Social Value Analysis of Autism NI & Parenting NI Telephone Helplines

Report compiled by

Rose Regeneration & Rural Community Network

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Introduction

Rose Regeneration and Rural Community Network NI were asked by the Public Health Agency NI (PHA) to carry out a Social Return on Investment analysis of two telephone helplines that were members of Helplines Network NI.

Helplines Network NI was established in 2013 by the PHA in collaboration with several helplines operating in Northern Ireland in the public, community and voluntary sector.

Helplines Network NI is a membership-led organisation currently consisting of 34 helplines across Northern Ireland. Members provide a variety of support services including information, advice, counselling and befriending, and offer immediate support to those with a wide range of health and wellbeing needs, often for those who are the most vulnerable in our community.

Many of the services take place over the telephone, via email, text and in some cases, with live web chat. The member helplines are run by public, voluntary and community organisations and are non-profit making.

Autism NI & Parenting NI were the two organisations chosen to take part in the project. Staff from both received access to the Social Value Engine for the duration of the project and received ongoing support from Rose Regeneration & RCN staff to carry out the analysis of their work.

What is Social Value?

Measuring the tangible costs and outputs of an activity is relatively straightforward. We may know what the inputs are (e.g. the funding, equipment, staffing or volunteers needed to run the activity) and the outputs expected of the group (e.g. a target for the number of people participating in the activity); but the greater challenge is quantifying the wider social, economic and environmental outcomes the community groups are delivering.

This is what social value does. It asks the question 'if £x is spent on delivering an activity, what is the value of that same £x in terms of wider benefits for the local community?'

Examples of social value might be the value community members experience from increasing their confidence or living near green space; or it could be the value of the time the community group has spent collaborating with other organisations to improve health services in a local area.

The Social Value Engine helps organisations identify and measure the social value of the outcomes achieved by their activity.

This information can then be used to:

- understand where an organisation is having the most impact;
- make decisions about where to invest resources;
- demonstrate the value of an activity to funders and other stakeholders.

The Social Value Engine also helps to describe how to build a better 'place' - a sustainable community where people want to live, work and invest.

The Engine has been jointly developed by Rose Regeneration and East Riding of Yorkshire Council. It provides:

1. A systemised and academically robust assessment of social value for groups to forecast, plan and evaluate their activities.
2. More than 200 peer-reviewed financial proxies derived from reliable sources, which are regularly updated.
3. A description of how a project creates value and a ratio that states how much social value (in £/€) is created for every £/€ of investment.
4. An overview of how a group's activities are making a place better to live in and more sustainable, as well as making people's lives better.

Rural Community Network NI is the delivery agent of the Social Value Engine in Northern Ireland.

Bristol Accord

The Social Value Engine uses the Bristol Accord to enable organisations to see how their activity is building a more attractive community – where people want to live and work, both now and in the future.

The Bristol Accord (http://www.eib.org/attachments/jessica_bristol_accord_sustainable_communities.pdf) was developed in 2005 when the UK Government worked with all the EU Member States to agree what makes communities sustainable and to foster 'place making' skills.

A sustainable community should be safe, fair, thriving, environmentally sensitive, well run, served, well connected and well designed and built.

This common framework for defining a successful sustainable community is shown in the following diagram:

Approach to SROI

The Social Value Engine (http://socialvalueengine.com) has been used to undertake the SROI analysis for each of the 2 Helplines.

There are six steps to the standard SROI process namely:

1. Establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders to identify impacts.
2. Mapping project outcomes with stakeholders.
3. Evidencing project outcomes and giving them a financial value.
4. Establishing project impact – accounting for attribution, deadweight, displacement and drop off.
5. Calculating the SROI.
6. Reporting the findings from the assessment process.

Additionally, this pilot has focused on how each helpline impacts relate to the local **place**, a sustainable community where people want to live, work and invest. To do this, our approach involves relating each of the project impacts to improvements to the sustainability of local areas. We do this by grouping the proxies into the eight domains of the Bristol Accord.

This approach enables us not just to offer a financial SROI for each helpline but to set out the contribution that each has made to the relative sustainability of the area where they deliver their services. This approach is particularly powerful in supporting a narrative element to SROI reporting which brings a local context to the SROI process to accompany a financial value.

