



# Demonstrating the value for money of third sector activity in Rotherham

Case study report:  
Kites Parenting Support

May 2011

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## 1. Introduction

This is one of two case study reports produced as part of research designed to demonstrate the value for money of third sector activity in Rotherham. The research was commissioned by the Rotherham Infrastructure Network and funded through a grant provided by South Yorkshire Community Foundation.

This case study explored the economic and social benefits of Kites' core service - the delivery of parenting support based on the 'Triple P' parenting programme to families in Dearne Valley area (covering parts of Rotherham, Doncaster and Barnsley). This report provides an overview of the case study findings.

### 1.1. About Kites Family Support

Kites Family Support (Kites) is a relatively small local voluntary organisation that provides parenting support to families with children up to the age of 13 across the Dearne Valley. They provide a range of one-to-one and group support activities based on the principles of the internationally renowned Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P). Kites' activities are primarily funded through grants from charitable trusts and foundations, and a small amount of traded services. Kites does not currently deliver any services under contract to public sector bodies but the majority of their clients are referred by public sector health and education professionals. The organisation employs six qualified Triple P practitioners and is one of the few officially accredited non-statutory Triple P providers in South Yorkshire.

### 1.2. An Overview of Triple P

Since 2007 Kites has delivered parenting support based on the Triple P approach to families across the Dearne Valley. Triple P promotes good communication and strong relationships between parents and children. It is designed to help parents to support their children's development and manage their behaviour in a constructive and caring way. The programme helps parents recognise common causes of child behaviour problems and encourage more desirable behaviour. There are five key principles of Triple P:

- ensuring a safe, interesting environment where children can explore, experiment and develop their skills
- creating a positive learning environment by being available when children need help, care or attention
- using assertive discipline by being constant and acting quickly when children misbehave
- having realistic expectations for children and yourself as a parent
- taking care of yourself as a parent and ensuring personal needs are met.

The Triple P approach provides parents with suggestions and ideas to help build positive relationships with their children. This includes strategies such as positive

praise and encouragement for desirable behaviour, setting rules and boundaries for children to follow, and responding to misbehaviour immediately, consistently and decisively.

### **Policy context**

Support for parents and parenting has been a key feature of Government policy for a number of years and Triple P is one of three parenting programmes officially endorsed by the government<sup>1</sup>. Recent policy developments can be traced back to 1998 when the Labour government published its *Supporting Families* Green Paper which identified a better work-life balance and greater practical support for parents as key policy goals. Following this, in 2001, a national exercise to identify services that provided support for parents was undertaken with the aim of identifying the quantity and quality of parenting support, qualifications and training available<sup>2</sup>. Despite this exercise, in 2006 a further government commissioned report identified considerable gaps in the provision of parenting support caused by weak or poorly co-ordinated commissioning processes<sup>3</sup>.

In response to ongoing concerns about gaps in the provision of effective parenting support in 2007 the government published *Every Parent Matters* which outlined a range of initiatives designed to create a scaffolding of support for parents of children aged up to 19. It included an announcement that local authorities would receive £7.5 million in the period 2006-2008 to map provision in their localities and develop their own parenting support strategies. Since March 2008, each authority has been required to employ a commissioner and two parenting experts to champion services for parents, expand their parents' information service and provide a range of community level services based in venues such as children's centres, extended schools, and village and community halls. Despite this unprecedented level of investment, research revealed that by 2009 only 70 per cent of local authorities had published a parenting strategy and many were concerned about a range of issues including the capacity to run programmes; insufficient funding; questions around the sustainability of provision; and inadequate evaluation of outcomes<sup>4</sup>.

In South Yorkshire, local authority priorities are increasingly focussed on 'Family Recovery': intensive interventions with a cohort of 'resource intensive families' who are 'stuck' in a cycle of persistent (often negative) engagement with multiple public sector agencies. Multi-agency teams have been formed to provide a targeted resource to support these families and reduce their long-term impact on mainstream services, particularly in the areas of health, social care, housing and criminal justice. The intention is that this support will eventually enable some families to re-engage with mainstream intervention services.

Against this background Kites provides an important preventative service for families in the Dearne Valley that compliments current government and local authority priorities in the field of parenting support and family intervention.

