



# MAXIMISE! SOUTH EAST IMPACT REPORT 2018-2019



**Maximise!**  
Income - Wellbeing - Attainment - Potential

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"I struggle to put into words how helpful Maximise's! support has been to the family, as well as to myself as the family's Social Worker. The difference in mum's confidence and engagement has been amazing and I know she really values the relationship and being heard for what seems to me like the first time, perhaps, ever. I feel like words can't do it justice".

Family Social Worker

Funded by  
NHS Lothian Health Improvement Fund  
Capital City Partnership  
Liberton School Cluster Pupil Equity Fund



# Child Poverty context: 1 in 5

According to recent City of Edinburgh Council figures, 20,474 children live in poverty in the capital after housing costs are taken into consideration. The '1 in 5' report highlighted that "more than 22% of children in Scotland (212,000) live in poverty. The Institute for Fiscal Studies forecasts that this will increase by 100,000 to over one in four children by 2020".

In Edinburgh, 1 in 5 children live in poverty. It is recognised by the Scottish Government that a gap exists in the progress made between children from higher and lower income families – referred to as the 'attainment gap'. Children from higher income families significantly outperform those from low income households at ages 3 and 5.

(Source: JRF)

Alongside experience of education and educational outcomes, poverty has negative impacts on "children's health; cognitive, social, emotional and behavioural development; friendships; self-esteem; relationships...and access to employment (Treanor 2012).

Research has shown that family income impacts on children's lives and development in a variety of ways. Living on a low-income increases parents' stress levels, which in turn affects relationships and family dynamics.

It's clear that improving the lives of children in Edinburgh is only a possibility if the needs of families are addressed. Maximise! supports families to navigate the structural challenges that contribute to poverty, such as the rise of living costs, insecure work, underemployment and low wages.

# Maximise! in the South East

This report reviews and summarises the first year of Maximise! service activity delivered during 2018 -19, aiming to capture the impact of the service and the lessons learned in the project's first year within the Liberton school cluster.

## What is Maximise?

Maximise! is a Family Advice and Support Project delivered in partnership by Children 1st and CHAI (Community Help and Advice Initiative) and supported by the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership, NHS Lothian, the City of Edinburgh Council and Capital City Partnership.

Schools are also a partner in the service, contributing to the embedding of the service within their school clusters via Pupil Equity Funding (PEF).

Maximise! takes a child-centred, family minded approach to tackling child poverty in Edinburgh. Holistic, community-based advice and support is provided to parents, children and young people who are, or are at risk of, experiencing poverty to overcome the barriers that families experiencing poverty face in achieving at school, work, home and in the community.

Maximise! aims to improve families' financial resilience and health and wellbeing, as well as increasing children's positive participation in school life and education attainment, reducing the attainment gap that exists between higher and lower income families.

From August 2018, the South East Maximise! team have been embedded in the following five primary schools, and one high school which make up the Liberton cluster:

**Liberton High School | Liberton Primary School | Prestonfield Primary School  
Gracemount Primary School | Gilmerton Primary School | Craigour Park Primary School**

The Maximise! model works with the school clusters, providing an Advice Worker, Family Support Worker and Employability Worker who work flexibly in the school and the local community using a whole family support approach - offering trauma-informed, person-centred support to all family members as needed to address the wider issues that often impact families affected by poverty.

# Maximise! Model

The Maximise! model was developed following the success of the NHS model 'Welfare Advice and Health Partnerships' (WAHP) which implemented Welfare Rights Advisors (WRA) in GP practices, CHAI's School Income Maximisation service which was initially developed in the Tynecastle area and Children 1st's Money Advice service which had operated in North Edinburgh schools.

Maximise! expands on the WAHP model, bringing together two separate charities with their own areas of expertise to create a multidisciplinary team with the aim of mitigating and preventing social inequalities caused by poverty.

