

# Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) Year 1 Process Evaluation Final Report



**CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

# **Acknowledgements**

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2021-22 committed to investing £500 million in Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) over the course of the parliament (2022-2026). The aim was to transform the way family support is delivered so families can get access to the help they need, where and when they need it.

The WFWF is split into three elements. This evaluation focused on understanding the implementation of Element 1 and Element 2, in the first year of WFWF (2022-2023):

- **Element 1:** Funding provided to Children's Services Planning Partnerships (CSPPs) to support the scale up and delivery of holistic whole family support. This support was to address the needs of children and adults in a family at the time of need, rather than at crisis point (see Annex 3 for a full glossary of terms relevant to the WFWF).<sup>1</sup>
- **Element 2:** Support to build local capacity for transformational system change in how families are supported. This included collaborative partnerships between a Scottish Government-led transformation team and three CSPPs. It also incorporated a Learning into Action Network to facilitate collaboration, sharing of learning and approaches, discussions on key implementation issues and peer support.

The evaluation aimed to:

1. Provide an overview of the types of activity the Element 1 and 2 funding was used for.
2. Understand local delivery partners' views on how Element 1 and 2 funding was used.
3. Understand children, young people, and families' experiences of the family support services that have received Element 1 and 2 funding, and the extent to which this funding achieved short-term outcomes (within Year 1).
4. Provide evidence of policy and practice relating to the implementation and delivery of the WFWF which would inform future development of the funding and support local level whole system transformational change for family support. This approach to change aimed to enable organisations to deliver a vision for the future of family support by making changes to culture, structure and practice.

The evaluation framework captures all research questions associated with each evaluation aim and is presented in Annex 1. The evaluation aims were met through a mixed-method approach conducted between November 2022 and August 2023. The research included qualitative case studies with six CSPPs, and secondary data

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<sup>1</sup> The annexes are published separately as part of the supporting documents for this report.

analysis of initial plans for WFWF (which set out how CSPPs intended to spend their WFWF allocation for 2022-23) and Children's Service Plan (CSP) annual reports capturing WFWF progress. Both the initial plans and information on WFWF included within CSP annual reports were written by CSPPs using templates and guidance provided by Scottish Government.

## Key findings

The key findings presented below incorporate the results from across all data sources to meet the research aims.

### **Scottish Government approach to funding, allocation, distribution, and support**

The Scottish Government's primary role as the funder was to set the aims and objectives of the funding, outline the criteria, and put in place processes and guidance to support CSPPs to begin designing their WFWF activities.

The overall vision of Scottish Government was shared by CSPPs and reflected in the aims and objectives described in CSPPs' WFWF plans, underpinned by Children's Services Planning duties<sup>2</sup>. CSPPs perceived the funding as an opportunity for innovation in developing ways to support whole families. Key factors of the funding's approach that CSPPs valued included:

- Spending criteria which provided the autonomy for CSPPs to tailor activities to the needs of their local area.
- Scope of the criteria to include activities focused on scaling up, building capacity, or developing new support, to achieve systems change.
- Flexibility of funding to enable alignment with broader CSPP priorities and funding streams.

During the process of allocating funding (described in full in Section 3), Scottish Government provided CSPPs with an initial plan template to complete to outline their activities, monitoring, and expected outcomes. Most case study CSPPs found the initial plan easy and straightforward to complete. Case study CSPPs developed their plans collaboratively, including with third sector CSPP partners (in all but one case study CSPP). Involvement of third sector partners in the design stage was important as early collaborative discussions made their involvement in delivery possible.

The Scottish Government allocated named WFWF leads to provide support to CSPPs throughout the funding period. The WFWF leads worked in the Scottish Government policy team. They were a dedicated point of contact for CSPPs if they had any questions about the WFWF or wanted to seek advice (e.g. on their monitoring and evaluation plans). Where ongoing support for Element 1 from Scottish Government had been accessed, this was perceived as helpful. CSPPs were positive about the responsiveness of the WFWF Scottish Government leads.

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<sup>2</sup> [Children's services planning: guidance - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2022/04/Childrens_services_planning_guidance_-_gov.scot.pdf)

Some strategic leads and local WFWF leads said they would have liked information about WFWF from the Scottish Government earlier, including a Year 1 funding timeline. They also said they would have benefited from greater clarity on spending criteria, allocation of funding, and funding milestones at an earlier stage (see Section 3). Although the Scottish Government provided this information in July 2022, it was viewed as coming too late, and all the information was not received at the same time.

To further aid their delivery of WFWF activity, CSPPs requested more opportunities to understand the WFWF activity of other CSPPs, and additional support from Scottish Government with data collection for monitoring and legacy planning beyond 2026.

### **Experiences of designing and planning priorities and activity**

In the case studies, plans for WFWF activity were generally led by senior CSPPs leaders. Leaders tended to come from children's services, but representatives from across CSPP partners were also involved in developing plans, including senior leaders such as heads of children's and justice services.

CSPPs generally planned to focus on improving or expanding their provision of early intervention and prevention support, within the context of their provision of holistic whole family support. However, some CSPPs focussed their WFWF activity on responsive support based on analysis of local needs.

Some activities were tailored towards specific groups including the six priority groups<sup>3</sup> in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (Scottish Government, 2022b), children at the edge of or in care, parents with substance misuse, and families with children with neurodiversity needs. Most case study CSPPs did not specify any target beneficiaries for their WFWF activity. This was because they intended their WFWF activity to provide accessible support that was more adaptable to the changing needs of the community based on individual assessment.

The extent to which CSPPs included views of children, young people and families in their design of WFWF activity varied. There was some evidence that CSPPs had consulted with children, young people, and families when developing their initial plans, but ongoing consultation on service design was rare. CSPPs recognised that gaining continuous feedback from children, young people and families was important, and shared a sense of duty about their role in seeking out these views in order to make improvements. Common challenges described by CSPP staff included:

- Encouraging families to engage, especially where they had limited time or capacity due to the complexity of their family circumstances.

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<sup>3</sup> Lone-parent families, households where someone is disabled, families with three or more children, minority ethnic families, families with a child under one year old, families where the mother is under 25 years old.

- Difficulties pitching engagement activities at the right level due to the variety of lived experiences and specific support needs of children, young people and families.

All case study CSPPs reported involving CSPP partners to some extent, including those from the third sector, health, and education, in planning and delivery of WFWF activity. CSPPs consulted third sector partners through steering groups, multi-partner workshops and panel consultations. However, third sector partners indicated that more was needed to include their perspectives in WFWF activity, as they believed that engagement with them and their organisations was somewhat ‘selective’ or ‘superficial’. For example, limited or no communication had been received from CSPPs on progress or outcomes after input into the WFWF initial plans from staff in the third sector.

All case study CSPPs were using quantitative data in some form, to help make decisions about WFWF plans and priorities during the early stages of agreeing strategic approaches. CSPPs used data to understand the needs of local families, the impact of current interventions, and gaps in their current provision. However, there was limited evidence of data being used to support service design and delivery among case study CSPPs. More on monitoring and measuring performance can be found below and in Section 6.

### **Implementation and delivery of WFWF to date**

At the beginning of the evaluation, IFF established a maturity model, to help illustrate broadly how far into their family support journey CSPPs were. The model categorised CSPPs by the stage of their journey (‘early’, ‘moderate’ or ‘advanced’) and the types of activities they planned to use WFWF for, see Figure 7 in Section 5. At the end of Year 1, most CSPPs had progressed with implementing and delivering WFWF activity. The number of CSPPs at a moderate or advanced stage of delivery maturity (according to the maturity model) had increased compared with the beginning of the WFWF.

Key **enablers** of implementation identified were:

- CSPPs reported that WFWF implementation was easier where they were focussing on expanding existing successful activities. Where an activity was deemed successful pre-WFWF, the funding helped provide CSPPs with the resources needed to scale up.
- CSPPs having dedicated strategic and operational oversight of WFWF activity. CSPPs leaders’ abilities to develop and strengthen cross-partner links to enable greater collaboration was identified as particularly important.
- The Scottish Government allocating named WFWF leads to provide support to each CSPP throughout the funding period. Where CSPPs’ strategic leads and managers had accessed support from their WFWF Scottish Government lead, they reported that having dedicated support and clear lines of communication was key. This was felt to be particularly helpful if CSPPs had any questions about the WFWF or wanted to seek advice (e.g. on their monitoring and evaluation plans).

- Frontline practitioners being encouraged to look at the ‘bigger picture’ for families (i.e. seeking to support them as a family unit, rather than providing individual support for family members). For many CSPPs, this was an impact of the recent move away from siloed working, improved collaboration, and better working relationships across CSPP partners.
- The pace of WFWF implementation was faster where strong partnerships with third sector organisations already existed. This included where third sector partners’ views were already aligned with WFWF priorities, and the decisions and direction of WFWF aims were made collaboratively.

Key **factors limiting** implementation identified were:

- Some case study CSPP strategic leads reported that WFWF timescales and sustainability concerns had impacted the recruitment of staff to deliver WFWF activities. This limited the pace of WFWF implementation for some CSPPs.
- The process chosen by some CSPPs for engaging with third sector partners limited the pace of WFWF activity implementation. Reasons for this included:
  1. Strategic leads and local WFWF leads noted that third sector organisations tended to offer more fixed packages of support (than other service providers), and those packages may not have the capability to meet the continuously evolving and changing needs of families;
  2. Third sector organisations tended to work on a commissioning cycle, which meant they had less control over financial resources (in a competitive third sector space);
  3. A couple of the case study CSPPs indicated that there were some difficulties with alignment from third sector organisations. The result was that these CSPPs felt caught in a cycle of inconclusive discussions around how to proceed in a collaborative manner.

### **Monitoring WFWF delivery**

The Scottish Government advised CSPPs to set up monitoring systems to support continuous improvement, to track progress against WFWF intended outcomes and to contribute to the evaluation of WFWF.

It is a positive sign that all CSPPs had begun identifying indicators to monitor performance of WFWF activity. CSPPs with more advanced analytical capabilities had pre-existing data and already had performance groups to manage data collection and establish its use in their planning and strategy.

Data collection for monitoring delivery of WFWF activities was further along than data collection for monitoring outcomes. This likely reflects the stage of WFWF implementation. All CSPPs were undertaking development work to understand the monitoring indicators they would use to evidence the outcomes of their WFWF



activity. However, CSPPs had varying levels of confidence in using collected data for strategic decision making.

CSPPs had lower confidence in monitoring intangible outcomes like collaboration between partners, service integration, and shared accountability. They had engaged in 'thinking work', but there was no evidence of data being collected or analysed around these aspects of system change. A challenge for any system change initiative is how to evidence contribution to the initiative, and CSPPs were uncertain about how they would do this.

### **Perceptions of progress towards early outcomes**

CSPPs were not expected to achieve all outcomes identified in the programme logic model (see Annex 4) within the first year of delivery. Instead, Scottish Government expected that CSPPs would collectively demonstrate progress towards early outcomes of the logic model at the end of Year 1, with other outcomes expected to be achieved at later stages.

Progress against outcomes among CSPPs varied (from limited to some early evidence) due to differences in types of activities and WFWF activity maturity. Outcomes with early evidence of positive progress were:

- CSPPs shifting towards non-siloed and aligned family services funding that matched scale of need.
- CSPPs starting to redesign/design delivery of new whole family support services, including removing barriers for children, young people, and families to accessing support.
- CSPPs working more collaboratively and with adult services (design and delivery of whole family support, and sharing resources, data, feedback, and information).

Outcomes where evidence of progress was limited included:

- Embedding key principles for holistic whole family support in local systems and structures.
- Improving access to services in communities.
- Increasing whole family support service capacity among CSPP partners – which were scaled and where new services were integrated.
- Partners beginning to develop a holistic workforce approach.
- Meaningfully engaging with children, young people, and families, actively and regularly in service design.
- Feedback analysed by CSPPs informed Adult and Related Services planning/delivery.

## Conclusions and recommendations

There is positive evidence that across most CSPPs, delivery of WFWF activity has progressed between developing their initial plan and submitting their CSP annual report to the Scottish Government.

Some activities and outputs are still outstanding in some CSPPs. This includes CSPPs establishing or enhancing processes to gather regular feedback on services from children, young people and families. CSPPs are also not consistently undertaking local evaluations and are still working on developing their performance monitoring systems. A lack of progress in these areas will likely prevent some CSPPs from achieving the intended early outcomes by the end of Year 2.

For CSPPs to progress with WFWF implementation and ensure the foundations are in place to achieve intended WFWF outcomes, Scottish Government and CSPPs should continue to focus on:

1. Mobilising the necessary workforce across the CSPPs to deliver local WFWF plans, embedding the whole family support principles (see Annex 2), and upskilling the workforce with the analytical skills required for whole system monitoring and evidence-based decision making.
2. Collaborating and relationship building within and across CSPPs. This is particularly important regarding the development of a clear, strategic vision for approaching system change and establishing a clear understanding of how this is going to happen as a result of WFWF.
3. Establishing systems for capturing regular feedback and engaging in ongoing consultation with partners across the CSPP, as well as children, young people, and families, to inform transformative family support.
4. Gathering data and evidence to understand the progress and performance of WFWF activities and outcomes achieved, as well as developing the analytical capacity to interpret and use data within strategic decision-making.

# 1 Introduction

This is the final report from an evaluation of Elements 1 and 2 of the Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) during its first year of operation (2022-2023). See Annex 3 for a glossary of terms.

## Policy and legislative background and context

The Scottish Government wants to ensure that all children, young people and families have access to any help they need to grow, develop, and reach their full potential. 'Getting it right for every child' (GIRFEC) provides everyone in Scotland with a framework and shared understanding for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people so that they grow up loved, safe and respected. The Scottish Government's vision is for holistic whole family support to be readily available for families where and when they need it. GIRFEC underpins the Scottish Government's ambition to Keep the Promise and create a country where more children will only know care, compassion and love, rather than a 'care system' (Scottish Government, 2022a).

The GIRFEC National Practice Model sets out a holistic whole family approach to providing support for children and young people, and their families, with the principle that wellbeing is about all areas of life, including family, community and society. This includes universal provision to support development and build resilience, and specialist and intensive help to address more complex needs. Holistic whole family provision focuses on joining up preventative and early intervention support for families across a range of community and national services provided by different organisations such as local agencies, individual practitioners and third sector partners.

Children's Services Planning duties deliver Scotland's strategic partnership approach to local multi-agency planning of services and support to improve outcomes for children, young people and families living in each area. Duties and key tasks over a 3-year cycle are set out in Part 3 of the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) and supporting [statutory guidance](#). These aim to ensure a whole system approach is in place across public and third sector partners to: safeguard, support and promote wellbeing; shift resources to early intervention, and where possible, prevention; and to make best use of local assets, workforce and budgets across partners, with support to families at the core of this.