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<sup>1</sup> The other two are Incredible Years (also known as Webster-Stratton) and Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC). Similar to Triple P both programmes encourage parents to develop problem solving skills and help children and young people master self-regulation.

<sup>2</sup> Ministerial group on the Family (1998) *Supporting Families – A consultation document*, London: Home Office.

<sup>3</sup> PriceWaterhouseCoopers (2006) *The market for parental and family support services*, Department for Education and Skills

<sup>4</sup> Klett-Davies, M, Skaliotis, E and Wollny, I (2009) *Parenting services: Filling in the Gaps Mapping and Analysis of Parenting Services in England Assessing needs and patterns of spending*. Family and Parenting Institute

## **Service delivery**

Kites provides a range of services linked to the Triple P approach:

- a) the core service is a *twelve week one-to-one support package* delivered in the family home. Some families undertake the full Triple P training course while others receive a more tailored 12 week package, including those for whom the full programme is not necessary
- b) a small number of *Triple P group training courses* have also been provided. These are usually organised at the request of schools and tend to be delivered in neutral settings (i.e. the school or a community venue)
- c) supplementary *support services*, such as a parent and toddler group, are available for service users. They provide parents and children with the opportunity to engage with their peers in a non-threatening and informal environment and often act as a step in the transition into mainstream services (i.e. nursery or school).

## 2. Identifying Stakeholder Benefits

The first stage of the research explored the range of benefits accruing to different stakeholders in Kites core service (parenting support). Three main stakeholder groups were identified:

- **the public sector**, including health and education professionals
- **parents** in receipt of support
- **children** of parents in receipt of support.

The research mapped the benefits accruing to each stakeholder in detail, including the nature of the benefit (economic or social), how it could be measured, and the extent to which evidence about the benefit was available. The outcome of this process is discussed in more detail below.

### 2.1. Stakeholder group 1: public sector bodies

The public sector benefits from Kites activities in two main ways:

- more cost-efficient way of delivering parenting support
- 'upstream' cost savings across a range of areas.

These benefits are outlined in more detail in the public sector impact map in table 1.

**Table 1: Public sector impact map**

Nature of benefits (i.e. economic or social outcome)	Measure	Indicator	Evidence
Economic (immediate): More cost-efficient way of delivering parenting support	Cost of delivering Kites support compared to public sector alternatives	Cost-effectiveness comparison	Kites costs can be calculated using their management accounts. Public sector comparison can be obtained from evaluation reports
Economic (long term): Public sector cost savings across a range of areas	Public sector cost savings associated with Triple P	Cost benefit analysis	Beyond the scope and capability of this study but some general benchmarks are available from existing research

### 2.2. Stakeholder group 2: parents in receipt of support

Parents in receipt of Kites support benefit from the programme through:

- improved well-being, an improvement in their parenting ability, confidence, family relationships and mental health



- longer term improvements in other areas of their life such as skills, qualifications and employment, as result of improved well-being.

The benefits are outlined in more detail in parents impact map in table 2 overleaf.

### **2.3. Stakeholder group 3: children of parents in receipt of Kites support**

The Children of parents in receipt of Kites support benefit from the programme through:

- an immediate improvement in their well-being as a result of improvements in their behaviour and familial relationships
- sustained improvements in behaviour and relationships, leading to wider improvements in well-being such as educational attainment and personal and social development.

The benefits are outlined in more detail in the children's impact map in table 3 on page 6.

**Table 2: Parents impact map**

<b>Nature of benefits (i.e. economic or social outcome)</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Social (immediate): Improved well-being	Improved parenting ability	Positive direction of travel on parenting scale	Kites PPP monitoring data
	Improved confidence	Positive rating on customer satisfaction questionnaire	
	Improved relationship with child/children	Positive rating on customer satisfaction questionnaire	
	Improved mental health	Positive direction of travel on DAS scale	
Social (long term): Sustained improvement in well-being	Sustained improvement in parenting ability	Sustained positive direction of travel on parenting scale after 6/12 months	Not currently collected. Outcome plausibility tested through this research. Could be collected through a combination of quantitative (re-administer 4 existing surveys) and qualitative measures (case studies)
	Sustained improvement in confidence	Sustained positive customer satisfaction questionnaire after 6/12 months	
	Sustained improvement in relationship with child/children	Sustained positive rating on customer satisfaction questionnaire after 6/12 months	
	Improved mental health	Sustained positive direction of travel on DAS scale after 6/12 months	
Social/economic (long term): Improved skills and qualifications	New skills and/or qualifications gained	Proportion of parents completing PPP who go on to gain new skills or qualifications and attribute it to PPP support	Not currently collected. Outcome plausibility tested through this research. Could be collected through a combination of quantitative (surveys) and qualitative measures (case studies)
Social/economic (long term): Employment (or better quality employment)	Employment gained/better quality employment gained	Proportion of parents completing PPP who go on to gain employment and attribute it to PPP support. The economic value of this could be measured through the net improvement in wages.	

