



SSRG: Prevention and Outcome Analysis: What relevance for Children's Services Planning?

David Allan

Warwickshire County Council

National Evaluation of the Children's Fund

28th September 2005



The ground to be covered

- Prevention: What it is, why it is important in planning children's services.
- Prevention: The historical and current practitioner forces that make prevention an elusive concept.
- Outcomes: What they are and how they're connected to planning.
- Outcomes: The political shift in evaluating impact, and traps to avoid in outcome analysis.



Prevention: Why is it important?

- Intervening further up the river, reducing crises.
- More time on assisting rather than assessing families.
- More cost effective by moving from narrow intensive services to wider supportive services.
- Increases user involvement because services are less stigmatising and more tailored to meeting needs.
- Assists inter agency working because it connects universal and specialist services.



Prevention and Planning

“Integrated Children’s Service Plans must continue to include appropriate and specific reference to services for vulnerable children and children in need, including arrangements for early intervention and support within universal service and targeted additional support where required.”

(Section 7 of ICSP Guidance 2005-08)



Prevention: What is it?

"preventive services which provide support for young people and their families before they reach crisis, with the aim of reducing the future probability of poor outcomes and maximising life chances." (CYPU 2001)

"Better a fence at the top of the cliff than an ambulance at the bottom." (CYPU 2001)



Prevention: Agreeing what you're trying to prevent.

“One person’s prevention is another person’s intervention. There is much confusion over the term, and no single definition can be counted on as definitive.” (Dartington Unit 2004)



Prevention: What recent history tells us.

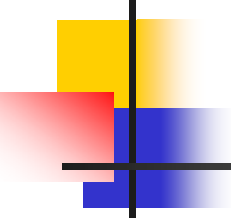
- The difficulty of demonstrating the worth of preventive services in the performance management culture. Causation and attribution.
- Social workers concentrate on the pathology of children and their families.
- Teachers concentrate on pupil performance.
- Health practitioners concentrate on illness.
- Prevention is the main arena of the voluntary and community sectors.



Prevention: 4 Levels of Prevention

- ***Diversionary*** : Making good things happen. (universal provision, developmental programmes)
- ***Early Intervention*** : Stopping bad things happening. (specialist, targeted interventions)
- ***Heavy End prevention*** : Stopping really bad things happening (multiple complex interventions)
- ***Restorative Prevention*** : Harm minimisation/ Bad things have already happened (protection, rehabilitation)

(adapted from Hardiker et al 1991)



Charting preventive services and policy objectives (Outcomes)

Don't forget "Included"

Level	Safe	Nurture	Health	Achieve	Active	Respect
Diversionsary						
Early Intervention						
Heavy End Prevention						
Restorative Prevention						



Prevention and planning processes

Governance & Decision Making	Plans and planning cycles
Commissioning	Performance Management Frameworks



Prevention: Agreeing an approach

- Having decision making arrangements that include the “prevention” lobby.
- Agreeing policies and strategies in plans that include the prevention dimension.
- Commissioning more services with a prevention remit at different levels.
- Having PM frameworks that have indicators, targets and **outcomes** concerned with prevention.



Outcomes and the planning process

“Planning processes must add value to the outcomes for children and young people.”

(Section 3 of ICSP Guidance 2005-08)



Outcomes: The new paradigm in England

- 1998: Performance Indicators (performance measurement)
- 2001-2004: Tools and Techniques (performance management)
- 2005: Standards & Outcomes (managing performance)



Outcomes: What are they and how do you analyse them?

- Evidence of reaching policy objectives for improvements.
- From Inputs and Outputs to Outcomes.
- Short, medium and long term outcomes.
- How do you know you've made the right impact? Users experiences.



Outcomes and planning processes

Governance & Decision Making	Plans and planning cycles
Commissioning	Performance Management Frameworks



Outcomes and Governance

- Looking at the effectiveness of the deployment of resources in achieving policy outcomes.
- Making decisions about new commissioning and decommissioning on the basis of achievement of outcomes.



Outcomes and Plans.

- Stating what your outcomes are and describe and define in terms that can be measured.
- Define the timescales for an impact of a policy objective being realised.
- Gain inspiration from being outcome orientated. “Outcomes: Reframing Responsibility for Well Being.” Annie E Casey Foundation 2002 (www.aecf.org publications, Research and Evaluation)



Outcomes: connected to commissioning

- Build in an independent evaluation of the user experience against agreed standards in the contract.
- Have short, medium and long term outcome statements in the contract that have a developmental dimension to them.



Outcomes: connected to performance management

- Have input, output and outcome indicators within the performance management framework that paint a full picture of performance.
- Where possible define the standards to be achieved in performance connected to outcomes.



Measuring the impact of prevention: Outcomes

“Measuring the none
occurrence of negative
events.”



Measuring the impact of prevention: Outcomes

■ The MacNamara Fallacy

“The first step is to measure whatever can be easily measured. This is ok as far as it goes.

The second step is to disregard that which cannot be easily measured or to give it an arbitrary quantitative value. This is artificial and misleading.

The third step is to presume that what cannot be measured easily really isn't important. This is blindness.

The fourth step is to say that what cannot be easily measured really does not exist. This is suicide.”

(Dylan William, Educational Review 2001)



Measuring the impact of prevention: Outcomes

- Work undertaken through the Children's Fund. Key message

"A three dimensional and more holistic approach to measuring the success of the Children's Fund. It is about the importance of hard evidence, the power of anecdotal evidence and being well positioned strategically to influence change."

(Making the Case for Prevention. Yorkshire and Humberside Region Children's Fund. June 2004)



Outcomes: The 3 cornered approach

- Quantitative evidence of change, drawing on trends, costs and impacts.
- Qualitative experiences of impact from users and staff involved in providing services.
- The power of case studies to highlight issues and demonstrate impact.



Outcomes: A final cautionary note

- Whose outcomes? Children's parents, communities, practitioners?
- Social Policy coherence and complimentary outcomes.
- Keeping it simple, and outcomes being political rallying calls rather than scientific pathways to the truth.