SROI Process for Each Project

For each of the 2 Helplines, we followed a consistent approach of analysis involving:

1. Discussion with the group involved in project delivery and/or project monitoring.
2. Analysis of available monitoring information.
3. Identifying outcomes achieved by each project.
4. Assigning a gross £ value to each of these outcomes, using the range of over 200 proxies.
5. Applying a range of 'deflators' to produce a net £ value:
    - **Leakage**: How much of an outcome might have delivered an impact outside of the area that the group intended;
    - **Deadweight**: How much of the outcome might have been achieved without intervention;
    - **Attribution**: What proportion of an outcome might be attributed to others because their activity contributed to it;
    - **Drop-Off:** What proportion of the outcome will diminish over time;
    - **Displacement**: How much of the outcome has displaced other outcomes.
6. Calculating the input costs - the grant awarded and any other costs such as volunteer time.
7. Producing an SROI figure for the project by dividing the net value of the outcomes by the input costs.

SROI Analysis - Overview of Findings

In this section, we set out an overview of the total SROI achieved-categorised by each of the helplines against the eight Bristol Accord themes. This is then followed by a project description and breakdown of each of the 2 organisations who participated in this exercise. Before looking at this detail, it is important to note that the final SROI ratio is only part of the picture for several reasons:

The true value of a project is more than just a SROI number.

- The SROI analysis for each project is underpinned by available data/evidence.
- Each of the individual helplines' programme and monitoring forms were not developed with social value analysis specifically in mind therefore it has been necessary to review data/evidence retrospectively to undertake the analysis. On the one hand, some helplines have collected a wealth of additional data about their project and its impact that could be factored into the analysis. On the other hand, there are some projects which appear to be generating far more social value than that captured by this analysis but for which robust data is not currently available.
- SROI analysis uses money as a common denominator and produces a ratio (i.e. an investment of £1 delivers £6 of social value) This ratio is only meaningful as part of a wider narrative about the difference a project has made. Ratios will also differ between capital and revenue projects, short term and longer-term projects. Therefore, if one project has generated £3 for every £1 invested and another £8 for every £1 invested it does not mean that the £3 project is any less valid than the £8 project because both will have different outputs, outcomes and achievements. For all projects the SROI analysis provided a rounded view of the positive change happening in people's lives because of the work of these 2 helplines.

Autism NI

Autism NI is a parent led partnership organisation formed to promote positive collaboration between parents, professionals and individuals with autism and address the need for appropriate services. This partnership ethos extends to the charity's promotion of a multi-disciplinary, cross agency response to issues such as assessment, diagnosis, and early intervention. The charity's mission to support parents and individuals with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder is core to its work and is based on individualised assessed need. The charity is committed to promoting best practice, accessible to all irrespective of family circumstances.