**Table 3: Children impact map**

<b>Nature of benefits (i.e. economic or social outcome)</b>	<b>Measure</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Evidence</b>
Social (immediate): Improved well-being	Improved behaviour	Positive direction of travel on SDQ	Kites PPP monitoring data
Social (long term): Sustained improvement in well- being	Sustained improvement in behaviour	Sustained positive direction of travel on SDQ	Not currently collected. Outcome plausibility tested through this research.
	Improved educational attainment	Qualitative examples of improvement, including testimonials from e.g. teachers or nursery staff	Could be collected through a combination of quantitative (surveys) and qualitative measures (case studies)
	Improved personal/ social development		

### 3. Measuring Stakeholder Benefits

The next stage of the research involved measuring the benefits accruing to each stakeholder group. The stakeholder mapping process revealed that these benefits fall into two broad groups:

- **economic benefits** where the outcome can be considered in terms of monetary value accruing to the stakeholder, and
- **social benefits** where stakeholders experience outcomes in areas such as personal well-being.

The process also revealed that time was an important factor in the types of outcome achieved. Some of the outcomes were immediate and linked to the successful completion of the 12 week Triple P programme while others were long term and a result of immediate outcomes being sustained and extended beyond the period immediately following the programme. The evidence base around these economic and social benefits is explored in more detail in the following sections.

#### 3.1. In Focus: Economic Benefits

The stakeholder mapping process revealed the economic benefits of Kites Triple P delivery to be threefold:

- immediate, in the form of a more cost-efficient model of parent support
- long term (a), in the form of 'upstream' savings to the public purse
- long term (b), in the form of subsequent employment, skills and qualifications gained by parents in receipt of support.

The immediate economic benefits can be estimated by comparing the cost-efficiency of Kites delivery with a range of benchmarks obtained from secondary data. Although there is insufficient primary data to enable an estimate on either of the long term economic benefits, broad estimates can be made on the basis of findings from previous studies. Evidence about each type of benefit is discussed in more detail below.

##### *Cost-efficiency of Kite's service delivery*

The *cost-efficiency* of Kites delivery of the Triple P programme can be considered by examining the relationship between the inputs used, expressed in terms of the overall cost of delivering the programme, and the outputs obtained, expressed in terms of the number of families supported. In addition, efficiency should not only be considered in terms of the level of activities supported (i.e. the number of parents who begin a programme) but also in terms of the extent to which activities are successful in meeting their objectives. For example, if a greater proportion of parents complete a programme, the overall efficiency of the intervention will increase.

Cost-efficiency indicators for Kites delivery of parental support packages between October 2009 and September 2010 are outlined in table 4.

**Table 4: Cost-efficiency of Kites Parenting Support - all packages (2009-10)<sup>5</sup>**

No. of parents receiving support (at least 2 sessions)	No of parents completing support package	Completion rate (%)	Cost per parent receiving support	Cost per parent completing support package
236	148	63	£797	£1,270

This shows that in 2009-10 Kites parenting support cost on average £797 for each parent attending at least two support sessions and £1,270 for each parent completing the 12 week programme of support.

### *Benchmarking the cost-efficiency of Kite's service delivery*

It has been possible to benchmark the cost-efficiency of Kites delivery with similar programmes.

#### *1. The Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinder (PEIP)*

Detailed data on the cost-efficiency of local authority parenting support programmes was collected through the Evaluation of the Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinder (PEIP)<sup>6</sup>. The PEIP was a DCSF funded programme over the period September 2006 – March 2008. It funded 18 local authorities to implement one of three selected parenting programmes with parents of children aged 8 – 13 years: Incredible Years, Triple P and Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC). The study explored the roll out of these three programmes on a large scale across a substantial number of LAs and included a detailed cost-efficiency study.

