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Forecast Social Return on Investment Analysis of Midlothian Together for Positive Change

August 2026



Midlothian



Executive Summary

This report provides a forecast of the social return from the investment in the Midlothian Together for Positive Change service which provides intensive family support. It uses a targeted approach across Midlothian, focussing on high-risk families with at least one child under 16 who are known to have a recurring need for support and face multiple barriers to moving out of poverty

The service is provided by Barnardo's who work collaboratively with a range of public sector services.

The benefits that are measured are those that are likely to be made possible by the investment of £85,000 by the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and have been identified following consultation with those who were most directly affected.

The analysis considers investment between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025 and was undertaken by the Improvement Service.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) provides a principled approach that can be used to measure and account for a broad concept of value. It enables the social and economic benefits a service or activity delivers to be calculated and monetised. It is a stakeholder informed process and consultation is an integral part of the methodology.

The analysis identified those who are likely to derive benefits from Midlothian Together for Positive Change and values some of the changes that they are likely to experience. For an investment of £85,000 benefits of over three quarters of a million pounds are delivered.

Improving children's' engagement with school which will ultimately contribute to improved attainment.

Supporting both parents and children to enjoy **improved family relationships**.

Enabling parents **to have an increased ability to cope with daily life, to feel more positive about the future** and to be able **to work towards securing employment**.

Increasing the skills and abilities of staff members.

Enabling partner organisations to use time and resources more effectively by focussing on areas of expertise.

It was found that every

£1

invested would
generate around



£9

of benefits

By applying a sensitivity
analysis, or varying any
assumptions made in the
calculation, the value of the
benefits derived ranges from
between

**£8 and
£10.**



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1. Introduction

This analysis describes and predicts the social return from investing in the Midlothian Together for Positive Change Service.¹

The service provides intensive family support and uses a targeted approach across Midlothian, focussing on high-risk families, with at least one child under 16, who are known to have a recurring need for support and face multiple barriers to moving out of poverty. The service is aligned with Midlothian Council's Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability team and works in partnership with Midlothian Council's Early Intervention and Prevention team to identify young people and families that would benefit from this type of support.

The Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability Service provides employability, learning opportunities and mental health support to families when they are ready to engage with this support. Many of the families receiving support have at least one child in the family who is neurodiverse.

The service is managed and delivered by Barnardo's.

This analysis has been prepared by the Improvement Service.

The period that is considered in the analysis is a duration of one year - from April 2024 until March 2025.

1.1 Background

The Edinburgh and South East Scotland City (ESES) Region Deal² is a £1.6 billion five-year programme whose purpose is to drive economic growth and create opportunities across the region. The deal has five themes, one of which is the delivery of an integrated Regional Employability and Skills Programme. Providing Intensive Family Support Services will enable:

“targeting significant pockets of persistent, entrenched worklessness and poverty that are evident throughout the ESES city region and implement(ing) a holistic whole family support approach that tackles intergenerational disadvantage and helps families meet their individual needs. The service focuses primarily on workless, lone parent and low-income households, supporting adults to provide a better environment for their young people and promote progression opportunities for every member of the family. Raising attainment levels, reducing

1 <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/services/barnardos-together-positive-change>

2 <https://esescityregiondeal.org.uk/>

the number of those leaving school to a negative destination and increasing employment levels in those families where work has not previously been seen as an achievable goal.”³

1.2 Subjects of the analysis

This analysis predicts the social and economic benefits of providing individual family members in Midlothian with a range of support services delivered by specialist workers who are employed by Barnardo's.

The Midlothian Together for Positive Change method:

“The approach provides intensive family support by enabling and empowering families and individuals to address the core issues that may be affecting the whole family to stabilise families and increase independence – this may include improving mental health and well-being and supporting and developing parental skills.

The service approach has been developed and refined in discussion with partner organisations to ensure there is best use of resources, no duplication of effort and to fill service gaps in family support in Midlothian.”

1.3 Strategic considerations

There is a strong correlation between unemployment and poverty.

“Among unemployed working-age adults — those who are out of work, but available for and seeking employment — the poverty rate was 53%, nearly 5 times higher than for those in work.”⁴

For children living in households experiencing poverty there is evidence of links between poverty and lower achievement of development milestones, lower school attendance, poorer attainment and poor health and wellbeing outcomes⁵ as well as having immediate adverse effects there are implications for the child's long-term future. As the Child Poverty Action Group found, *“children from higher income families significantly outperform those from low-income households at ages 3 and 5. By age 5 there is a gap of ten months in problem solving development and of 13 months in vocabulary.”⁶*

3 Extract from Capital City Partnership Service specification Intensive family support service – phase two

4 <https://www.jrf.org.uk/uk-poverty-statistics/work>

5 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/costs-of-child-poverty-a-rapid-evidence-review-of-the-effect-of-income-on-child-outcomes/costs-of-child-poverty-a-rapid-evidence-review-of-the-effect-of-income-on-child-outcomes>

6 <https://cpag.org.uk/scotland/child-poverty/facts>

As well as the long-lasting adverse effects on individuals, a report, 'Counting the cost of UK poverty' by Heriot Watt and Loughborough Universities⁷, illustrated how much poverty across all age groups costs the public purse. It found that c£69 billion, or £1 in every £5 of all spending on public services, was needed because of the impact and cost poverty had on people's lives.