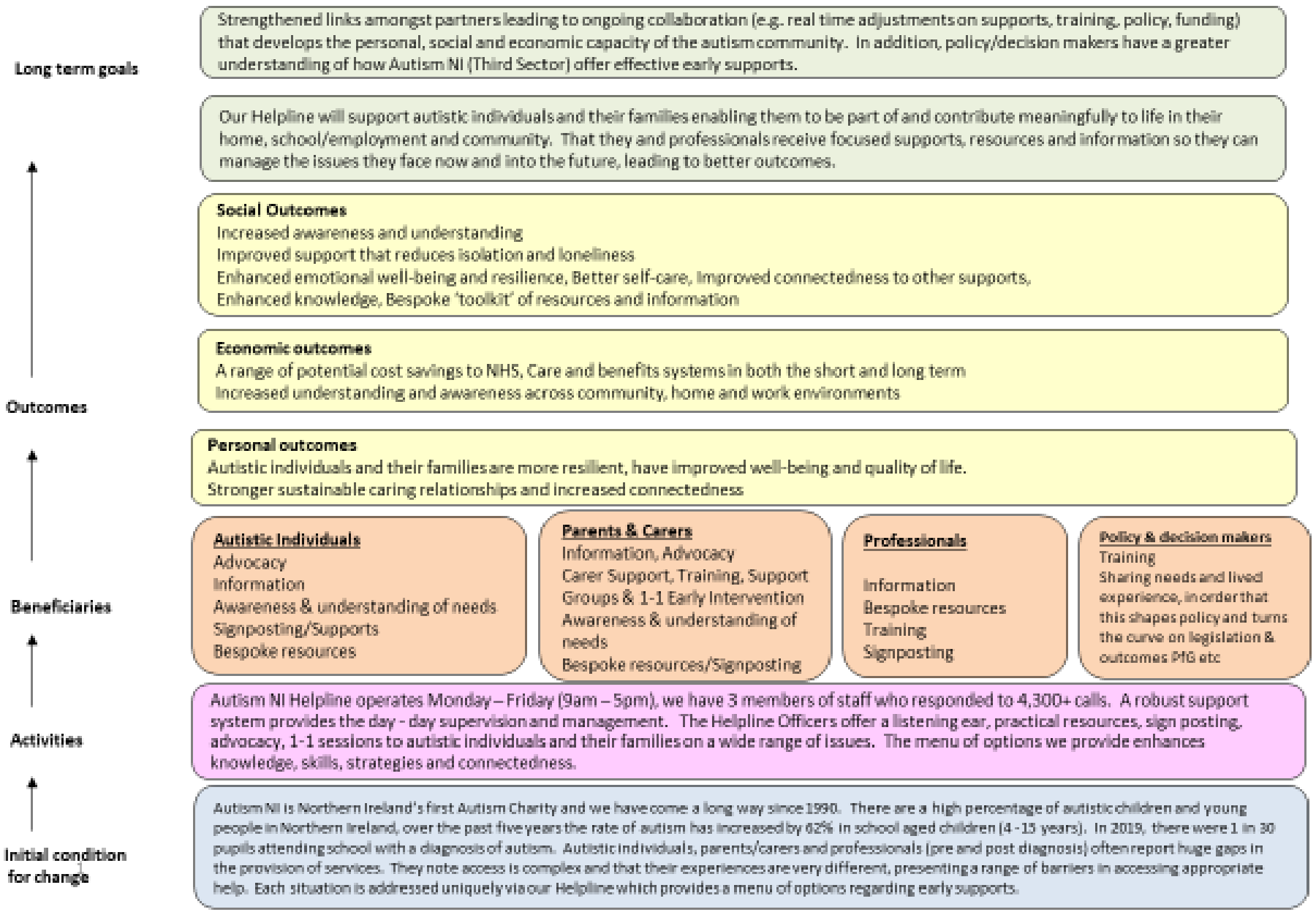
Autistic individuals, parents and professionals use the Telephone Helpline service to seek information and support on a wide range of issues related to autism pre and post diagnosis. The volume of enquiries it deals with indicates the real need that exists to inform, assist, and support those affected by autism.

Outcomes chosen by Autism NI for the analysis of the Helpline included the following: -

- People contacting the Helpline who received bespoke supports;
- Parents/carers connecting with local Support Groups;
- Increasing autism awareness and understanding;
- Supporting family's access to early intervention;
- Providing training for parents/carers;
- Reducing barriers through empowerment of autistic individuals;
- Supporting families in financial hardship.

A Theory of Change model for the services that Autism NI carried out was developed and is illustrated below. It shows how the project works: explaining the activities that will bring about change and the results the project expects to achieve through its duration.

Autism NI Helpline



A more detailed breakdown of the outcomes chosen, and output numbers can be seen in the table below. We have used the Social Value Engine to identify a financial proxy for each of these outputs. Each proxy is linked to an example of activities of similar worth where peer-reviewed research enables us to identify how much that example costs.

Output	**Financial proxy**	**Unit**	**No of units benefitting**	**Duration**	**Benefits per unit**	**Total benefits**
People contacting the Helpline who receive bespoke supports	cost of GP consultation	Parents & Carers	3335	1 year	£42.61	£142,104.35
Parents/carers connecting with local Support Groups	average cost of a personal development course	Parents & Carers	1552	1 year	£850	£1,319,200
Increasing autism awareness and understanding	cost of equality/disability awareness training	Professionals	2110	1 year	£395	£833,450
Supporting families access early intervention	counselling (NI)	Parents & Carers	1418	1 year	£54	£76,572
Providing training for parents/carers	adult learning course that made someone more satisfied with their life overall	Parents & Carers	505	1 year	£947	£478,235
Reducing barriers through empowerment of autistic individuals	Cost of Advocacy	Autistic Individuals	418	1 Year	£36	£15,048.
Supporting families in financial hardship	average debt per cab client	Parents & Carers	50	1 Year	£9442	£472,100.