Cost-efficiency indicators for public sector delivery of parenting support programmes are outlined in table 5.

**Table 5: Cost-efficiency of PEIP delivery (2006-09)**

Programme	No. of parents undertaking the programme	No of parents completing the programme	Completion rate (%)	Cost per parent undertaking the programme	Cost per parent Completing the programme
Incredible Years	550	398	72	£3,474	£4,789
Triple P	1,226	861	70	£1,890	£2,742
SFSC	992	750	76	£1,706	£2,261
All PEIP Pathfinders	2,768	2,009	73	£2,135	£2,955

Source: Adapted from DCSF/University of Warwick (2008)

This shows PEIP cost between £1,706 and £3,474 for each parent undertaking the programme and between £2,261 and £4,789 for each parent completing the programme. The average cost of PEIP was £2,135 for each parent undertaking the

<sup>5</sup> The costs of Kites delivering support have been calculated based on 2009-2010 running costs (i.e. the overall financial input) of £188,000

<sup>6</sup> Lindsay, G, et al (2008) *Parenting Early Intervention Pathfinder Evaluation*. DCSF/University of Warwick

programme and £2,995 for each parent completing the programme. SFSC appeared most cost-efficient followed by Triple P and Incredible Years.

All three types of PEIP support appear considerably less cost-efficient than Kites. However, an important caveat is that the figures for PEIP programme expenditure included fixed and set-up costs and variable or recurring costs. The analysis above examined the full cost of the programme, including management, training, community liaison and a range of other expenditures attributed to PEIP programme delivery (directly or indirectly). The estimates therefore represent the average cost of the whole range of activities associated with the development and delivery of parental support and are not directly comparable with Kites' costs, which do not include start-up or fixed expenditures such as initial training and accreditation for practitioners.

Helpfully, the PEIP evaluation presents an alternative approach to estimating the cost for local authorities providing Triple P group support. For the Triple P element of PEIP the cost of training facilitators was 'top sliced' from the Year 1 budget. Training for facilitators was found to be a significant set-up or fixed cost for PEIP Triple P providers and also formed part of Kites set-up expenditure. Although there are likely to be other fixed costs in addition to facilitator training the removal of these costs should provide a local authority Triple P expenditure figure that is more comparable with Kite's variable cost than earlier estimates.

Table 6 provides a comparison between Kites and PEIP Triple P provision once facilitator training costs are removed.

**Table 6: Cost-efficiency comparison of PEIP-Kites Triple P delivery (2006-09)**

	<b>Cost per parent undertaking the programme</b>	<b>Cost per parent completing the programme</b>
PEIP LA Triple P (training costs removed)	£1,671	£2,425
Kites	£797	£1,270
Difference	£883	£1,155
	48%	52%

Source: Adapted from DCSF/University of Warwick (2008)

This shows that even once fixed or set-up costs are removed Kites represents a more cost-efficient option for Triple P delivery than PEIP provision. Compared to the average delivery costs associated with PEIP local authority areas, **Kites appears to be about 50 per cent more cost-efficient: their service represents a saving of £883 per parent undertaking the programme and £1,155 per parent completing the Triple P programme.** Some of Kites efficiency can be attributed to their 'flat' structure: management costs are low because the CEO manages all five members of staff and office costs are kept at minimum through realistic and well managed budgets. By comparison local authorities have several layers of management costs and other organisational overheads which are unlikely to be able to provide equivalent economies.

In making these comparisons it is important to note a key difference between the support provided through PEIP and the support packages delivered by Kites: PEIP provided training for groups of parents while the majority of Kites support is provided

on a one to one basis in the family home. One to one support is more resource intensive than group work and therefore more expensive to deliver. This difference highlights even further the cost-efficiency of Kites support compared to PEIP local authority provision.

