



Choices Plus
for lone parents

Qualifications : Work Experience : Support

Social Return on Investment Study
2007-2013



In association with
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gingerbreadni
supporting one parent families

The ESF Managing Authority as an agent of the Commission is pleased to have provided the funding which has so evidently impacted on those who participated in the project led by Gingerbread.

There were significant achievements which should be highlighted not least to have 58 beneficiaries attain qualifications at NVQ level 3 or higher. This was a notable achievement and demonstrates that with the appropriate support mechanisms in place those who are at a distance from the labour market can progress and aspire to gaining full time employment and achieve their full potential.

What is apparent from the testimonies in the report is the significant impact that participation in the project had on increasing the self esteem and confidence of many of the beneficiaries. The consequence of this ESF supported project can only be to increase the employability of those concerned.

Brian Smart, Head of DELNI European Unit

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1 GINGERBREAD NI

1.1 Organisational Overview

Gingerbread NI is the lead agency working with and for one-parent families in Northern Ireland. It works in partnership with other organisations and agencies to develop and deliver innovative services and build local networks. Its primary concern, whether through campaigning to promote positive policies for lone parents and families, or through developing and delivering programmes, is to help to tackle the many difficult issues and barriers faced by one-parent families. Gingerbread NI has always sought to speak up for lone parents amongst policy makers and to ensure they are treated fairly in respect to policy matters.

Gingerbread was founded by Tess Fothergill in London in 1970 following the breakdown of her marriage and the associated dramatic change in circumstances for her young family. She wrote a letter to "The Sunday Times" highlighting her situation and, as a consequence of the response, she realised the need for a self-help organisation for lone parents. Gingerbread in England was born.

In Northern Ireland in the late 1970s, groups of lone parents from West Belfast and Cookstown, County Tyrone met together to form a support network. After exploring options, they agreed that Gingerbread in England mirrored much of what they wanted to achieve. A sister network in Northern Ireland, Gingerbread NI was formed which adopted and adapted many aspects of the national movement. The first office was opened in Belfast in 1978 with two members of staff and a number of volunteers. The need for a lone parent organisation was apparent and so the organisation grew rapidly. The high demand for services and the commitment, voluntary effort and active participation of its membership gave the organisation dynamism and acted as a catalyst for its ongoing development and consequent growth.

In Northern Ireland there are nearly 92,000 lone parents with 150,000 children. Between 20% and 25% of all families in Northern Ireland are one-parent families.

Gingerbread employs 19 people.

1.2 Mission, Values & Aims

Mission:

Gingerbread NI is Northern Ireland's only lone parent led organisation working to secure and protect equality and social inclusion for one parent families.

Values & Principles:

- Gingerbread is an independent, not for profit, membership organisation
- Gingerbread is an organisation promoting individual and collective empowerment
- Gingerbread operates on a Northern Ireland wide basis to represent and be accessible to all lone parents
- Gingerbread respects and reflects the diversity of one parent families and recognises the need for their equality of treatment

Aims:

- To represent one parent families in Northern Ireland and enhance understanding of their needs and aspirations
- To identify the needs of one parent families and develop appropriate responses
- To influence policy makers and service providers to respond appropriately to the needs of one parent families

1.3 Service Provision

Gingerbread has developed and delivers a wide range of services, which benefit one-parent families, including:

- advice and information
- childcare
- membership
- personal development and
- vocational training initiatives

2 INTRODUCTION TO CHOICES PLUS

Choices Plus is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), administered by Northern Ireland's Department for Employment and Learning (DELNI). Choices Plus supports lone parents to:

- Achieve qualifications
- Access (ongoing) mentoring support and careers advice
- Gain work experience and, in so doing, enhance development of new skills
- Build self confidence and self esteem
- Help participants to progress and advance within the labour market

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"...this means that a significant number of lone parents will return to education and employment who would not have been accommodated under the mainstream New Deal for Lone Parents programme.¹"

Choices Plus' aspirations are to:

- Increase the number of lone parents receiving training
- Provide access to training at a higher level than other provisions (Level 3 & above)
- Increase the breadth and duration of training lone parents can access
- Make work taster sessions available
- Provide flexibility in offering part time and more tailored support for those lone parents who may find the mainstream provision prohibitively restrictive
- Place emphasis upon socially excluded individuals

Choices Plus is made up of the following elements:

- Programme induction and professional careers advice followed up with action planning
- Access to Level 3 or above qualifications at local Further Education Colleges /other training providers (and assistance with fees)
- Assistance with childcare costs or access to Gingerbread NI's crèche
- Assistance with travel and subsistence to College and to work placement
- Exit planning (assistance with job searches, CVs, and interview preparation)
- Access to Gingerbread NI's other support services such as peer support and careers advice
- Indirectly, to be of benefit to lone parents as a group by encouraging cohesion of provision across sectors and links with employers

Choices Plus has a long-standing history. It started life in 1989 as "Choices", becoming Choices Plus in April 2008. Throughout this time, it has remained a European Social Fund (ESF) programme. Northern Ireland operates a single ESF programme under its Competitiveness and Employment Objective, the overarching aim of which is *"to reduce economic inactivity and increase workforce skills in support of EU, UK national and Northern Ireland regional, employment and skills policy"*².