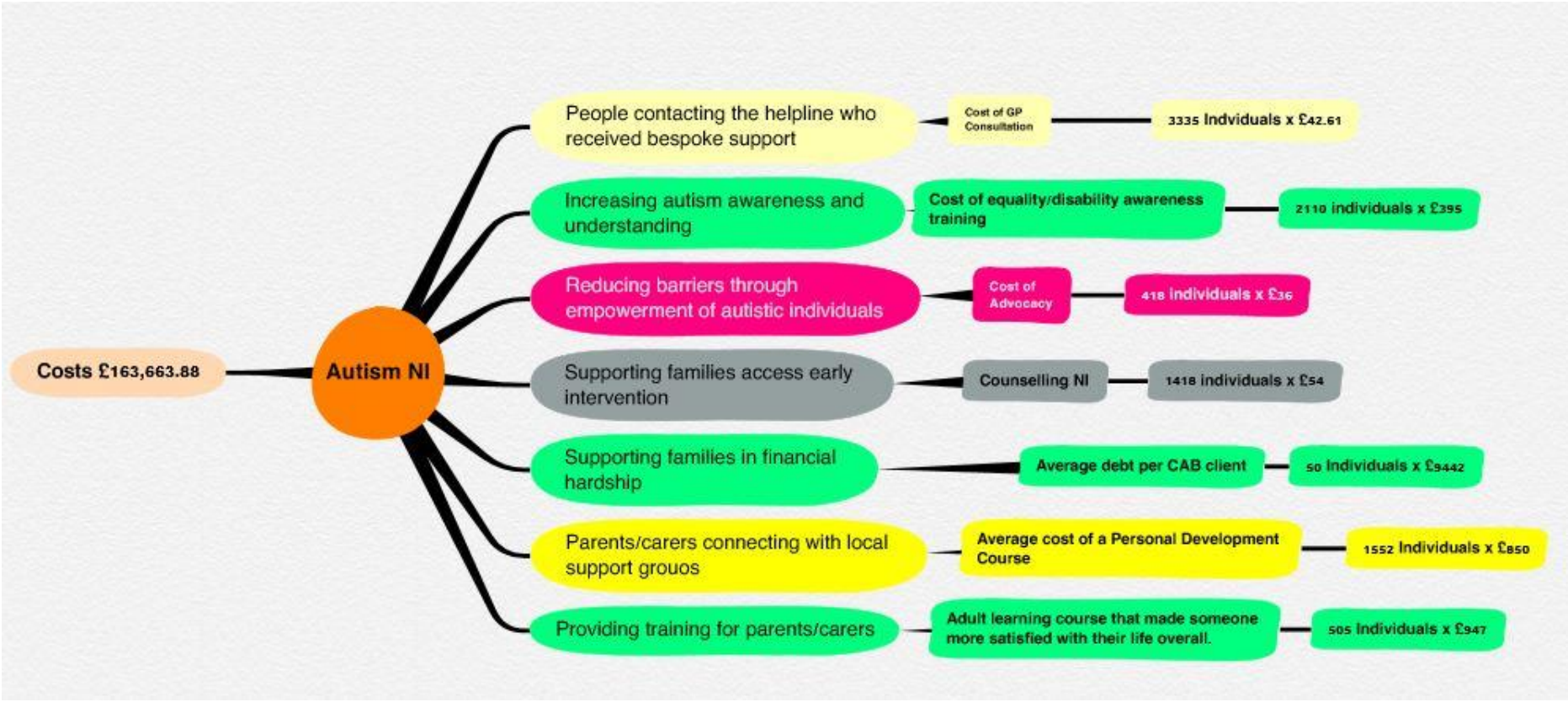
Each output area has then been adjusted to take account of:

- Leakage: what proportion people from outside NI used Autism NI's services?
- Deadweight: what proportion of the outcomes would have happened if the individual did not contact Autism NI?
- Attribution: what proportion might other organisations assisting autistic individuals & their families have contributed to these outcomes?
- Drop off: what proportion of the outcomes will deteriorate over time?
- Displacement: how much does Autism NI's services displace other projects in NI?

