

National Autistic Society Scotland

Children's Rights & Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA)

Stage 2: Assessment

1. UNCRC Rights Affected by Moving Forward+ with CashBack

The four general principles of the UNCRC are affected by our programme:

- Article 2: Apply rights without discrimination
- Article 3: Best interests of the child to be a primary consideration
- Article 6: Right to life, survival and development
- Article 12: Right to express a view and have that view considered

Additionally, we identified seven other articles affected:

- Article 13: Freedom of expression
- Article 15: Freedom of association
- Article 23: Children with a disability
- Article 28: Right to education
- Article 31: Leisure, play and culture
- Article 39: Recovery from trauma and reintegration
- Article 40: Juvenile justice

2. Assessing the Impact of Moving Forward+ with CashBack on these rights

Article 2: Apply rights without discrimination - positive impact

- We promote Moving Forward+ with CashBack to a wide range of schools and referral agencies, ensuring as many people as possible are aware of the programme and know how to refer, or self-refer, to us.
- Our leaflets are being updated to include information in the other languages most commonly spoken within our delivery area, in order that children and young people from ethnic minority groups feel included and encouraged to join our programme.
- We reimburse travel expenses so that children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds can access Moving Forward+ with CashBack.
- When delivering group sessions for children and young people, we ensure that there are always at least two female participants per group in order that female participants feel comfortable.

Article 3: Best interests of the child to be a primary consideration - positive impact

- Background information provided by other stakeholders, e.g., parents, carers, teaching staff or social workers is considered in order to gain a rounded picture of the circumstances affecting each child and young person.
- The programme can be delivered in whatever format is in the best interests of each child or young person; online sessions can be set up if preferable, these can be 1-1 or group based and while online, children and young people have the option of communicating via text and video or just text. If in-person support is preferred, this can also take place on a 1-1 or group basis. Children and young people who opt for in-person support can also choose between attending our office base or receiving community-based support.
- Support is regularly reviewed with children and young people being encouraged to feed back on their progress and advise whether additional sessions, resources etc may be helpful to them.

Article 6: Right to life, survival and development - positive impact

- Moving Forward with CashBack offers a very flexible, person-centred pathway that we tailor to meet the development needs of individual children and young people.
- By addressing the specific challenges faced by each child and young person joining the programme and equipping them with the necessary life skills, we ensure each individual has the best opportunity to move forward with improved confidence and resilience.

Article 12: Right to express a view and have that view considered - positive impact

- From the outset of their time on the programme, children and young people are encouraged to express their hopes and fears, in order that we can support them effectively.
- Within group settings, children and young people are asked to express themselves in a way that is respectful to others and to have respect for different points of view.
- We encourage children and young people to share their views on programme delivery. We have adapted our delivery in response to previous feedback and will continue to be responsive to new ideas that our children and young people put forward.

Article 13: Freedom of expression - positive impact

- We encourage children and young people participating on the programme to express themselves, but we know that autistic people can need extra time to process information. We therefore provide information in advance of each meeting or training session. This gives children and young people time to think about what is to be discussed and consider any questions, thoughts or ideas for the meeting or training session. We also ensure that materials and resources used in meetings and training sessions are provided in alternative formats where needed e.g., easy read, coloured paper etc. By helping children and young people feel prepared and making information accessible, we ensure that they are best placed to express themselves on the day.
- The programme team will offer positive feedback to children and young people as they express themselves, encouraging participants to feel more confident about doing so again in future meetings or training sessions as part of the programme or in day-to-day situations.

Article 15: Freedom of association - positive impact

- Moving Forward with CashBack offers children and young people the opportunity to work on a 1-1 basis with programme staff or to work within a group alongside other children and young people. A child or young person who starts off working on a 1-1 basis may later decide that they would prefer to try group work and vice versa and the programme team are happy to accommodate changing preferences.
- Many autistic children and young people are socially isolated and group work is the first opportunity they have had to socialise with others. Group work has often led to the establishment of connections and friendships that have lasted beyond the programme. This is seen as a very positive development.

Article 23: Children with a disability - positive impact

- Our programme provides autistic children and young people with the skills and confidence to realise their potential and go on to live fulfilling lives. Moving Forward+ with CashBack also reaches out to schools, referral agencies, employers and the wider public, in order to raise awareness and increase opportunities for autistic children and young people.