In 2020, a review of Scotland's 'care system' for children and young people was completed by the Independent Care Review. A central part of the review involved listening to the views of care experienced children and young people, and their families, in order to put together evidence to underpin the legislation, practices, culture and ethos of the care system, as well as to explore how Scotland could improve the support available.

The review's findings indicated that a significant upscale of family support was required. As a result, Scotland's then First Minister pledged that Scotland would 'Keep the Promise' (The Care Review, 2020a). The Promise outlined key outcomes

that aimed to ensure that Scotland's children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected. The commitment to the Promise was set out alongside the 2021-2024 Plan (The Care Review, 2020b), which outlined how change must happen, and made whole family support a priority. Part of the response to the Plan, set out in the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2021-2022, included the WFWF (Scottish Government, 2021a).

WFWF supports Scottish Government's commitment to respect, protect and fulfil children's human rights across Scotland. By providing holistic rights-based support that delivers the help children and their families need, when they need it, WFWF aims to support families to flourish and reduce the chances of family breakdown and children entering the care system.

The ambitions of The Promise and the WFWF are situated within the context of ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly impacted the health, education, and income of families, and worsened systemic inequalities. Among other aims, the 2021 Covid Recovery Strategy (Scottish Government, 2021b) set out the vision for Scotland to improve the wellbeing of children and young people through development and delivery of activities to increase holistic whole family support, also drawing on findings from the analysis and review of Children's Services Plans<sup>4</sup>. These included: changes to commissioning and procurement of family support, supporting Children's Services Planning Partnerships (CSPPs<sup>5</sup>) to scale up and develop new family support, and establishing consistent standards and evaluation tools.

## About Whole Family Wellbeing Funding

The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2021-22 committed to invest £500 million in Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) over the course of the parliament (2022-2026). The aim was to transform the way family support was delivered, so that families could access the help they needed, where and when they needed it.

This aim was part of a wider goal to reduce the need for crisis intervention in families, and to shift investment towards prevention and early intervention.<sup>6</sup> The funding had an emphasis on support for child mental health, poverty, alcohol and drug misuse and educational attainment.

The aim of WFWF was to facilitate the delivery of holistic family support with the expectation this would improve and reduce inequalities in family wellbeing, reduce

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<sup>4</sup> [Improving outcomes for children, young people and families: review of Children's Services Plans and strategic engagement activity - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/improving-outcomes-for-children-young-people-and-families/review-of-childrens-services-plans-and-strategic-engagement-activity/pages/12.aspx)

<sup>5</sup> Children's Services Planning Partnerships lead strategic planning in local areas with a multi-agency strategic governance group of senior leaders from the local authority and health board working with other organisations responsible for planning the delivery of services and support to improve outcomes for children, young people and families living in that area. Partnerships include community-based, adult and children's services (but are not limited to) Integration Joint Boards, SCRA, Police, Social Work, the Third Sector, Housing, Health, and Education.

<sup>6</sup> This is support that addresses the needs of children and adults in a family both before they need it (so to prevent any issues from developing) and at the time of need rather than at crisis point (this is known as early intervention).

requirements for family crisis intervention, and reduce the number of children and young people living away from their families. It is anticipated that WFWF will help to address the challenges of child poverty, by ensuring that families can access the help they need for as long as they need it. There was recognition here that support for broader family wellbeing was an important driver in helping families in poverty or at risk of poverty.

The longer-term ambition of the WFWF was that holistic whole family support would be available to every family who needed it. However, the immediate focus was on supporting those families judged by the CSPP to be most in need. For example, the six priority family types identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (Scottish Government, 2022b) and to support the children, young people, and families who were known to be at risk of being taken into care.

The six priority family types included: lone parent families, the large majority of which are headed by women; families which included a disabled adult or child; larger families; minority ethnic families; families with a child under one year old; and families where the mother was under 25 years of age.

The WFWF was split into three elements, with this Year 1 evaluation focusing on Element 1 and 2:

- **Element 1:** Funding provided to CSPPs to support the scale up and delivery of holistic whole family support in local areas. This funding could also be used to build local capacity for achieving transformational change in how families are supported. For example, this could include recruiting a small team to support the CSPP plan for this funding or buying in additional transformational expertise to support leadership discussions.
- **Element 2<sup>7</sup>:** Support to build local capacity for transformational system change in how families are supported. This included:
  - a) collaborative partnerships between a Scottish Government-led transformation team and three CSPPs (East Ayrshire, Glasgow City and East Lothian) to drive whole system change in family support at the local and national level. The partnerships worked through a structured process to accelerate practical learning about the national and local systemic change required to deliver holistic family support.
  - b) a Learning into Action Network to facilitate collaboration, sharing of learning and approaches, discussions on key implementation issues and peer support. The Learning into Action Network is co-designed and co-delivered with stakeholders to enable collaboration, facilitate peer support, share learning and approaches from across the country, and support solution-focused discussions around the barriers to whole system change. CSPPs have utilised this network to develop their initial plans (the documentation CSPPs provided setting out how they intended to spend their WFWF allocation for 2022-23 including information on CSPPs' existing approach to holistic whole family

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<sup>7</sup> Element 2 also supports the wider evaluation and research work for WFWF.

support, planned activity for WFWF, anticipated outcomes for the first year, and intended monitoring activities) and delivery of WFWF activities.

- **Element 3:** Providing funding to support a cross-portfolio approach to system change through new, Scottish Government-led national policy projects that will help transform how families are supported. The projects will contribute to the ambitions and outcomes of WFWF, in line with the National Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support (Scottish Government, 2022c). Annex 2 contains the full list of National Principles.

Year 1 of the WFWF also focussed on the exploration and understanding of children's services as a 'complex system'. This recognises that the system is made up of diverse, interacting actors, and parts that learn from one another, and one which can have outcomes that are challenging to assess. As such, it is vital that holistic family support and, in turn, this evaluation, are alert and responsive to the dynamic nature of the policy and practice context.

## **Whole Family Wellbeing Funding logic model**

A logic model was developed by Scottish Government, in consultation with stakeholders, to underpin the planning and delivery of funding and the evaluation. IFF reviewed and recommended refinements to strengthen its use for informing the evaluation, and future evaluations. The full model, including how elements relate to the core components of holistic whole family support (set out by Scottish Government), is presented in Annex 4.

A logic model is a visual representation of how the funding is intended to impact its beneficiaries (CSPPs and children, young people, and families). The logic model captures the ultimate impacts WFWF intends to have on beneficiaries, including the sequence of events expected to lead to short-term outcomes that together, if achieved, are expected to lead to the impacts. It summarises the rationale for providing the funding and shows some of the mechanisms by which change might come about.

The logic model is divided into sections (assumptions, inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes) and broadly describes what kinds of changes are expected. The logic model acknowledges, in the underlying assumptions, that each of the CSPPs will have different priorities for the funding and will be at a different stage in their planning and delivery journeys. Likewise, activities, outputs, and early outcomes and progress towards these by the end of Year 1 will differ between CSPPs. A brief description of the activities, outputs and outcomes of the model within scope of the 2022-23 evaluation are reported below.

### **Activities**

Activities at the local level include activities planned under Elements 1, 2 and 3 delivered through CSPPs and partners (this evaluation focused on Element 1 and 2 only). Some activities proposed in the logic model are expected of all CSPPs, and

some are related to CSPPs with specific aims for their activity (exploratory, transforming, or scaling).

Activities relevant to all CSPPs are to:

- Engage with a wide range of children, young people, and families on service design;
- Identify support for needs assessment, system analysis and change planning;
- Plan for and procure support/recruiting staff to scale up and/or deliver plans; and.
- Deliver training and upskilling of new or existing workforce.

Other activities related to particular CSPPs in terms of the type of support they are aiming to undertake as part of the WFWF, related to the maturity matrix in Section 5:

- Exploratory: plan for and identify pilot programmes and complete local assessment of needs and develop plans for system change.
- Transforming: identify and plan for family support with an early intervention and preventative focus and identify and plan for improving access to support for children, young people and families.
- Scaling: begin to scale up local transformative and effective approaches to service delivery.

Activities also included those supported by Scottish Government at a national level including Element 2 and 3 activities, and contributions to support this evaluation.

## **Outputs**

The outputs specified in the model include:

- CSPPs planning for and developing mechanisms to enhance participation of children, young people, and families in service design.
- Beginning to test new system approaches to family support.
- Establishing processes to gather regular volunteered feedback on services from children, young people, and families.
- Expanding the use of locally based multi-agency services co-ordinating support.
- Identifying what good practice is and it being used by other CSPPs and partners.
- Reporting mechanisms becoming more streamlined, accessible and less bureaucratic.

## Outcomes

The logic model proposed 11 outcomes for the WFWF where some evidence of early progress may be available by the end of Year 1. These outcomes can be broadly split into four categories based on the core components of holistic family support, though there is some overlap between them. The core components and associated outcomes are:

- Children and families at the centre of design – A children’s rights-based approach to improved Family Wellbeing, with services designed with children, young people and their families’ needs at the centre, supporting all families to flourish and thrive. Outcomes include:
  - Meaningful and ongoing participation by children, young people and families in service design, which ensures choice and control.
  - CSPPs begin embedding the key principles for holistic whole family support within their own systems and structures.
- Availability and access – All families know how to, and are able to access multi-sectoral, holistic, whole family support. Outcomes include:
  - CSPPs start to redesign/design delivery of new whole family support services, including removing barriers for children, young people and families accessing support.
  - Improved points of access to services in communities.
- Whole system approach – A collaborative, multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach to the funding, commissioning and delivery of family support. Outcomes include:
  - Feedback on children’s services informing planning and delivery of adult and related services.
  - Non-siloed, aligned, and proportionate family support funding that matches scale of need.
  - Local investment in planning of system change.
  - More collaborative work across CSPPs partners and with adult services.
- Leadership, workforce, and culture – Cross-sectoral commitment to collaboration and innovation which empowers and supports the workforce to provide holistic whole family support. Outcomes include:
  - Increased whole family support service capacity, and scaled and new services are integrated.
  - Empowerment for innovation.
  - Development of holistic workforce approach.

Proposed longer term outcomes are included in the full logic model which covers the whole period of the WFWF implementation, however these were beyond the scope of this evaluation.



## 2 Evaluation approach and reporting

### Aims and approach

In September 2022, the Scottish Government commissioned IFF Research to undertake a process evaluation of the implementation of Year 1, of Elements 1 and 2 of the WFWF. A process evaluation explores how an initiative (in this case the WFWF) was designed and delivered. It typically explores questions such as: was the initiative delivered as intended, what worked well or less well (for whom and why), what could be improved, and what can be learnt for future initiatives. The aim of the evaluation was to gather evidence from the first year of implementation to inform future Scottish Government policy and practice in the CSPPs. Parallel research of Element 2's specific approach was undertaken by Rocket Science and Blake Stevenson, and evidence from Element 3 activity will be integrated into an impact evaluation from 2024.

The overarching aims and associated research questions of this Year 1 evaluation were to:

1. Provide an overview of types of activity the Element 1 and 2 funding is being used for.
  - a. What activities, audiences and topics are CSPPs targeting (or not targeting) their funding towards?
  - b. How does funding used compare with existing provision?
2. Understand the CSPPs' views on how Element 1 and 2 funding has been used:
  - a. To what extent and how did the approach taken by the Scottish Government, in terms of allocation of funding, mechanisms of distribution and support, contribute to CSPPs' ability to scale up family support services and drive system change?
  - b. How were funding decisions taken within CSPPs?
  - c. Which audiences were consulted, and in what ways? (e.g. delivery staff, wider partners, families and young people).
  - d. Explore experiences of design, set-up, structure, practice, workforce, partnership, managing change.
  - e. How is performance monitored (by whom, when by, targets, mitigations) to demonstrate impact?

3. Understand children, young people and families' experiences of family support services that have received Element 1 and 2 funding, and the extent to which this has achieved short-term outcomes (as far as possible).
  - a. To what extent and how has the funded activity achieved intended short-term outcomes related to service delivery?
  - b. Were there any unintended outcomes for service delivery?
  - c. To what extent and how has the funded activity achieved intended short-term outcomes related to the experiences of children, young people and their families?
  - d. Were there any unintended outcomes for children, young people and their families?
4. Provide evidence for policy and practice to inform future improvement of the WFWF and whole system transformational change.
  - a. What conditions are necessary for consolidating improvements in the funded CSPPs?
  - b. What are recommendations for 2023-2026 funding and practice?

Figure 1 below summarises the evaluation approach and timescales.

Figure 1 WWF Year 1 Evaluation approach overview

**Scoping and set-up: September – November 2022**



**Wave 1: November 2022 – February 2023**



**Wave 2: April – August 2023**



**Final analysis & outputs: August – December 2023**



## **Scoping and set-up**

An initial scoping and set-up phase focused on revising the existing logic model and establishing an evaluation framework (presented in Annex 1), both of which helped to govern evaluation direction and inform research tool development. To produce these evaluation tools the evaluation team reviewed strategic documentation and CSPPs initial plans - documents outlining CSPPs' existing approach to holistic whole family support, planned activity for WFWF, anticipated outcomes for the first year and intended monitoring activities (further detail of how the plans were developed is included in Section 3 and the analysis approach is described in Annex 5).

Initial plans were received from 30 CSPPs, the contents of which were entered into an analytical framework which is a table structured by the research themes to help prepare, consolidate, and organise data ready for analysis. Funding aims, target populations, activities, partnerships, stage of development, and expected outcomes were all included in the framework. The data was analysed to understand how CSPPs intended to use their funding. The information was used by the research team to help inform the design of other evaluation activities, including how to best monitor progress over time; CSP annual report; and the case study research materials (see below).

## **Qualitative case studies**

Case studies were undertaken with six CSPPs (of 32 CSPPs) across two waves of fieldwork, between November 2022 and August 2023. Details of how case study CSPPs were selected, and their characteristics are presented in Annex 5: Case Study selection.

Wave 1 fieldwork included interviews with strategic leads and local WFWF leads (see Table 1). Strategic leads who were interviewed were typically directors/chief officers or senior managers within children, families and justice services. Local WFWF leads interviewed were typically within the social work team or service managers with some responsibility for WFWF (or an element of funded activity) in their CSPP. The interviews aimed to understand how services were intended to be delivered, to explore opportunities and challenges to delivery, and to contextualise the experiences reported by other staff and families through the Wave 2 fieldwork.