To answer these questions, we have spoken to Autism NI's representatives and several of their service users in a facilitated workshop setting. As a result of these discussions, the following table shows the amount (as a %) that we have deflated each output area:

Output	**Leakage**	**Deadweight**	**Attribution**	**Drop Off**	**Displacement**
People contacting the Helpline who receive bespoke supports	0%	22%	22%	10%	0%
Parents/carers connecting with local Support Groups	0%	22%	22%	10%	0%
Increasing autism awareness and understanding	0%	30%	0%	20%	0%
Supporting families access early intervention	0%	22%	22%	10%	0%
Providing training for parents/carers	0%	30%	0%	20%	0%
Reducing barriers through empowerment of autistic individuals	0%	22%	22%	10%	0%
Supporting families in financial hardship	0%	22%	22%	10%	0%

The Social Value for the project is then calculated by dividing each of these output areas by the input cost (what we have called 'expenditure') and applying the deflator figures as above. You can therefore see what the Social Value of the work that Autism NI carries out in the following diagram.



Bristol Accord Themes

Active, Inclusive & Safe	
Environment	
Well designed & built	
Well Connected	
Thriving	
Well Served	

Dividing the net social value return (after leakage, deadweight, attribution and drop-off) by the input costs, the **Autism NI is delivering a social value of £12.32 for every £1 spent in project activity.**

Parenting NI (Dad's Project)

The Dad's Project is designed to serve separated fathers. These individuals were identified during the course of Parenting NI's work as being particularly vulnerable, and in particular need of specific support.

The aims of the Dad's Project are:

- Provide a range of services to empower and support separated dads;
- Provide dads with knowledge, information and choices;
- Educate practitioners/professionals on the importance of ongoing engagement with dads;
- Promote the importance of children having an ongoing relationship with their dad;
- Influence policy change to ensure dads are considered on an equal basis to mothers;
- Promote children's rights to having access to both parents.

