



THE CHANGING LIVES INITIATIVE

“You have changed our lives and helped us achieve a happy home for our child”

Press Release

Embargo Tuesday 13 April 11.30am

Families report unique, drug-free approach to ADHD delivers life-changing results

Almost 2,000 families have reported life-changing benefits from a three-year cross-border project to support parents and guardians struggling with young children displaying behaviour consistent with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). The Changing Lives Initiative has been delivered in Northern Ireland, the border counties of Ireland and the Argyll and Bute region in Scotland thanks to the award of €2.7m from the European Union’s INTERREG VA Programme, which is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

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 the five Project Partners.

Northern Ireland’s Health Minister Robin Swann said: “This initiative has proved of major benefit to families of children with ADHD across these islands. I commend the Changing Lives Initiative team’s work and the positive contribution they have made to children with ADHD and their parents.”

Ireland’s Health Minister Stephen Donnelly said: “I welcome this important new EU Interreg report, which reflects improved supports in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland for young people with ADHD and their families. I intend that all HSE mental health services, including those around ADHD, will be developed over 2021 and beyond. This is in line with our new mental health policy, ‘Sharing the Vision’. Any initiative that gives us a clearer understanding of how best to address ADHD benefits us all. The cross-border and international dimension of this Interreg initiative only reinforces this common objective.”

The Changing Lives Initiative provides an evidence-based parenting programme that has succeeded in significantly reducing the impact of ADHD on the lives and functioning of children and families.

Today’s project report included the findings of several evaluations conducted as part of The Changing Lives Initiative. These have added to the body of evidence demonstrating significantly improved outcomes for families from this type of programme and the benefits of an early intervention, community-based approach to the issue of ADHD.

Welcoming the report outlining the results of The Changing Lives Initiative that was published today Gina McIntyre, Chief executive of the SEUPB, said: “Health and social care

services, on both sides of the border, face many challenges in terms of rising demand and increasing budgetary pressures. The EU INTERREG VA Programme is helping to address these issues by providing support to projects that can give citizens better access to high quality, joined up healthcare.

“The Changing Lives Initiative is a fantastic example of this, as highlighted in the report. The project has made a hugely positive impact upon the lives of many families across Northern Ireland, the border counties of Ireland and Western Scotland. The benefits also extend beyond parents to teachers, early years’ practitioners and healthcare professionals, who have been able to access vital training under the initiative. I would like to congratulate everyone who was involved for their hard work and dedication in delivering this much needed project,” she continued.

“The project findings confirm that The Changing Lives Initiative has led to a significant reduction in ADHD-related behaviour as well as in other emotional and conduct problems. The programme has also succeeded in significantly improving parental skills and reducing parental stress,” said Aileen O’Donoghue, Chair of The Changing Lives Initiative Steering Group.

She went on to say that the Initiative had not only proved to be a highly effective early intervention, but also the least invasive.

“Typically children with ADHD are treated with prescription drugs. Yet these drugs provide only short-term relief of the symptoms of ADHD,” Ms O’Donoghue said.

“The cost for ADHD medications in Northern Ireland alone for the 12-month period March 2019 – February 2020 was £3,462,711. The aggregate costs of ADHD in the UK have been estimated at around £102,135 per case.¹ In Ireland over 90,000 prescriptions for ADHD medications were issued in 2019 at a cost of €5,143,915.²

“In contrast, the cost of providing The Changing Lives Initiative programme per family is as little as €1,155.”

The award-winning project has been made possible thanks to an innovative partnership between organisations from both the statutory and community sectors on the island of Ireland and the Argyll & Bute region. It brings together the specialist expertise and resources of a diverse group of organisations committed to testing new ways of supporting families with children displaying behaviour consistent with ADHD.

1. 2012/13 prices; Parsonage M. The Lifetime Costs of Attention Deficit Disorder. Centre for Mental Health (2014).
2. According to data extracted from the HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Service (PCRS).

Notes to Editor

Links to further information:

- [Infographic](#) providing highlights of The Changing Lives Initiative project report
- Families and practitioners can download The Changing Lives Initiative App at www.changinglivesinitiative.com (Note: a dedicated link is available for **media use only** at <http://www.invrness.deuxality.com/Archways/>)

- [Information kit](#) (providing details on The Changing Lives Initiative Intervention Programme as well as background on ADHD)
- [Summary report: An Early Intervention Approach to ADHD - Final report on Outcomes, Process and Economic Evaluations](#). April 2021.
- The recording of today's event will be available at <http://www.changinglivesinitiative.com/event-recording/> from 2pm today.

EU INTERREG VA Programme

- The Special EU Programmes Body is a North/South Implementation Body sponsored by the Department of Finance 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 co-operation, 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

Project Partners:

- Archways, Lead Partner, Dublin
- Dundalk Institute of Technology, Research Partner
- Colin Neighbourhood Partnership, who deliver The Changing Lives Initiative in Belfast and Lisburn
- The Genesis Programme (Louth Leader Partnership), who deliver The Changing Lives Initiative in Louth and surrounding border areas
- NHS Highland (Argyll & Bute Health and Social Care Partnership), who deliver the programme in Argyll & Bute Region.

Interviews can be arranged on request with:

- Parents who have participated in the programme
- Early years practitioners who have participated in the programme
- Project partners
- Programme trainers
- Researchers who compiled The Changing Lives Initiative 'Final report on Outcomes, Process and Economic Evaluations'.

Images, vision and audio

- Available on request

Contact

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