

West Cheshire's Whole Place Community Budget pilot

West Cheshire's Community Budget work – Altogether Better – is designed to reduce wasteful duplication of services, promote an integrated approach to service delivery and improve outcomes for residents. The key aims of the Altogether Better³ programme include reducing demand for more expensive and long term services by:

- Reducing duplication and waste that exists in current delivery models
- Targeting resources to where they are most needed and in a way that is easier for people to see on the ground
- Providing better value for money
- Supporting, sharing and replicating excellent practice, with proven solutions that can be scaled up locally, regionally and nationally
- Providing services that genuinely make a difference to people's lives and that result in sustainable improvements for local communities
- Devolving and divesting services, responsibilities and assets to local communities where appropriate
- Enabling local communities to play a greater role in the design and delivery of services
- Supporting economic growth and job creation

The project is one year into implementation and a lot of the focus in that year has been on setting up the systems to support the work, including shared systems amongst partners, facilities, information sharing and how to understand and measure the impact of new delivery models – known as benefits realisation.

This approach focuses on the metrics and baselines that enable partners to track progress and understand the impact of new models of service delivery, allowing partners to move from theoretical cost-benefit analysis to real data.

Innovative projects that work across themes have been established, including one known as Integrated Early Support, which supports children and young people with multiple needs and troubled families, as well as tackling domestic abuse in a joined up way. This approach brings together three of the original business cases submitted to Government to avoid new silos. The ultimate aim is to improve outcomes by intervening before people's problems escalate to crisis points, thereby reducing demand on costly acute services.

West Cheshire's business plans predicted savings overall from the Community Budget in the region of £106m gross and £51m net over five years, but savings were not expected at scale in the first financial year of implementation (2013- 14). However, some early learning is available, which includes encouraging signs across the board. Those from the Integrated Early Support work include:

- The balance between 'step ups' to statutory social care and 'step downs' from social care is shifting, indicating that multi-agency support to individuals and families below the social care threshold can help prevent escalation. This positive trend in step downs could result in a financial saving of between £378 and £2,416 per case when looking at the case's management costs only, but importantly, by intervening earlier and preventing a case escalating, avoids a child potentially being taken into care (average placement cost of £44,676)
- Very small numbers of people are being re-escalated into social care after they have been 'stepped down', and significantly lower numbers than before the integrated care system was in place

- In some cases, due to earlier intervention to prevent a case escalating, demand for services can increase (we found this is a finding common to areas focusing on early intervention) – however it is anticipated that corresponding reductions in more acute interventions should be seen over time, resulting in significant financial savings.

Extract taken from:

Managing Demand: Building Future Public Services

By Anna Randle and Henry Kippin

The RSA

P.47

<https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/managing-demand-building-future-public-services/>