



SCSN Policy and Strategy Paper No 03 – Preventative Spend

1 Introduction

Preventative spending, such as investment into prevention and intervention programmes, is seen by many as being the best economic and social long term investment for the future as it reduces dependency and cost to services in later years. Preventative spend is not a novel or complex idea, in the 1950's the mass vaccination against polio and tuberculosis saw the virtual eradication of the diseases by the mid 1960's.

The large scale social problems in Scotland pose a pressure on the public purse with approximately 40-45% of public spending focussed on short term spend aimed at addressing social problems¹. The cost to Scotland of illicit drug use and alcohol abuse is £3.5bn and £2.25bn respectively, however, only 6% of £173m spent on drug and alcohol services is for prevention².

This briefing paper aims to highlight the position of the Scottish Government, Scottish Parliament and the Christie Commission on the notion of preventative spending and to provide insight to the barriers that public services will face, but will need to overcome to ensure a healthier and safer Scotland.

2 Government and Parliament Position

Christie Commission

The Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services, also known as the Christie Commission was established to develop recommendations for the future delivery of public services. One of the Commissions four key objectives is “prioritising prevention, reducing inequalities and promoting equality”. The Commission recognises that the growing demand for public services is stemmed from a focus on reactive spending and that these reactive approaches are resource intensive and represent lost opportunities to have a more transformative impact. It is highlighted that with the budgetary decline and increase in demand for services, preventative spending is challenging but imperative and that the adoption of preventative spending will contribute to making best use of money and to eradicate duplication and waste. The commission states that a reform of the public services can support a preventative approach by:

- Pooling budgets in support of longer term outcome based approaches and reduce public expenditure by preventing duplication;
- Deepening a partnership approach;
- Empowering frontline staff; and
- Empowering communities.

The Commission calls on the Scottish Government and Local Authorities to initiate reforms with the goal to a substantial transformation of public services which would lead to a sustainable, person centred system achieving outcomes for every citizen and community.

¹ Finance Committee Report on Preventative Spending, Scottish Parliament Paper 555, 2011

² Drug and Alcohol Services in Scotland, Audit Scotland, 2009

The full report can be accessed at:
<http://scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/352649/0118638.pdf>

Scottish Parliament Finance Committee 2011 report

The Scottish Parliament's Finance Committee 2011 report regarding preventative spending strongly backs the prevention and intervention approach. The report notes that the focus must be changed from responding to social problem to preventing them and in doing so, public bodies must work more closely together to tackle root causes. It is highlighted that while preventative spend can deliver savings, it should not be seen as a way to save money but as an approach that will deliver wider benefits as a whole and can deliver both short and long term results. The report highlights the work of the Early Years Framework undertaken by the Scottish Government and recognises that early interventions provide children (and their families) significant help to prevent or reduce likelihood of developing future social problems.

The report identifies that the challenge is the need to redirect resources away from crisis intervention to crisis prevention. The 2012-13 draft Scottish budget projects £500 million to be spent on preventative care over the next three years targeting programmes relating to adult social care, re-offending and early years. However, it is recognised that a consensual, partnership approach is needed and requires constructive dialogue with Scottish Government, COSLA, Health Boards and other partners, including the third sector.

The full report can be accessed at:
<http://archive.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/finance/reports-11/fir11-01.htm>

Scottish Government

The Scottish Government state that preventative spend is integral to the approach to Government in Scotland and delivering the outcomes set out in the National Performance Framework. The Government Economic Strategy focuses on preventative spend to tackle social and health problems which prevent people and communities from reaching their full economic potential. There is a need to identify the appropriate mix of policies and interventions to respond to short term necessities and to deliver long term benefits. However, they also highlight that Scotland shouldn't look exclusively to preventative programmes to prevent negative social outcomes as we should also recognise the preventative elements of wider programmes. The Scottish Government are convinced by the merit of driving forward preventative approaches and will make a step change in focussing efforts on prevention and anticipation, with evidence based intervention at earliest stages. The Scottish Government state that they will aim to help partners identify, generate and share evidence on what is working and make clear which are ineffective and should no longer be supported.

The continued investment in preventative spend in the 2012-13 budget is directly aimed at improving outcomes and reducing demand for a range of acute services over time. The additional funds will help drive further integration of services and sharing of vital resources. Corresponding budgets can therefore be reduced in further years enabling the Scottish Government to manage costs across the pending review period as a whole.