## 2. Other sources of data

In addition to the PEIP evaluation a number of other studies have sought to assess the cost-efficiency of parenting support programmes:

- Dretzke *et al* (2004)<sup>7</sup> found that the average cost of parent training was £1,279
- Edwards *et al* (2007)<sup>8</sup> estimated that providing community based parenting interventions in Wales cost £1,289 per parent
- NICE (2006)<sup>9</sup> developed a costing template for their systematic review of parental training/education interventions to produce estimates of the unit cost of different types of parental interventions:
  - clinic-based individual programmes - £2,000
  - home-based individual programmes - £3,000
  - community based group programmes - £7,200 (per group)
  - clinic based group programmes - £5,000 (per group).

Although seemingly more cost-efficient than PEIP none of these examples are as cost effective as the Kites model.

## Upstream savings to the public purse

The general premise of interventions to promote early childhood development is that early benefits in cognitive and emotional development will carry on into later life and that these benefits accrue to society as well as the individual. This includes, for example, reduced crime rates and lower use of expensive public services (London Economics, 2006)<sup>10</sup>.

Although there has been very little research into the precise societal benefits of parent support programmes, several studies have analysed the difference in public service use between children and adults with conduct disorders and those without. Cumulative public services costs for individuals with conduct disorders (£70,019) are 3.5 times higher than for those with less severe behaviour problems (£24,324), and 10 times higher than for those with no problems (£7,423) over 18 years, aged 10-28 (Scott *et al*, 2001)<sup>11</sup>. These costs fall on criminal justice, health, education and social services, with a significant impact on mental health agencies where conduct problems are most commonly treated.

<sup>7</sup> Dretzke J, *et al* (2004). The effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of parent training/education programmes for the treatment of conduct disorder, including oppositional defiant disorder, in children. Birmingham: West Midlands Health Technology Assessment Collaboration, University of Birmingham.

<sup>8</sup> Edwards R, *et al* (2007). 'Parenting program for parents of children at risk of developing conduct disorder: cost effectiveness analysis', *British Medical Journal*, 334:682

<sup>9</sup> NICE (2006). *Costing Template and Costing Report: Parent-training/education in the management of children with conduct disorders*, National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

<sup>10</sup> London Economics (2010). *Cost Benefit Analysis of Interventions with Parents*. Department for Children, Schools and Families.

<sup>11</sup> Scott, S *et al* (2001). Financial cost of social exclusion: a follow-up study of antisocial children into adulthood. *BMJ* 2001 323:191

Research into the effectiveness of Triple P indicates that it has the potential to avert at least 26 per cent of cases of conduct disorder. Based on this evidence and the costs discussed above, it has been estimated that the Triple P programme saves £4.24 (four pounds and twenty four pence) for every pound (£1) spent on delivery (University of Queensland, 2004<sup>12</sup>; Dretzke et al, 2004). If this ratio is applied to Kites delivery of parenting support, **it can be estimated that in 2009/10 Kites generated public sector savings of at least £797,120**. In reality this figure is likely to be higher as Kites has been shown to be more cost-efficient than other providers.

Although there is no primary evidence about the extent to which Kites support prevents conduct disorder in children, based on the costs outlined above, it is estimated that **Kites would only need to prevent between two and three (2.26) cases of severe conduct disorder or 32 cases of less severe conduct disorder each year to save more resources than it consumes** (i.e. produce a positive cost-effectiveness ratio).

It is important to note that these calculations only refer to the cost-savings associated with children supported through the Triple P programme. We have not been able to identify any studies exploring cost-savings linked to benefits accruing to parents but these are likely to be significant, and associated with reduced demand on health and welfare services.

### ***Employment, skills and qualifications gained by parents in receipt of support***

In addition to the financial savings identified in the previous sections, Kites support can lead to long term economic benefits for parents in receipt of support in the form of new or improved employment, and new skills and qualifications gained. Although the proportion of parents experiencing benefits in relation to employment, skills and qualifications following Kites support has not been systematically measured there is qualitative evidence that this has occurred in a number of cases (some specific examples are provided later in this report).

If Kites support does ultimately lead to parents entering employment or gaining better quality employment the economic impact will be considerable, both for the individual/family, in terms of greater financial security, and for the public purse, in terms of reduced benefits payments and increased taxes received. However, any future approaches to measuring the number of parents whose employment situation has improved and valuing its economic impact will need to consider carefully the extent to which this can attributed to Kites support, particularly if the individual has been in receipt of subsequent interventions related to employment support (i.e. Job Centre Plus).