Wave 2 fieldwork included focus groups with frontline staff, interviews with children, young people and families accessing WFWF support and interviews with strategic leads. Frontline practitioner focus groups explored progress towards early outcomes, the mechanisms of change and practical lessons learned for bringing about longer-term outcomes and sustaining benefits. Interviews with children, young people, and families explored their experiences of WFWF design and delivery engagement, and WFWF support. Interviews with strategic staff explored their experiences of the funding over time and any outcomes they had seen in their CSPP to date.

**Table 1 Fieldwork targets and completed**

Wave	Audience	Fieldwork Target (Number of Participants)	Fieldwork Completed (Number of Participants)
1	Strategic leads	6	12
1	WFWF leads	6	13
2	Strategic leads	6	10
2	Frontline practitioners	24-36 (6 groups)	27 (5 groups)
2	Children, young people and families	24-36	31

Note: Fieldwork was completed with additional strategic leads and WFWF leads as it was agreed with CSPPs that multiple staff could attend the interviews to provide adequate coverage of interview topics. Fieldwork with frontline practitioners and children, young people, and families was completed with fewer participants due to one CSPP feeling they had not sufficiently progressed their delivery to take part.

Analysis of the case study data was a continuous process (during and after fieldwork periods, and between phases) and iterative, moving between the data, research objectives and emerging themes. Data from case study interviews was entered into an analysis framework structured by key research questions and themes. The findings were systematically summarised by the research team and then triangulated through analysis sessions where key findings were discussed, and emerging themes and insights were tested.

### **Secondary data analysis**

The Scottish Government developed a template for CSPPs to provide updates on their WFWF plans. The completed template was intended for CSPPs to include as part of their annual CSP reports for 2022-23. The template aimed to gather information about CSPPs' WFWF activities to date, evidence of progress towards outcomes, funding spent, and the key challenges and successes they had experienced in delivering their WFWF activity. Annual WFWF progress templates were returned by 21 of 30 CSPPs, within the timeframes for analysis. The information provided in the reports was synthesised into a framework and analysed using thematic analysis to draw out key themes aligned to each of the relevant research questions.

## Evaluation considerations

The WFWF and evaluation were undertaken within an ever-changing landscape. The ongoing post-pandemic recovery, and the cost-of-living crisis impacted family needs and services during the period of the evaluation. Also, in March 2023, Scotland had a change in First Minister and Cabinet responsibilities, which may have influenced policy decisions.

CSPPs were all at different stages of planning and delivering WFWF activities during the period of this evaluation. This meant their level of engagement with some audiences (especially with children, young people, and families) varied. In some CSPPs, frontline practitioners did not feel able to comment or provide observations on the WFWF, because activities were only in early stages. Moreover, children, young people and families' engagement in design was low in some areas, so it was not possible to include their contributions in the evaluation. Data collection was adapted, by mutual agreement, to align with the stage of delivery more closely in one case study area, as activities with frontline practitioners and children and families had not yet begun.

Secondary analysis was limited by the availability and quality of data provided by CSPPs in their initial plans, and CSP annual report templates. Initial plans were provided by 30 CSPPs, and CSP annual reports were returned by 21 CSPPs by the deadline or inclusion in evaluation analysis. The relatively low return rate for CSP annual reports meant that data, especially relating to progress towards early outcomes, was incomplete. Therefore, readers should not generalise conclusions across CSPPs. The quality and completeness of information provided in the CSP annual reports varied, and this limited the scope of analysis. The variation in the information provided included gaps in responses or missing data (e.g. proportion of funding spent); limited detail or explanation (e.g. activities delivered, consultation groups convened); limited or unclear evidence of progress towards outcomes (e.g. presented outcomes they expect to achieve instead of progress towards those); and limited information on lessons learned and future plans for implementation and impact.

Qualitative case study evidence is not intended to imply prevalence but rather to illustrate the range of experiences implementing WFWF and provide depth of understanding. It should be noted that findings from this process evaluation may not be generalisable beyond the particular case study areas explored in this research. In particular, the evidence from case study CSPPs indicated that partnerships with third sector organisations were relatively limited, and in some cases attempts at collaboration had had negative results on relationships. These views typically came from strategic leads and local WFWF leads, and the evaluation did not hear from all third sector partners involved. It is important to highlight that there are good examples of collaboration with the third sector within the wider CSPP landscape, for example case studies from Supporting the Third Sector highlight good practice of collaboration with CSPP partners (third sector being a CSPP partner; Children in Scotland, 2023).

This report is intended to provide readers with a sense of the overall journey of CSPPs in their first year of implementing WFWF. The findings presented here are

not exhaustive. Further, time-bound findings and lessons learned were captured in local evaluations and reports, and in knowledge exchange activities facilitated by the Scottish Government.

## **Structure of this report**

This report presents the findings of the Year 1 process evaluation structured around the primary research questions:

- Section 3 presents the initial views of CSPPs on the WFWF funding, their process for developing their initial plans, and their perceptions of the ongoing support they have received from Scottish Government.
- Section 4 reports the priorities outlined by CSPPs, and the approaches taken to developing those priorities such as reflection, consultation, data analysis and involvement of local partners.
- Section 5 includes analysis of the delivery of WFWF to date, such as progress and nature of activities to transform support, and the enablers and barriers experienced.
- Section 6 presents CSPPs plans for monitoring performance of the WFWF, and various challenges identified in meeting reporting requirements.
- Section 7 outlines the evidence demonstrating progress towards early desired outcomes.
- Section 8 provides conclusions from the first-year evaluation and recommendations developed by IFF for Scottish Government and for CSPPs.

### 3 Scottish Government approach to funding, allocation, distribution and support

This section explores the Scottish Government's role in supporting in the administration and delivery of the WFWF. It draws on data from initial plans, WFWF progress templates for Annual Reports 2022-23, and qualitative interviews with strategic leads and local WFWF leads held in November and December 2022 and June to August 2023.

#### Key findings

- All interviewed strategic leads and local WFWF leads shared the Scottish Government's vision for WFWF. They valued the innovative opportunity presented to develop their holistic whole family support, the autonomy they had to tailor spending to local needs, and the flexibility of the funding to scale up existing support or create new offers.
- Although case study strategic leads and local WFWF leads agreed that Scottish Government provided the required information on Year 1 of the funding, they would have liked more information on spending criteria, allocation of funding and funding milestones communicated in one document and earlier in the process.
- Most case study CSPPs found the initial plan template (see below for details) easy and straightforward to complete. Case study CSPPs reported that they developed the plan collaboratively, including with third sector partners (in all but one case study CSPP).
- Where strategic leads and local WFWF leads had accessed support from their Scottish Government WFWF lead contact, this was seen as positive and useful. Suggestions for improving support included facilitating more opportunities for CSPPs to share good practice; provide more support with data planning, collection and analysis to evidence WFWF performance; and provide direction or advice about sustainability of WFWF.

The Scottish Government's role as the funder was initially focussed on setting the aims and objectives of the funding, outlining the funding criteria, and putting in place processes and guidance to support CSPPs to begin designing their WFWF activities. The Scottish Government provided CSPPs with a template for detailing their initial WFWF plans (see Annex 6). The initial plan template captured information on the CSPPs' existing approach to holistic whole family support, planned activity for WFWF, anticipated outcomes for the first year, and intended monitoring activities. These plans were the first documentation indicating how CSPPs intended to spend their WFWF allocation for 2022-23. The template also provided CSPPs with detail on the methodology by which the Scottish Government were allocating the WFWF (outlined below), the aims of the funding, and the criteria for spending the funding (presented in Section 4: Experiences of designing and planning priorities and activity below).

CSPPs were awarded funding based on a formula which weighted allocations based on the population of 0–17-year-olds in the area, rurality, number of children



in low-income families, and the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD; Scottish Government, 2022d). CSPP funding levels can be grouped into three categories:

- Eight CSPPs received £0.5m or less.
- 13 CSPPs received £0.5m - £1m.
- Nine CSPPs received more than £1m.

The lowest level of funding received by a CSPP was £0.132m and the highest was £4.7m. Across the six evaluation case studies, the lowest level of funding was £0.832m and the highest was £4.7m, with an average of £1.933m.<sup>8</sup>

The Scottish Government allocated named WFWF leads to provide support to CSPPs throughout the funding period. The WFWF leads worked in the Scottish Government policy team and were a dedicated point of contact for CSPPs if they had any questions about the WFWF or wanted to seek advice (e.g. on their monitoring and evaluation plans). Each CSPP was allocated a Scottish Government WFWF lead to be their direct point of contact.

## Initial views of the WFWF

### Element 1

Case study interviews revealed CSPPs had strong support for WFWF, with all interviewed strategic leads and local WFWF leads sharing the Scottish Government's vision. Strategic leads and local WFWF leads also appreciated the innovative opportunities WFWF presented for whole family support, early intervention, and prevention:

"It's a really exciting opportunity for us to be actually given this type of money specifically for this and to focus on prevention and the whole family...[to] invest and support families that we have not really been able to do in this kind of way, at a very early stage..."

Strategic Lead

Some strategic leads and local WFWF leads valued the autonomy of having dedicated funding specifically for developing whole-family support. This allowed them to tailor spending and align family support with local needs:

"The WFWF being ring-fenced meant that the full amount was for us to align additional resources and existing funding streams with the WFWF. This meant maximising investment where we had identified need and where we knew there was good practice."

Strategic Lead

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<sup>8</sup> Glasgow City (£4.7m); East Ayrshire (£0.832m); North Ayrshire (£0.959m); Aberdeen City (£1.025m); Fife (£2.289m); South Lanarkshire (£1.827m).

Interviewed strategic leads and local WFWF leads often commended the funding's broad criteria, including enabling CSPPs to scale up existing services through building local capacity, or creating new support. The funding's flexibility also facilitated alignment with local family and adult support priorities.

“The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund[ing] has allowed us to look at our services in a more co-ordinated way... so that we're not competing with each other or duplicating activity.”

Strategic Lead

The case study research indicated that CSPPs were increasingly using multiple funding sources to create a comprehensive whole family approach, combining WFWF funding with others into a unified pot for holistic support. Interviewed strategic leads and local WFWF leads viewed the WFWF as complementary to other funding streams, such as mental health and wellbeing funds and the Scottish Attainment Fund (see Figure 2).

## **Figure 2 CSPP Spotlight: South Lanarkshire**

### **Complementary funding streams reviewed and combined where appropriate by a management group.**

In South Lanarkshire, a children's services management group includes representatives from a number of funding streams: Inclusion As Prevention; The Children and Young People's Mental Health Grant; The Attainment Scotland Fund; and The Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. This group assessed commissioned services from each funding stream with the aim of ensuring the different budgets' priorities aligned with funded activities, and to minimise overlap or duplication between budgets. As a result, and with permission from funding sources, the management group combined council and the integrated joint board<sup>9</sup> funding with WFWF, to collectively fund whole family support.

### **Initial information provided about Element 1**

Some strategic leads and local WFWF leads said that they would have liked information about WFWF from the Scottish Government earlier, including a Year 1 funding timeline. They also for said they would have benefited from greater clarity on spending criteria, allocation of funding, and funding milestones at an earlier stage. Although the Scottish Government provided this information, they would have liked more information on spending criteria, allocation of funding and funding milestones communicated in one document and earlier in the process.

“We appreciated the information but having it all in one document, early on would have been great.”

Strategic Lead

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<sup>9</sup> The integrated joint board is a formal public body in South Lanarkshire that develops and leads the local strategy for health and social care.

## Element 2

Strategic leads and local WFWF leads in two case study areas, receiving both Element 1 and 2 funding, were initially uncertain about how the two elements would work together. However, they later gained clarity through the expressions of interest process, and discussions with their Scottish Government WFWF lead.

“We had Element 1 and Element 2 [funding], but how are they different, what would be the different processes...we had a lot of questions [at the start] basically.”

Strategic Lead

Strategic leads summarised that Element 1 funding provided an opportunity to consolidate and enhance the early intervention and prevention support that they provide to families. While Element 2 was an opportunity to reflect on Element 1 activity and learn from other CSPPs through the Learning into Action Network.<sup>10</sup>

CSPPs who applied for but did not receive Element 2 support said they would have liked more detailed feedback on their Element 2 application, which they thought could have aided Element 1 activities. The Scottish Government offered feedback shortly after the decision-making process but noted low engagement. CSPPs would appreciate feedback being automatically sent when their applications were unsuccessful, and efforts to be made by the Scottish Government to make CSPPs aware that they had the opportunity to request feedback.

## Developing the initial plan

The initial plan template asked for information on CSPPs' existing approach to holistic whole family support, planned activity for WFWF, anticipated outcomes for the first year of funding, and intended monitoring activities.

## Development process

Most case study CSPPs strategic leads actively led the initial plan development, collaborating with partners (e.g. colleagues working in health, education, housing, community justice etc.) through workshops and discussions. This engagement aimed to understand partner priorities and identify areas of overlapping support for families. The involvement of third sector organisations was considered vital and occurred in all but one CSPP case study area. Strategic leads found this early engagement facilitated third sector partner participation in subsequent WFWF activities.

CSPPs also used data on existing support service usage and performance to inform WFWF activity plans. Figure 3 illustrates an example of this from South Lanarkshire.

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<sup>10</sup> The WFWF Learning into Action Network is co-designed and co-delivered with stakeholders to enable collaboration, facilitate peer support, share learning and approaches from across the country, and support solution-focused discussions around the barriers to whole system change. CSPPs have utilised this network to develop their initial plans and delivery of WFWF activities.

## Figure 3 CSPP Spotlight: South Lanarkshire

### **Continuous data sharing across the CSPP allowed for evidence-based decisions when developing the initial plan.**

In South Lanarkshire, data from partners (e.g. social work, health, education and housing) was shared to allow for data analysis across services delivered by the partners.

This data included key health measures, child protection, school participation, post-school destinations, and leisure and culture participation. Strategic leads and local WFWF leads used this data to gain insights into supported families and identify overlapping services, facilitating the creation of an initial WFWF plan based on local needs.

"It [the data] was telling us...that actually the groups [being assisted] are homogenous...the child affected by addiction is from the same household that's experiencing adult addiction, or adult protection issues."

Strategic lead

### **Template usability**

The initial plan template was well received by all case study CSPPs. Those who had been involved in drafting initial plans reported it was effective in supporting them to document their plans, without placing a significant or unreasonable burden on them. The interviews indicated that this was primarily because CSPPs already had a clear vision for how they wanted to deliver holistic whole family support and were often building on existing plans rather than starting from scratch. Where pre-existing plans were in place, CSPPs identified that 'more flexibility' in the template would have been useful in allowing them to fully describe their planned activities. However, interviewees did not explicitly describe what greater flexibility would look like.