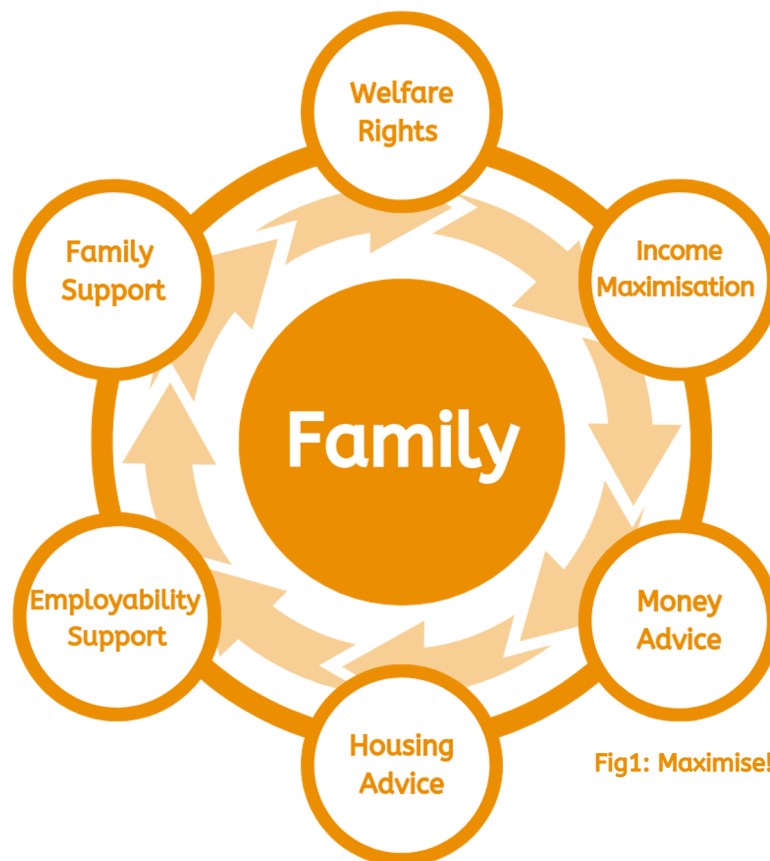


Fig1: Maximise! Model of Support

The Maximise! model of support (fig1) was developed collaboratively between partners and puts families at the centre of the service. The model illustrates that families can engage with the element/s of support as needed.

Flexibility and fluidity are key parts of the model as families can select the areas of support they engage with and they can move through and engage with the model of support in a manner which suits their situation.

The Maximise! service is embedded within the familiar and trusted environment of the school building. In its first year of delivery, Maximise! has become integrated into the school community.

As a new service, the Maximise! team focused on establishing the service within the school community and raising awareness of the service and as a result, the team now have a highly visible presence in the schools, and have worked over the past year to maintain this and build positive relationships with staff and parents across the cluster.

The work done by the Maximise! team in establishing the service has had a positive impact on the number of parents accessing support both from school referrals, other agency referrals and self-referrals via telephone or school reception.

Families have the option of engaging with any one of the three strands of support available to them dependant on need, with each aspect of the support being entirely optional.

The service offers support under the strands of advice, intensive family support and employability, involving a staff team of three who work flexibly together with families.


## Advice

We know how important financial resilience is in supporting a safe and nurturing environment for children to grow and develop. We also know that money and debt issues can be a result of – or result in – a range of social and emotional factors which can, in turn, seriously affect family functioning.

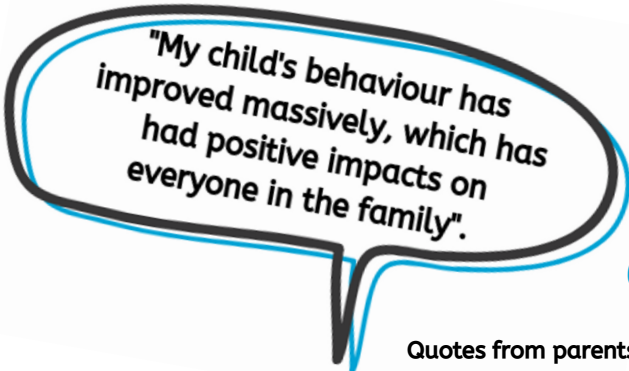
Often the first point of contact for families engaging with the Maximise! project, the Advice Worker addresses inequalities by providing families individualised advice and support on income maximisation, welfare rights, crisis management, debt management, housing issues and financial education.

