

Research advises that all children, but especially those children from more disadvantaged backgrounds, can benefit from attending high quality Early Learning and Childcare. (Scobie G and Scott E. Rapid evidence review: Childcare quality and children's outcomes. Edinburgh: NHS Health Scotland; 2017).

The North West Area of Kilmarnock is considered to be an area of high deprivation with the majority of housing in SIMD 1 or 2 and 40% of the population considered to be income deprived, 33% of the population are unemployed and this area is consistently among the most deprived 5% of Scotland.

**Aim: Increase the uptake of eligible 2 year old children, living in the North West Area of Kilmarnock by 50%, ensuring all children have access to full entitlement of 600 hours of funded Early Learning and Childcare by August 2019.**

### Method

- Our initial focus was on identification of eligible 2 year olds. Our baseline data advised that 24% of children were accessing a 2 year old funded place, however only 45% of these children had access to full entitlement. **Our aim was re-defined with a focus on accessing full entitlement.**
- We developed cross sector collaboration through our shared set of values about the wide ranging benefits in increasing the uptake for children and families. This collaboration included DWP, Manager of a Voluntary Organisation, East Ayrshire Council and the Community Childminding Coordinator.
- Process mapping identified quickly that our application process required to be streamlined.
- We liaised with parents which consisted of face to face discussion, questionnaires and focus groups. This allowed us to gather data on points of access, ease of application and barriers experienced in up- taking their entitlement. From these vital conversation we were able to develop change ideas for testing, which included application process and centralised admissions.

### Process Change

The varying data led to testing to develop a more streamlined **application process** and the **introduction of a centralised admission**. This has resulted in increase flexibility, reduce stigma, more accurate decisions in a more timely way for families to access full entitlement.

Poster and **publicity materials** were tested with families and parents and a range of partners such as DWP.

Families advise they recognise the branding and it is being used to support conversations and raise awareness.

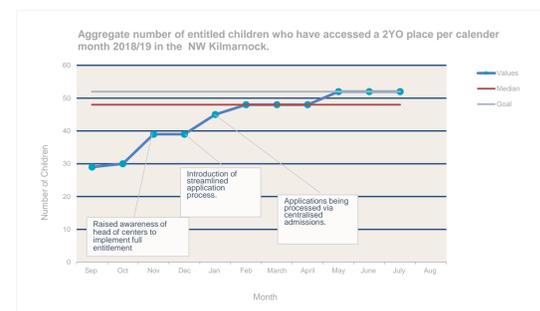
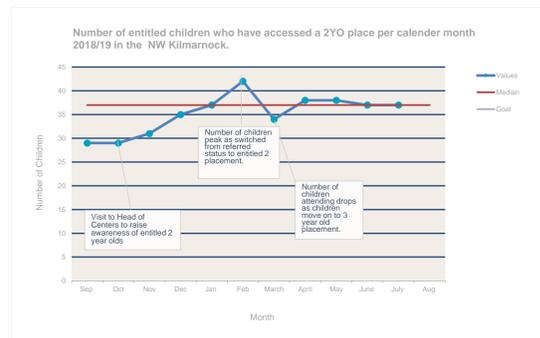
### Achievements

Our achievements are underpinned by the positive partnerships that we have established. Our unique partnership with the DWP has supported this progress and reduced the barriers to accessing entitlement. Team members have benefited from attendance at the practicum and the model for improvement is now embedded in our collaboration as well as within practice. We now have a family centred application process which is proving more responsive for families.

### Key Learning Points

- Clear vision with a shared understanding for improving outcomes. Having a collaboratively agreed aim, family of measures and collectively reviewing data over time has been crucial for the project to succeed.
- Enthusiasm for improvement.
- Collaborative working – *the right people at the right time.*
- Sharing of individual expertise and the impact of this for families.
- Partnership with parents.

### Results



The project has resulted in improvement in 2 key areas:

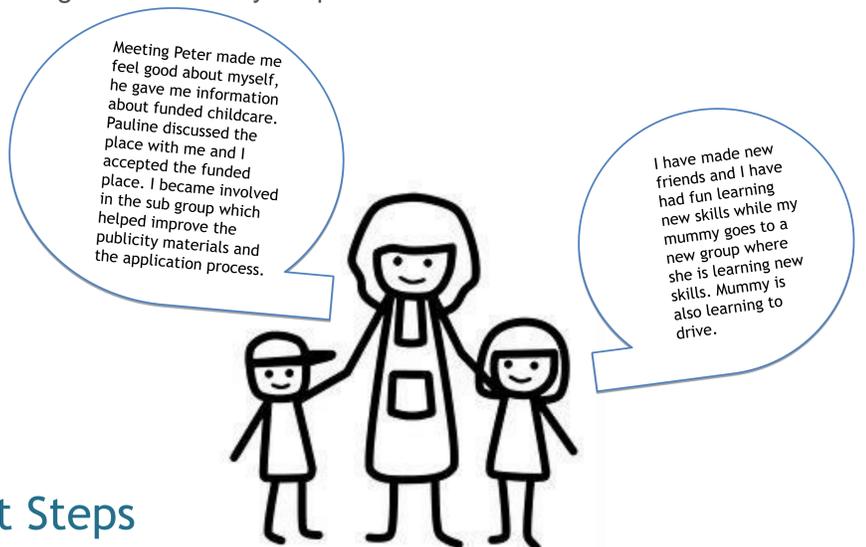
data tells us that 52 children residing in North West Area of Kilmarnock are accessing a funded place showing an increase of 79% from the base line of 29 children in September 2018.

AND

Significantly 100% of the 52 children are receiving their full entitlement.

### Conclusion

The aim was met and exceeded. This improvement journey undertaken by the team has shown a real commitment to improving the outcomes for children and families. As a result of the DWP being on board, work coaches across East Ayrshire are now routinely signposting parents to East Ayrshire Council for further information. The request for assistance form has been changed to include a question about entitlement and this supports Heads of Centre to plan admissions to ensure access to full entitlement. Centralising the admissions has streamlined the process which in turn has meant easier access and greater flexibility for parents.



### Next Steps

- Spread the application form and publicity materials developed through testing across the Local Authority
- Continue data capture and use learning to support implementation of 1140 by August 2020
- Ongoing work with partners to ensure consistency of information to families.
- Ongoing discussion with the senior management team in respect of sustainability of centralised admissions and how to take this forward
- Continue progress achieved working toward 68% of eligible children receiving entitlement