### **Timescales for developing the initial plan**

The timescales for developing the initial plans were relatively short, with CSPPs given between July and October 2022 to complete these. Case study CSPPs had varied experiences with completing the initial plan templates within the specified timescales. Some CSPPs reported that time pressures limited the degree to which they could develop their ideas and include details of these in their initial plans. For example, one CSPP said that there was limited time to discuss their plans with third sector partners before submitting the initial plan, and that they had to rush their decision-making processes (e.g. plans for analysis of data) to meet the timescales.

Other CSPPs, however, valued the need for urgency and reported the short timescales gave them the opportunity to speed up their decision-making process around where to focus their holistic whole family support.

Though the primary intended purpose of the initial plan was for CSPPs to communicate their WFWF plan to the Scottish Government, strategic leads and

local WWF leads of case study CSPPs highlighted the usefulness of the template as a tool for using within CSPP planning discussions about how to spend the WWF. In this way, the initial plan also served to support CSPPs in the development of their WWF plans.

## **Ongoing support from the Scottish Government**

Initially, some CSPPs did not access Scottish Government support from the WWF lead (their role is described at the start of the section) due to uncertainty over what support was available or perceived lack of engagement from their assigned contact.

“We have had a meeting with our identified person [...]. It is not clear what that role of that person is, or what that person's duties and responsibilities will be going forward, and how they can enhance this. It feels remote [...] I don't feel they are particularly engaged.”

Strategic Lead

However, as Year 1 of the WWF progressed, CSPPs' engagement with Scottish Government support improved, and their perception of it became more positive. Where CSPPs had accessed it from their Scottish Government WWF lead, they found the support and communication helpful for designing and implementing WWF activities. They valued direct, named links within the government, and praised the timely responses.

Initially, Element 2 CSPPs had separate contacts for Elements 1 and 2, but they suggested combining them for greater efficiency. The Scottish Government responded by providing a single point of contact for CSPPs with both Element 1 and 2 funding.

## **Suggested improvements to Scottish Government support**

Case study CSPPs outlined three ways the Scottish Government could improve their support offer:

- Facilitate more opportunities for CSPPs to understand what other CSPPs were doing in relation to delivery of holistic whole family support. This would include examples of best practice and opportunities for learning from overcoming common challenges and achieving transformational change.

- Provide support with data planning, collection, and analysis to evidence the performance of their WFWF activity. Some sought guidance on using existing data effectively, particularly in assessing whether outcomes were contributing to specific WFWF activities and demonstrating intangible outcomes, like enhanced collaboration between family support services. More details on CSPPs' approach to data collection and monitoring can be found in Section 6: Monitoring delivery.
- Provide direction or advice on the sustainability of WFWF, beyond the 2026 funding period, and in embedding whole-family support in CSPPs beyond the lifetime of the funding. The last statutory Children's Services Planning cycle<sup>11</sup> ran from 2020-23 and the next planning cycle runs from April 2023-26.

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<sup>11</sup> Scottish legislation requires CSPPs to develop and publish their Children's Services Plan every three years. The current cycle runs from 2020-2023 and the next planning cycle runs from April 2023-2026.

## 4 Experiences of designing and planning priorities and activity

This section discusses how CSPPs made funding decisions and planned their WFWF support activities to achieve their priorities.

### Key findings

- Most CSPPs reported activities in their CSP annual reports that aligned with the WFWF criteria and aims, with an emphasis on early intervention and prevention family support. Where CSPPs decided to focus WFWF on responsive support (rather than early intervention and prevention), this was because of the findings from local needs analysis.
- All case study CSPPs reported that they had consulted with children, young people, families, and carers when developing their initial plans, at least to some extent. Though ongoing consultation on service design was rare. Children, young people, and families interviewed also did not generally feel they had engaged in specific service design activities.
- Across all case study CSPPs, there was agreement from those who contributed to the evaluation that a range of partners (including the third sector) who make up the CSPP were involved in discussions about planned WFWF activities.
- In terms of CSPP third sector partners, there were mixed views across those interviewed for the evaluation about the extent to which involvement had worked well to engage staff from third sector partners. In the second wave of fieldwork, views were more positive about third sector engagement suggesting this had improved across the Year 1 implementation of WFWF.

### Criteria for design of WFWF activities

The initial plan template included guidance from Scottish Government on criteria for spending the funding, with a focus on directing resources towards early intervention and prevention activities. It specified that funding could be used for:

- Scaling up existing transformational activity, with the funding only to be used to fund the scaled element (rather than to support business as usual activity).
- Providing additional resource and capacity to support transformation in the system, in line with key national policy initiatives, for example, The Promise.
- Exploring new approaches to delivering holistic whole family support.

The target groups for WFWF activities included families with the greatest support needs. This included children, young people and families where there was a risk of

a child or young person being taken into care and the six priority groups<sup>12</sup> identified in the Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (Scottish Government, 2022b).

The Scottish Government advised CSPPs that their WFWF activity should ensure that:

- Planning and decision-making are collaborative across all CSPP partners.
- Decisions are based on an assessment of local need, including data in the CSPPs Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).<sup>13</sup>
- Decisions are taken with appropriate consultation with children, young people and families.
- WFWF is not used to replace or substitute funding for existing services but supports investment in transformational activity.
- Commissioning and procurement of services supports the outcomes sought from the Funding, by building in plans for sustainability and ensuring that the appropriate range of partners, including the third sector, are involved.

## **CSPPs' Whole Family Wellbeing Funding priorities**

### **Aims and activities**

Most CSPPs reported activities in the progress templates of their CSP annual reports (described in Section 2: Secondary data analysis), that aligned with the WFWF criteria and aims, emphasising early intervention and prevention family support. Early intervention and prevention activities aim to ensure families can access support before they reach crisis point. Examples in the CSP annual reports included CSPPs establishing new community hubs to provide support, reducing the need for formal referrals and improving access for families seeking early intervention support. Other examples included recruiting to new posts to provide preventative support for children, young people and families – for example, a trauma recovery counsellor to reduce the need for more intensive mental health support.

Where CSPPs decided to focus WFWF on responsive support (rather than early intervention and prevention), this was because of the findings from local needs analysis and on the basis of young people and families' input (discussed further in the section 'Using data to understand local needs' below).

Another reason for this was that CSPPs in the earlier stages of WFWF progress generally focussed on activities around workforce development such as building workforce capability and capacity, recruiting staff and setting up panels or focus

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<sup>12</sup> Lone-parent families, households where someone is disabled, families with three or more children, minority ethnic families, families with a child under one year old, families where the mother is under 25 years old.

<sup>13</sup> Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a process that is used to identify the current and future health and social care needs of a population. It aims to highlight needs around topics of joint strategic importance, providing recommendations for action to improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. It is a statutory duty for local authorities, CSPPs and commissioning groups under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.



groups. As such, prevention and early intervention was not discussed in their CSP annual reports.

### Targeted beneficiaries

The findings from the CSP annual reports showed that only a small number of CSPPs (three of 21 CSPPs) were undertaking activities that explicitly targeted the six priority groups identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (see Table 2). Whilst four CSPPs targeted children at the edge of care, in kinship care, who are adopted or requiring safe accommodation. Two CSPPs targeted parents with substance misuse or families with children with neurodiversity needs.

Most case study CSPPs though did not specify any target beneficiaries or did not plan to support particular groups. This was mainly because these CSPPs reported that having a specific beneficiary focus would not address, or be adaptable to, the multiple family support needs of their local community.

“We have lots of families with different and complex needs, and they are not in specific groups. So, we chose to do it [focus WFWF support] more broadly.”

Strategic Lead

As such, family support activities were not targeted to specific groups in order to maximise the reach of the support. The evidence from one CSPP showed that plans to engage with seldom heard families were dropped for capacity reasons.

Table 2 below shows the groups CSPPs intended to support as part of WFWF activities.

**Table 2 Groups of service users CSPPs intend to support as part of WFWF activities**

Supported groups	Number of CSPPs
Children at the edge of care, in kinship care, who are adopted or requiring safe accommodation	4
Six priority groups identified in the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan: lone-parent families, housing where someone is disabled, families with three or more children, minority ethnic families, families with a child under one year old, families where the mother is under 25 years old.	3
Parents with substance misuse issues	2
Families with children with neurodiversity needs	2

## Approaches to deciding on WFWF priorities and activity

Senior leaders, particularly in children's services, led the prioritisation and planning of WFWF activities, with involvement from other senior leaders such as heads of children's and justice services. Managers supported senior leaders and collaborated with representatives from various CSPP partners. Working groups for initial plan development with cross-partner representation were formed in most CSPPs. Draft plans were then reviewed and approved by CSPP partner representatives before submission to the Scottish Government. This inclusive approach allowed a wide range of partners to contribute to the design process and encouraged ownership and responsibility among staff from partner organisations.

However, the case study findings suggested that some partners did not feel as though they had been engaged with in meaningful ways and were dissatisfied with the approaches taken. The following sections provide details on CSPPs' specific approaches to determining WFWF priorities and activities, along with highlighting best practices and challenges.

### Pre-WFWF reflection and development work

Some CSPPs held discussions before WFWF about improving their structure and governance to enhance alignment across partnerships. They used these discussions to determine their WFWF priorities. For instance, one CSPP had agreed to hold more frequent board meetings and set up structured working groups for specific priorities, which facilitated a swift establishment of a WFWF-focused group with partner representation.

Many CSPPs had established their priorities for children and family services after the pandemic, and before WFWF launched, by engaging with various stakeholders and conducting self-assessments using the Scottish Government's Supporting Families: A National Self-Assessment Toolkit for Change. For instance, East Ayrshire developed a place-based community model to meet local needs before WFWF (see Figure 4).

### Figure 4 CSPP Spotlight: East Ayrshire

#### **Shifting approach to holistic family support after reflecting on local family needs, then developing a place-based community model.**

East Ayrshire re-evaluated the approach to holistic family support to reflect the recommendations of The Promise and the Independent Review of Adult Social Care. This meant greater emphasis on early intervention and support for diverse communities. The CSPP collaborated with the third sector to create the HEART model, which is a place-based community hub approach. The model consisted of six community-based hubs aiming to enhance self-directed family support. While the model predated WFWF, the funding allowed the CSPP to expedite and expand its efforts. With a strong understanding of local needs and evidence, it has quickly developed its WFWF initial plan.

Some CSPPs also had informal discussions with the Scottish Government before the formal launch of WFWF. For example, one CSPP engaged in a pre-funding conversation with existing government contacts, gaining insights into WFWF priorities, funding parameters, and timelines, which aided their initial plan development. Strategic leads and local WFWF leads also reported that these pre-WFWF national-level discussions indicated the Scottish Government's interest in and commitment to practically supporting CSPPs.

### **Consulting children, young people and families**

All case study CSPPs reported that they had consulted with children, young people, families, and carers when developing their initial plans, at least to some extent. This included general requests for information, invitations to existing groups of service users to comment on proposals, approaching families directly (e.g. through education colleagues), or using existing channels of communication such as feedback forms and experience surveys. In Fife, a session was delivered by frontline practitioners which invited children, young people and families to share their experiences to inform service design (see Figure 5).

#### **Figure 5 CSPP Spotlight: Fife**

##### **Inviting children, young people and families to a co-creation project session to share their lived experiences directly and inform service design.**

A co-production project session ran in Fife as part of WFWF was attended by local families. Frontline practitioners shared that they brought children, young people and families to the co-production sessions to allow them to directly share their lived experiences and support needs. One support worker involved shared that the children and young people involved were excited to attend the consultations because they were thrilled that people wanted to hear their views. A young person interviewed also reported that they found the session 'really fun' because they got to share their views of what it was like 'being a kid' with senior people. This led to families feeling empowered and more parents approaching frontline practitioners asking to be involved in future meetings.

A key enabler of successful consultations with children, young people and families was the size of group consultation sessions. Frontline practitioners reported that smaller, and informal, group sessions were received well by parents because they were more comfortable to be open and share their particular needs that they would like addressed by service delivery.

Despite reports of initial consultation with children, young people, and families in the design of WFWF activity, ongoing consultation on service design was rare. There was some evidence of feedback on design being collected beyond the initial stage, typically through informal feedback to the frontline practitioner or via a feedback form. As described above, Fife was also continuing their co-production work. However, CSPPs did flag continuous feedback from children, young people, and families as a necessary part of WFWF and generally shared a desire to improve on this.

“We did a lot at the design [stage] but beyond that we need to work harder to get feedback from families, I think, to input into our future work.”

Strategic Lead

Some of the children, young people and families who were interviewed described influencing WFWF service design through tailoring the individual support they received. Examples included tailoring the topics discussed and individualising areas of focus for the support received. Although this was on an individual basis, rather than influencing overall service design, adapting support provision in this way was appreciated by these children, young people, and families.

“I got asked what I wanted to chat to [name of practitioner] about and what I thought I needed [support with]. I liked that I was asked what I think [sic].”

Parent

Parents receiving support that was less tailored to their individual support needs (e.g. group sessions) reported fewer opportunities to input into the support received. However, there were still opportunities to feedback what they did and did not like about the group sessions, as well as opportunities to frame the group sessions around their current life situations.

“It was just a group so not really about me. I did fill out a survey form to say what could be nicer next time. So, hopefully that will help other mums.”

Parent

Beyond this activity, children, young people, and families interviewed did not generally feel engaged in any service design activities. This is despite professionals interviewed in the case study CSPPs stating that they had organised various ways for engaging with children, young people, and families in service design. This may be because it was not made clear to children, young people, and families that this was the purpose of their engagement, or they did not recognise these consultation activities as contributing to the design of WFWF, but instead assumed that it was part of their ongoing support received through WFWF.

An interviewed young person was involved in developing the WFWF offer through a youth forum where they interviewed other young people about drug related deaths and led a workshop to help professionals understand stigma around this topic. The young person reported they found the experience of contributing to service design enjoyable and felt that they were able to share their perspectives with adults.

“I liked it. Was good. I got to tell the people that it should be this way, not that [way].”

Young person

“They [families] have really enjoyed being part of it and have said that they feel really connected and it’s...a positive experience being part of that...this allowed them to kind of reflect and really appreciate their own expertise and experience and how they can help other people.”

Frontline practitioner (family support worker)

Frontline practitioners in case study CSPPs identified two key barriers to engaging children, young people, and families in service design:

- Challenges encouraging families to engage, especially where families had limited time or capacity due to the complexity of their family circumstances. This was reported by a minority of frontline practitioners who shared that the life circumstances of some families created difficulties when opening up and limited their ability to contribute to service design activities.
- Difficulties pitching engagement activities at the right level due to the variety of lived experiences and specific support needs across children, young people and families. Frontline practitioners also noted that some families with complex needs did not feel as ready to join group sessions, perhaps due to discomfort of sharing their personal circumstances in a group setting.

