

## Written evidence from AllChild (CSC 180)

### Education Committee Children's Social Care

#### **About Us:**

AllChild works through place-based programmes to support children, families and communities in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Recognising the shortcomings of a system that reacts to crises rather than preventing them, we proactively identify children and young people at a tipping point of need, and mobilise private, public and voluntary services, to co-design holistic place-based programmes of support rooted in communities, to help each child to develop socially, emotionally, and academically. Delivered in-school through AllChild Link Workers, our place-based early intervention support programmes extend beyond individual care to drive a joined-up ecosystem of local support that strengthens communities, while also influencing national policy to promote community-led place-based models.

Since 2016, AllChild has worked with families to help thousands of children and young people at risk of negative outcomes including school exclusion, mental health disorders and involvement in violence to flourish, with measurable improvements in social, emotional, and academic wellbeing, demonstrating the effectiveness of early action and collaborative community efforts. Only 2-5% of children previously known to children's services re-engage, following AllChild's programme. 74% of children are no longer at risk in their peer relationships and 8 out of 10 are no longer at risk in their social and emotional wellbeing. Over half at risk in Reading/English and Maths improve their grades.

As an organisation focused on early identification, providing holistic wrap-around support for children and their families, we are answering the question: '***What measures can be undertaken to improve early intervention?***'

The current system is facing problems that prevent effective early intervention to occur. Though it is possible from data and professional judgement, ie. teachers, to know where and when help is required, due to lack of resources and difficulties engaging families, early intervention is non-viable. Additionally, children and young people's strengths and challenges are multi-dimensional however the system is siloed and support is fragmented. A truly holistic and joined up operational model bringing together families, schools, councils, civil society and communities is therefore needed, delivering early intervention, rooted in trusted relationships, located in a universal setting, and delivered by community based resourcing.

## **A) Early identification in schools**

Effective prevention is contingent on identifying children and families at a tipping point of need, before their emerging issues escalate to crisis and social care intervention. AllChild employs a unique methodology to proactively identify children most in need of early intervention, who would not otherwise fall under the radar for targeted support by utilising social, emotional and academic data, teacher judgements and school insight. Schools are best placed to identify early where needs are going unmet, particularly for children and families not known to children's services. AllChild has also found that schools are the best setting to rebuild trust and deliver Family Help support given the access this enables to children and families every day, and in taking the support and intervention to the children where they are. A schools-based approach therefore facilitates both early identification and early intervention.

Sustainable early intervention however is also contingent on resourcing and delivery of support. To have a truly effective preventative approach, you need to go upstream to tackle the root causes that are materialising in behaviours evident in the day to day. This requires a trusted relationship - where an understanding of a young person's family and home context, strengths, difficulties and needs can be developed and then an appropriate and tailored response can be put in place.

## **B) Trusted adult relationships**

AllChild provides each young person we work with their own AllChild Link Worker. Based full-time in schools, this helps facilitate that trusted relationship, and by collaborating with key adults in each child's life, they are able to gain a complete and shared picture of their needs and progress. They work directly with families, teachers and specialist charity and community organisations to plan, coordinate and deliver two-year support plans for each child and family. Understanding the strengths and interests alongside the challenges means intervention can be highly tailored and delivered in the right way at the right time. Schools act as a universal setting, an accessible place for children to receive support and where third sector organisations can reach children 'where they are'. Having a trusted adult based in schools, helps target the root causes and provide the right support at the right time to prevent escalation to crisis and children's services later down the line. Only 2-5% of children previously known to Children's Services, re-engage after AllChild support.