The Advice Worker carries out a financial health check for each family to help ensure that they are receiving the money they are entitled to and are not paying over the odds for services.

In the 2018-19 period, **90** financial health checks were carried out for families in the South East – the first step in supporting families to access benefits, reduce household bills, deal with any debts and access other available grants and funding as applicable.



"It's been so important - knowing that we won't be homeless and we have our flat secured".



"My child's behaviour has improved massively, which has had positive impacts on everyone in the family".

**ADVICE  
IMPACTS  
AND  
OUTCOMES  
YEAR ONE**

**109  
ADVICE  
ISSUES  
WERE  
DEALT  
WITH**

**90  
PARENTS  
RECEIVED  
WELFARE  
ADVICE**

**181  
APPOINTMENTS  
WERE ATTENDED**



**TOTAL AMOUNT OF  
FINANCIAL GAINS IN  
YEAR ONE:**

**£256,238.00**

**OVER  
QUARTER OF  
A MILLION!**



# Intensive Family Support

Intensive family support involves looking at the core issues that may affect the whole family and addressing these to stabilize families and increase independence. It can also include prevention work and assisting people to move forwards.

The focus of referrals to the family support service has been around reducing the effects of poverty on families, supporting access to learning, improving mental health and wellbeing and supporting and developing parenting skills.

The intensive family support element of Maximise! takes The Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach to tracking progress for individuals and families.

A review of the family support element of Maximise! has been carried out which highlights some of the progress achieved by the 20 families who have engaged with support, as highlighted below.

## SHANARRI Wellbeing Outcomes

### ACHIEVING

- o 10 families have children more engaged in education with:
- o 3 children having increased attendance
- o 3 children enjoying school more
- o 2 children having improved behaviour at school
- o 1 child having their additional needs better met in school

### NURTURED

- o 10 families have improved family relationships including:
- o 6 families experiencing reduced tension/conflict at home
- o 6 parents reporting improved parenting skills

### SAFE

- o 19 children are living in safer environment including:
- o 9 children with basic needs now being met
- o 6 children at reduced risk of harm - including no longer exposed to domestic abuse

### INCLUDED

- o 15 Families with improved access to essential items such as food, clothes, toys and household items
- o 11 Families now receiving full amount of benefits they are entitled to

### HEALTHY

- o 11 Parents have increased resilience including:
- o 5 parents better able to cope with difficult situations
- o 4 children with a greater sense of belonging and security



**FAMILY  
SUPPORT  
IMPACTS  
AND  
OUTCOMES  
YEAR ONE**

**20**

**LOW-INCOME FAMILIES  
ACCESSED INTENSIVE  
FAMILY SUPPORT.**

**26**

**PARENTS/  
CARERS  
AND 51  
CHILDREN  
AND  
YOUNG  
PEOPLE  
RECEIVED  
DIRECT  
SUPPORT**

**FAMILIES BENEFITED  
FROM A RANGE OF  
PRACTICAL, SOCIAL AND  
EMOTIONAL OUTREACH  
SUPPORT**

**23**

**OTHER PARENTS,  
CARERS AND  
CHILDREN IN THE  
HOUSEHOLD  
RECEIVED  
INDIRECT  
SUPPORT**

**7**

**FAMILIES WITH  
CHILDREN WITH  
ADDITIONAL  
SUPPORT NEEDS**

**4**

**CHILDREN ON THE  
CHILD PROTECTION  
REGISTER. ALL  
CHILDREN REMOVED  
FROM REGISTER  
WHILE SUPPORTED  
BY MAXIMISE!**