### **Using data to understand local needs**

CSPPs were expected to conduct a local assessment of need to share in their system change plans. They were encouraged to use the Scottish Government’s draft Supporting Families: A National Self-Assessment Toolkit to identify funding priorities and activities.

During the planning stages, all case study CSPPs incorporated data into WFWF activity decisions. They analysed quantitative and qualitative data, such as referral rates, school attendance, child poverty rates, and qualitative evidence about children, young people, and families’ views on support, in order to identify local family needs, impact of current support, and service gaps. For example, one CSPP used qualitative data from children, young people and families and frontline practitioners in consultations to change a service’s name from ‘hubs’ to ‘networks’.

“We talked in those sessions quite a lot about ‘hubs’ but in subsequent engagement work and trying to bottom out exactly what we’re doing to fully reflect the functions of the hubs as opposed to a pre-conceived notion of what a hub is, we’ve started to use the word ‘network’ because that better conveys, I think, what families are feeding back and practitioners are feeding back about what they like which is...that more integrated and seamless support at an earlier stage.”

Strategic Lead

Some CSPPs collected data for other purposes, including potential new activities, and were still in the early stages of developing their whole system monitoring plans.

## Involvement of partners

The WFWF logic model (see Annex 4) anticipated that the key WFWF partners were:

- Children, young people and families;
- CSPP strategic leads;
- CSPP staff (including local WFWF leads);
- Adult services staff;
- Third sector partners;
- (Public) health partners such as community link workers;
- Mental health practitioners;
- School nursing services;
- Employability services;
- Primary care;
- Welfare rights; and
- Income maximisation advisors and financial support partners.

Across all case study CSPPs, participants agreed a range of partners contributed to WFWF plans. This included consulting partners through steering groups, multi-agency workshops, and panel consultations. Staff from partner organisations who were involved in the engagement typically included frontline practitioners from third sector organisations and from education and health and social care teams.

“I'm not saying it's absolutely perfect [in terms of engagement with a wide range of partners] but I think they [WFWF strategic leads] definitely listened and took on board the input we gave. There was a good spread of people too from schools and NHS. It felt good to share our thoughts.”

Frontline practitioner – Educational psychologist

While initial engagement in the WFWF plans was reportedly good across case study CSPPs, ongoing and consistent partner engagement in WFWF activity implementation and delivery varied. In some case study CSPPs, various partners played a key role in determining what the monitoring and evaluation of the funding would look like, through their participation in sub-groups focussed on understanding specific issues in the CSPP. In other CSPPs, partners inputted into the design of pilot projects and were involved in the co-creation projects (see Figure 6).

## Figure 6 CSPP Spotlight: South Lanarkshire

### **Contribution of partners to co-ordinating links between various support organisations.**

In South Lanarkshire, educational psychologists were involved in considering how various partner organisations could join up their work. For instance, they helped identify ways the family support hubs would link in with education services, how the referral systems between the organisations would work in practice, how to foster links between multi-agency teams within secondary schools and how to communicate with parents and families to inform them about support hubs (including sharing information about what these were).

One of the social workers was also consulted in the early stages of discussion about the role of social workers in terms of how they would fit into the family support hubs model. The main conclusion was that there was 'no one size fits all' approach and that a flexible, adaptable approach would have to be taken.

Analysis of CSP annual reports indicated that an open and transparent approach to engagement had encouraged more innovative bids from partners and fostered an overall innovative environment. For example, one CSPP held a 'development day' workshop attended by head teachers and third sector partners to generate innovative approaches to holistic family support, by exploring gaps in current provision.

Case study participants shared mixed views about the consistent engagement with third sector partners. During the first wave of the evaluation, engagement was not always viewed by strategic leads and managers as consistently capturing the perspectives of a diverse range of partners. In the second wave, their views were more positive, suggesting this was improving across the Year 1 implementation of WFWF.

Some third sector frontline practitioners reported that engagement with them and their organisations was somewhat 'selective' or 'superficial'. For example, limited or no communication from CSPPs on progress or outcomes after third sector practitioner input into the WFWF initial plans.

"One of our school nurses was involved in the design of the idea, they had a lot of meetings and stuff, but we don't really know what happened."

Frontline practitioner – School nurse

Strategic leads and local WFWF leads felt their third sector partners faced challenges in understanding the WFWF aims and how it would work in practice. This was mainly reported in cases where CSPPs experienced differences across CSPP partners around how the WFWF vision should look in their area. This barrier was also typically seen where relationships with third sector partners were newer, as this meant more time was needed to build relationships and consensus between partners.

Some strategic leads noted the influence third sector commissioning practices had on their engagement with WFWF plans and delivery. Third sector commissioning practices were viewed as competitive and channelled through an organisation; this approach to commissioning services was at odds with the criteria of the WFWF allocation. This was felt by strategic leads to impact the alignment of third sector partners with WFWF priorities and cause some confusion amongst third sector partners about how the WFWF funding would be allocated. For example, some third sector partners were concerned about receiving insufficient funding for the level of work required to deliver WFWF activities.

“Part of our challenge is the [third] sector's a really competitive place [in terms of the need to secure funding]. It's very difficult for them to think about how they can collaborate more effectively to the good end of the families, without putting themselves into detriment. Those are some of the wrestling conversations that we're currently having with the third sector...Helping them to think [about] how they can actually get to where they need to get to deliver what families are asking for is a real challenge for them. To work in the collaborative way and make sure that families get a really good, high quality, consistent response at the point of entry into the system, wherever that is...Still working on the readiness and how are they actually going to do what families want without compromising their own funding.”

Strategic Lead



## 5 Implementation and delivery of WFWF to date

This section explores the early implementation of WFWF by CSPPs, recognising their varying stages of progress. It assesses the maturity of their journey toward delivering transformative support and how WFWF activities have been implemented. It also discusses the enablers and barriers to WFWF activity implementation. The findings are from qualitative interviews with strategic leads, local WFWF leads, frontline practitioners, and children, young people and families, and the CSP annual reports analysis.

### Key findings

- There was positive evidence that across most CSPPs delivery of WFWF activity had progressed between developing their initial plan and submitting their CSP annual report to the Scottish Government.
- WFWF activity delivered to date included CSPPs delivering new or redesigned services to children, young people, and families. Progress was stronger for CSPPs who were undertaking scaling up activities, including offering support to a wider range of families through an existing service. Both new/redesigned and scaled up activities were usually frontline, practitioner-led and one-to-one to enable tailored support to be provided to children, young people, and families.
- Five key enablers were identified as being key to helping CSPPs progress with WFWF implementation and delivery. These included CSPPs having a dedicated lead for WFWF locally, who led on coordination across CSPP partners, and upskilling of staff to look at the 'bigger picture' for families. Those CSPPs where they had existing relationships with third sector partners, were expanding existing successful activities, and had dedicated strategic and operational oversight for the WFWF, typically found implementation more straightforward.
- Key factors limiting implementation included WFWF timescales and the short-term nature of the funding meaning CSPPs could only recruit staff on less appealing fixed-term contracts. Lack of collaboration amongst local third sector partners were also raised as a key limitation for some CSPPs.

## Maturity of CSPPs' journey to delivering transformative support

A 'maturity model' was developed in March 2023 and updated in October 2023 to group CSPPs into categories based on the stage of their journey to delivering transformative whole family support, and to help illustrate findings from the analysis. The maturity model is presented in Figure 7 below, showing where CSPPs are in terms of their maturity (see Annex 7 for detailed explanation of the model). The three categories of maturity are:

- **Early**, have either not begun their transformational journey, with no delivery or scoping work conducted to date, or have engaged only in preliminary scoping or research.
- **Moderate**, have a good understanding of existing need or delivery from scoping work already completed, or have begun some early delivery, in a few instances in the form of small pilot programmes.
- **Advanced**, are well into their journey, already delivering a substantial amount of holistic whole family support. This may be because they have good local evidence on which their WFWF plans are based on.

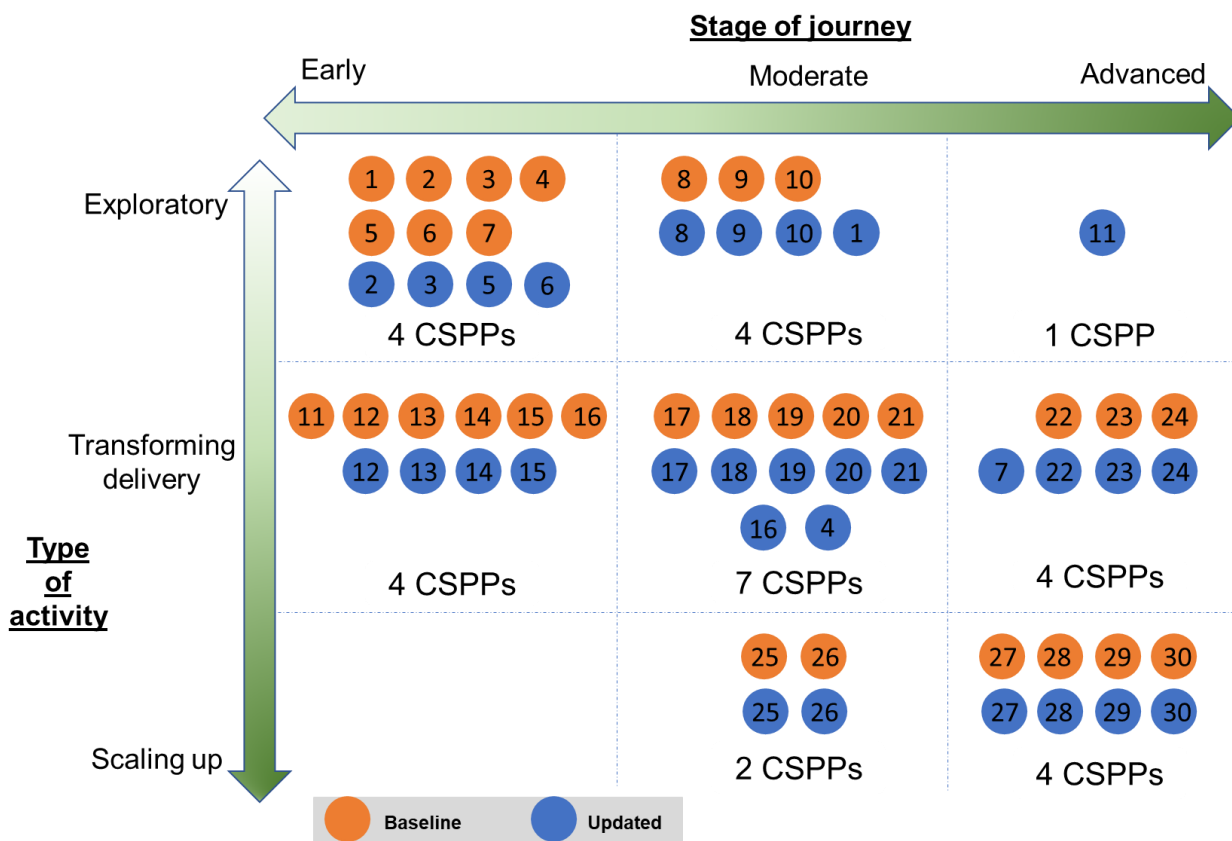
The activity type CSPPs planned in their initial plan and had implemented (as evidenced by their CSP annual report) fell into the three categories below. It is worth noting that many CSPPs outlined some combination of the three different kinds of activity, and so this categorisation looks at their primary focus for the WFWF.

- **Exploratory**, focusing efforts on research and scoping work, to understand the extent of existing delivery and need across the area.
- **Transforming delivery**, primarily focussed on delivering new support to families in a way that differs from existing support in the area.
- **Scaling up existing delivery**, CSPPs were already delivering, to varying extents, some aspects of the activity outlined in their initial WFWF plan. They intend to use the funding to develop and grow this existing activity.

Compared to where CSPPs were within the baseline version of the model, a greater number of CSPPs have demonstrated they are at a moderate (13 CSPPs compared to 10 CSPPs) or advanced stage of maturity (nine CSPPs compared to seven CSPPs). The progression of maturity was evenly split across CSPPs delivering exploratory or transforming activities, whereas there was no change in maturity among CSPPs undertaking activities related to scaling up. This is not surprising given they were already more progressed in terms of their transformational journey. Specifically, three CSPPs moved from an early stage of maturity to moderate stage and two CSPPs moved from early to advanced maturity.

There was no evidence to suggest that CSPPs also involved in Element 2 had progressed differently in terms of scaling up existing provision or undertaking transformative delivery of family support services.

**Figure 7 CSPP Updated Whole Family Maturity Model**



**WFWF delivery to date**

**Exploratory activities**

Most CSPPs who had planned to undertake exploratory work (as per their initial funding plan) had progressed to delivering the services they were exploring (see Figure 8). The CSP annual report analysis showed that a minority of CSPPs had not progressed with specific activities based on the exploratory work undertaken. This was mainly because, based on their assessment and mapping of existing provision, developing this service was not believed to be a priority.

## Figure 8 CSPP Spotlight: Falkirk

### **Establishing new WFWF governance group to oversee exploratory activities.**

In Falkirk, the focus was on aligning current activity with WFWF priorities and exploring new internal processes that would support this. Specifically, Falkirk intend to set up a WFWF governance group that will oversee work associated with the Fund and report back to the wider CSPP; update the CSPP terms of reference; create clearer decision-making pathways for whole family support through a small forum of senior leaders; and outline, and ultimately recruit, a WFWF strategic team that could drive forward the family support strategy.

Falkirk's CSP annual report showed that this activity had changed following the recruitment of the new dedicated WFWF lead. The new Funding Panel replaces the initial Whole Family Wellbeing Governance Group (in October 2022) and is now comprised of wider partnership representation, including children, young people and families. The new Funding Panel is responsible for identifying pilot programmes and testing the benefits of these.

### **Transforming delivery**

Some CSPPs stated progress around delivering new or redesigned services to children, young people, and families. However, there was limited evidence of progress from the case study CSPPs.

CSP annual reports analysis provided examples of new services delivered as part of WFWF, including redesigning mental health support (see Figure 9); a Compassionate Distress Response Service (CDRS) pilot; procurement of an educational resource app to support children; and interventions aimed at changing how children, young people, and families access support through schools by building on family strengths and making connections within local networks.

