

Boosting Budgets How-to Guide



This guide offers more detailed information and advice for those who may be interested in adopting or adapting the initiative in their local area.

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Title	Boosting Budgets
Organisation	Fife Council
Category	Promising Practice
Poverty Impact	Reduction
Introduction to the Project	
<p>The Boosting Budgets project is a 7-week financial capability group for parents and carers across various schools across Fife with a weekly class covering a different topic every week. It addresses issues from fuel poverty, saving and borrowing, to benefits and rights as well as cooking on a budget with separate sessions dedicated to budgeting, benefit support and cooking. The service can provide support with maximising income through informing service users of potential unclaimed benefits they may be entitled to, as well as practical help with cooking skills and budgeting for food and households. This project currently runs across 20 schools and is provided by the Fife Council (Education Service) and Citizens Advice and Rights Fife (CARF).</p>	

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Initial Idea

Who had the initial idea?
Louise Hynd
How did the idea for the project come about?
Louise took inspiration from a previous project which had been disbanded in Fife, which she evolved and expanded upon.
Did you draw on any published reports / papers / research evidence or practice you had seen elsewhere to inform your plans? <i>If so, please add details to the box below.</i>
No
Who was involved in developing the initial idea of the project?
Louise Hynd
Were those with lived experience of poverty involved in developing the initial idea of the project?
No
What funding was used, if any, to support the development of the initial idea of the project?
Support and Education Fife Council funding (from mainstream funding for Support and Connect).

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What in-kind resources were needed when developing the initial idea of the project?	
Facilities	Schools, Nurture Centres
Equipment	Cooking utensils, WIFI, Computers
Local Knowledge	Louise has connections with different agencies across Fife
Food and Drink	Ingredients for cooking sessions
What, if any, barriers did you have to overcome when developing the initial idea of the project?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Getting schools to invest in the project.• Understaffing in schools created difficulties in facilitating sessions.	
What, if anything, was helpful when developing the initial idea of the project?	
Training up staff to be food champions, allowing them to deliver the sessions themselves.	
What was the timeline between the initial idea and the start of the project?	
Around 2 years due to the disruption of COVID-19 lockdowns.	
Who made the decision to introduce the project?	
Louise Hynd.	

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Early Development of the Project

Did you run a pilot project or carry out a feasibility study?	
Yes	
What did you do? Please describe the pilot project or feasibility study.	
Workshops were delivered in 5 nurture centres throughout Fife.	
Who was involved in the work of the pilot project?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fife Council (Education Service) • Family Workers • Citizens Advice • Cosy Kingdom • Nurture Centre staff 	
How, if at all, were those with lived experience of poverty involved in the pilot of the project or feasibility study?	
No co-production	
What funding was used, if any, for the pilot of the project or feasibility study?	
Support and Education Fife funding (from mainstream funding for Support and Connect).	
What in-kind resources were used for the pilot of the project or feasibility study?	
Facilities	Schools, Nurture Centres
Equipment	Cooking utensils, WIFI, computers
Local Knowledge	Louise has connections with different agencies across Fife
Food and Drink	Ingredients for cooking sessions
Was the pilot project or feasibility study evaluated? <i>If yes, please provide details</i>	

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Yes, using a scale (further details below).

What evidence, if any, from the pilot project was used to confirm that it was working?

The scale was used to highlight the effectiveness of the project. Participants would be asked to, for example, rate their confidence regarding cooking on a budget both at the start and end of the sessions.

Who made the decision to continue with the project beyond the pilot or feasibility study?

Louise Hynd

How did the pilot or feasibility study inform the final design of the project?

The final design of the project is to a great extent identical to the design of the pilot. The following aspects have been altered:

- A local credit union, Community Bank, initially had a session to themselves. They are now tied into their citizens advice sessions as it felt a full one wasn't needed.
- Initially, money being put into a credit account was used as an incentive for participants to attend. As this was not desirable for many people, the incentive used is now a £30 shopping voucher, given out at the end of their course on their celebration week.

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Accessing the Service and Engaging with Service Users

Is there a referral process? If yes, how does the referral process work (self-referral, referred by other agencies, identified from an existing database)

Referral by members of school staff.

How are potential clients made aware of the project?

They are targeted in schools and nurture centres via already existing relationships with staff. Potential clients are also made aware of the project via group calls, text messages, and social media posts.

How do you keep in touch with service users? Do your service users have a preferred method of contact?

Via text message, phone call and email. Service users are more likely to respond to text message or email if a relationship has not yet been established with staff.