**3**

**FAMILIES WITH  
LOOKED AFTER  
CHILDREN**

# FAMILY SUPPORT

AUG 18-19

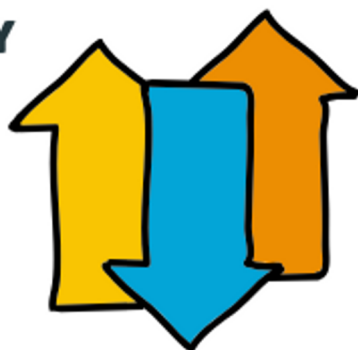
## OVER 50% OF FAMILIES SUPPORTED FACED HOUSING ISSUES INCLUDING:

- Living in Emergency and/or Temporary Accommodation
- Eviction/Rent Arrears
- Poor Housing Conditions/Overcrowding



## ADVOCACY

11 Families, including 33 children, received social and emotional support as well as a range of advocacy support to help navigate systems and services.



## PREVENTION

### 4 FAMILIES PREVENTED FROM HOMELESSNESS

- ➡ Advocacy with letting agencies and local authorities
- ➡ Negotiating payment plans for rent arrears
- ➡ Supporting engagement with legal processes



## STABILITY

3 FAMILIES WERE SUPPORTED TO MOVE FROM EMERGENCY ACCOMODATION (B&B) INTO TEMPORARY ACCOMODATION



**Maximise!**  
Income • Wellbeing • Attachment • Potential

THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF INTENSIVE FAMILY SUPPORT IS 6-9 MONTHS

55% OF FAMILIES SUPPORTED LIVE IN SIMD DECILE 1 (MOST DEPRIVED)

# Employability

The Employability Worker promotes independence and supports families to engage in employment and or/employability related activities by offering tailored advice and support to parents and older school pupils seeking employment, delivered through 1:1 drop-ins and appointments.

Referrals to the employability service come via the Advice and Family Support Worker, once it is identified that an individual would benefit from this support.

Once engaged, individuals receive support suitable to their needs, this can include help with accessing training, education and volunteering, as well as CV and interview preparation or assistance in applying for jobs, exploring career and education options and confidence building.

Support is available to individuals regardless of their current working situation, for example, those who are in work and looking to progress can engage in the service. Ongoing in-work support is also an option once suitable employment has been found.

'Next Steps' - a six-week employability workshop was created and delivered by the Employability Worker. The sessions were designed to help improve confidence, highlight strengths and set short and long-term goals. Seven parents engaged in this course and gave positive feedback upon its completion.

**"Maximise! has made an enormous difference at our school. Parents who were under a great deal of pressure now have a support network in a comfortable space that they know.**

**Some of our families have spoken of how much pressure has been relieved simply by talking things through and working with Maximise!**

**Many families have a much stronger relationship with the school as a result of this support. Catherine and Beth are so supportive, knowledgeable and caring. They are a real asset to the school community".**

**Former Acting Principal Teacher,  
Gilmerton Primary School**

**EMPLOYABILITY  
IMPACTS  
AND  
OUTCOMES  
YEAR ONE**

**31**

**PEOPLE HAVE  
ENGAGED WITH,  
AND RECEIVED  
SUPPORT FOR  
EMPLOYABILITY**

**3**

**PEOPLE HAVE  
PROGRESSED  
INTO PART  
TIME AND  
FULL TIME  
WORK THAT  
HAS BEEN  
SUSTAINED  
FOR  
4 WEEKS+**



**7**

**PARENTS  
ATTENDED 'NEXT  
STEPS' SIX  
WEEK  
EMPLOYABILITY  
COURSE**

**8**

**PEOPLE HAVE  
PROGRESSED - 7 HAVE  
TAKEN PART IN  
EMPLOYABILITY AND  
SKILLS TRAINING**

**1**

**HAS  
ENTERED  
PART TIME  
EDUCATION**

# MAXIMISE! CLIENT JOURNEY CASE STUDY

PARENT APPROACHED SCHOOL AS SHE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT HER 8 YEAR OLD SON JOE\*. HE WAS NOT SLEEPING AND HIS BEHAVIOUR HAD CHANGED. HE SEEMED ANGRY AND HAD STARTED TO MISBEHAVE AND GET INTO FIGHTS AT SCHOOL.