## Figure 9 CSPP Spotlight: West Lothian

### **Redesigning of mental health support to include non-clinical settings, and a wider age range of children.**

In West Lothian, there had been an expansion of mental health support and coverage across the area. Previously, this support was only available for mental health referrals and has now been expanded to support all families in West Lothian who are feeling isolated or overwhelmed.

As part of WFWF, the CSPP has provided a place-based approach of bringing families together in a non-clinical environment, specifically families with a child or young person aged between 0-18 years old. Mental health support is provided by trained volunteers who are supported by a family support manager. Families involved self-score on mental health factors and undergo a review with the family support manager every three months, while children and young people have interviews or discussions instead.

## Scaling up existing delivery

Analysis of case study and CSP annual report data showed that all CSPPs who planned to undertake scaling up activities had progressed to delivering a scaled-up version of support for children, young people and families. Examples included a CSPP offering support to a wider range of families through an existing service.

Where CSPPs reported expanding an existing service, it was unclear whether they had assessed their approach for delivering support against the Scottish Government's Supporting Families: A National Self-Assessment Toolkit.

## Type of activity

Many WFWF activities were frontline practitioner-led and can be categorised as either one-to-one support or group activities. Case study CSPPs mostly reported that new, or expanded, support was one-to-one and involved providing tailored support to children, young people, and families, including:

- Regular meetings between children, young people and families and a frontline practitioner, either at home or in a public location like a café.
- Practical support such as with housing, employment, communications with schools/medical professionals, or legal services.
- Emotional support or advice.
- 'Caseworker' role held by the frontline practitioner.

Group activities included regular support activities for children, young people, and families to address specific needs or receive more holistic support. Examples included learning sessions held in schools or other community buildings, and holiday activities such as beach trips.

"They [holiday activities] were about us bonding as a family – getting to know each other and learning to dealing [sic] with each other when things didn't go to plan. It was fun too. We all loved it."

Parent

## Enablers of WFWF implementation

CSPPs reported that WFWF implementation was easier where they were focussing on expanding existing successful activities. Where an activity was deemed successful pre-WFWF, WFWF was helpful in providing CSPPs with the funding needed to scale up. CSPPs assessed activities as successful based on feedback from children, young people, and families, and tangible measures of improvement such as increases in children and young people's school attendance. There was no evidence to suggest that CSPPs sought to expand, or build upon, services that were unsuccessful pre-WFWF.

CSPPs having dedicated strategic and operational oversight of WFWF activity was another key enabler. This included children's services boards providing steer and

sign off on how all family support funding is used. Cross-partner representation on the boards also helped to ensure alignment with priorities across the CSPP.

Strategic leads and WFWF local leads also reported that the ability to develop new, and strengthen existing, cross-partner links had also allowed for increased collaboration, contributing to better implementation of WFWF. One CSPP's example of multi-agency collaboration at a strategic level was that steering groups and boards were now sharing data across agencies to ensure that various organisations delivering WFWF support could be more joined up. CSPPs used this data to inform how they collaborate, and it had helped them to understand the interdependencies of the different services to ensure that these fit together into a coherent family support approach.

Other types of cross-agency collaboration included education leads and frontline practitioners from third sector organisations co-creating a pilot project, and input from educational psychologists to coordinate links between various partner organisations and staff (such as secondary school staff and social workers).

Most CSPPs had a dedicated local lead for WFWF who led on coordination across CSPP partners. This was reported to be important to ensure collaboration and alignment with priorities. This allowed CSPPs to have someone that was dedicated to driving the WFWF vision forward, leading to a more efficient pace of implementation.

“We wouldn't have progressed so far without [WFWF lead]. Such a big programme needs dedicated time and leadership to make it a success. You can't underestimate the time needed to get multi-agency input and agreement.”

Strategic lead

The pace of WFWF implementation was faster where strong partnerships with third sector partners already existed. This included where third sector partners' views were already aligned with WFWF priorities, and decisions and direction of WFWF aims were made collaboratively. This avoided repeated alignment discussions (present in CSPPs where third sector partners were not as aligned) and meant that all parties involved in WFWF delivery could focus on achieving their joint vision for family support.

The increased ability of frontline practitioners to look at the 'bigger picture' for families (i.e. seeking to support them as a family unit, rather than individual support for family members) had also contributed to the effective implementation of WFWF. For many CSPPs, this was an impact of the recent move away from siloed working, improved collaboration, and better working relationships across CSPPs partners. These improvements were driven largely by the creation of new WFWF posts that aimed to specifically strengthen the interface with the third sector, and better understanding of roles due to closer working. Across partners, frontline practitioners had demonstrated an improved knowledge of what support was available for families which meant that support pathways for families were more aligned and connected.

“Before, with multi-agency working, something wasn’t quite clicking. Everyone was focused on just their own responsibilities. Everybody was so overwhelmed, and resources were so stretched for such a long period of time that it was so difficult to see beyond your own role. I think there has been a massive and much needed culture change positively and just a mutual respect for everybody else’s roles. WFWF has helped with this and been the added boost we needed to focus and get there.”

Service manager

To upskill existing staff, CSP annual reports data highlighted that a few CSPPs had also delivered training to a multi-agency audience, whilst others had created a new workforce development lead role (see Figure 10). The main purpose of this was to improve frontline practitioner confidence, awareness and understanding of the whole family approach. During these training sessions, frontline practitioners were able to learn about different services that existed across the CSPP, and how they worked together to deliver WFWF services which enhanced multi-agency working.

### **Figure 10 CSPP Spotlight: Fife**

#### **A workforce development lead to identify and resolve workforce gaps that limit achievement of WFWF aims.**

Fife have involved a workforce development lead as part of a sub-group to understand issues and gaps in workforce development across partner agencies and how workforce development could be expanded to meet WFWF aims. At the time of interview, 500 frontline practitioners across a range of CSPP partners (including health, education, social work, third sector) had engaged.

Activity included holding practice development sessions (planned collaboratively and held four times over the course of a year) that were based on the aims and principles of WFWF, the logic model and findings from their internal training needs analysis. This subgroup was responsible for designing session content, how it would be delivered and how monitoring and evaluation would look. The aim of the practice development sessions was to improve confidence, and knowledge, of the workforce. Following success of these sessions, they are now being rolled out across all seven localities.

#### **Factors limiting implementation**

There was some evidence of WFWF timescales and sustainability concerns impacting recruitment of staff to deliver WFWF activities, thereby limiting the pace of WFWF implementation for some CSPPs. CSPP strategic leads and local WFWF leads reported the main difficulties to be the temporary nature of the funding limiting applications, as CSPPs could only recruit staff on less appealing fixed-term contracts. One CSPP observed that the short contract length of the posts advertised may have negatively affected the quality of applicants.

"There is no doubt at all that the sort of the public sector recruitment space within the [region] has and remains a real challenge for large parts of it, particularly health visitors, school nurses, children, social work, social care... and I think given in some respects the time limited nature of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund[ing], which is you're only offering short term contracts or contracts with that limit to them, that also makes them perhaps less attractive."

Strategic Lead

All case study CSPPs reported that at least one post was yet to be filled. To overcome this, a few CSPPs decided to fill WFWF-related vacancies with existing staff rather than by advertising new roles (see Figure 11).

Not all CSPPs were able to overcome the effect of time limited funding on recruitment though. In these instances, delaying other activities to account for slower recruitment was an important measure taken by CSPPs. In one example, after the departure of the local WFWF lead, the new lead reported that the CSPP had stalled in working towards implementing WFWF activity because a great deal of the service design work had to be repeated.

### **Figure 11 CSPP Spotlight: Fife**

#### **Mitigating recruitment issues by recruiting staff on a permanent basis.**

To overcome difficulties recruiting employees for short-term contracts, Fife decided to recruit children and family social workers on a permanent basis, guaranteeing new recruits a job after the end of the WFWF. Fife also found it useful to recruit from existing staff and then backfilling those positions. This approach enabled Fife to recruit to fill roles in the two new services they had established: residential outreach and foster care support programmes.

However, this approach did come with risks relating to finding roles for these frontline practitioners if the new WFWF activities did not continue beyond the end of the funding period. Although strategic leads and local WFWF leads did not have a definitive plan for this and it is subject to review, they described aiming to embed all new WFWF activity within support delivery and make it business as usual if there was evidence of positive outcomes.

The process chosen by some CSPPs to engage with third sector partners had also limited the pace of WFWF activity implementation. There were five key reasons noted for this:

- Strategic leads and local WFWF leads noted that third sector organisations tended to offer more consistent packages, which may not fully consider the continuously evolving and changing needs of families.
- Smaller third sector organisations, at times, had more limited knowledge of how the wider family support system worked. Case study strategic leads and local WFWF leads suggested that, as a result, these smaller third sector organisations may face difficulty when trying to integrate with other services,



and that there was more work required from CSPPs to ensure that third sector organisations had the knowledge to engage.

- Working more collaboratively within CSPPs had also meant that CSPP partners, including third sector organisations, had more bureaucratic processes (for instance aligning with CSPP hiring practices and IT systems) to work through. This was perceived as a burden and therefore a contributing factor to limited WFWF implementation.
- Another difficulty was that third sector organisations tended to work on a commissioning cycle, so were in a position of having less control over financial resources (in a competitive third sector space), which had caused internal challenges and impacted their engagement with the WFWF.
- There was also evidence from a couple of case study CSPPs that suggested there were some difficulties with alignment from third sector organisations which meant that the affected CSPPs had been caught in a cycle of inconclusive discussions around how to proceed in a collaborative manner (see Figure 12). As shown by the quote below, one significant reason for this difficulty was that third sector organisations felt that they were already delivering the type of support that addresses WFWF aims.

“One of the things that the third sector are slightly struggling with is the idea that we have to do something completely different to actually shift the culture of service delivery. I think some of the feedback is they feel as though they're doing some of this work already and we're actually saying to them, 'That's not what we need you to do now. We need you to do something fundamentally different with families at a much earlier stage.’”

Strategic Lead

### **Figure 12 CSPP Spotlight: Glasgow City**

#### **Repeated discussions with third sector organisations about aligning with WFWF priorities.**

In Glasgow, strategic leads shared that there was a persistent challenge of third sector organisations not fully aligning with WFWF priorities. It was reported that this was mainly because third sector organisations struggled with the idea of doing something different to achieve transformative family support aims.

As such, strategic leads reported being caught up in repeated discussions with third sector colleagues about how best to align. Where progress towards alignment was believed to have been achieved, this was short-term, and the same discussions would continue when discussing a new point.

## 6 Monitoring WFWF delivery

This section discusses how CSPPs monitored their WFWF performance. Findings are based on evidence from initial plans and CSP annual report analysis, and qualitative interviews with case study strategic leads, local WFWF leads and frontline practitioners.

### Key findings

- It is a positive sign that all CSPPs had identified indicators to monitor performance of the WFWF activity to some extent. All CSPPs were also aware and undertaking development work to understand the monitoring indicators they would use to evidence the outcomes of their WFWF activity. Data collection was less progressed for outcomes, compared to collecting data on delivery. This likely reflects the stage of WFWF implementation.
- CSPPs had varying levels of confidence in using collected data for strategic decision making. CSPPs with more advanced analytical capabilities had pre-existing data and performance groups to manage data collection and establish its use in their planning and strategy.
- Going forward they expressed ambition to use feedback from children, young people and families collected to shape their WFWF support offer in a more formal and structured way.

The initial plan guidance from Scottish Government instructed CSPPs to establish monitoring systems to assess their progress in achieving intended WFWF outcomes. This included to:

- Provide information through Children's Services Plans (CSP)<sup>14</sup> and CSP annual reports about the performance and impact of WFWF activity. This should be supported by information on how CSPPs are approaching the delivery of holistic family support through the WFWF.
- Develop local measures of success criteria, key milestones, and quality indicators, aligned with the logic model established for the funding.
- Provide supplementary information required by the of the WFWF evaluation, where possible as part of reporting on Children's Services Plans.

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<sup>14</sup> CSPPs are required to set out how the partnership will work together collaboratively to improve outcomes for children and young people in their area. This plan also outlines the local authority and health board's vision for how public services used by children and families will develop in the local area.

## Monitoring the impact of WFWF support

### Collecting monitoring data

All CSPPs intended to use existing quantitative management information to monitor the performance and outcomes of WFWF activity (see Figure 13). The extent to which CSPPs reported that they had defined the required indicators and were collecting required evidence to monitor progress though varied considerably. This was primarily linked to diversity and progress with implementing their WFWF activities.

WFWF funding supported a workshop for staff and project leads to train them on how to monitor outcomes using the Children's Services Data Group's framework, including specifying outcome measures and monitoring processes.

### Figure 13 CSPP Spotlight: Fife

**Using existing data service groups to select priority metrics for impact monitoring, then running workshops to train project leads in how to use them.**

Fife used their pre-existing Children's Services Data Group to select existing metrics to use as part of their performance and outcomes monitoring. They created a high-level dataset and scorecard, which incorporated wellbeing indicators and a modified framework derived from the 'Supporting Families: A National Self-Assessment Toolkit for Change' Framework. Initially, the dataset focused on activity measures, with plans to transition to outcome measurement as outcomes became evident.

CSP annual report analysis suggested all CSPPs had identified indicators to monitor performance of the WFWF activity to some extent, but the maturity of the data collection process varied among CSPPs. Some CSPPs used WFWF to refine their family support monitoring approaches. This included an example of a CSPP implementing new IT software to better track and measure children and families' journeys across the family support system. CSPPs less mature in their approach to monitoring were collecting basic baseline data (e.g. numbers of beneficiaries), while some CSPPs were going further and capturing stories from children, young people and families and frontline practitioners.

The range of monitoring indicators used by CSPPs to evidence outcomes varied according to the diversity of their WFWF activities. Although CSP annual report analysis indicated that all CSPPs were mindful of the need to evidence outcomes, progress towards this varied considerably.

Some CSPPs had developed new templates for stakeholders to use to monitor outcomes. Several CSPPs had also begun reporting into new channels (e.g. the Council's Social Work Services Committee or contributing to the Children Services Plan Joint CSP annual report).

The progress templates included in CSP annual reports (described in Section 2: Secondary data analysis) also revealed that many CSPPs planned to use

established measures to demonstrate progress in health and wellbeing outcomes. This included the Scottish Government's core wellbeing indicators (a list of potential indicators to measure wellbeing, that are part of Scotland's children, young people and families outcomes framework; Scottish Government, 2023) or the Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale (a standardised scale to measure emotional and psychological wellbeing in children; Liddle and Carter, 2015). Whilst some CSPPs were planning to monitor the number of referrals onto crisis level support to assess whether the intervention that had been developed through WFWF was reducing referrals.

