

Improving the consistency of information given to parents



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Rationale

To support the Scottish Government's intention to promote and increase the uptake of Early Learning and Childcare places for eligible 2-year-old children within Dumfries and Galloway (D&G). The uptake of eligible 2-year-old places in D&G was 32% (June 2018) We aimed to achieve the national commitment of 64% uptake. Our initial intention was to focus on two communities with the highest SMID index, however existing data showed a high uptake in those areas. This led to a region wide approach being adopted. The key focus was to ensure consistency of information was available across all platforms including partner agencies. This included a focus on eligibility criteria, application process and the benefits for children and families.

Aim: Increase the uptake of eligible 2-year old places in D&G to 50% by 30th August 2019

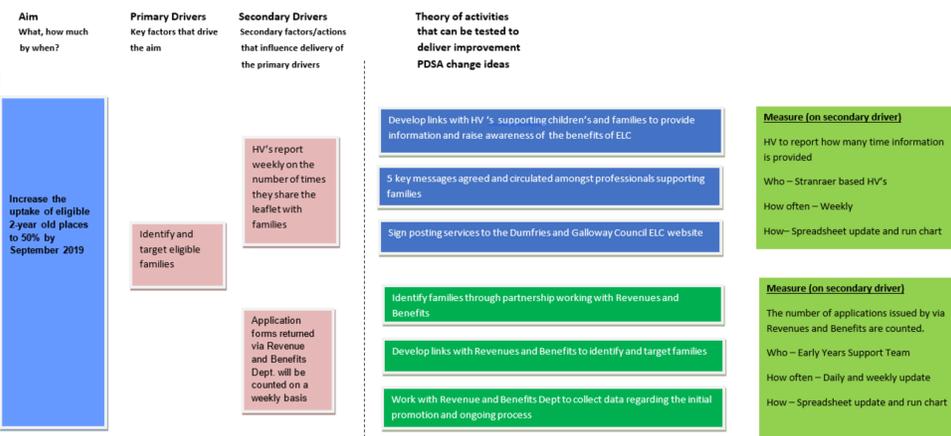
Method

- Developed a process map around the application procedure to identify possible areas for improvement.
- Identified 13 changes ideas using a high impact low effort matrix.
- Developed a baseline questionnaire to use with the HV service and ELC staff to gauge levels of confidence around the knowledge and understanding of the application criteria, process and perception of benefits for children and families.
- Tracked where families gained information around the eligible 2-year-old criteria/ process, by adding a marketing section to a new downloadable application form.
- Contacted Pen Green to learn from their experience.
- Considered research carried out by Scottish Government regarding the impact of marketing to encourage parents of eligible 2-year-olds to take up their entitlement.
- Collaborated with D&G Revenues and Benefit agency, sharing data enabling direct targeting of eligible families in receipt of Community Tax Reduction (CTR)

Process Change

Throughout the learning process, the Driver Diagram was revised and amended 8 times. Taking account of a deeper understanding of our current system by applying our quality improvement methods.

Number 8 - DRIVER DIAGRAM DRAFT FOR THE QUEENS OF THE SOUTH



Achievements

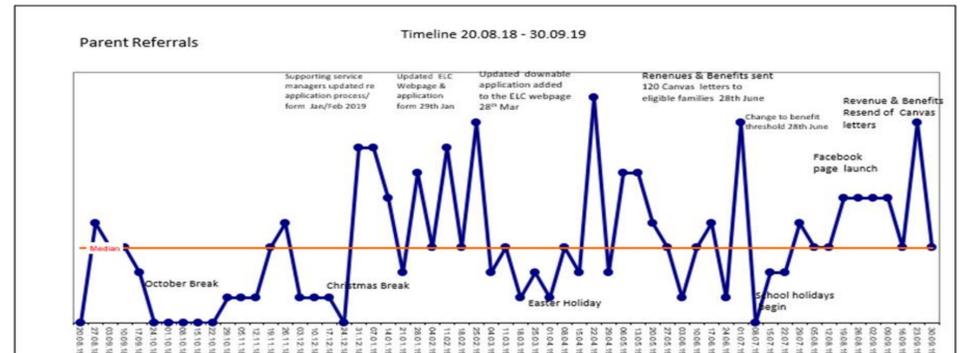
- Built positive working relationships as a project team, valuing and drawing upon each members' skills and agency knowledge ensuring progress towards the aim.
- Worked collaboratively with Education Early Years Support (Home team), to collect and share data for measuring purposes.
- Home and Away team established positive relationships with D&G Revenues and Benefits (R&B's) dept. Data sharing between R&B's and Early Years Support has enabled the identification and direct targeting of eligible families. The process of targeting continues to be tested and measured and reviewed with family consent.
- Changes to the application process means families are now able to complete a downloadable application form available on the D&G ELC Website.
- Specific information source codes added to the application form enables marketing data to be gathered. Data shows the HV service as the main source of information for families.
- Data highlights the potential to further target other supporting agencies to ensure sign posting and consistency of information.
- Worked in collaboration with the LA Graphics team to update and rebrand the now 'Terrific Twos' leaflet and develop a Facebook page, released at the end of August. The new branding encourages a positive view of 2 year-old children.
- Developed links with DWP and HV management to ensure consistency of information and sign posting - this work is ongoing with future meetings arranged.
- Raised awareness to the National commitment to improving the uptake of eligible twos within home teams.
- Increased knowledge and skills in improvement methodology. From novices to enthusiasts

