

Press Release

Date: Tuesday 21st May 2019

NEW EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME FOR ADHD IS CHANGING LIVES

The Changing Lives Initiative is an innovative new early intervention programme supporting families affected by Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). At its mid project conference in Belfast today, the project highlighted the enormous impact the intervention has had on families since it was launched 18 months ago and how it is changing lives.

The initiative is supported by an award of €2.7m by the European Union's INTERREG VA Programme, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) and is delivering the new early intervention model in Belfast and Lisburn; County Louth and surrounding border area; and the Argyll and Bute region in Scotland. The project is set to benefit over 2,000 families in these regions over 3 years.

As many as 5% to 6% of school-aged children are affected by ADHD. The Changing Lives Initiative works to create a better understanding of ADHD and provides an intervention programme for families with children aged (3-7) experiencing behaviours consistent with ADHD. In the last 18 months, the project has provided an intervention to over 800 families who were concerned about their child's/ children's behaviour, including the delivery of 23 intensive group based programmes for parents.

Speaking at the conference Danielle a parent who has recently completed the programme in Belfast said: **"I got my son back, I got my family back. I got more support from this group than anything else. My son got his childhood back."**

As well as highlighting the impact the intervention has had on families, the conference today discussed the interim findings of the three research programmes examining the outcomes for families from the intervention; the cost effectiveness of this new type of intervention; and the successes and challenges in implementing this new model (process evaluation).

Sean McDonnell, Research and Training Manager with Archways, the lead partner of the Initiative, discussed the positive outcomes for families: **"Parents indicate they have seen significant improvements in both their child's behaviour, their own parenting skills**



and stress levels. These findings indicate the intervention has the potential to significantly reduce parent reliance on medicalized /drugs treatment. The intervention has also greatly enhanced parents' sense of manageability and control and broken the coercive pattern of parent child engagement which typically accompanies the presence of hyperkinetic disorder."

Lucia Carragher, Research Fellow with Dundalk Institute of Technology, who are conducting the cost effectiveness and process evaluations said: **"Process evaluations of complex interventions like the Changing Lives Initiative provide vital information on how interventions work and the factors that shape outcomes. Preliminary findings from our process evaluation suggest diverse partnerships add value to services and promote integrated thinking, planning and delivery across agencies and sectors.**

Programme participants reported high levels of satisfaction, with over 70% rating the programme as excellent/extremely useful and a further 20% as superior/useful. Challenges for implementation reflect the chronic under-funding of mental healthcare, experienced to a greater or lesser extent across the three jurisdictions. Our economic analysis, when combined with evidence on outcomes makes a compelling case for early intervention and prevention programmes for families with children at risk of ADHD."

Gina McIntyre, Chief Executive Officer with the SEUPB, said: **"This project is delivering a high impact, cost effective intervention that strengthens family bonds whilst reducing reliance on drug treatments for ADHD. It is having a profoundly positive impact upon the lives of hundreds of children and families who are effected by the condition across Northern Ireland, Ireland and Scotland. The project is a fantastic example of the type of innovative cross-border health and social care work helping citizens through the EU INTERREG VA Programme."**

This new intervention has involved project partners from both the Community and Statutory Health Sectors: with Archways as Lead partner; Dundalk Institute of Technology as Research Partner; Colin Neighbourhood Partnership delivering the programme in Belfast and Lisburn; The Genesis Programme (Louth Leader Partnership) delivering the programme in Louth and surrounding border areas; and NHS Highland (Argyll & Bute Health and Social Care Partnership) delivering the programme in Scotland. The project has successfully



engaged both urban and remote communities in the different jurisdictions and is working with some of the most disadvantaged communities in these areas.

Match-funding for the project has been provided by the Department for Health in Northern Ireland, the Department of Health in Ireland as well as by the project partners.

Further information on the project is available at www.changinglivesinitiative.com.

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Notes to Editor:

The Changing Lives Initiative

- The Changing Lives Initiative is a community-based project creating a better understanding about ADHD and providing an intervention programme for families with children aged (3-7) experiencing behaviours consistent with ADHD.
- The Initiative is a cross border project operating in County Louth and surrounding border areas; Belfast and Lisburn; and the Argyll & Bute Region.
- The Changing Lives Initiative offers a programme for families of children aged 3-7 consisting of an information and awareness programme, a screening programme, and an intervention programme.
- As well as providing support to families, the programme provides training for those working with young children, in particular teachers and early years professionals. The project has trained over 1,000 professionals to date in working with and supporting children with ADHD.

INTERREG VA Programme

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland and the Department



of Public Expenditure and Reform in Ireland. It is responsible for managing two EU Structural Funds Programmes, PEACE IV and INTERREG VA which are designed to enhance cross-border cooperation, promote reconciliation and create a more peaceful and prosperous society.

- The Programmes operate within a clearly defined area including Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and in the case of INTERREG VA, Western Scotland.
- The INTERREG VA Programme has a value of €283 million and aims to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders.
- For more information on the SEUPB please visit www.seupb.eu please visit www.seupb.eu