Most CSPPs primarily collected qualitative outcomes data informally, such as reviewing comments from service users during support sessions, rather than through formal data collection (e.g. depth interviews or structured case studies). In some cases, frontline practitioners collected qualitative data from parents after group WFWF support sessions to assess the effectiveness of the support. One CSPP described plans to gather qualitative data from parents who declined referral to better understand and address barriers to uptake.

CSPPs also utilised management data from a range of partner organisations to report on the performance and outcomes of their WFWF activity. For example, the CSP annual report data for one CSPP highlighted an increase in the number of care-leavers in education, training, and employment between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, indicating a positive impact of their support for this group.

### **The use of data in strategic decisions**

CSPPs had varying levels of confidence in using collected data for strategic decision making. CSPPs with more advanced analytical capabilities had pre-existing data and performance groups to manage data collection and establish its use in their planning and strategy. These groups were given oversight of all WFWF support, facilitating data interpretation across different services and informing support service decisions (see Figure 14).

### **Figure 14 CSPP Spotlight: Aberdeen City**

#### **Using monitoring data within strategic meetings to help cross-agency decision making.**

Aberdeen City's Children Services Board (CSB) holds multi-agency meetings where partners, including children's services, health, and education, share and monitor data. This practice enhances cross-partner comprehension of service impacts and challenges. Sharing data helps partners grasp how different support services interact and address issues such as service overload and its effects on other services. This understanding then informs strategic decisions aimed at fostering more collaborative and holistic family support.

Through consistent monitoring and reviewing data, CSPPs who were more established in terms of monitoring processes had become more agile, adapting their support offers in response to emerging evidence. For example, one CSPP reported that they had removed funding from community activity organisations

where their data did not show evidence of impact on children, young people, and families in the local area.

Some strategic leads and local WFWF leads reflected that, although they collected a lot of data, they had been limited to informally using feedback from children, young people, and families to shape the design of their WFWF delivery. In other words, feedback collected was not systematically analysed and interpreted but used in an ad-hoc way to inform decision-making. Going forward, they expressed ambition to use feedback from children, young people, and families collected to shape their WFWF support offer in a more formal and systematic way.

### **Monitoring whole system change**

In addition to monitoring family outcomes, CSPPs were asked to monitor system change across the partnership. Initially, creating monitoring approaches for system change was a key task for all CSPPs but progress towards establishing systems was varied. Some CSPPs were still in the planning stage and had not embedded systems for monitoring systemic change, whilst others had established approaches, but their use was inconsistent.

Approaches to monitoring system change varied by activity, from understanding the scope and complexity of their family support system (for example, the links between support, organisations, and any gaps), to defining which system they were attempting to change and setting questions to help them understand how change was happening, or will happen, within that system.

One CSPP reported revising their commissioning requirements for new WFWF activity to include enhanced monitoring data collection, so that they could use data across organisations to monitor the whole system. Following this revision, new services would need to report their impact against the CSPP's devised 'five pillars of WFWF', which they were in the process of operationalising at the time of writing their CSP annual report. The CSPP lead believed this would help the CSPP to capture evidence of WFWF outcomes in new services.

CSPPs had lower confidence in monitoring intangible activities like collaboration between partners, service integration, and shared accountability. They engaged in 'thinking work', but there was no evidence of data being collected or analysed around these aspects of system change. A challenge for any system change initiatives is how to evidence contribution to the initiative, and CSPPs were uncertain about the expectations and how to set up systems to achieve this.

"The difficulty is how can you prove it is this money that made the difference because there are a whole load of other things going on at the same time...we can pull the stats [e.g. on level of collaboration between partner services], but can you say as a direct result of this funding stream this happened?"

Strategic Lead

## 7 Progress towards early outcomes

This section discusses the evidence of progress towards early outcomes, as set out in the proposed logic model. It is important to note that achieving outcomes is a longer-term aim of the funding, beyond the first year, so CSPPs were not expected to achieve outcomes within the first year of delivery. Instead, it was hoped that CSPPs would demonstrate initial progress towards these early outcomes at the end of Year 1, and Year 2 would focus more on outcomes being achieved. The findings are based on case study qualitative data and the CSP annual report analysis.

Further detail on outcomes with limited progress and unintended outcomes can be found in Annex 8.

### Key findings

- Progress towards outcomes was limited, in part due to data quality, but there was some evidence to suggest CSPPs had made progress towards three of the anticipated early outcomes.
- There was some evidence to suggest CSPPs had begun to shift towards ways of working which were non-siloed and allowed the support to match the scale of need, primarily through alignment of funding streams, establishing governance groups to oversee funding priorities, and scaling existing provision to meet needs.
- The findings showed that some CSPPs had started to re-design delivery of services in terms of how families accessed support through different referral systems, activities to raise awareness of support offers, and ways to provide more choice and control over support options.
- Increased collaborative working between CSPPs and adult services was demonstrated to some extent through governance groups where partners were able to participate in the design of services, and improved, purposeful working between agency partners in delivery of support.

### Intended early outcomes

CSPPs were asked by Scottish Government to set out in their initial plan the outcomes from the WFWF logic model they anticipated making progress towards from WFWF Element 1 activities within the first year (see

Table 3 below for early outcomes). The Scottish Government proposed these outcomes as part of the WFWF logic model and refined them in collaboration with stakeholders, including the Family Support Advisory Group (see Annex 4 for the WFWF logic model). Please note that CSPPs were not expected to achieve all 11 outcomes; rather, they could choose which outcomes they would aim to achieve and there was no requirement for a minimum number of outcomes.

In summary, the most common outcomes CSPPs intended to have made progress towards in Year 1 were:

- To embed holistic whole family support;
- (Re)design whole family support; and,
- Improve children, young people, and families' access to support.

The less common intended outcomes CSPPs made progress towards were to:

- Innovate family support solutions;
- Develop a holistic workforce approach; and,
- Invest locally in planning system change.

Interviewed strategic leads and local WFWF leads highlighted another outcome they intended to measure progress on – that of getting people into post to deliver WFWF activities. This was not explicitly one of the original outcomes in the logic model, but strategic leads and local WFWF leads noted that it was a required activity for delivering several of the related outcomes outlined in the logic model. For example, to increase holistic whole family support service capacity.

The logic model captures early outcomes that relate to systems change and are emergent in nature. Within the CSP annual reports, CSPPs often used different terminology or merged outcomes within the logic model into a single one when providing evidence. It was also evident that CSPP stakeholders considered children, young people and family outcomes to be individual-level social or health outcomes because that is the nature of their day-to-day work. CSPPs may benefit from reassessing the ambition of their Year 1 outcomes of engagement to what can be realistically accomplished within a year, instead of anticipating individual-level social or health outcomes that are much longer-term outcomes. This confusion captures the challenges CSPPs faced with establishing realistic ambitions for whole system change.

## **Evidence of progress towards early outcomes**

Progress towards outcomes varied across CSPPs. Data on outcomes comes primarily from the CSP annual reports provided by 21 of 30 CSPPs. Where relevant, the evidence from case study research is also included in the analysis below. It is important to highlight that while progress towards early outcomes was included in analysis, the focus of this process evaluation was not to capture evidence of this. The Year 2 evaluation will focus more on the outcomes CSPPs have achieved.

Evidence from the CSP annual reports was included in analysis below only if it clearly and explicitly described the action taken to achieve an outcome; claims of achieving outcomes were excluded from the analysis if no evidence was provided to support the claim, or the evidence described intended plans or actions rather than what had been achieved. Outcomes are discussed based on the number of CSPPs indicating they had made progress towards them. This is presented in Table 3. Nine CSPPs did not provide clear evidence of any early outcomes included in the logic model, and four CSPPs included evidence towards only one outcome each, demonstrating the limited progress towards outcomes made by some CSPPs.

Generally, the CSPPs who reported relatively more progress towards outcomes were among those with the highest funding amounts, and those working in urban areas with larger populations. Half were focusing on transforming delivery as opposed to exploratory or scaling up.

The following sections describe the evidence provided for the outcomes outlined in the logic model where there was notable evidence of progress. There were three outcomes for which more than a quarter of CSPPs (who returned CSP annual reports) showed evidence of progress, and eight where evidence of progress was limited (less than a quarter of CSPPs who returned CSP annual reports demonstrated progress). Outcomes with some evidence of progress are discussed below, and a full discussion of the outcomes with limited evidence of progress is presented in Annex 8.



**Table 3 Number of CSPPs intending to deliver and presenting evidence of progress towards each early outcome in the WFWF logic model**

WFWF intended early outcomes	Number of CSPPs intending to deliver outcomes (n=16) <sup>15</sup>	Number of CSPPs reporting progress towards outcomes (n=21) <sup>16</sup>	Evidence of progress towards outcome
1 Early evidence within CSPPs of shift towards non-siloed and aligned whole family support funding that matches scale of need	5	8	Some
2 CSPPs start to redesign/design delivery of new whole family support services, including removing barriers for children, young people, and families to accessing support	10	7	Some
3 Early evidence that CSPPs (including third sector partners) are working more collaboratively and with adult services (design and delivery of whole family support, share resources, data, feedback, and information)	7	6	Some
4 CSPPs begin embedding key principles for holistic whole family support in their own systems and structures	11	5	Limited
5 Early evidence that children, young people and families have improved access to services in communities	10	5	Limited
6 Increased whole family support service capacity among CSPP partners – scaled and new services are integrated	4	5	Limited
7 CSPP partners begin to develop a holistic workforce approach	3	4	Limited
8 Early evidence that children, young people and families are actively and regularly and meaningfully engaged in service design	8	4	Limited
9 Early evidence of culture in CSPPs that encourages and empowers staff to develop innovative whole family support solutions	1	3	Limited
10 Early evidence that feedback analysed by CSPPs informs Adult and Related Services planning/delivery	5	2	Limited
11 Local investment by CSPPs in planning system change (budgets already set for 2022-23)	3	2	Limited

Note: An earlier version of the logic model included the outcome: Delivery partners (including third sector) are integral to service design and delivery of whole family support. Seven CSPPs indicated they aimed to achieve this in their initial plan and two demonstrated some progress towards it in their CSP annual reports. As this outcome was

<sup>15</sup> 14 CSPPs did not specify early outcomes included in the logic model in their initial plans.

<sup>16</sup> Annual reports were not received by nine CSPPs; nine CSPPs did not report progress towards any early outcomes in their annual reports.

combined with outcome number 3 above due to overlapping meaning, it is not discussed further in this section.

## Outcomes with early evidence of progress

### 1. Early evidence within CSPPs of a shift towards non-siloed and aligned family support funding that matches scale of need

Only five CSPPs stated an ambition to achieve this outcome in their initial plan, but eight were assessed as showing evidence of progress towards this outcome in their CSP annual reports. Evidence largely centred around integration and alignment of WFWF funding with other sources of funding for family support establishing governance groups to oversee funding priorities and scaling existing provision to meet needs (as discussed in Section 3 Scottish Government approach to funding, allocation, distribution and support: Element 1).

"It's not like we're all being precious over one pot of money, and you know we can work together whereas previously an issue... It's all about coming together and being part of the one big project and goal."

Children's Services Manager

To align funding streams and to ensure that family support matched the scale of need, some CSPPs indicated they were **reviewing existing contracts** to ensure there was not overlap in how services were being funded, such as where multiple CSPP services were funding third sector organisations. For example, see CSPP Spotlight in Figure 15 below.

#### Figure 15 CSPP Spotlight: Glasgow City

##### Integration of WFWF activities and existing mental health funding

Glasgow City's CSPP identified that the WFWF complemented the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing funding they already received from Scottish Government. Due to potential overlaps, they are taking steps to ensure work is not duplicated across the two funding streams.

Interviewees reported better cross-agency working with colleagues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) as the CSPP was working in partnership with them and encouraging CAMHS staff to feed into WFWF design and delivery. This enabled them to demonstrate how their activities were aligned and encourage integration.

A common approach to making progress towards this outcome was CSPPs **convening a steering group of relevant stakeholders** who were responsible for overseeing funding opportunities and ensuring a collaborative and multi-agency approach to whole family funding.

Informed by needs analysis, some CSPPs were **scaling up existing services to meet demand**. For example, some were recruiting additional social work assistants

and family support workers, or commissioning services currently run by statutory partners to increase capacity.

## **2. CSPPs start to redesign/design delivery of new whole family support services, including removing barriers for children, young people and families to accessing support**

Ten CSPPs stated an ambition to achieve this outcome in their initial plan and seven showed progress towards this in their CSP annual reports. CSPPs who reported in their CSP annual report that they had successfully established or scaled family support hubs, or built new ways of accessing services, tended to have a larger population, were based in urban areas, and had higher than average WFWF funding and a medium level of family need.

Some CSPPs were in the process of re-designing the routes for children, young people and families to **access support through different referral systems**. For example, some CSPPs were using place-based provision such as having hubs in local communities (as discussed in Section 5: Implementation and delivery of WFWF to date). To provide easier and approachable access to support, South Lanarkshire and Fife reported that this hub approach minimised the need for formal referrals and reduced the time taken by families to identify the correct point of contact for their needs.

Some CSPPs had **reviewed and revised referral processes**, including how families accessed support, how their requests were processed, how support was allocated, and the process for self-referrals. Similarly, CSPPs reported ensuring that families were directed to support by trusted frontline practitioners, and closer agency working which enabled more effective referrals (see Figure 16).

### **Figure 16 CSPP Spotlight: South Lanarkshire**

#### **Closer agency working enabling direct 'warm' referrals**

A family support programme called 'Pathfinders' in South Lanarkshire is working with secondary schools and social workers to engage with families who are disengaged from school with a focus on preventing the child or young person being taken into care. Attention was paid to how to communicate to parents and families to inform them about the Family Support Hubs.

'Pathfinders' were utilised to promote the hubs in schools and in discussion with families following referrals from social work or the school. The multi-agency nature of this programme has meant that the hubs have been able to make links with families more easily. For example, pathfinders will give families a number to call or can take them to show them where to go to access support.

"It just seems so much more open for them to access the support than it's ever been. So, a lot of our young people on our case files have now got that intervention in place just because it became so much easier to access."

Practitioner – Family support worker

Lack of awareness of support available was also a barrier for children, young people and families identified in the CSP annual reports and by partners in interviews. CSPPs reported **awareness raising activities** such as local advertisements and trying to **improve communications and signposting in the community** through more accessible materials. CSPPs also recognised that a key barrier to accessing support was the perception of family support among children, young people and families. For example, scepticism about social workers among some families acted as a barrier for these families because they tended to have negative associations with social work that would discourage them from getting involved in support that was offered (see further discussion in Section 5: Implementation and delivery of WFWF to date).

