

## **Cost of the School Day Evaluation: Briefing for schools**

‘Children who are unable to participate in the same activities as their peers will very often not feel included and this can have a negative impact on health and wellbeing. The key is finding possible solutions to ensure all children have the same opportunities.’ (Primary teacher)

### **Does Cost of the School Day (CoSD) make a difference?**

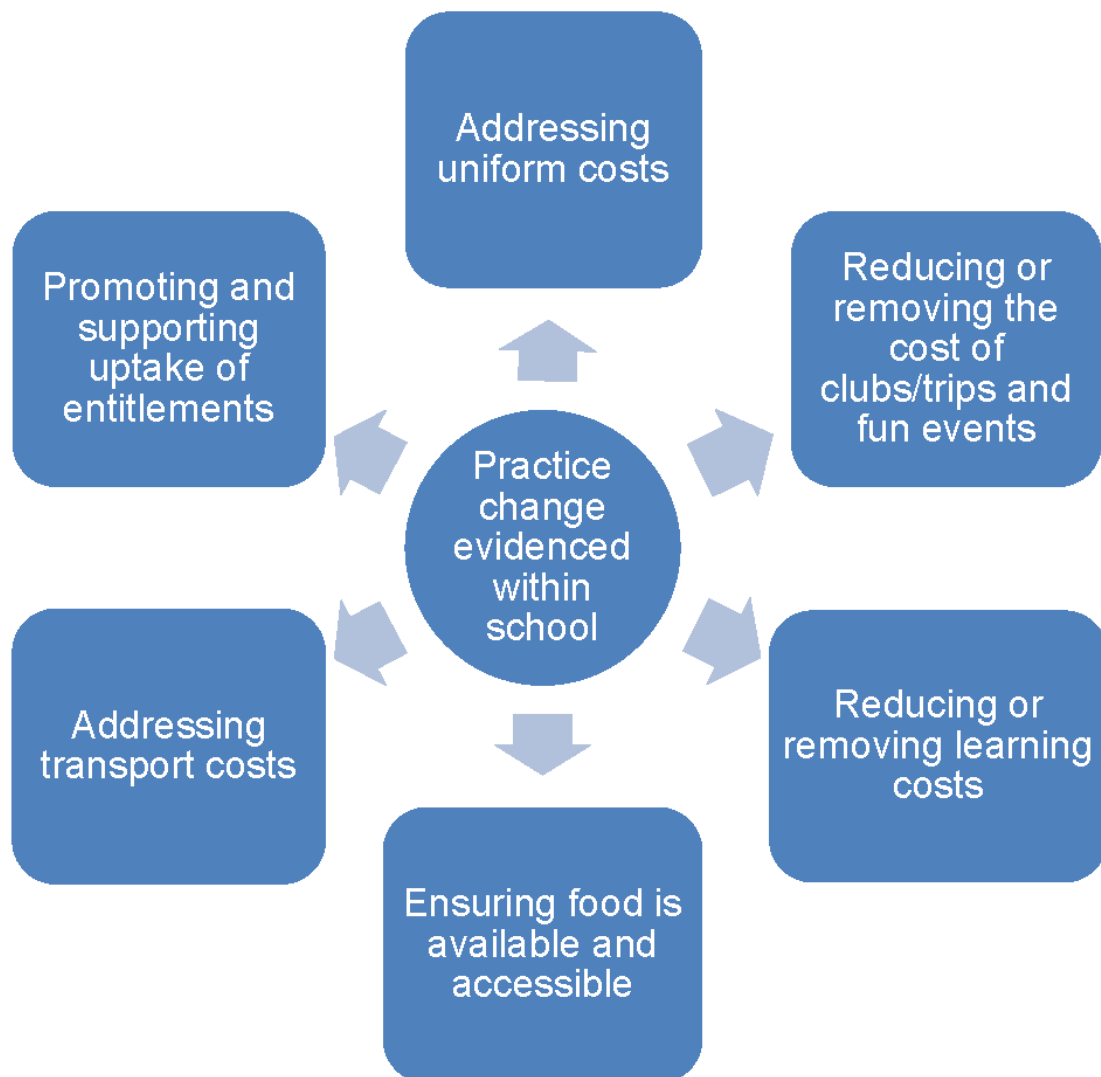
Yes. This evaluation found evidence that the delivery of the CoSD programme contributed to the following outcomes for participating schools:

- Changes in the understanding of the drivers and consequences of child poverty and school costs among school staff and some parent councils.
- New school policies and practices that are more poverty sensitive.
- Reduced or removed cost barriers to participation in school and after-school activities.
- Supported schools or parent councils to secure and use available funding to lessen child poverty within their setting.
- Increased participation in school and after-school activities.
- Reduced school-related financial pressures for families.
- Promotion of entitlements and financial supports available to parents.
- Increased uptake of entitlements.

## How are these outcomes being achieved?

There was evidence that CoSD activity had resulted in **practice changes at school level** that resulted in reduced costs and barriers to participation in areas shown in the figure below:

**Figure 1**



Further to this, there was evidence that CoSD activity had contributed to changes to awareness, understanding and attitudes towards poverty at a school level, including:

- raised awareness of the consequences of child poverty
- raised awareness of the costs associated with participation in school

- an improved understanding of child poverty and the cost of participation among school staff
- pupils experiencing less income stigma and exclusion
- parents experiencing less financial pressure
- families having a greater awareness of financial entitlements.

'It does take time to change attitudes so this needs to be on the agenda and spoken about constantly... it's not a fad.' (Teacher)

## **What can schools do to develop and sustain CoSD activity?**

The evaluation produced several recommendations that schools should consider when looking to develop and sustain CoSD activity.

- Addressing CoSD requires a whole-school approach with commitment and leadership from the senior management team to listen and take action.
- Designate a CoSD lead and set up a working group to implement, monitor and review CoSD activity.
- Ensure that the whole school community hears about and is involved in CoSD, including children, families and parent councils.
- Make use of the wide range of tried and tested CoSD materials and resources to involve your school community on an ongoing basis.
- It's important to understand and address staff and parent attitudes towards poverty when making practical changes – this can minimise potential negative reactions to cost-reducing measures further down the line.
- Consider how CoSD actions can be implemented in a non-stigmatising way which will help encourage families to access support.

- Ensure that there is widespread understanding of the links between CoSD and key policies such as the Child Poverty Act (2017), Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) and the Scottish Attainment Challenge.
- CoSD is an ongoing process. Ensure that CoSD becomes embedded in the planning cycle rather than seen as a one-off programme by including CoSD actions within school planning and review processes.

'[CoSD resources] tackle all areas of childhood poverty, are easy to use and quick and simple to take actions from.' (Head teacher)

## Further supporting resources

The [Cost of the School Day website](#) contains a wide range of information and supporting resources for schools and local authorities.

The [Cost of the School Day Toolkit](#) is full of tried and tested discussion prompts, images, audit tools, surveys, session plans and case studies for school communities to identify and tackle financial barriers together.

[Cost of the School Day Films](#) offer examples of what other schools and local authorities are doing to address financial barriers and the impact that this is having.

You can also visit the NHS Health Scotland [Child poverty](#) and [Child poverty in schools](#) webpages for more information, resources and examples of work from across Scotland.

## Get in touch

Any questions? Get in touch with the Cost of the School Day team at Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in Scotland for advice and support at: [costoftheschoolday@cpagscotland.org.uk](mailto:costoftheschoolday@cpagscotland.org.uk)