Whilst the causes and costs of inequalities have been highlighted for many years, they have still not been addressed. There are compelling arguments, both in terms of equity and economic prudence, to invest in initiatives, such as increasing employment opportunities, that reduce social and economic disadvantage. Although employment remains the best route out of poverty, gaining a job is not in itself sufficient. Rates of in-work poverty are increasing, and it is estimated that 60% of people living in poverty live in a household where someone works.⁸

1.4 Social Return on Investment

Social Return on Investment (SROI) provides a principled approach that can be used to measure and account for a broad concept of value.

SROI measures social and economic change from the perspective of those who experience or contribute to it. Through the use of financial proxies, it is possible to identify and apply a monetary value to represent each change that is measured. The resultant financial value is then adjusted to take account of other influential factors. In this way the overall impact of an activity can be calculated and the value generated compared to the investment in the activities. This enables a ratio of cost to benefits to be calculated. For example, a ratio of 1:3 indicates that an investment of £1 in the activities has delivered £3 of social value.⁹

Whilst an SROI analysis will provide headline costs to benefits ratio, it will also deliver a detailed narrative that explains how change is created and evaluates the impact of the change through the evidence that is gathered. A SROI analysis is based on clear principles and progresses through set stages. SROI is much more than just a number. It is a story about change, on which to base decisions, and that story is told through qualitative, quantitative and financial information. The principles of the SROI approach are set out in Appendix 2.

There are two types of SROI analyses: a forecast SROI predicts the impact of a project or activity and an evaluative SROI measures the changes that it has delivered. This report is a forecast SROI analysis.

7 <https://www.jrf.org.uk/press/poverty-costs-uk-£78-billion-year---jrf-report>

8 Birt, C., Cebula, C., Evans, J., Hay, D. and McKenzie, A. (2025) Poverty in Scotland 2025. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

9 In SROI, 'social' is taken as a shorthand for social, economic and environmental value

1.5 Purpose of the analysis

There is a growing body of evidence supporting the multiple benefits of providing intensive whole family support services to which this analysis will contribute.

This analysis considers an approach to providing support based on enabling and empowering families to address the issues in their lives and to become more stable and independent.

The methodology adopted examines the benefits from a stakeholder perspective and calculates the social return on investment.

The findings from this analysis may assist local authorities, funders and providers of family support and employability services to consider how they can improve the way these services in Scotland are delivered to ensure support for prevention, rather than crisis intervention, is provided which takes into account the holistic needs of individuals and families.

2. Scope and stakeholders

2.1 Scope

This is a forecast of the social return from investing in a service which provides individuals and families in Midlothian, with at least one child under 16, with a wide range of support depending on their needs and demands. The findings it contains are based on the duration of one year - from April 2024 until March 2025.

2.2 Stakeholder identification and consultation.

All those who were likely to experience change as a result of the project (the stakeholders), were identified, the nature of any changes that might be experienced considered and how such changes might be measured explored. This resulted in drawing up a list of those organisations or individuals whom it was believed would be significantly affected (the stakeholders). Details about these stakeholders are provided in Appendix 1.1.

A consultation plan was established for each of the identified stakeholders using methodologies that best suited their individual needs. Consultation was carried out by the Improvement Service with support from Barnardo's staff. Appendix 1.2 sets out the engagement methods used for each stakeholder.

Stakeholders were consulted initially to confirm possible outcomes that had been identified by the reference group. Stakeholders were consulted face to face, or via telephone or using TEAMs, at all stages of the process.

3. Theory of change from the perspective of stakeholders

By engaging with stakeholders this analysis has identified, from the perspective of each, the changes that have taken place as a result of the support provided by the intensive family support services in Midlothian delivered by Barnardo's.

Within each stakeholder grouping not all individuals are likely to experience the same changes and this is reflected in the quantities used to calculate the return on investment. The quantities used are drawn from responses from individual interviews and questionnaires and are considered further in section 4.3.

