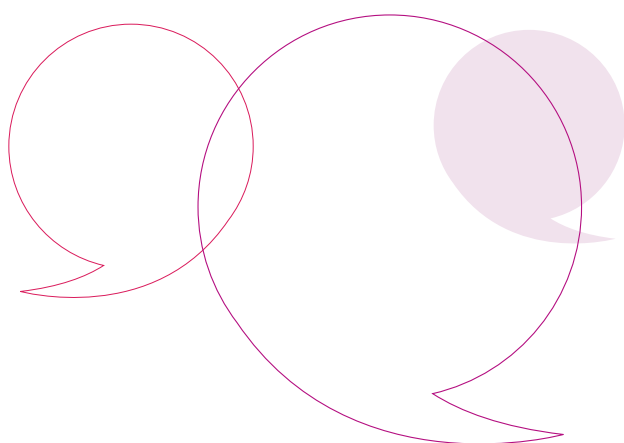
Looking forward

The Better Breaks programme has made a difference. In just a short timescale, with a limited amount of funding, it has brought significant benefit to young people with disabilities and their families. Much of this has been through one off events, or short lived summer activities. Despite this, sustained benefits are being recorded by carers and indeed by the young people themselves.

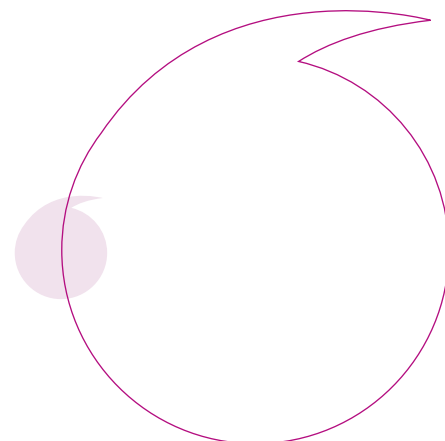
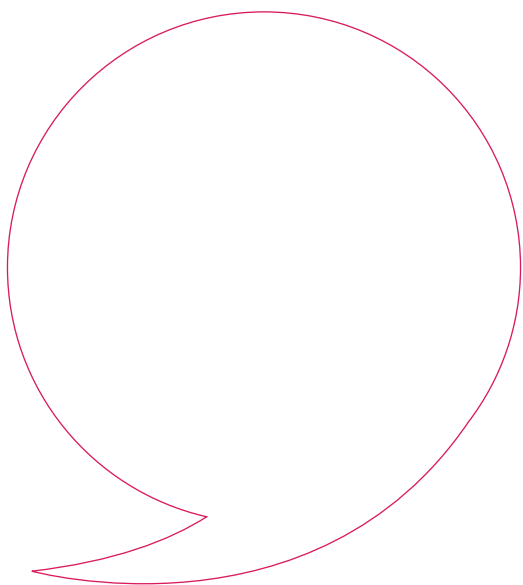
The funded projects were generous in sharing their experiences. From this, there is considerable learning to draw from – which we have been able to collate, analyse and present in chapters four, five and six. This final section is about looking forward – the conclusions we can draw from the report and from this the recommendations which can help to improve the quality of funded projects, the depth and range and the experience for carers and young people. These are summarised here.

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>It was clearly evident that a short break can help sustain a caring relationship not just through time out but in other ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building circles of support: enabling the parents to build up support networks or the disabled young people to build up peer / friendship networks. • Building the independence and capacity of the cared for young person through being away in a different setting with different young people and support staff. This often provided opportunities for young people to grow and develop as well as being able to respond to new approaches and challenges. • Helping identify where further support to a family might be needed. <p>The above were seen across longer term programmes <i>and</i> one off breaks such as a holiday or activity break.</p>	<p>Shared Care Scotland to continue to highlight these benefits and help organisations to capture evidence of impact.</p>
<p>Whilst a good number of children and young people and their families have benefited, Better Breaks has not been able to bring benefit to all areas of Scotland and there were some geographical gaps in provision. In addition the programme has only just scratched the surface of meeting the needs of families with a child with disabilities across Scotland.</p>	<p>Shared Care Scotland should consider how to reach out to geographical areas not covered by the fund to date and ensure future portfolios of funding are balancing out support across Scotland.</p>
<p>The majority of families assisted were already receiving some kind of support and many were well known to the organisations in receipt of funding. There was limited evidence of organisations working to reach out to all families who could potentially benefit nor prioritising support to those who might need it most.</p>	<p>Shared Care Scotland should strongly encourage third sector organisations to consider how they will reach out to all families in their area of working which could potentially benefit and have a plan for prioritising those most in need. This may be carers who are not currently getting a break from caring and subsequently children or young people who may be isolated.</p>

Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>Funded projects presented some evidence of reaching out to “hard to reach” carers such as those from BME communities, single parents, and carers living in rural areas. However, only two out of 51 projects were supporting families whose children were under five.</p>	<p>Shared Care Scotland should encourage organisations to consider how they would work to engage with “hard to reach” families and in doing so ensure their work is fully accessible and appropriate to all who could benefit. Bespoke projects for particular target groups may be needed as a first stage in breaking down barriers and building understanding of needs.</p>
<p>Some of the funded projects had close working relationships with statutory agencies. This resulted in all referrals into the project being controlled or dominated by statutory services. As such services are not open to all who may need it and may result in funded projects not being fully additional to statutory provision.</p>	<p>Shared Care Scotland to ensure future applicants to the Better Breaks programme be clear about their referral pathways and where statutory services are involved be clear about the level of control they exert on who can access services.</p>
<p>Projects were not confident in describing what multiple support needs the children and young people they were supporting were living with.</p>	<p>At application and during assessment of projects ask the projects to describe the multiple support needs of the children they plan to support to ensure funding is prioritised to those families. The End of Grant form should ask organisations to report back on the multiple support needs of the children assisted.</p> <p>Shared Care Scotland should provide guidance to applicants on the distinction between disability and multiple support need.</p>
<p>There was strong delivery across the outcomes of the fund and in particular Outcome one which was about the enabling disabled children and young people to take part in activities which were fun, stimulating and rewarding. The impact on carers (outcomes two, three and four) were often less well reported.</p>	<p>Encourage organisations to consider both sides of the caring relationship in the design, delivery and evaluation of the projects.</p> <p>Some are clearly weighted to one side and as such are not able to report back on the outcomes of the fund and demonstrate the difference they are making.</p>
<p>Delivery of the principles of the fund was mixed. Whilst there are some key strengths – notably that carers and young people had good quality breaks – there was at times limited evidence of projects putting children and young people at the heart of the projects. Where children and young people were truly engaged in the creation, design and delivery of projects the outcomes were the strongest for all involved.</p>	<p>Shared Care Scotland should provide clearer guidance on good practice in person centred approaches and personalisation – using examples drawn from funded projects. When prioritising which projects to fund ensure funding is awarded only to those where children and young people are truly at the heart of the project.</p>



Conclusion	Recommendation
<p>Funded projects generally returned well written and informative evaluation returns. There were some organisations who still demonstrate limited expertise in reporting back and a few with limited appetite for reporting.</p>	<p>It is essential that organisations have the appetite and capacity to capture the difference their project... This ability and appetite needs drawn out at assessment.</p> <p>Shared Care Scotland should continue to develop their support for evaluation and methods of capture of evaluation information.</p>
<p>The projects which were most successful in reaching out to 'minority groups' or 'hard to reach' families were those who dedicated time and effort to this and whom viewed it as a continual process of understanding barriers and overcoming these.</p>	<p>In funding projects in the future, assess how well the organisation understands the client group and the barriers they might face.</p> <p>Following on from this look for evidence that they are interested and capable of overcoming these.</p>
<p>Some of the funded projects were not a strong fit with the criteria of the fund as they were not suitably focussed on supporting children and young people with multiple support needs.</p>	<p>The provision of better breaks for children and young people should be at the heart of all funded projects. Shared Care Scotland should ensure that the key aim of the project is on providing quality better breaks to children and young people which are stimulating, fun and focussed on their needs. Following on from this another key point to assess is that the organisation knows how to support and enable disabled children or young people are at the heart of the planning process.</p>
<p>There was a varied capacity to comply with monitoring and evaluation requirements. Some projects did not provide enough information to ensure compliance whilst many of the projects reported with depth and quality. Some of the projects did not report back well.</p>	<p>Ensure at assessment that the organisations have the management capacity and appetite to monitor and evaluate and to participate in the Better Breaks evaluative process.</p>
<p>Many of the funded organisations had under-estimated the resources they would need to deliver the projects. Organisations reported that they had to put more staffing and especially management and administration support to the projects to ensure they were able to deliver them.</p>	<p>Shared Care Scotland provide guidance at application stage which guides organisations to be realistic regarding what resources will be required to deliver projects. This is not an encouragement for organisations to apply larger 'management fees' which are a percentage of core costs. It is about ensuring the projects have considered the staffing required, the transport required, the need to be flexible around activities due to the weather, the time and resources required to reach out and promote the work etc.</p>



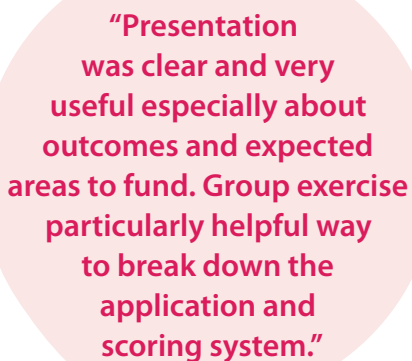
Section 8

Shared Care Scotland's role

8.1 Pre-application support to organisations

In order to promote the fund and to support potential applicants to prepare high quality applications, Shared Care Scotland hosted five application workshops. These took place in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dumfries and Stirling. In all, 68 participants took part. Each workshop covered the background to the fund, its aims, beneficiary groups and how to prepare a strong project plan. Each workshop lasted three hours and was supplemented by one to one time with individual applicants when this was requested.

