

Greater Manchester Evaluation and Cost Benefit Analysis Newsletter – No. 3 – April 2011

Welcome to the third GM Evaluation and Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) Newsletter.

In this newsletter we:

- Give feedback on the pilot cost-benefit training workshop we ran in February.
- Review the GM Community Budget pipeline projects who we will be working with in the coming months.
- Introduce our work with GM Police to assess their new approach to neighbourhood policing.
- Give an update on the wider evaluation tasks which support our cost benefit modelling.
- Summarise our research into Sure Start outreach activities.

If you want to find out more, our contact details are given at the end of the newsletter. Alternatively, visit the Community of Practice website.

Roll out of cost-benefit training

In February we ran a pilot training workshop for staff from Manchester, Stockport and Salford local authorities. The purpose of the workshop was to consider some of the tasks (such as identifying the cohort, calculating delivery costs and using cost benefit analysis to inform investment agreements) that partnerships will need to undertake in order to get a community budget up and running. We made the day-long workshop interactive, with attendees being put into groups to discuss how they would undertake various tasks and each group being helped to produce a cost benefit analysis of their community budget proposal.

Following positive feedback on the workshop, we have been given the green light to offer the training to other teams across Greater Manchester. We plan to deliver four workshops over the coming 4-6 weeks. These sessions will be for local teams who are currently developing GM Community Budget proposals (see below for details). Unlike the pilot workshop, the upcoming sessions will include staff from outside the local authority. Having a broad range of agencies represented will help to embed the processes and partnerships that will define the GM Community Budget. Additional workshops will be delivered before we reach the end of our NWIEP funding period.

Applying CBA to GM Community Budget proposals

In the last newsletter we mentioned how we plan to apply the cost benefit analysis model we developed for the GM spatial pilots to GM community budget proposals. GM Community Budget proposals will involve the pooling of several funding streams from different agencies to support a combined proposition. Proposals will need to include evidence of the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed intervention.

At a session in Bolton in March 12 teams presented their ideas on how a community budget could operate in their locality. Some proposals represented an evaluation of the GM spatial pilots work; others represented new areas of partnership working. Following the meeting it was agreed that we will work intensively with four teams in order to help them understand how the CBA model works and how its application will help them to develop their community budget proposal. The four teams we will be working with are:

- Oldham
- Tameside
- Trafford
- Wigan

The proposals put forward by these teams are highly varied. Some are proposing intensive work with a small number of families; others are looking at area-wide activities. Some teams want to work with support providers to develop a suite of interventions; others want to give budgets to local residents to let them determine what support they need. This variety will present interesting challenges when it comes to cost benefit modelling the different proposals.

In the coming 4-6 weeks we will be arranging day long training workshops (see above) with each of the community budget teams. Following these workshops we will be drawing up a list of key research tasks, divided between the teams and ourselves, that will need to be completed before their GM Community Budget proposal can 'go live'.

We plan to work with further teams of agencies as more proposals come forward.

Work with Greater Manchester Police

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) is currently testing a new approach to neighbourhood policing in Bury and four other locations in GM. In these areas teams of police, council staff and housing officers will be working to a single line of management, with the aim of identifying and supporting those families who are most in need and who currently place the greatest strain on resources.

The GMP team was aware of our cost benefit analysis work and asked if we could support their work to develop a business case setting out the operational and financial benefits of the new approach to neighbourhood policing. Over the next six weeks we will help the GMP team to develop its cost benefit analysis model and to better understand the benefits that flow from the new way of working.

We believe that being able to apply our cost benefit analysis model to a real life intervention will be of great benefit. In particular it will help us to understand the magnitude of cost savings that can be achieved by bringing several agency teams together in one delivery system.

Our work with GMP will conclude in early May.

Progress in developing an evaluation framework for Greater Manchester

Cost benefit analysis is only one part of our work. We are also seeking to develop and embed across GM agencies a range of tools that will help staff to plan, monitor and evaluate their activities. The tools we are currently developing and trialling include:

- A central costs database – this will allow partnerships to quickly and accurately work out the net cost of their proposal, and thereby provide a building block for robust CBA;
- Input into the development of investment agreements – community budget propositions will be underpinned by common agreements on how propositions will be funded and how the savings that result from a proposition will be shared or reinvested. We are using our CBA model to help inform what information these investment agreements need to contain.
- Accessing data – several of the spatial pilots and community budget proposals have encountered difficulties accessing data and information. We are using our strategic position, and our links to the work of groups such as the North West e-Government Group, to identify these difficulties and raise them with the relevant authorities.

Sure Start Randomised Control Trial findings

In February we published the results of a randomised control trial (RCT) into the effectiveness of different forms of outreach by Sure Start centres. In particular, the research looked at how centres can engage those families who do not currently attend.

This was the one of the first occasions on which an RCT has been used to assess a social policy in GM. The study found that expensive doorstep visits and postal leaflets were not an effective way of boosting registration rates, suggesting that alternative ways of raising awareness of the services on offer are required.

Further detail on the RCT is available on the New Economy website.

Next steps

The next steps in our work programme include:

- Further workshops with a selection of GM Community Budget partnerships.
 - Working with central government to further develop the GM CBA model.
 - Producing a summary of the outputs from our 12 months of NWIEP funded activity.
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Contact details

To find out more about Evaluation and Cost Benefit Analysis or provide feedback, please contact us.



David Morris
Evaluation Partnerships Manager

(0161) 2374079

(07540) 920822

david.morris@neweconomymanchester.com



Julian Cox
Cost Benefit Analysis Manager

(0161) 2374034

(07540) 920821

julian.cox@neweconomymanchester.com