The outcomes reported by stakeholders are described in the following sections and are illustrated by direct anonymised quotes

3.1 Parents/Carers

Outcomes:

- **Feeling valued and supported**
- **Increased ability to cope with daily life**
- **Improved health and wellbeing**

As a result of receiving the service, parents/carers reported feeling more valued and supported. This is linked to lower levels of depression, anxiety and stress. Individuals also reported being able to cope better with daily life and to navigate new pressures without becoming overwhelmed. By taking a 'whole family' approach, the service took into account the needs and desires of all family members rather than just the child who had been referred to the service, so empowering families to build resilience and coping strategies.



"I'm coping better and using the tools that the support worker gave me to help him moving to secondary school"

"We are no longer walking on egg shells around him"

"I feel like I can now cope as we have a better relationship with no tantrums or meltdowns"

"My children's confidence and self-esteem has grown so much"

"The whole family now has strategies to put in place when my boy has a meltdown"

"Getting the children ready for school in the morning was so stressful for us all, but the support worker came to the house in the morning and came up with different ways of doing things which has made everything so much easier and less stressful"

"I feel so much more confident as a parent"

Outcome: Increased employment opportunities as a result of new skills and qualifications

As a result of the support they received some parents were able to start to engage in group work activities, and some were referred to the council's employability support service. Previously these parents would not have been able to access the employability support service as it is set up to support individuals rather than families. However parents, who required extra assistance, were able to sustain engagement as their family support needs were being addressed by Together for Positive Change in Midlothian.



"Barnardo's can provide intensive support to the whole family – we just work with the individuals who are referred to us" (Partner Organisation)."

3.2 Families

Outcome: Improved family relationships

By accessing intensive family support, family members reported significant improvements in their relationships. Developing better communication techniques, parenting skills, trust and establishing routines all led to an improvement in family relationships. Importantly, for all the families interviewed, a better understanding of their child/children's neurodiversity enabled all members of the family to understand better how information may be processed differently, how to tailor support and how to react to and communicate differently in a non-judgemental and supportive way.



"I've now got a better relationship with my other kids as I'm not spending all my time trying to cope with her"

"All of us in the family have benefited as we know how to deal with his behaviour as we understand autism better"

"We now have a real understanding of what everyone in the family needs, we give ourselves time to think and listen to each other"

"We have better relationships with each other"

"I understand more how my children experience the world"

"I think I'm parenting differently, I'm more effective as I understand my children better"

3.3 Children/Young People

Outcome: Increased chances of attainment through re-engagement in education

By providing intensive family support to the whole family, the service is able to address the root causes of non-attendance or sporadic attendance at school. Through consistency and a tailored approach, depending on their needs, families (often in conjunction with schools) were supported to identify and test out opportunities to enable children to develop a better relationship with school, so improving attendance and enhancing the chances of attainment.



“I now have a better relationship with his school”

“The support worker worked with us and the school to come up with options to avoid stressful situations for him”

“She’s better at going into school and class, I’ve had positive feedback from the school”

“Now my son is going into school on time he’s more focussed in class and has more friends”

“My son now loves school, he hasn’t been off at all”

3.4 Partner organisations

Outcome: Able to use time and resources more effectively by focussing on areas of expertise

The role of Together for Positive Change in working in partnership in Midlothian was reported very positively by the partner organisations interviewed for this analysis. It was described as ‘the missing piece of the jigsaw’ in terms of providing a ‘whole family approach’ to delivering family support - an approach which none of the other partners interviewed had the experience, capacity or remit to undertake. Through this effective partnership working better outcomes for families could be achieved, avoiding duplication of effort and better targeting of resources. Additional funding was awarded to develop their family support work further with a small number of families in Midlothian. Partners were also very positive about the shared learning offered by Together for Positive Change in relation to improving their knowledge and understanding of neurodiversity and how it can affect family relationships.



“They have filled a gap in local service provision, they can provide a support to parents who wouldn’t have been eligible for any other services”

“They provide intensive support to the whole family, we just work with individuals”

“They take a whole family approach and were awarded additional funding to do more of this type of work in Midlothian”

“From a partnership perspective, things are more joined up, we all work together and complement each others skills and experience. Each service can work to its strengths”

“Due to this service we have really seen improvements in attendance and attainment at school”

“We can see that the children are more confident and less socially isolated, they have friends in class”

“This service is the missing piece of the jigsaw in supporting families in Midlothian”

“Their knowledge and experience about supporting families where there is neurodiversity is second to none, it’s not just the families who benefit, we all benefit from their expertise”

3.5 Staff in Delivery Organisations

Outcomes:

- **Increased opportunities to share skills and learning**
- **More confident to try new approaches**

There are two family support workers, employed and managed by Barnardo’s to develop and deliver the service across Midlothian (one worker was on maternity leave during the evaluation process). The worker interviewed recognised that working effectively and proactively in partnership in Midlothian was crucial to the success of the service. Along with their manager they actively contributed to the partnership, sharing learning, skills and ways of working, as well as respecting the expertise and remits of other organisations.