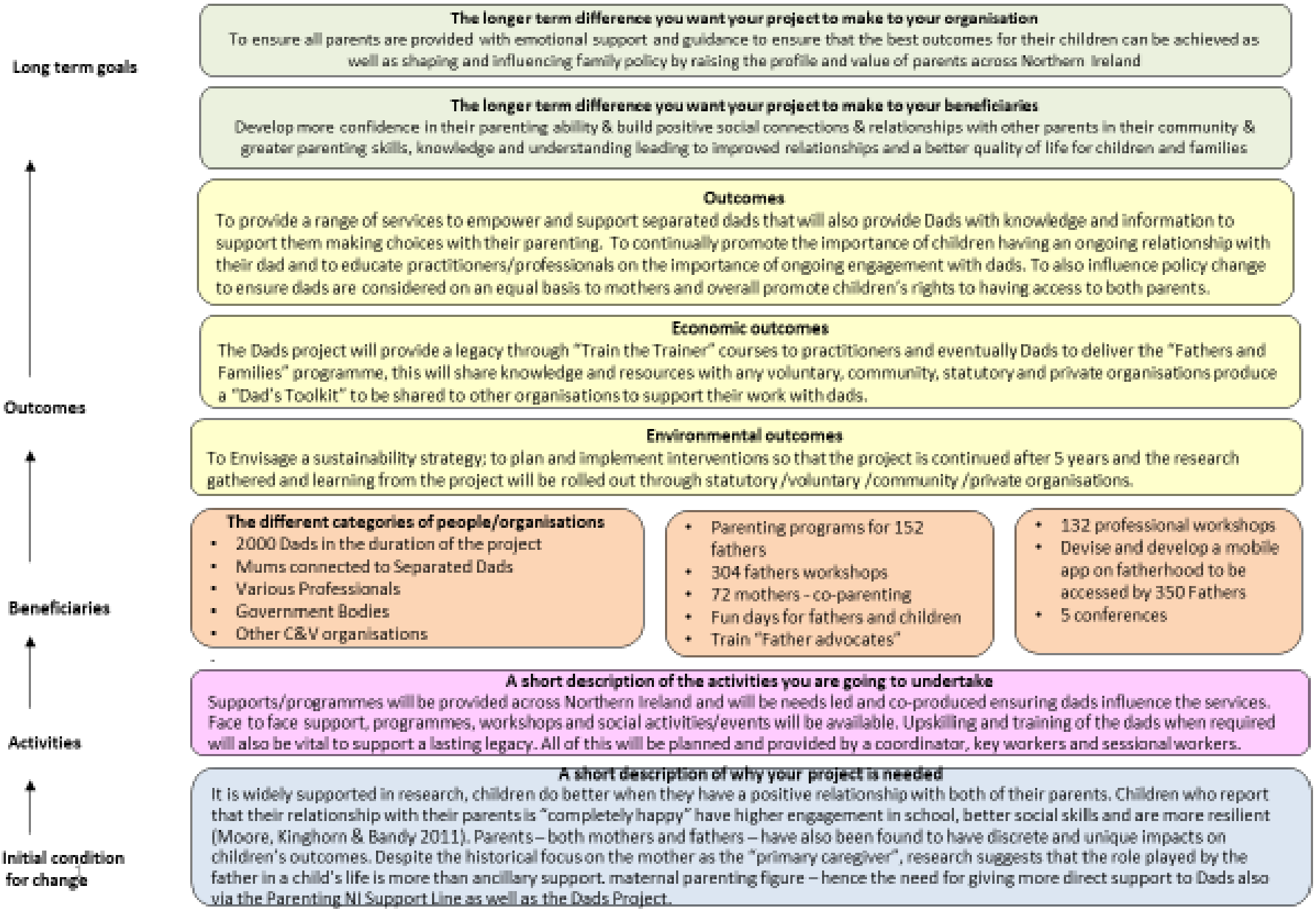
The Dads project supported separated dads in their involvement in the lives of their children, families and community. The project helped develop their confidence in their parenting ability and build positive social connections with other dads in their community. The project delivered several programmes to assist dads in their roles as well as providing a continuity of support. It also provided relevant workshops as identified as areas of need by the dads themselves, provided engagement activities which included dad and children fun days, the production of support materials, and the provision of online support.

Outcomes Chosen by the Dad's Project for the analysis of the Helpline included the following: -

- Fathers Contacting & Receiving Support from the Helpline;
- Face to Face Support/Drop in for Dads;
- Parenting Apart Programmes, Families and Fathers' Programmes;
- Mobile App/Accessing Services Online;
- Provide Mothers with workshops on the importance of co-parenting;
- Group/Family Therapy;
- Family Fun Days, events, stands, awareness sessions;
- Regular Volunteers.

A Theory of Change Model was also developed for the Dad's Project as illustrated overleaf.

Parenting NI Support Line supporting the Dads Project



A more detailed breakdown of the outcomes chosen, and output numbers can be seen in the table below. We have used the Social Value Engine to identify a financial proxy for each of these outputs. Each proxy is linked to an example of activities of similar worth where peer-reviewed research enables us to identify how much that example costs.

Output	**Financial proxy**	**Unit**	**No of units benefitting**	**Duration**	**Benefits per unit**	**Total benefits**
Fathers Contacting & Receiving Support from the Helpline	Cost of stress counselling to help service users maintain their stability in the face of stressful circumstances	Fathers	637	1 year	£457	£291,109
Face to Face Support/Drop in for Dads	Social Work Support Mental Health (NI)	Fathers	264	1 year	£120	£31,680
Parenting Apart Programmes, Families and Fathers Programmes	Adult learning course that made someone more satisfied with their life overall	Fathers	120	1 year	£947	£113,640
Mobile App/Accessing Services Online	Cost of average savings from using online shops & services	Fathers	86	1 year	£689	£59,254
Provide Mothers with workshops on the importance of co-parenting	Cost of Equality/Disability awareness training	Mothers	14	1 Year	£395	£5530
Group/Family Therapy	Cost of Family Therapy	Fathers	30	1 Year	£300	£18,000
Family Fun Days, events, stands, awareness sessions	Average spend on social activities	Fathers	168	1 Year	£4027	£676,536
Regular Volunteers	Value per Volunteer in UK	Fathers	8	1 year	£1179	£9432