### ***Overall economic benefits***

Although it has not been possible to place an overall value of the economic impact of Kites service delivery the economic benefits are clear. Kites provide a service that is about **50 per cent more cost efficient than national local authority benchmarks** and one year of service delivery is estimated to **save the public sector at least nearly £800 thousand pounds** over the longer term.

## **3.2. In Focus: Social Benefits**

The stakeholder mapping process revealed a range of social benefits of Kites parenting support linked to the well-being of the families (parents and children)

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<sup>12</sup> *Triple P Positive Parenting Programme*, Submission for Technology Appraisal by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence, Prepared by Parenting and Family Support Centre, The University of Queensland (2004)



involved. These benefits were realised immediately (i.e. at the end of the 12 week support programme) but there is also evidence to suggest that some outcomes are sustained and extended beyond the support period.

Kites measure each client's progress during the 12 week programme using a range of tools developed as part of the Triple P programme:

- Parenting Scale questionnaire
- Depression, Anxiety and Stress questionnaire (DAS)
- Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ).

They also carry-out a customer satisfaction questionnaire at the end of the programme to assess overall improvements in confidence and relationships.

These tools enable Kites to evaluate in some detail the immediate social benefits of their work by analysing the distance travelled by parents and children during the support period. However, Kites do not currently measure the longer term sustained benefits in a systematic way. As part of this research Kites were supported to develop an approach to measuring the extent to which progress had been sustained by clients after six and 12 months with a view to implementing it across the organisation. This approach was piloted with three parents and the findings were made available for this report.

Analysis of the data collected through the end of programme evaluations and the pilot is outlined below.

### *Immediate benefits: improvements in well-being on completing support*

We examined Kites evaluation material collected from clients that completed their support package between April 2009 and March 2010. The results for each of the indicators identified in tables 2 and 3 reveal the following.

#### *1. Parents*

##### a. Improved parenting ability

The Parenting Scale is a 30 item measure of parenting practice. It is designed to identify three types of dysfunctional discipline styles in parents: laxness (a permissive approach to discipline); over-reactivity (displays of anger, meanness and irritability); verbosity (unnecessarily lengthy verbal responses or reliance on talking). In 2009/10, **88 per cent of Kites clients recorded an overall improvement on the Parenting Scale**: 83 per cent recorded an improvement in laxness; 88 per cent recorded an improvement in over-reactivity; and 90 per cent recorded an improvement in verbosity.

##### b. Improved confidence

Kites end of programme customer satisfaction questionnaire asks parents whether they feel the support received has helped improve their confidence. **96 per cent of Kites clients have said the support had helped their confidence improve**: 43 per cent said it had helped a great deal and 53 per cent said it had helped somewhat.

##### c. Improved relationship with child/children

Kites end of programme customer satisfaction questionnaire asks parents whether they feel that their relationship with their child/children has been improved following

the support. **93 per cent of Kites clients said the support had helped improve their relationship with their child/children:** 21 per cent said it had definitely improved and 71 per cent said it had generally improved.

d. Improved mental health

The Depression Anxiety and Stress (DAS) scale is a 42 item self reporting tool designed to assess symptoms of depression, anxiety and stress in adults. In 2009/10 **77 per cent of Kites clients recorded an overall improvement rate across the DAS scale:** 78 per cent recorded an improvement in relation to depression; 70 per cent recorded an improvement in relation to anxiety; and 81 per cent recorded an improvement in relation to stress.

## *2. Children*

Improvements in the behaviour of children are measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a 25 item measure of parent's perceptions of difficult behaviours in children aged 3-16 years. The questionnaire covers five areas of behaviour: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems, pro-social behaviour (i.e. caring, empathy etc). In 2009/10, **79 per cent of clients recorded an overall improvement in terms of the total difficulties experienced:** 50 per cent recorded an improvement in relation to emotional symptoms; 71 per cent recorded an improvement in relation to conduct problems; 50 per cent recorded an improvement in relation to hyperactivity; 64 per cent recorded an improvement in relation to peer problems; and 40 per cent recorded an increase in relation to pro-social behaviour.