With the support of their manager, the worker developed an approach which filled a gap in Midlothian’s existing provision for family support. By providing intensive whole family support, with a focus on meeting the needs and demands of families with one or more neurodiverse children, the worker was able to develop individualised ,targeted approaches to enable better outcomes for families to be

achieved. In addition, they supported the transition of individual family members to other services in Midlothian delivered by partner organisations.



“We now receive direct requests for support from school and CAMHS”

“When working together with other services, there is a real sense of mutual respect, and often we are asked for advice”

“I think we have developed an approach which is responsive, reliable and respected. And this seems to work for the families we work with and partner organisations”

3.6 Delivery Organisation

Outcomes:

- **Increased the profile of the organisation and recognition of its expertise in family support**
- **Increased opportunities to secure funding**

On behalf of Barnardo's, the manager of the service is very actively engaged in developing the service and working in partnership to ensure it is delivered effectively in Midlothian. She has ensured that the service remit and responsibilities are familiar to, and understood by, partners such as, social work, family well-being, education, employability and community & lifelong learning. In leading and developing the service, her organisation now has a better understanding of local needs and gaps in services and, where opportunities have arisen, has successfully applied for funding to develop the work further both in Midlothian and beyond. Through discussion with local partners, Barnardo's has developed an improved approach to family support which meets local needs and demands. The organisation has now become a well-established delivery partner in Midlothian and is contributing to delivering better outcomes for families.



“Learning about local needs and mapping gaps in existing service provision has enabled Barnardo’s to strengthen our offer to Midlothian in terms of developing new services and resources. For example, we have delivered neurodiversity learning for professional networks, funded via Midlothian’s Family Well-being Fund.”

“This service has helped Barnardo’s to identify and focus on its strengths and our offer to families in Midlothian. Using the learning from Midlothian, we have secured funding for a new project in Edinburgh which will be delivered in collaboration with other third sector organisations”

“In Midlothian, Barnardo’s has developed an improved approach to service delivery in relation to family support which is agile, flexible and more responsive to local need and demand”

4. Inputs and outputs

4.1 Investment (inputs)

The money invested by the stakeholders below was used to meet staffing and associated costs. .

Table 1. Investment levels by stakeholder

Stakeholder	Description	Amount (£)
Funder- ESES Region Deal- Capital City Partnership	Grant funding to cover staff, overheads and activity costs	85,000

4.2 Outputs

The outputs describe, in numerical terms, the activities that took place as a result of the inputs. It is these activities which resulted in the changes (or outcomes) for each of the identified stakeholders. The outputs reported below relate to the year covered in the analysis.

Table 2: Outputs by stakeholder

Stakeholder	Relevant output ¹⁰
Parents/Carers	60 parents/carers were supported by Barnardo's
Families	25 families were supported by Barnardo's
Children/Young People	20 Children/Young People were supported by Barnardo's
Partner Organisation	There were 5 partner organisations involved in Midlothian Together for Positive Change
Staff	2 staff members supported or delivered services
Delivery Organisations	1 delivery organisations , Barnardo's, delivered the Programme

4.3 Quantities

It is important to clarify the number in each stakeholder group who actually experienced the outcome that has been identified. In many cases, not all of the stakeholders involved will experience change, or indeed do so to varying degrees. For example, whilst 60 parents/carers have been able to access

¹⁰ It should be noted that the activities provided by have been described in Section 1.2.

Barnardo's services not all experienced improved health and wellbeing or increased job opportunities.

Parents/Carers

The table below details the numbers of the cohort of parents/carers who have experienced the reported outcomes. The findings have been scaled up based on the responses received from the interviews/survey results.

Table 3. Ouputs by stakeholder - parents/carers

Feel more valued and supported	45
Increased ability to cope with daily life	40
Improved health and wellbeing	40
Increased employment opportunities as a result of new skills or qualifications	8

The sample size and responses were insufficient to ensure that there can be a 95% confidence level with a low margin of error and hence this is a forecast analysis.

Families

In the course of engagement with adults/carers questions were included about whether there were any changes, either positive or negative, in family relationships. The findings have been scaled up based on the responses received. The number of positive responses was sufficient to ensure that there can be a 95% confidence level with a low margin of error.

Table 4. Outputs by stakeholder - families

Improved family relationships	15
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Children/Young People

Children and young people were not interviewed directly as participation would have been challenging for them given their health conditions. Parents/carers and the Barnardo's worker were used as proxies.

The table below details the numbers of children/young people who were considered to have experienced the reported outcomes. The findings have been scaled up based on the responses received during engagement with the proxies.