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Working with People with Lived Experience of Poverty

Are those with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>delivering</u> the project? <i>If so, please describe below.</i>
No
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved in <u>managing</u> the project or project governance? <i>If so, please describe below.</i>
No
Are people with lived experience of poverty involved <u>in any other aspect</u> of the project? <i>If so, please describe below.</i>
No

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Leadership, Governance and Partnership Working

Who is responsible for managing the project?
Louise Hynd.
Is this the only responsibility of the person managing the project? <i>If not please describe the manager's wider roles and responsibilities.</i>
Louise is a Welfare Reform Coordinator and is also responsible for coordinating the Support and Connect Group in Fife. Louise also currently works on a 1-on-1 basis with parents throughout Fife, though this responsibility will be passed on to another member of staff in the near future.
Is there a Project Steering Group? <i>If yes, who is involved in this and how does it work.</i>
No

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Links to Wider Policies, Strategies and Statutory Requirements

Is the project part of a wider anti-poverty strategy? <i>If so, please give details.</i>
This project feeds into the Plan for Fife.
Is the project part of any other strategy? <i>If so, please give details.</i>
No
Is the project delivering a service that is a statutory commitment. <i>If so, please give details.</i>
No

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Funding

Who funds the project? <i>Please give details.</i>
Support and Education Fife funding (from mainstream funding for Support and Connect). Funding is used to run the workshops.
How much does the project cost?
£60,000 p/a.
Is future funding based on pre-agreed outcomes or outputs being delivered?
No

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Staffing and Resources

Which partners are involved in delivering the project (local authorities, organisations, community groups, etc.)?	
See below	
Which paid staff are involved in delivering the project?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fife Council (Education Service) staff • Citizens Advice and Rights Fife (CARF) staff • Staff in selected schools in Fife Council • Family Workers • Cosy Kingdom staff • Nurture Centre staff • Louise Hynd (Welfare Reform Co- Ordinator) 	
Are volunteers involved in delivering the project? <i>Please describe their role and their contribution.</i>	
No	
What in-kind resources do you need to deliver your project?	
Facilities	Schools, Nurture Centres
Equipment	Cooking utensils, WIFI, computers
Local Knowledge	Louise has connections with different agencies across Fife
Food and Drink	Ingredients for cooking sessions
For each of the in-kind resources listed above, who provides it?	
Facilities	Fife Council
Equipment	Fife Council
Local Knowledge	Fife Council
Food and Drink	Fife Council

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Did you have to buy or develop new IT systems, software (databases, apps) or technology to deliver your project? *Please describe below.*

No.

Was additional staff training required to deliver your project? *If so, please describe.*

Food Champion training for members of school staff.

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Monitoring and Evaluation

What information, if any, do you collect about your project?	
Number of users	Yes
Profile of users	Yes
Experience of users	Yes
Anything else	Financial gains to clients directly resulting from the project, as well as attendance
How often is data collected? Who collects the data?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is recorded each week • User experience is recorded at the end of the 7-week block • Case studies are collected on an ongoing basis • Data is collected by the staff running the project 	
Do you have baseline data on what things were like before the start of the project or before users started the project? <i>Please describe the type of baseline data that you have.</i>	
No.	
Do you produce an annual report? <i>Please provide details of what this includes.</i>	
Louise reports project data to the Child Poverty Report annually, as well as conducting quarterly reports to highlight the impact of the project	
In what ways, if at all, do you use the data that you collect to adapt the service that you provide?	
Case studies are evaluated and taken into consideration in terms of any future modifications to the project.	
Have you employed an external organisation to formally evaluate your project? <i>If yes, please provide details.</i>	

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No.

Do you intend to employ an external organisation to evaluate the service that you provide in the future? *If yes, please provide details.*

Not currently planned.

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Reach and Impact

What difference has the project made?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increased income for service users.• Service users are now claiming benefits they are entitled to that they were not claiming previously.• Improvement in confidence and social skills of service users.• Improvement in service users cooking skills.• This project has inspired more support groups to take place in local schools, such as peer support groups for parents of children with additional support needs.
How do you know this?
Metrics, feedback and case studies.
To what extent have the aims of the project been achieved?
To a great extent, as the project aims to reduce the impact of poverty in Fife. This has arguably been achieved as 65 families combined have had their income increased by £98,947.96.
How, if at all, has the demand for the service provided changed since it started?
There has been an increase in demand due to the good feedback and reputation of the project.
If yes, has the project had the capacity to meet these changing conditions and demand
No, the project has struggled to keep up with the increase in demand.
Has the project had any unexpected or unintended outcomes? <i>If so, whether positive or negative, please describe.</i>
There has been a desire to replicate this project in the community setting as well as in the school setting.

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In your opinion, is the project having an impact on tackling child poverty? If so, please describe in what ways.

Yes, because it often leads to financial gains for families with children.

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Learning from Experience

What is working well?
The project overall has been very successful, as it has been well received and has maintained an excellent reputation in Fife.
What, if anything, is working less well?
No barriers identified.
What are the key learning points that you'd like to share with other practitioners? For example, is there anything that you would do differently?
Be mindful of the context of delivery, for example, the Boosting Budgets project is restricted in that it cannot run during school holidays.
What plans do you have to develop or expand the project in the future?
Though there is a desire to expand the project to meet the increase in demand, this will come down to what funding and resources are available over the next couple of years.
How easily do you think your project could be replicated in another setting?
Very easily.

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