Key Learning Points

- Time is required to maintain dynamic momentum.
- Building and fostering good inter-agency communication was a key factor.
- Allow time to refine the project aim.
- Reducing the number of change ideas allows for an achievable aim.
- The monthly report and Driver Diagram were useful in identifying the work and agreed actions for each team member. An action minute would have been useful.
- To be clear about what is required from the data to ensure measuring tools are robust.
- Analyse and use the data available to inform our actions.
- To reduce variants, key sources of information need to be limited to two sites - one National and one Local, ensuring well managed up-to-date information.
- Further high-level support and facilitation could have been accessed.

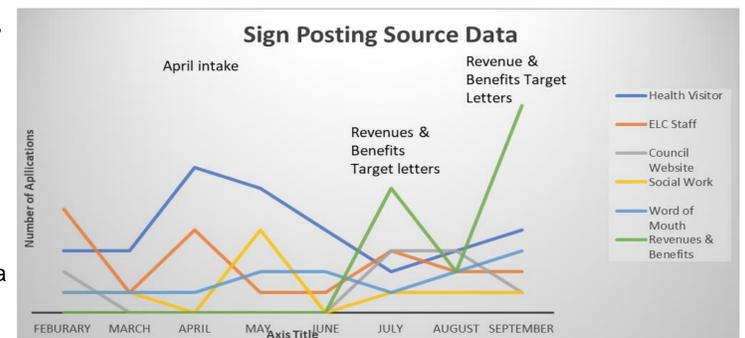
Results

The Timeline highlights the pattern of parental self-referrals from August 2018 – Sept 2019. Marketing information shows notable peaks in applications that aligned to changes introduced by the project team during the first 7 months of 2019.



Marketing data showed the Health Visiting service as the main source of information for parents followed by ELC staff. Collection of Revenues & Benefit data began in July.

Data collected shows a pattern of applications at the time Revenues and Benefits targeted eligible families.



Cross matching of data will highlight where families used a different application route.

Conclusions

- The aim was to increase the uptake of eligible 2-year old places to 50% by 30th August 2019. In June 2019, we reported an increased uptake of eligible 2-year old places to 61%, achieving our aim.
- Marketing data showed the Health Visiting (HV's) service as the main source of information for families. The HV's who completed the baseline questionnaire demonstrated all were confident in their knowledge and understanding of the application criteria and the benefits of ELC for children and parents. A sample of data shows out of 17 families sign posted by HV's, only one application was not approved. This would suggest HV's provide consistently accurate information as a result of the project activity.
- Marketing information suggests a lower than expected response from the 120 families targeted by the Dept of Revenues & Benefits (R&B's). There is potential to include information regarding the benefits of ELC for the child and the parent. A data crossmatch of applications will help to identify families who may have chosen to apply through a different route.
- Parents have told us:

'Clear useful information. I like the pictures and Terrific Twos title'

Parent comment on revised leaflet

'My little girl loves being at nursery. she has come on leaps and bounds. It's given me the chance to go college'

Parent successfully passed her HNC in Childcare and secured a job with the LA

Scale / Spread

- Ongoing work with the Dept. of Revenue and Benefits will ensure all eligible families receive timely information about the 2-Year-Old entitlement. Letters and application forms to go out in October targeting those families with children who are eligible to take up a place in January.
- Early Years Support Team will continue to collate data, which will be used to improve and agree the final joint working process.
- Ongoing work with supporting services to ensure consistency of information around the eligibility criteria, application process and benefits for children and families, this will include a presentation to Department of Working Pensions (DWP) frontline staff and continued working with Health Visiting and ELC services.
- Facebook page will go live in August and will be followed by a second promotion in November before the January intake.
- Continued collaboration with Early Years Support team and other agencies.