

PUPIL EQUITY FUNDING: THIRD SECTOR EXPERIENCES IN GLASGOW RESEARCH SUMMARY - FEBRUARY 2018

The Everyone's Children project was established in 2013 by Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector (GCVS) to promote, support and connect Third Sector organisations in Glasgow that provide services to children, young people and families. The project is funded by the Scottish Government and seeks to enable stronger links between the Third Sector and the local authority in Glasgow to inform policy, planning and service development.

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) was announced in December 2016, as part of the Scottish Government draft budget. It provided a total of £120m for schools to use at their discretion to close the attainment gap in 2017-18. The funding was allocated directly to schools, based on eligibility for free school meals. The national guidance stated that the funding was intended to provide targeted support for children and young people affected by poverty to achieve their full potential.

Schools were urged to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people by working in partnership with a range of bodies such as parent groups, parent councils, Third Sector organisations, other educational sectors and centres of expertise.

Schools in Glasgow received a total of £21,602,400 in Pupil Equity Funding. They had a limited time to submit proposals. Guidance was issued in January 2017 and initial plans submitted by the end of March. Schools were asked to implement from April 2017, where possible.

During the planning process, three networking events were held in Glasgow for schools and Third Sector organisations. Two of these were run by Locality Planning in the North-East and South. One was run by GCVS in collaboration with the North-West Wellbeing Network and West & Central Voluntary Sector Network, at the request of primary schools in Knightswood and Drumchapel. To support the event, the Everyone's Children team also prepared a directory of Third Sector services for children, young people and families.

AIMS

This report set out to find out the views of Third Sector organisations on their experiences of the procurement process and contracting with schools for PEF in Glasgow. It also sought views on how GCVS could support them.

METHODS

The report includes a review of guidance on PEF spending for head teachers from local and national government, as well as some background details of the funding in the wider context of educational reform & the child poverty agenda. It summarises examples of which measures are most effective in closing the attainment gap, based on academic research and feedback on the use of the pupil premium in English schools. The report also examines available information as to how PEF was spent within local authorities, particularly within the Glasgow City Council area.

In order to get an insight into Third Sector experiences, we interviewed ten organisations working with children, young people and families in Glasgow. Most of these organisations – though not all – had participated in the PEF commissioning process with varying degrees of success.

FINDINGS

All but one of the organisations who participated in the research had existing relationships with schools and had provided services to pupils and families.

These services included:

- After-school care
- Breakfast and lunch clubs
- Family support, e.g. groups for parents; parent and child play sessions; outreach family support for substance abuse, poverty and trauma-related issues
- Creative Play sessions
- Targeted support for pupil wellbeing and learning

One of the Third Sector organisations said they were aware of PEF before the guidance was issued, while the other organisations were not aware of PEF until the commissioning process was already underway (one was not sure when they became aware of the process).

All of the organisations attended at least one networking event but eight of the ten organisations interviewed also made direct contact with schools regarding PEF. The other two organisations decided not to participate in the commissioning process.

Six of the organisations (of the eight who participated in the commissioning process) were critical of how the process operated.

The main issues they identified were:

- The process was not long enough
- There was insufficient advance notice and information for both organisations & head teachers
- Head teachers were not aware of available services
- The process encouraged the marketisation of the Third Sector at the expense of the genuine needs of pupils
- Lack of clarity as to how and when PEF monies would be paid
- Lack of sustainability due to the short-term nature of the funding

Organisations which approached schools with pre-written and costed proposals had an easier time contracting with schools than those who tried to first engage schools in a discussion about their needs.

Five of the ten organisations were ultimately commissioned by schools to provide services using PEF. Services commissioned included play sessions, physical wellbeing, and support for learning. All organisations commissioned this year are hoping to continue their contracts with schools into the next year of funding.

One organisation was interviewed after they had already begun working with schools and they described having difficulties managing the expectations of teachers - about what they were able to provide and how quickly they could expect to see results.

Views on the utility of networking events were mixed. One organisation said that the event helped them to make contacts and they were commissioned by a school following the event. Another organisation said that they used their existing school contacts to secure contracts, though they felt it was still a worthwhile event. Others said that they were useful but happened too late in the process.

Most of the organisations thought that GCVS could take on an "honest broker" role, though they emphasised that this should be done locally rather than on a citywide basis. They were also largely positive about the idea of producing directories of organisations in specific parts of the city and making these available to head teachers.



ACTIONS

- Everyone's Children Project held two further networking events in 2017 (in North West and North East Glasgow) in conjunction with the Citywide Forum (Children, Young People and Families) and local voluntary sector networks. These enabled Third Sector organisations to meet with Health and Social Care Staff and head teachers. Both had excellent turnouts (100+ people) and good feedback from participants about the opportunities to meet. A further networking event is planned for 2018.
- A directory of local Third Sector services was developed for each event. These were very well received and teachers in particular commented that they did not know that there were so many local services. The Everyone's Children Project continues to expand the directories, which are now [on the GCVS website](#).

- GCVS now has a place on the Glasgow Education Improvement Board. This is an officer group that supports schools to meet the National Improvement Framework. It includes Glasgow Council Education Services staff, Glasgow Life staff and head teachers from Glasgow primary and secondary schools.
- Everyone's Children staff are giving presentations to groups of schools about the benefits of partnership working with the Third Sector, and offering to support and co-ordinate local networking events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Scottish Government should examine research into what initiatives have been shown to be effective in closing the attainment gap, as well as reports on the use of the pupil premium in England and Wales. This can be used to inform future guidance for head teachers on spending the pupil equity monies.
2. Glasgow City Council should evaluate the effectiveness of the various PEF initiatives and continue to encourage networking and partnerships between the public and Third sectors.
3. GCVS should continue to promote the Third Sector, organise further networking events for organisations to engage with schools and provide training to organisations on pricing services and developing proposals.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information on this report or on the Everyone's Children project, you can contact the team: everyoneschildren@gcvs.org.uk

You can find us at www.gcvs.org.uk or on Twitter [@EC_GCVS](https://twitter.com/EC_GCVS)



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