Some CSPPs were planning or actively making changes to service design and delivery to **provide children, young people and families with more choice and control about the services they accessed**. For example, a new parenting pathway which will provide more choice and control for parents accessing services was being designed in one CSPP. Another CSPP was recruiting more Health Visitors and Nurses to provide children, young people and families with choice between in-person and virtual services.

Children, young people and families expressed appreciation towards the trustworthy and friendly attitudes of frontline practitioners which encouraged them to engage with support. Most children and young people who were interviewed reported that they found **activities and support enjoyable** which helped with the implementation of WFWF because it meant that families had ongoing engagement with the support provision.

“My favourite bit was the fact hunting bit, that was fun because I remembered the facts and they were actually really fascinating.”

Child

**Frontline practitioners were seen by families as being distinct from social workers.** This was important to note as some parents often associated social workers with the possibility of their children being removed from their care, so it was important to these parents that the frontline practitioners they received WFWF support from were not social workers. As such, this had supported with the implementation of WFWF as families were more able to engage fully and openly with support provided.

### **3. Early evidence that CSPPs, including third sector partners, are working more collaboratively and with adult services**

WFWF seeks to bring about whole system change to family services, so Scottish Government expected CSPPs would work collaboratively with adult services and third sector partners to design and deliver support. Nearly all CSPPs who set out in their initial plan to work more collaboratively with adult services provided evidence of doing so in their CSP annual report; six of the seven CSPPs evidenced progress towards this outcome in their CSP annual reports. CSPPs who reported progress towards this outcome tended to have medium-high family needs and lower deprivation ranking than average.

CSPPs reported in their CSP annual reports that they were working with partners through **governance groups** to enable them to participate in the design of services. One CSPP reported they had updated the membership and remit of their CSPP governance board to ensure more collaborative, joined up and efficient partnership working. This included creating two new senior posts to ensure a collaborative approach across GIRFEC, Promise and WFWF. Another CSPP that had broadened membership of their stakeholder groups stated that this had led to more aligned proposals that better meet the needs in their area.

"Third sector practitioners' voices are more heard than previously and your inputs valued with it...Previously statutory and third sector organisations did work together, but not to the intensity that we do now so anything involving the third sector used to take more of a backseat...We were seen as more on the periphery before."

Frontline practitioner – third sector support worker

Greater collaboration among CSPPs was demonstrated through **active, purposeful working between agency partners** to support the same families in different ways (as discussed in Section 5: Implementation and delivery of WFWF to date: Enablers of WFWF implementation). For example, one CSPP reported in their CSP annual report better support for parents with substance misuse, through closer integration between drug and alcohol services. Another CSPP reported the development of a project for neuro-diverse young people, which brought together partners from education, social work and mental health.

## 8 Conclusions and recommendations

The Scottish Government's vision is for holistic family support, with early intervention and prevention at its core, to be readily available to families that need it. WFWF was established to help support whole system, transformational change. This was in line with the aim of reducing the need to intervene at the point of crisis for families, and to shift investment towards prevention and early intervention.

In the 2022-2023 financial year, Element 1 WFWF funding was provided to CSPPs to support the scale up and delivery of holistic whole family support which addresses the needs of children and adults in a family at the time of need rather than at crisis point. Element 2 support was intended to build local capacity for transformational system change in how families are supported.

This final report from the evaluation of Year 1 of the WFWF has discussed the early journey of change of CSPPs since receiving funding; evidence of implementation in respect of fund administration; the design and set-up of funded activities; and progress towards early outcomes.

CSPPs and their partners, with support from Scottish Government, have engaged well with the ambitions of WFWF in Year 1. Substantial progress has been made within and across most CSPPs, as evidenced by their reported progress between their initial plans and annual reports. However, some activities key to bringing about early outcomes in the logic model are outstanding in some CSPPs. This will likely prevent some CSPPs from achieving the intended early outcomes by the end of Year 2. For CSPPs to progress with WFWF implementation and ensure the foundations are in place to achieve intended WFWF outcomes, Scottish Government and CSPPs should continue to focus on:

- 1) Mobilising the necessary workforce across the CSPPs to deliver local WFWF plans, embedding the whole family support principles (see Annex 2), and upskilling the workforce with the analytical skills required for whole system monitoring and evidence-based decision making.
- 2) Collaborating and relationship building within and across CSPPs. This is particularly important regarding the development of a clear, strategic vision for approaching system change and establishing a clear understanding of how this is going to happen as a result of WFWF.
- 3) Establishing systems for capturing regular feedback and engaging in ongoing consultation with partners across the CSPP, as well as children, young people, and families, to inform transformative family support.
- 4) Gathering data and evidence to understand progress and performance of WFWF activities and outcomes achieved and developing the analytical capacity to interpret and use the data within strategic decision-making.

Conclusions and recommendations related to each evaluation aim are discussed below.

## Scottish Government approach to funding, allocation, distribution, and support

CSPPs embraced Scottish Government's flexible funding approach, allowing them to tailor their WFWF activities to local needs and collaborate with partners. This approach gave CSPPs the flexibility to use WFWF funds to complement other funding streams' activities, and combine, where appropriate.

CSPP leads found the initial plans required to access funds straightforward to complete. In nearly all case study areas, a key principle of developing the plan was collaboration, including with children, young people, and families and third sector partners. This is discussed in more detail in the section below.

Although leads in the case study CSPPs valued the dedicated support from Scottish Government's WFWF leads, they would welcome more opportunities to understand what other CSPPs are doing in relation to delivery of holistic whole family support. They would also value direction or advice from Scottish Government on the sustainability of their whole family support, beyond the WFWF's 2026 funding period.

### Recommendations:

**For Scottish Government:** Continue to facilitate ways for CSPPs to share knowledge, good practice and learning from their WFWF activity with each other. This could build on recently established forums (Knowledge Hub established in July 2023 and Learning into Action Network sessions delivered from early 2023, with a dedicated coordinator in place from August 2023). Useful topics for coverage would be ways to ensure key staff are in place, building relationships with the third sector, and engaging children, young people and family in delivery.

**For Scottish Government:** Scottish Government to continue to work with CSPPs to support them to build the sustainability of their WFWF activities and plan longer term spending, beyond the funding payment milestones. This could be incorporated into the ongoing discussions Scottish Government WFWF leads have with CSPPs and tailored to the individual needs/concerns of the CSPP. It may also usefully be linked to wider discussions between Scottish Government and CSPPs as part of Children's Services Planning processes. Useful topics of coverage could include mechanisms for moving from 'projects' to business as usual, including workforce and capacity and financial considerations. Sustainability should also be considered in the broader context, including considerations of other funding streams, to ensure that a longer-term plan for whole family support is being considered by CSPPs beyond WFWF.

## Approaches to designing and planning priorities and activity

Evidence shows that WFWF activities focussed on holistic family support tailored to family needs, such as delivering frontline practitioner-led support, through either one-to-one or group activities, with families.

Most CSPPs provided updates on activities in their CSP annual reports that aligned with the WFWF criteria and aims, emphasising early intervention and prevention family support. Where CSPPs decided to focus WFWF on responsive support (rather than early intervention and prevention), this was because of the findings from local needs analysis and children, young people and families input indicating a more pressing need and demand for intensive and crisis support.

Most case study CSPPs did not specify any target beneficiaries or did not plan to support particular groups (only five of 21 were undertaking activities specifically focussed on certain groups). This was because they intended their WFWF activity to provide accessible support that was more adaptable to the changing needs of the community based on individual assessment.

Although all case study CSPPs were aware of the need for collaboration and engagement with children, young people and families, integrating this within WFWF delivery has not happened consistently across all CSPPs. CSPPs engaged with children, young people and families when developing their initial plans but ongoing consultation on service design was rare. Barriers to ongoing collaboration included staff capacity and capabilities, effort required by families, and complex family needs. Small consultation groups and simple surveys were effective. Frontline practitioners reported that smaller informal group sessions were received well by parents because they felt more comfortable to be open and share their particular needs that they would like addressed by service delivery.

All CSPPs engaged with third sector partners, though the extent of this engagement and its success varied. The pace of WFWF implementation was faster where strong partnerships with third sector partners already existed. Lack of collaboration between third sector organisations in some areas had also limited the pace of WFWF activity implementation for some CSPPs. This was particularly the case where relationships were newer, and amongst smaller third sector organisations who at times were thought to have had more limited knowledge of how the wider family support system worked. Case study strategic leads and local WFWF leads suggested that third sector organisations also faced difficulty when trying to integrate with other services due to their commissioning cycle. They also indicated that there was more work required by CSPPs to ensure that third sector organisations had the knowledge of the holistic whole family support system to engage.

### **Recommendations:**

**For CSPPs:** CSPPs should establish systems for regularly and formally capturing feedback from, and undertaking engagement with, children, young people and families.

**For CSPPs:** Strategic leads and local WFWF leads should utilise tools produced by the Scottish Government (e.g. self assessment toolkit produced to support WFWF planning) to look to improve third sector collaboration into Year 2. These activities should enable CSPPs to draw more strongly on the expertise and knowledge of the third sector in their future collaboration as part of the WFWF.



## Implementation and delivery of WFWF to date

A key enabler of WFWF implementation was focusing on expanding existing successful activities. Where an activity was deemed successful pre-WFWF, WFWF funding was helpful in its expansion. CSPPs assessed activities as successful based on children, young people and families' feedback, and tangible measures of children, young people and families' outcomes such as increases in school attendance.

CSPPs have found it difficult to progress at the pace envisioned by the Scottish Government for Year 1 implementation. Barriers to implementation at speed varied depending on the starting point for a CSPP and ranged from operational capacity and capabilities; organisational culture of system change; ability to meaningfully engage diverse partners and families; and the lack of functionality and agility of monitoring systems for systems analysis and change planning. Taken together, the Year 1 evidence suggests the culture change and systems needed for family support transformation needs more time to become established before CSPPs observe early outcomes.

Operational capacity was further affected by the time-limited nature of the funding, which had a substantial impact on progress made as many CSPPs struggled to fill required posts. This included concerns that the funding will not continue until or after 2026, and that the period of time until 2026 is relatively short to achieve the ambitious outcomes set out in the WFWF logic model.

It is a positive sign that interviewed children, young people and families expressed appreciation towards how WFWF activity had been delivered. The approach taken by frontline practitioners (including being friendly and relatable), the perception of practitioners being distinct from social workers, and support being provided in an engaging manner were all key in generating positive feedback.

## Recommendations:

**For CSPPs:** Where possible, look to achieve recruitment priorities through lessons learned from this evaluation, such as offering staffing contracts that extend beyond the scope of the funding. If that is not feasible, other options include considering secondments or job sharing within or across neighbouring CSPPs. This should be set within the context of the ambition that WFWF activity becomes business as usual following the end of the funding and reflects the wider contextual situation within Scotland and local areas.

**For Scottish Government:** In terms of the perception about the temporary and short-term nature of the funding, Scottish Government should work with CSPPs, within the confines of what is possible, to provide reassurance about funding allocations until the end of the funding period. As per the recommendation above, work to help CSPPs plan for sustainability should also be undertaken.

## Monitoring WFWF delivery

It is a positive sign that all CSPPs have identified indicators to monitor performance of their WFWF activity, at least to some extent, and that CSPPs have made progress with this across Year 1. All CSPPs were also undertaking development work to understand the monitoring indicators they would use to evidence the outcomes of their WFWF activity. However, data collection relating to outcomes was less widely progressed than data collection relating to performance monitoring. This likely reflects the stage of WFWF implementation.

The main priority for further development remains around analysis and interpretation of data collected. There are still varying levels of confidence among CSPPs in how to use the data they had collected to drive strategic decision making. CSPPs with more advanced analytical capabilities had pre-existing data and performance groups to manage data collection and establish its use in their planning and strategy.

Going forward, most leads in case study CSPPs expressed ambition to use the data collected to shape their WFWF support offer in a more formal and structured way. The box below captures suggestions for how the Scottish Government could support CSPPs with this as they look to evidence outcomes in Year 2.

## Recommendations:

**For Scottish Government:** CSPPs would benefit from Scottish Government support to help them understand their current capabilities, and how they could develop their knowledge and skill around data analysis, interpretation and how to use this in decision-making. This should start by collecting detailed insight from CSPPs about areas of priority and how this support could be best delivered (e.g. format, timescales, frequency etc.). Scottish Government should also ensure that support for this is coordinated and not duplicated across different Scottish Government policies and programmes that interact with CSPPs. Support should also be specific and tailored to each CSPP's needs and point in their monitoring and evaluation journey.

**For Scottish Government:** As outlined in Section 2, one of the limitations of this evaluation resulted from the variable completeness and quality of the CSP annual report information CSPPs provided in relation to their WFWF activity. To improve the quality of data available for future evaluation work, feedback should first be gathered from CSPPs about their experience of completing the WFWF reporting and understand what additional support could help CSPPs to complete this going forward. Once feedback has been collected, consideration should be given to encouraging comprehensiveness of information provided, including around capturing spend on activities delivered. Any amends to reporting processes should recognise the broader context of a drive towards proportionate reporting and CSPP accountability.

**For CSPPs:** CSPPs should consider ways to build capacity for data analysis, for example recruitment of data analysts as needed. This would help confirm what data should be collected to support investment based on preventative and wellbeing outcomes, and to ensure the contribution of the WFWF to achieving outcomes is able to be effectively evidenced.

## Perceptions of progress towards early outcomes

The WFWF logic model outlined 11 early outcomes the Scottish Government expected to see some evidence of by the end of Year 1. Progress towards these outcomes varied across CSPPs, mainly because of the differences in the activities undertaken and maturity of projects. There are some CSPPs who showed almost no progress towards any of the intended early outcomes, whilst others showed progress across several outcomes. This position is not unsurprising given the delays to implementation progress and the challenges with delivery (e.g. recruitment) experienced by some CSPPs. It will be a focus of the Year 2 evaluation to explore outcomes achieved and understand the evidence available for this.

Where evidence was available for early outcomes, it is important to emphasise that most CSPPs had limited evidence to indicate achievement of these outcomes. There was early evidence of CSPPs moving towards non-siloed and aligned whole family support funding that matches the scale of need, and CSPPs beginning to redesign new whole family support services that meet the needs of children, young people and families.

### Recommendations:

**For CSPPs:** CSPPs should ensure they have clearly defined outcomes for their WFWF activities, and that these clearly align with the intended outcomes/priorities of the WFWF, as captured in the logic model. This will be especially important in terms of early intervention and prevention support, and how best to assess the outcomes of this activity with either existing evidence or through collecting new evidence.



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