Working holistically also extends to supporting the whole family around a child. Many families in need of support, particularly those in poverty, lack the resources required to access it. AllChild Link Workers work with parents and carers, signposting them to and helping them receive support for their own needs such as family help or mental health support. Working in and with communities means AllChild can help form relationships between families and their local neighbourhoods. Last year, AllChild linked children and their families to opportunities available in their local communities approximately 5,000 times. These included referrals to CAMHS, housing support and Citizens Advice. In cases where the relationship between school and family has broken down, having an independent trusted relationship like the AllChild Link Worker, helps build that trust back up and re-form lost relationships. 78% of school leaders say

AllChild achieves a significant impact for their families including improving families' relationships with the school and access to local services. Support therefore is on-going and families have a better understanding of the services they can access when in need, allowing them to engage at the right time rather than needing crisis support later down the line.

### **C) Shared resources and shared outcomes**

AllChild shows that by pooling funding via an independent organisation known and trusted by families and giving all stakeholders (Early Help, schools, government) a seat at the table as partial payers, targeted meaningful collaboration can take place on the ground and provide a joined-up experience for families. Alignment to a shared outcome framework, with pooled funding, means all parties pay-in, and leads to effective and targeted early help. AllChild combines public and private funding by securing commissioned contracts from public sector commissioners including Local Authorities, schools and central government, and leveraging philanthropy via fundraising.

This funding model delivers more resources towards prevention than any one party can afford on their own and draws philanthropy into local systems in which it is currently not fully exploited. Outcomes-based funding through Social Outcomes Partnerships allows AllChild to deliver ambitious and highly tailored interventions with long-term impacts whilst risks associated with innovation are shared between stakeholders and upfront costs eliminated for commissioners.

Outcomes-based funding mechanisms are key for onboarding cash-stripped local commissioners, but to create lasting change, these need to be co-designed and 'owned' by communities – rather than creating more obligations to the centre. When done well, outcomes-based funding can empower practitioners, leading to greater autonomy and thus more person-centred support, and drive greater transparency and accountability for public funds via shared data.

For local commissioners, this model is a shortcut to prevention: a means to go out and identify children and families in need, a tool to build a local network of cross-sector partnerships and get services to people much earlier, and a mechanism for strategically utilising philanthropy in the system. This enables the right support to be delivered at the right time, and prevents the escalation of need for statutory intervention. According to independent analysis, AllChild's programme generates an estimated average of **£81,000 in financial savings and wider economic benefits per child** – e.g. from reduced demand for higher-tier services or improved earnings potential, and three-quarters of school leaders say that AllChild has contributed to avoiding the need for external intervention and escalation down the line including via social care.

### **D) Strategic partnerships with stakeholders**

As a mixed public/private 'backbone' organisation, independent of public systems but accountable to them, which both delivers services and proactively coordinates them, AllChild

enables children and families to engage in personalised and timely support that is relevant to their unique strengths, needs, and context. AllChild co-designs each local model with community leaders, services, schools and communities, tailoring its delivery to local contexts and needs. By bringing together local systems of support for design and delivery, AllChild embeds ongoing collaboration and drives positive community effects that extend well beyond individual care, for example, building lasting relationships between the school community and the local voluntary and community sector.

### ***Joining up local and specialist services via micro-commissioning and a network model***

Communities are best placed to know the needs of their neighbourhoods, and using community based assets helps to get through to hard to reach families and cultivates trust with local services. AllChild micro-commissions charity and community organisations, bringing specialist support into schools so children can best access it, including delivering socioemotional support and talking therapies. Intervening early and ensuring support can be easily accessed has a preventative effect as it provides children with the tools they need to flourish, socially, emotionally, academically, and prevent the need for statutory services later on. In 2022/23, we directed £1.3m in funding to community-based charity and voluntary organisations. Having AllChild convene all aspects of support into one place enables families that may go under the radar to be supported. Three quarters of delivery partners say AllChild helps them reach a broader range of young people and 90% of our in-school leaders say AllChild helps their families and schools connect with local services and opportunities. Local connections help embed support into the community, meaning that post-AllChild programme, families can continue to access support if they need it, preventing escalation to crisis and the need for intervention from statutory services later down the line.

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