3 Barriers to Overcome

It is evident that preventative spending is seen as the way forward, however a number of barriers have been highlighted which will need to be overcome and worked with to ensure it is a success.

- An increase in investment of preventative spend programmes does not mean that existing 'reactive budgets' can be immediately cut;
- There is a difficulty in freeing up money to finance preventative spend that is currently tied up in acute care and hospital provision;
- There is too much pressure on budget holders to tackle negative social outcomes here and now, despite recognition this will have limited success in the longer term;
- It may be difficult to prove that a specific intervention was responsible for an outcome;
- Long-term outcomes delivered by preventative spending measures may be difficult to evaluate;
- The public service sector who invest in preventative spend may not be the same body that derives the benefits;
- The political cycle every 4 years means that some preventative spend projects would run longer and the issue of funding arises;
- Budget restraints may make focus on preventative spend less likely.

4 Examples of Preventative Spending

Make It Safe Campaign - Blind Cord Initiative Scotland

The Make It Safe campaign, of which RoSPA is a part, aims to raise awareness of the potential dangers of looped cords among families with small children by distributing thousands of "Make it Safe" leaflets and cleats, around which blind cords can be tied out of the way of young children. RoSPA have expanded on their Scottish blind cord safety awareness campaign pilot project, which initially ran in North Lanarkshire, to three new areas in Scotland: Borders, Fife and South Lanarkshire.

The funding of £8000 from the Scottish Government allowed for the distribution of 12,000 leaflets (1p each) and cleats (6p each) with the remainder of the funding utilised for catering at press launches and ensuring RoSPAs time was spent on: formulating press releases, taking part in set up and support meetings, providing and completing partnership agreement forms, facilitating and conducting telephone interviews with recipients of the resources and the production of the final evaluation report (due out in January 2012).

The TRL Re-Evaluation of Home Accidents report estimates that home accidents result in around 2.7 million people treated in hospital and 4000 fatalities per year. The average cost of non-fatal home accident is £16,900 per victim whilst a fatality is estimated at £1.61million. The results from the initial Make it Safe pilot project in North Lanarkshire found that since receiving Make it Safe information, 60% of the parents and carers who participated said they were now unlikely to buy any blinds with looped cords because their knowledge of the dangers had increased and 69% said they had gone on to discuss the risk of blind cords with other parents or carers. Therefore, the results show that as well as injury and deaths being prevented, the project will result in a reduction of cost to the UK from an original outlay of £8000.

Further information relating to the Make it Safe Blind Cord Initiative can be found at: <http://www.rospa.com/about/currentcampaigns/blindcords/scotland.aspx>

The TRL Re-Evaluation of Home Accidents Report can be found at: <http://www.rospa.com/homesafety/Info/re-valuation.pdf>

Practice Notes

The SCSN Practice Notes are designed to disseminate the knowledge and experiences of practitioners working within community safety. The table below details

three Practice Notes that utilise the Preventative Spending theory. Please follow the link to access the entire Practice Note or visit the SCSN website (www.safercommunitiesscotland.org) to view all the Practice Notes.

Practice Note Number and Title	Description	Potential Savings
1: Reckless Driving Wrecks Lives	Road safety project targeted to secondary school pupils to highlight the consequences of dangerous driving and to emphasise responsible driving. Since 2005, 10,000 pupils have attended these events.	A death on the road is estimated to cost £1.64 million while serious and slight injuries are approximately £184,000 and £14,000 respectively.
20: The Gramps Initiative – Reducing Wilful Fire Raising	Early intervention project to prevent wilful fire raising through walks and talks programmes with P6 and P7 pupils. A reduction of 91 fires in 2005 to only 8 in 2010 has been seen.	The cost to the fire service for one fire was estimated at £37,000. Additional costs are associated with damage to property from smoke and soot.
29: Outer Hebrides Visitor Safety Initiative	Intelligence led intervention programme to promote safety awareness to the tourist visitors to the Outer Hebrides. During the programme, the lowest call out rate for the helicopter was observed.	The average cost every time the helicopter is scrambled is £10,000.

5 Conclusions

Preventative Spending is simply spending to prevent rather than spending to rectify. Due to the existing financial climate it has been made evident that a more systematic approach to preventing negative social outcomes is the way forward. An increased approach to preventative spending will ensure both long and short term results within society. However, all preventative spend projects need to ensure that they follow evidence of what works. Local Authorities and Community Safety Partnerships are well placed to implement Preventative Spending, with many already carrying out projects with prevention in mind.

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