These sessions were highly valued by potential applicants to the fund and generated very positive feedback



“Presentation was clear and very useful especially about outcomes and expected areas to fund. Group exercise particularly helpful way to break down the application and scoring system.”



“Great overview and explanation from an experienced facilitator, great discussion from experienced representatives. Great ideas generated on how we can support carers and cared for with mutuality.”

Shared Care Scotland also provided one to one telephone support to applicants.

8.2 How applications were assessed

The fund received 67 applications which were individually assessed by one of Shared Care Scotland's team of external assessors. Shared Care Scotland provided training for them on the specifics of the Better Breaks programme and provided a standard assessment proforma. Assessors were asked to comment on the following:

- The capacity of the proposal to increase the availability and reach of short breaks
- How well it focussed on the needs of carers and of disabled children and young people, particularly those with additional multiple support needs
- The involvement of carers and disabled young people in how the project had been planned and would be implemented and evaluated
- The quality of project planning
- Value for money
- What the project would contribute to shared knowledge and learning about short breaks for families with a disabled child

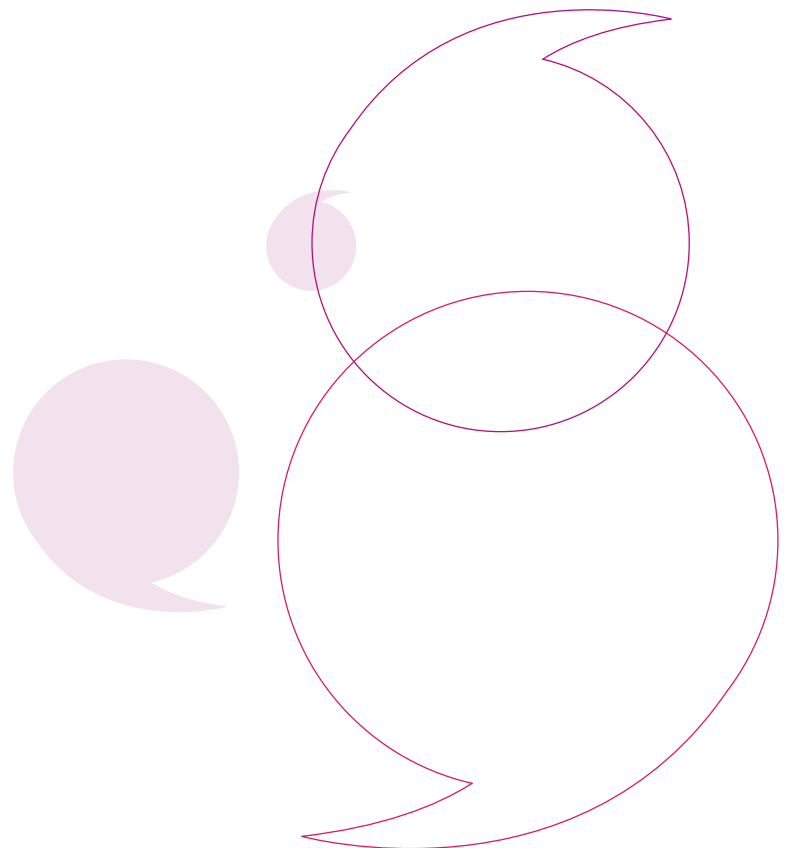
The assessments were desk based and included an assessment telephone call with the applicant, and contact with at least one referee.

8.3 The grants' panel

The assessed applications went before a grants panel consisting of volunteer participants representing a range of national and local carers' organisations, and two representatives from relevant departments in Scottish Government. The panel considered the assessed applications and assembled the final portfolio of funded projects, taking into account geographical spread and the relative size of the population of carers in each local authority area.

8.4 Evaluation support

Because of the emphasis on shared learning and the importance of effective evaluation, Shared Care Scotland commissioned training in evaluation skills from Evaluation Support Scotland for the funded projects. Three workshops were hosted, in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow which collectively involved 60 participants. The feedback from the participants who took part was very positive.





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Short
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