The sample size and responses were sufficient to ensure that there can be a 95% confidence level with a low margin of error in relation to the reported outcome

Table 5. Outputs by stakeholder - children/young people

Increased chances of attainment through re-engagement with education	15
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Delivery Organisations, Staff in Delivery Organisation and Partner Organisations

All of the above stakeholders were interviewed on an individual basis and reported achieving all outcomes recorded.

5. Outcomes and valuation

Detailed results from the stakeholder engagement and information collection are represented in the impact map information in Appendix 1..

5.1 Outcomes evidence

The changes (or outcomes) which were identified, following consultation with each stakeholder, are detailed below along with information on how the outcome was measured (indicator). All of the outcomes reported were positive. The outcomes which were identified in the course of the analysis but could not be measured and the reasons for this are listed in Appendix 1.3.

Table 6: Outcomes Evidence

Stakeholder	Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Source
Parents/Carers	Feeling valued and supported	Number of individuals reporting feeling more valued and supported	individual interviews, Barnardo's monitoring returns
	Increased ability to cope with daily life	Number of individuals reporting increased ability to cope with daily life feeling more valued and supported	individual interviews, Barnardo's monitoring returns
	Improved health and well-being	Number of individuals reporting improved health and well-being	individual interviews, Barnardo's monitoring returns
	Increased employment opportunities as a result of new skills and qualifications	Number of individuals progressing towards employment	Capital City Partnership reports
Families	Improved family relationships	Number of families reporting improved family relationships	Barnardo's monitoring returns
Children/Young People	Increased chances of attainment through re-engagement in education	Number of children/ young people re-engaging with school	Barnardo's monitoring returns

Stakeholder	Outcome	Outcome Indicator	Source
Delivery organisations	Increased the profile of the organisation and recognition of its expertise in family support	Number of organisations reporting Increased profile of the organisation and its expertise reported	individual interviews
	Increased opportunities to secure funding	Additional funding secured	individual interviews
Staff supporting the service	Increased opportunities to share learning and skills	Number of staff reporting increased opportunities to share learning and skills	individual interviews

5.2 Valuation

Financial proxies have been identified which allow a monetary value to be placed on the changes experienced by individual stakeholders. In each case stakeholders, or their proxies, have been consulted on the appropriateness of these measures and given the opportunity to make suggestions on potential financial proxies. These were taken into account in the final selection. In identifying the value given to a financial proxy attempts have been made to link the financial amount to the level of importance placed on the change by individual stakeholders.

Further information on how each outcome is valued is provided in Appendix 1.4.

6. Social return calculation and sensitivity analysis

6.1 Duration and drop off

Before the SROI calculation can be finalised, the period of time the changes produced by the activity will last must be considered. This is so that their future value can be assessed. The question to be answered is 'if the activity stopped tomorrow, how much of the value would still be there?'

To predict the length of time changes will be sustained stakeholder opinion and independent research are both taken into account. There will be variations in the length of time benefits last according to the nature of the change and also the characteristics of individual stakeholders. If significant assumptions have been required about the likely duration of changes then these will be tested in the sensitivity analysis.

In the absence of relevant research or stakeholder views that would suggest the time period the benefits are likely to last, the duration of all outcomes has been set at between one and three years. It is likely that several outcomes will endure for a longer period but, at this stage, in the absence of robust evidence to support this hypothesis, a conservative approach has been adopted.

Outcomes lasting several years cannot be expected to maintain the same level of value for each of these years. This is dealt with by assuming that the value will reduce or 'drop off' each year. Outcomes relating to improved skills and better family relationships are predicted to last for three years and hence will be affected by 'drop off'.

6.2 Reductions in value to avoid overclaiming

As well as considering how long the changes a service or activity delivers will last, it is necessary to take account of other factors that may be influential. The recorded change might have happened regardless of the service, something else may have made a contribution to it or the service may have displaced changes taking place elsewhere. In considering the extent to which each of these factors have played a part in the total impact, a realistic approach should be adopted. The aim is to be pragmatic about the benefits actually provided by the ability to access support. In this case there is limited existing research that can be drawn on to support the predictions made and hence these are tested in the sensitivity analysis.

6.2.1 Deadweight

A reduction for deadweight reflects the fact that a proportion of an outcome might have happened without any intervention. For example, it is estimated that approximately one in five people in Scotland will face a mental health problem and require help during their lifetime.¹¹ Of the total number unemployed, around a quarter are considered to be long term unemployed.¹²

The assumptions about deadweight are contained in Appendix 1.5.

6.2.2 Attribution

Attribution takes account of external factors, including the contribution of others that may have played a part in the changes that are identified. For instance, it is likely that other factors, such as participation in support groups or medication may have contributed to the cost savings reported as a result of the improved health of parents/carers.

The assumptions about attribution are contained in Appendix 1.5.

6.2.3 Displacement

Displacement applies when one outcome is achieved but at the expense of another outcome, or another stakeholder is adversely affected. In the analysis this is not considered to have occurred.