SCHOOL REFERRED FAMILY TO MAXIMISE! FOR SUPPORT

MAXIMISE! FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER MET FAMILY. 1-2-1 SESSIONS WERE HELD WITH JOE USING THE KITBAG RESOURCE WITH A FOCUS ON SHARING AND EXPRESSING FEELINGS.

JOE SHARED THAT HE WAS FEELING SAD AND ANGRY BECAUSE HE MISSED HIS MUM - HE SAID "SHE WORKS ALL THE TIME AND WE STILL CAN'T BUY STUFF"

THE FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER MET WITH MUM. SHE WAS IN AN INSECURE JOB EARNING MINIMUM WAGE AND WORKING THREE 12 HOUR SHIFTS A WEEK PLUS OVER TIME TO PAY OFF RENT ARREARS AND PROVIDE FOR THE FAMILY. SHE RECEIVES NO CHILD MAINTENANCE FROM SON'S FATHER.

THE EMPLOYABILITY WORKER MET MUM AND LEARNT THAT SHE WANTED TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH HER SON AND FIND MORE SECURE EMPLOYMENT. DISCUSSED OPTIONS AND CREATED A CV. BEGAN LOOKING FOR DAY JOBS THAT WILL OFFER SECURITY AND ALLOW MUM TO SPEND MORE TIME WITH HER SON.

EMPLOYABILITY WORKER SUPPORTING PARENT TO PRACTISE INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES AND BUILD SELF ESTEEM AND CONFIDENCE.

MUM MET ADVICE WORKER WHO ENSURED SHE WAS RECEIVING THE BENEFITS SHE WAS ENTITLED TO. SUPPORTED MUM TO APPLY FOR WORKING TAX CREDITS AND SET UP A MANAGEABLE PAYMENT SCHEME FOR RENT ARREARS.

FAMILY CONTINUES TO RECEIVE FAMILY SUPPORT TO DEVELOP GOOD COMMUNICATION BETWEEN MOTHER AND SON. SINCE BEING SUPPORTED BY MAXIMISE! JOE'S SLEEP ROUTINE HAS IMPROVED AND MUM NOW FEELS HOPEFUL FOR THEIR FUTURE.

"I FEEL BRAVE ENOUGH TO MAKE CHANGES FOR ME AND JOE KNOWING I HAVE THE SUPPORT FROM THE MAXIMISE TEAM"

Quote from parent

\*Name has been changed

# Learning in Year One & Next Steps

In year one, the Maximise! service established itself within the Liberton Cluster and achieved positive outcomes for families struggling with the effects of poverty. As part of the service development, co-production was held with families who shared their experiences of the service, giving suggestions on how it might be improved. The information gathered from families has been used to shape the service moving forward.

As this was a new service, resource in the first few months was heavily focused on establishing and promoting the service to families and schools, as well as linking in and forming relationships with relevant local statutory and third sector provision within the community.

Learning has been gained from the challenges encountered during the development period which will inform the service going forward. The intensive family support element of the service is based on relationship building and is by nature, intensive in staff resource. Lessons were learned regarding demand and capacity, and a waiting list system has now been put in place, with contact and support offered remotely for those families prior to allocation.

Following feedback from the Maximise! team, laptops have been provided for remote admin working, allowing for more time to be spent supporting families. The complexity and variation of issues that families face has become evident. In response, all members of the multidisciplinary team have received training on various specialist subjects, such as child protection and mental health.

As a result of the positive impact of Maximise! in the South East, funding has been secured from the City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Government's Improving Attainment – Care Experienced Children and Young People Fund to allow work to continue in the South East, and additionally, expand the service across Edinburgh.

This increased capacity has allowed Maximise! to expand the staff team and extend the service to an additional 3 School Clusters, who have each bought into the service via PEF funding. Maximise! was rolled out across the four localities in August 2019.

The continuation and expansion of the Maximise! service aligns with the Edinburgh's Local Child Poverty Action Report and addresses the priorities included in Every Child, Every Chance: Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2018-22, by tackling household costs and social security challenges; supporting individuals finding good employment and supporting families recovering from the impact of adverse childhood experiences.

## **For more information about Maximise! please contact:**

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