Each output area has then been adjusted to take account of:

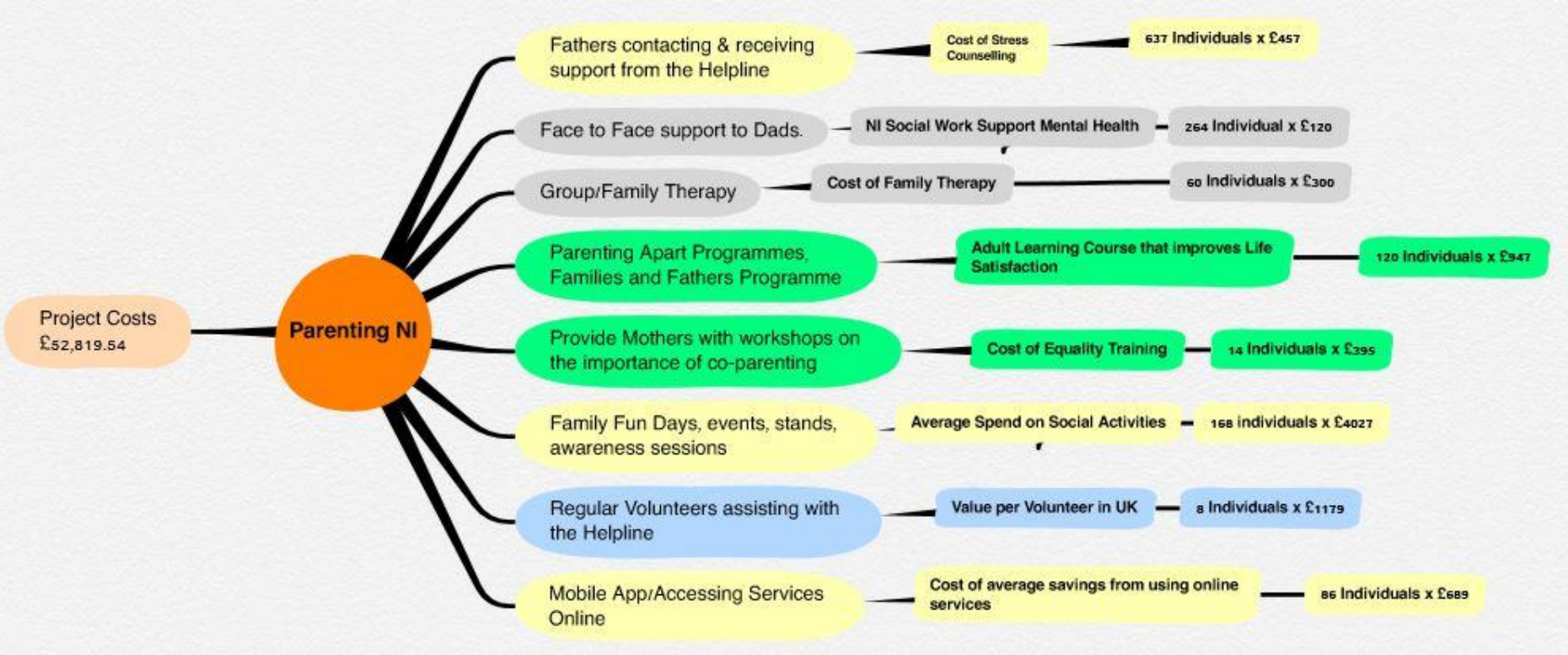
- Leakage: what proportion people from outside NI used Parenting NI/ Dad Project's services?
- Deadweight: what proportion of the outcomes would have happened if the individual did not contact Parenting NII?
- Attribution: what proportion might other organisations assisting Dads and their kids have contributed to these outcomes?
- Drop off: what proportion of the outcomes will deteriorate over time?
- Displacement: how much does the Dad's Project's services displaces other projects in NI?