6.3 Calculation of social return

Appendix 1.6 details the values for each outcome that a stakeholder experiences and takes into account deductions to avoid over-claiming. These individual values have been added together then compared with the investment in the service provided at section 4.1 above.

The results show a social return on investment of around £9.50 for every £1 invested based on the assumptions set out above.

6.4 Sensitivity analysis

Sensitivity Analysis

In calculating the social return on investment it has been necessary to make certain assumptions which may include the use of data which is either not subject to universal agreement or which cannot be adequately evidenced. To assess

¹¹ [11 Health and Wellbeing - The Scottish Health Survey 2023 - volume 1: main report - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-labour-market-insights-april-2025/pages/people-not-in-work/)

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-labour-market-insights-april-2025/pages/people-not-in-work/>

how much influence this has had on the final value that has been calculated a sensitivity analysis is carried out and the results recorded. By doing this the value of the benefits can be expressed within defined limits. The base level for testing is £9.58

The most significant assumptions that were made were tested in the sensitivity analysis as detailed below:

Table 7: Results of Sensitivity Analysis

Factor	Variation	Result
Attribution	Increase by 10%	£8.26
Attribution	Decrease by 10%	£10.63
Deadweight	Increase by 10%	£8.30
Deadweight	Decrease by 10%	£10.50
Quantities of families	Increase by 25%	£10.50
Quantities of families	Decrease by 25%	£8.96
Quantities of children/young people	Increase by 25%	£9.08
Quantities of children/young people	Decrease by 25%	£8.85

Varying the numbers of families and children/young people does not have a major impact on the investment ratio

Attribution considers the contribution made by others to the changes recorded- many participants claimed that the changes that had occurred had arisen almost entirely as a result of the support provided, and as a result attribution has been set at fairly low levels. The exception is in relation to the outcomes associated with health and wellbeing as it is likely that such improvements will result from multiple factors.

As many stakeholders reported that the outcomes identified would not have happened if the activity had not taken place, it is suggested that levels of deadweight are low. Varying the levels of deadweight does not impact greatly on the result.

For the reasons outlined above there can be a degree of confidence that between £8 and £10 of social and economic benefits are likely to be created for every £1 that is invested.

6.5 Materiality considerations

6.5 Materiality Considerations

At every stage of the SROI process judgements have to be made about how to interpret and convey information. Sometimes the rationale behind the decision is obvious and fully evidenced, on other occasions additional explanation or information may be required. SROI demands total clarity and complete transparency about the approach that is taken so that there is no possibility of confusion or misinterpretation. Applying a concept of materiality means that explanations must be offered for information that can be interpreted in different ways and which can exert influence on the decisions others might take.

The concept can be of particular importance in ensuring that outcomes for stakeholders are relevant, are not perceived as being duplicated and that the different values individual stakeholders may ascribe to the changes they experience are understood.

In assessing issues that are material SROI requires that various factors are taken into account. Stakeholder view is of paramount importance and from the outset, and throughout the preparation of this analysis stakeholders were invited to comment on the interpretation of data and the inclusion of information. Engagement took various forms including e mail requests for comment, telephone interviews and one to one meetings.

Financial proxies for children and young people

It was not possible to interview children and young people, as many live with neurodiversity it was considered that such engagement might be stressful. As a result, proxies were used and parents and support staff were asked to identify potential outcomes children and young people might experience. Only those outcomes around which there was a degree of consistency were valued, This is likely to have resulted in an underestimation of the outcomes experienced by children/young people.

It is acknowledged that the sample size of the proxies used for scaling up the findings is small but there can be confidence that the group are representative of children and young people, and there is evidence of this in the consistency of the responses that were received. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that this is a weakness and it has been tested in the sensitivity analysis.

Unexpected outcomes.

In the course of the analysis, some outcomes were identified which were not included in the final impact map. Potential outcomes were identified through

discussion with key stakeholders. This is a forecast SROI and more detailed engagement with a larger sample of stakeholders from representative groups may have resulted in additional outcomes.

The potential outcomes identified formed the basis of structured questionnaires and were used to quantify the benefits. This was possible given the relatively small size of the total cohorts of parents/carers and families.

The questionnaires included open ended questions and it was through the answers given to these that it was possible to identify unanticipated outcomes. As there is some uncertainty about the number (or quantity) of the stakeholder cohort who are likely to experience these outcomes they have not been valued and included in the calculation.

7. Conclusion and recommendations

The purpose of this analysis was to consider the benefits of Midlothian Together for Positive Change and by monetising them to calculate the social return on investment. The service provides intensive family support by applying a targeted approach focussing on high risk families with at least one child under 16 who are known to have a recurring need for support and face multiple barriers to moving out of poverty.