### *Long term benefits: sustained improvements in well-being*

In piloting the approach to follow-up evaluations with Kites clients after six and 12 months we found evidence that parents and children experienced sustained and extended improvements in their personal well-being in the period following completion of the Kites support. **All three parents demonstrated sustained improvements on the Parenting Scale and the DAS scale and improvements in the behaviour of their children had been sustained according to the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire after 6-12 months.** Furthermore, there was evidence that parents and children had experienced a range of extended benefits following completion of the programme:

- parents A and C had enrolled in a Further (A) and Higher (C) Education courses and Parent B had got a new, better paid job. All three attributed these changes, at least in some part, to the personal confidence gained through the Triple P training
- parent A reported that her improvements in her child's behaviour had been transferred into the school environment. Prior to completing Triple P he was constantly in trouble and Parent A was "constantly being called in by teachers" and "dreaded picking him up every day". His behaviour at school has improved markedly and she no longer worries about what awaits her at the end of the day
- all three parents report that their overall lifestyle and life satisfaction had improved considerably compared to the period prior to starting Triple P. Improvements in their children's conduct and their ability to manage and cope with misbehaviour had made events such as shopping and family outings far more manageable and enjoyable.

## *Overall social benefits*

The evidence suggests that the parenting support packages delivered by Kites lead to immediate, sustained and extended improvements in the well-being of parents and children involved. **More than three-quarters experience improvements in parenting ability, confidence, behaviour and mental health on completion of a 12 week package of support.** Moreover, there is qualitative evidence that these improvements are sustained after six and twelve months, and in the longer term can lead to extended benefits such as improvements in employment, skills and qualifications.

### **3.3. Conclusion**

This case study report forms part of wider research into the value for money provided by third sector activity in Rotherham. It has provided clear evidence of the economic and social benefits of Kites' parenting support and some key lessons for third sector and public sector bodies across the borough have emerged.

#### *The economic and social benefits of the Kites' parental support*

Kites' delivery of parenting support appears to be both cost-efficient and cost-effective: it is up to fifty per cent more cost-efficient than similar local authority based provision and each year is estimated to **save the public sector nearly £800 thousand pounds** in longer term benefits. Additionally, and importantly, it is also evident that **a majority (more than three-quarters) of clients experience improvements in parenting ability, confidence, behaviour and mental health on completion of a 12 week package of support.** There is evidence from a small number of case studies that these improvements in well-being are sustained and extended beyond the support period: a challenge for Kites will be to embed processes for measuring these longer term benefits on a more systematic basis and improve their understanding of how any changes can be attributed to the parenting support provided.

#### *Key lessons*

There are a number of important lessons from this case study for organisations for other organisations in both the third sector and the public sector:

##### *1) The importance of effective outcome monitoring*

Kites has embedded a very effective outcome monitoring system based on recommended Triple P practice. Their monitoring data provides 'distance travelled' information for every client undertaking a parenting programme which can be aggregated and collated over time. The data forms a strong evidence base for the effectiveness of Kites' activities.

##### *2) The need to understand if outcomes are sustained and extended*

Prior to their involvement in the research Kites did not collect data about their clients' outcomes beyond the period in which they had been supported. In order to fully understand the nature of the benefits provided to stakeholders it is vital to also collect data about the extent to which outcomes are extended and sustained. Where effective short term outcome monitoring tools are already being used it can be relatively straightforward to measure benefits over a longer period. However, this can be resource intensive and will work best if integrated into existing working practices.

*3) Public sector commissioners should consider value for money evidence more thoroughly when make decisions about service delivery*

It is striking that despite the efficiency and effectiveness it offers and the policy importance of parenting support, Kites has not been contracted directly by local public sector bodies to support their parenting strategies. This suggests that local commissioners might not have properly considered value for money when deciding which providers should be involved in the delivery of parenting support, and how.

*4) Small voluntary organisations have low management costs which provide cost economies in the delivery of services*

The research demonstrates that Kites is up to 50 per cent more cost-efficient than the national averages associated with similar public sector parenting programmes. Kites is able to provide this level of cost-economy in part due to a 'flat' management structure that could not be easily replicated in a large public sector body. This is likely to be a feature of other similar voluntary organisations and it is probable that certain other services could be delivered cost-efficiently by small organisations providing this degree of cost economy.

# Sheffield Hallam University

*Demonstrating the value for money of third sector activity in Rotherham: Case study report: Kites Parenting Support*

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