Article 28: Right to education - positive impact

- Participation on Moving Forward+ with CashBack is free for eligible children and young people with expenses covered from the programme budget.
- Children who have been unable to attend school due to high levels of anxiety are supported to develop coping strategies that will give them the best opportunity to return to education. The programme team also liaise with teaching staff to raise awareness of adjustments that can be made for each child, to facilitate a successful return to school. Young people who have left school and would benefit from gaining qualifications are assisted to identify and apply for relevant courses.
- Young people are also encouraged to consider alternative awards e.g., Hi5, Dynamic Youth and Saltire awards where these are more appropriate.

Article 31: Leisure, play and culture - positive impact

- Moving Forward+ with CashBack regularly supports children and young people to sample new experiences that they have identified as being of interest to them. Go-karting, laser tag, indoor climbing, raft building, meals out, museum and cinema trips, gaming groups, book groups and creative writing groups are just some of the many activities offered to date.

Article 39: Recovery from trauma and reintegration - positive impact

- Research indicates that autistic people may be more likely to experience traumatic life events, particularly interpersonal traumas, and to report symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Many of the children and young people accessing our service have had adverse childhood experiences and been subject to traumatic events including bullying and discrimination. Moving Forward+ with CashBack provides a safe space where children and young people can be themselves. We support participants to access specialist counselling and trauma focussed therapy where this would be helpful and provide opportunities for positive activity when children and young people tell us that they are ready for this.

Article 40: Juvenile justice - positive impact

- While autistic people are more likely to be victims and witnesses of crime than offenders, some of the children and young people accessing our programme to date have been involved with the police or criminal justice system. Moving Forward+ with CashBack uses a person-centred approach to build on the strengths and abilities of each child and young person, helping them to become more aware of their rights and responsibilities and empowering them to shape their own future. We also introduce children and young people to positive role models and support networks to help sustain progress made and reduce the likelihood of future anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Evidence Base

Throughout the six plus years that the programme has been funded by CashBack for Communities, we have reported to our funder on a quarterly and annual basis. There have also been five external evaluations conducted by an external evaluator, the most recent being published in July 2023. These reports and external evaluations draw on qualitative and quantitative data gathered from children and young people via online surveys, one to one interview's and focus groups, using the SHANARRI framework to measure changes in children and young people's wellbeing. Other stakeholders, including parents and carers, referral agencies and employers have also been consulted using similar methods. There was therefore a wide evidence base of information available from which to inform the CRWIA.

The information that has been gathered via these methods confirms that children and young people under the age of 18 feel that participating on our programme has had a positive impact in relation to the UNCRC articles outlined in the previous section and the five outcomes required by our funder, below:

Outcome 1: Young people are diverted from anti-social, criminal behaviour and involvement with the criminal justice system.

Outcome 2: Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options (positive destinations).

Outcome 3: Young people's health, mental health and well-being improves.

Outcome 4: Young people contribute positively to their communities.

Outcome 5: Young people build their personal skills, resilience, and benefit from strengthened support networks and reduce risk-taking behaviour.

We will continue to monitor the impact of Moving Forward+ with CashBack on children and young people's rights and wellbeing via ongoing surveys of those children and young people, as well as other stakeholders. We will also seek the views of our soon to be established Youth Advisory Council (see below).

Involving Young People in the Design & Development of our Programme

Prior to our first application to CashBack for Communities, in 2016, autistic young people were consulted via two focus groups and an online survey. The feedback received from these young people shaped the delivery model we employed during CashBack for Communities Phase 4 (2017-2020).

External evaluations conducted during Phase 4, highlighted the number of young people who, having benefitted from the programme, wished they had been able to access it sooner. Sadly, many had found school to be a traumatic experience and a time when a Moving Forward+ type intervention would have been welcome. In response to this feedback, for Phase 5 (2020-2023) we lowered the age range of the programme from 16-24 to 12-24 and began assisting autistic children who felt unable to attend school.

Feedback received in our most recent Phase 5 evaluation indicated that it would be very helpful to further reduce the age at which children can access the programme and in response to that during Phase 6 (2023-2026) we are now supporting children from age 10.

We are currently in the process of establishing a Youth Advisory Council (YAC), the aim of which is to amplify children and young people's views in terms of how we can further develop and improve the programme. Information on the aims of the YAC and a role profile have been shared with Phase 6 participants. At the time of writing, it is hoped that the YAC will have its initial meeting in January 2024, meeting quarterly thereafter. Reviewing and feeding back on this CRWIA will also be a part of the YAC's remit.

Review, Training & Promotion of CRWIA

This CRWIA is reviewed annually. We ensure that all current and future Moving Forward+ with CashBack team members undertake CRWIA training. A link to this CRWIA is posted on our webpage and the CRWIA will be referenced in our annual report to CashBack for Communities.

Stage 3: CRWIA Declaration

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