The outcomes identified, measured and valued have been as a result of stakeholder engagement, and represent the benefits they will actually experience. The analysis provides compelling evidence of the multiple benefits this approach delivers for parents/carers, children and young people, and service delivery. Using an accessible, person centred model for service delivery supported by a collaborative public and third sector partnership has resulted in significant impacts.

For an investment of £85,004 benefits of over three quarters of a million pounds are delivered.

However investment is not justified solely on the 'best value' or the economic advantages that it delivers in the short term. The nature of the outcomes experienced by families will result in earlier intervention and reduced inequalities which research shows in the long term reduces health costs and lowers demand for welfare benefits.¹³

This approach provides a practical and cost effective way of addressing social, economic and health inequalities.

¹³ http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/278073/Case-Investing-Public-Health.pdf

Recommendations

The benefits of providing intensive family support, particularly to families with one or more neurodiverse children, resulted in parents and individuals reporting significant improvements in family relationships, as well as enabling parents and other family members to have the opportunity to progress on to group work and early-stage engagement with employability services.

Recommendation – To sustain and build on this approach across Midlothian, enhancing the support to families and enabling them to engage with partner organisations where appropriate.

By developing an approach which addressed gaps in existing service provision in Midlothian and tailoring services to the unique needs of each family member, communication techniques, parenting skills, trust and routines were improved leading to better family relationships. Importantly, for all the families interviewed, a better understanding of their child/children's neurodiversity enabled all members of the family to understand better how information may be processed differently, how to tailor support and how to react to and communicate differently in a non-judgemental and supportive way.

The learning from this approach should be shared across Midlothian both in terms of, effectively targeting families and providing them with appropriate support, and, developing public and third sector partnerships in which they work together collaboratively focussing on their areas of expertise.

Appendix 1: Audit trail and value map information

1.1 Stakeholders identified who were included or excluded

A meeting was held with the delivery organisation to identify, and consider potential stakeholders and outcomes.

Table 8: Included and Excluded Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Included/excluded	Rationale
Families	Included	Key stakeholders and likely to experience significant outcomes.
Children/young people	Included	Key stakeholders and likely to experience significant outcomes.
Schools – primary and secondary	Excluded	Unlikely to experience outcomes directly but will contribute to outcomes achieved by children/young people
Council – Social Work	Excluded	Unlikely to experience outcomes directly

Stakeholder	Included/excluded	Rationale
Council – Housing	Excluded	Unlikely to experience outcomes directly
Whole Family Wellbeing Team	Included	Key stakeholders and likely to experience partnership outcomes
Parental Employability Support Team (PEST)	Included	Key stakeholders and likely to experience partnership outcomes
Employability For Young People (Under NOLB)	Included	Key stakeholders and likely to experience partnership outcomes
Team Around the Child (TAC) – collaborative framework	Included	Unlikely to experience outcomes directly but will contribute to outcomes achieved by families
Mental health services - CAMHS	Included	Key stakeholders and likely to experience partnership outcomes
Third sector	Excluded	Unlikely to experience outcomes directly
CABx	Excluded	Unlikely to experience outcomes directly
Barnardo's	Included	Key stakeholders and likely to experience significant outcomes.

1.2 Engagement methods for 'included' stakeholders

Table 9: Engagement methods for 'included' stakeholders

Stakeholder	Method	Number	Medium
Parents/Carers	Telephone	5	One to one interviews
Families	Telephone	2	One to one interviews
Children & young people	Telephone	7 Proxy interviews	One to one interviews
Partner organisations	Telephone	5	One to one interviews
Delivery organisations	Face to Face	1	One to one interviews
Staff supporting the service	Face to Face	1	One to one interviews

1.3 Outcomes identified but not measured

This is a forecast analysis and engagement with all the subgroups in each stakeholder group was limited. Given the extent of change reported by families in relation to improved relationships, it is likely that there will be additional outcomes for families. The reasons that it has not been possible to measure and value all outcomes have already been explained in s6.5 on materiality.

No negative outcomes were identified in the analysis- a negative outcome is one which has an adverse effect on stakeholders

1.4 Financial Proxies

All outcomes included had a financial proxy assigned to them.