To answer these questions, we have spoken to Parenting NI representatives and we asked several of their service users to complete a questionnaire specifically focused on their involvement with the project.

As a result of these discussions, the following table shows the amount (as a %) that we have deflated each output area:

Output	**Leakage**	**Deadweight**	**Attribution**	**Drop Off**	**Displacement**
Fathers Contacting & Receiving Support from the Helpline	2%	7%	36%	50%	0%
Face to Face Support/Drop in for Dads	2%	7%	36%	50%	0%
Parenting Apart Programmes, Families and Fathers Programmes	2%	7%	36%	50%	0%
Mobile App/Accessing Services Online	2%	7%	36%	50%	0%
Provide Mothers with workshops on the importance of co-parenting	2%	7%	36%	50%	0%
Group/Family Therapy	2%	7%	36%	50%	0%
Family Fun Days, events, stands, awareness sessions	2%	7%	36%	50%	0%
Regular Volunteers	0%	25%	25%	0%	0%

The Social Value for the project is then calculated by dividing each of these output areas by the input cost (what we have called 'expenditure') and applying the deflator figures as above. You can therefore see what the Social Value of the work that Parenting NI carries out in the following diagram.



Bristol Accord Themes

Active, Inclusive & Safe	
Environment	
Well designed & built	
Well Connected	
Thriving	
Well Served	

Dividing the net social value return (after leakage, deadweight, attribution and drop-off) by the input costs, the **Parenting NI project is delivering a social value of £12.86 for every £1 spent in project activity.**

Quotes

"I am so grateful, thank you for the information, very interesting. I will move forward today. I am on the very first steps of this journey. Think of the difference you make to the lives of others. Autism NI was the first place to offer me assistance, I had made so many calls before speaking to you"

Autistic Adult

"Thanks for sending this information through, it's really useful. You helped me a lot and put things into perspective. I went into the meeting far more relaxed than usual. So, thanks for listening and giving me your honest and balanced thoughts. It had great impact"

A Dad.

Conclusions

Key Findings

- *Both helplines analysed are delivering a positive social return.*
- *Both helplines have delivered several valuable outcomes.*
- *Both helplines worked with colleagues from across their organisation to collate data and evidence about their impact – and to have conversations about their results.*
- *By measuring their impact using the Social Value Engine, it has helped both organisations understand the importance of demonstrating their outcomes and achievements to funders, beneficiaries and wider stakeholders.*
- *How this process has assisted them to think about the broader context in which their project sits – including highlighting the importance of partnership working, collaboration and their complementarity of statutory and health services in delivering this work.*

Bristol Accord-What areas did the Helplines score highly in.

- **Well Run -** With effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership;
- **Well Connected -** With good services and communication, linking people to jobs, health and other services;
- **Fair to Everyone -** Including those in other communities, now and in the future;
- **Well Served -** With public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and are accessible to all;
- **Active, Inclusive and Safe –** Fair, tolerant, and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities;
- **Thriving -** With a flourishing and diverse local economy.

Both helplines delivered a significant Social Value in the work that they are doing within Northern Ireland. The ongoing work that they are carrying out to their respective client groups is hugely valuable to the people that help and demonstrate not only clear value for money but also an overwhelming positive social return.

Both organisations have indicated their wish to continue to measure the impact of their work by using the Social Value Engine in subsequent years and in other areas of work/projects that they are involved in. By participating in the pilot, both groups have re-examined the type of data that they were capturing, and are amending it to better reflect the difference that the work has in their beneficiaries lives, and therefore give an even more accurate social value on the work that they carry out regularly.

It is clear from the pilot that the Social Value Engine is an effective tool that Helpline organisations can use to measure the impact of their work. These organisations capture a large amount of data on their service users which makes measuring their social value relatively straightforward. Furthermore, the many spin off activities that a lot of helpline groups also carry out can also be incorporated into an evaluation like this and helps give an accurate and more complete picture of how accessing the helpline has assisted that individual. Health and Wellbeing proxies and research is a substantial element within the Social Value Engine and it's obvious that this methodology can be used in a wide range of health-based projects that the Helpline organisations and Public Health Agency continue to be involved in.

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