

Conclusion of the Life Stages Programme – November 2017

Life Stages Programme

Life Stages was a strategic programme of change implemented in 2008. It aimed to transform how the West Lothian CPP plans and delivers services to ensure more effective interventions, to tackle inequalities and to achieve positive outcomes for our communities. The key principles of the programme were around use of evidence to target services to reduce inequalities, shifting resources upstream to deliver preventative services and ensuring that we obtain maximum impact for our expenditure. A set of short, medium and long term outcomes were identified for five life stages: Early Years, School Age, Young People in Transition, Adults of Working Age and Older People. A target population, those most in need of support to achieve better outcomes, was also identified within each life stage. Life Stages focused on redesigning services around the needs of these target groups using a holistic, evidence based and partnership approach.

Dedicated support materials (including the Making Change Happen support guide and collaborative bitesize training) assisted staff across the CPP to embed the Life Stages principles and processes in service design and delivery.

Influence of Life Stages on the CPP

It is important to acknowledge the positive influence that the Life Stage programme has had on the way the CPP designs and delivers its services. Pioneering the Life Stages approach as far back as 2008 is likely to have led to the CPP's positive progress, allowing the partnership to implement public service reform at an early stage from a strong position. The information below summarises this progress:

- When the Christie Commission was published in June 2011, the CPP had already begun to reform public services to improve the quality of life and outcomes for West Lothian's communities – Life Stages was a large part of this and the principles and outcomes of the programme had already become well integrated into the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA).
- The Life Stages programme got the CPP thinking about prevention and early intervention very early on, ensuring this approach is now firmly embedded in the council's Corporate Plan and in partners' plans and strategies. The CPP developed a robust Prevention Plan highlighting the positive examples of early intervention to date and outlining the commitment to further embedding the prevention agenda within CPP structures, processes and arrangements. Significant additional resources have been invested in time-limited preventative projects across the CPP. Preventative measures are also supported by the CPP's Anti-Poverty Strategy, which adopted the Life Stages model and has tackling inequality, early intervention, targeted services and co-production at the heart of the strategy.
- Engaging with service users and building services around their needs is key to delivering better outcomes and this was acknowledged by the Life Stages programme. The CPP continues to recognise the importance of involving communities in community planning and work is

underway to improve community involvement throughout the CPP. Local regeneration plans are currently being developed with the community to tackle inequalities at a local level across West Lothian.

- Life Stages got the CPP thinking very early on about the need to use data and evidence to target services at those most in need. Some examples are included below:
 - **Young Mothers' Services:** The Family Nurse Partnership (NHS Lothian) and Young Mothers' Service (West Lothian Council) were designed to work together to provide intensive key working support to young and vulnerable mothers up to age 25 with specific needs-e.g. formerly looked after; history of mental illness; substance misuse; previous children looked after. West Lothian now ensures that 100% of its pregnant and parenting women under age 20 are offered an intensive keyworking service to support families at their earliest stage.
 - **Families Included Service:** Families Included Service (FIS) was a family intervention based service which worked with families who had multiple and complex needs and who had a long standing history of receipt of services from a range of agencies without sustainable improvement in their circumstances. It was externally evaluated to establish whether the model could affect sustainable change at an earlier opportunity, to avoid accommodation of children at a later date. The learning from the evaluation of both the Families Included Service and the Supporting Families Service, which targeted lower threshold families, has resulted in the development of the Whole Family Support Service. The aim of the Whole Family Support Service is to prevent the escalation of issues within families which occur as a result of generational patterns of social difficulties and cause high cost interventions such as long term care placements. Therefore the service works with the whole family to build their capacity to address their issues and support their children without such a heavy reliance on public services.
 - **Early and Effective Intervention:** A coordinator post was developed to implement the Early and Effective Intervention framework for 8- 17 year olds with offending behaviour, in line with West Lothian Whole System Approach (WSA). A multi-agency system of early screening and allocation of resources/intervention was established to ensure timely and proportionate responses to children and young people. This approach resulted in: Reduction in offence referrals to SCRA; Reduction in the need for Compulsory Measures of Supervision for Young People; Preventing young people escalating through the Criminal Justice System; and Reduction in re-offending rates.

Services are now better planned and aligned across West Lothian as a result of our outcomes approach, integrated planning arrangements, focus on prevention, targeted interventions and partnership working. The CPP audit report confirmed that the West Lothian CPP is a mature partnership with a long history of good collaborative working, we are making good progress in improving outcomes for our communities and partners are well placed to implement public sector reform. The audit report specifically recognised that partnership working is a strong feature across

services that help older people to live independently in their own home and services that target families facing difficult circumstances; it recognised good practice examples in the Working Together Employability Group, Families Included Service, Domestic and Sexual Assault Team and the successful partnership centre models; and it highlighted our good practice in sharing data across the partnership.

The recent Joint Inspection of Children's Services in the CPP area identified that "Partners could demonstrate a range of improving trends through their approaches to early intervention and prevention" and that "Community planning partners were firmly committed to tackling poverty and closing outcome gaps. A broad range of early intervention and prevention measures were working to improve health and wellbeing of families, with a focus in their early years."

Changing Policy landscape

The policy landscape within which the CPP operates has now changed and this has had implications for the Life Stages programme. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a specific duty on the CPP and partners to tackle inequalities and improve outcomes for communities. CPPs are required to develop a local outcomes improvement plan (LOIP) which sets out how the partnership will achieve this. The CPP's locality plans (regeneration plans) will also be a key mechanism for tackling inequalities in West Lothian. The Anti-Poverty Strategy was also developed after Life Stages was implemented and is now well established in West Lothian as a key strategy for tackling inequalities. The Strategy has adopted the Life Stages principles and the action plan is being taken forward in a life stages focused way. Tackling inequalities, early intervention, targeted services, co-production and partnership working are at the heart of the Anti-Poverty Strategy as well as the LOIP and other CPP plans/strategies. Governance changes also mean that the work of the Life Stages sub-groups has now been picked up by the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group.

Life Stages has therefore been superseded by other plans and arrangements and the principles of the programme have in fact been embedded in the way the CPP operates. CPP services are now planned and delivered in an outcomes focused and holistic way as a matter of course. There is also some confusion amongst CPP staff around whether Life Stages still exists and whether we should be working to the set of outcomes alongside the LOIP outcomes and so it would be useful to streamline the landscape.

Conclusion

Following a review of Life Stages, the CPP Board has concluded that there is no longer a need to have this as a separate standalone programme. Whilst it is important to acknowledge the benefits the Life Stages programme has had on CPP service design and delivery, we also need to recognise changes to the CPP landscape and more recent developments in terms of key strategies such as the LOIP and Anti-Poverty Strategy. The key principles of Life Stages have now been embedded in how the CPP operates. The CPP is therefore drawing a line under the Life Stages programme.

Life Stages documents and materials will be made available for reference only.