Table 10: Financial proxies

Stakeholder	Outcome	Financial Proxy	Value £	Source
Parents	Feel valued and supported	Self awareness course	£96.00	https://www.wea.org.uk/courses
	Increased ability to cope with daily life	Session with an average cost per advocacy intervention of £912	£912.00	P86 Unit costs social care
	Improved health and wellbeing	WELLBY	£15,000.00	HM Treasury. (2021). Wellbeing guidance for appraisal: Supplementary Green Book guidance
	Increased employment opportunities as a result of new skills or qualifications	Data provided to Capital City Partnership	£24,784.50	Minimum wage rates for 2026 - GOV.UK
Families	Improved family relationships	1 month of Local Authority Foster Care	££6,828.00	gmca-unit-cost-database-v3-0-final.xlsx
Children/ Young People	Increased chances of attainment through re-engagement in education	Future earnings differential expected to be realised by someone who completes o grades compared to having no qualifications	£1,539.80	Income returns to education - Social Mobility Commission State of the Nation - GOV.UK

Stakeholder	Outcome	Financial Proxy	Value £	Source
Partner Organisations	Able to use time and resources more effectively by focussing on areas of expertise	10% of cost of average staff member	£3,400.00	Staff records
Delivery Organisations	Increased the profile of the organisation and recognition of its expertise in family support	Cost of advertising campaign	£5,000.00	https://radioadvertising.co.uk/radio-advertising-costs/
	Increased opportunities to secure funding		£228,000.00	
Staff supporting the service	Increased opportunities to share learning and skills	Spend on training	£1,630.00	Employers spending a fifth less on employee training than a decade ago New Economics Foundation

1.5 Deductions to avoid over-claiming

Table 12: Deductions to avoid over-claiming

Stakeholder	Outcome	Deadweight %	Displacement %	Attribution %
Parents	Feel valued and supported	21%	0%	25%
	Increased ability to cope with daily life	25%	0%	25%
	Improved health and wellbeing	25%	0%	25%
	Increased employment opportunities as a result of new skills or qualifications	25%	0%	25%
Families	Improved family relationships	25%	0%	0%
Children/ Young People	Increased chances of attainment through re-engagement in education	25%	0%	0%
Partner organisation	Able to use time and resources more effectively by focussing on areas of expertise	10%	0%	25%
Delivery organisations	Increased the profile of the organisation and recognition of its expertise in family support	10%	0%	25%
	Increased opportunities to secure funding	0%	0%	25%
Staff supporting the service	Increased opportunities to share learning and skills	10%	0%	25%

1.6 Calculation

The table below summarises the factors that have been considered in calculating the total impact.

Table 13: Calculation

Stakeholder	Outcome	Quantity	Value				Drop Off	Impact
Parents	Feeling valued and supported	45	£96.00	21%	0%	25%	25%	£2,560
	Increased ability to cope with daily life	40	£912.00	25%	0%	25%	25%	£20,520
	Improved health and well-being	40	£15,000.00	25%	0%	50%	25%	£225,000
	Increased employment opportunities as a result of new skills and qualifications	8	£24,784.50	25%	0%	10%	25%	£133,836
Families	Improved family relationships	15	£6,828.00	25%	0%	25%	0%	£57,611
Children/ Young People	Increased chances of attainment through re-engagement in education	15	£1,539.80	25%	0%	25%	0%	£12,992
Partner organisations	Able to use time and resources more effectively by focussing on areas of expertise	5	£3,400.00	10%	0%	10%	25%	£13,770
Delivery organisations	Increased the profile of the organisation and recognition of its expertise in family support	1	£5,000.00	10%	0%	10%	25%	£4,050
	Increased opportunities to secure funding	1	£228,000.00	0%	0%	0%	25%	£228,000
Staff supporting the service	Increased opportunities to share learning and skills	3	£1,650.00	10%	0%	10%	25%	£1,337

The SROI calculation is expressed as a ratio of return from investment. It is derived from dividing the monetised value of the sum of all the benefits by the total cost of the investment.

In this report the total present value is £ 814,309 the total investment figure in the same period to generate this value is £84,000.

The SROI ratio is calculated by dividing the present value by the investment.

The social return from investing in the Midlothian Together for Positive Change was found to be in the region of £9-50 for every £1 invested.

Appendix 2: The Principles of SROI

Table 14: Principles of SROI

Principle	Description
Involve stakeholders	Inform what gets measured and how this is measured and valued by involving stakeholders
Understand what changes	Articulate how change is created and evaluate this through evidence gathered, recognising positive and negative changes as well as those that are intended or unintended
Value the things that matter	Use financial proxies in order that the value of the outcomes can be recognised. Many outcomes are not traded in markets and as a result their value is not recognised
Only include what is material	Determine what information and evidence must be included in the accounts to give a true and fair picture, such that stakeholders can draw reasonable conclusions about impact
Do not over-claim	Only claim the value that organisations are responsible for creating
Be transparent	Demonstrate the basis on which the analysis may be considered accurate and honest, and show that it will be reported to and discussed with stakeholders
Verify the result	Ensure independent appropriate assurance

The SROI Network has published a comprehensive guide to SROI. This can be downloaded at www.sroinetwork.org.uk



West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
Livingston
EH54 6FF

T: 01506 282012 |
E: info@improvementservice.org.uk
W: www.improvementservice.org.uk