ESF's Structural Funds regulations (2007-13) strengthened its support for the Lisbon Agenda which, since 2005 has focused on delivering stronger, lasting growth and more and better jobs. (The primary aspiration of the Lisbon Agenda, 2000, was to *"make the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."*)

Programmes funded by ESF must complement mainstream (or Government-funded) provision and not replicate it. ESF and mainstream programmes remain particularly separate in Northern Ireland.

Any organisation in receipt of ESF funding which directly or indirectly receives over 50% of its core funding from central or local government or levies raised for training purposes is eligible to provide public match funding. Gingerbread NI has allocated part of its core funding (received from the Northern Ireland Department of Health & Social Services & Public Safety (DHSSPS)) for such purposes.

It has always been important to Gingerbread NI, that its services complement and add value to mainstream provision (Choices Plus having sat alongside, in the first instance, the Government's New Deal Programme and now, more recently Steps to Work). Choices Plus offers participants the unique opportunity to undertake a qualification at Level 3 or above. (Government schemes are generally limited to Level 2). And it adds value through offering a service that is sufficiently flexible to adapt to each participant's needs and circumstances.

It is apparent that Choices Plus is an excellent fit with ESF's priorities, for Northern Ireland specially and Europe more generally. Gingerbread NI believes:

- it is better for lone parents to be working as employment represents a route out of poverty; and
- it is important to offer lone parents the opportunity to attain higher level qualifications as these represent the best opportunity to secure employment that will sustain a reasonable standard of living, helping individuals to attain financial independence and to provide for their family (hence impacting upon child poverty rates).

Choices Plus employs a full time Project Officer who is a coach / mentor to the participants and is also a fully qualified careers advisor. Choices Plus participants may complete one or two years, depending upon their circumstances and the qualification they are undertaking.

¹ Gingerbread Grant Application Form to Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme 2007 –2013

² European Social Fund Promoter's Manual 2007-13: Northern Ireland ESF Programme

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Choices Plus objectives (agreed with ESF for the funding period April 2007 to March 2010) are to:

- 1.1 Recruit 150 lone parents to Choices Plus
- 1.2 Assist 150 lone parents to gain qualifications at NVQ level 3 or higher by providing access to study part-time and over a longer period of time than mainstream programmes, providing financial support with costs such as childcare, travel and subsistence and outreach support visits to ensure high course completion rates.

Within this objective, Gingerbread NI's target was to ensure 120 lone parents (40 per year) gained qualifications at NVQ Level 3 or above.

- 1.3 Assist 150 lone parents to progress towards employment by providing professional careers advice and guidance, work tasters with employers to gain experience, welfare rights advice incorporating "better off" calculations, ongoing mentoring and support with job search, job applications and interview preparation.

Within this objective, Gingerbread NI's target was to enable 50 lone parents to secure employment over the three years of the funding. (Year 1: 16, Years 2 & 3: 17 each)

3 CHOICES PLUS SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT STUDY METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction to Social Return On Investment Methodology

The Social Return on Investment (SROI) model has grown out of recognition that demonstrating added social, economic and environmental value is of increasing importance to third sector organisations and funders. It is a model, or framework, for measuring and accounting for a broad concept of value; value that is generated as a result of actions but that cannot necessarily be accounted for or captured in traditional monetary terms (i.e. it cannot be bought or sold).

The SROI model is used to account for or to identify all of the social, environmental and economic costs and benefits of a particular activity. The approach is to measure these costs and benefits (change) in "ways that are relevant to the people and organisations that experience or contribute to it. It [SROI] tells the story of how change is being created by measuring social, environmental and economic outcomes and uses monetary values to represent them."³

SROI uses monetary values to represent the social, environmental and economic costs and benefits of a Programme or activity, enabling an SROI ratio of benefits to costs to be calculated.

Gingerbread NI's Choices Plus' SROI ratio can be found in Section 5.4. Whilst the ratio reveals much about the worth and value being generated by Choices Plus, is important to remember that "SROI is about value, rather than money. Money is simply a common unit and as such is a useful and widely accepted way of conveying value."⁴

The SROI ratio is not the whole story; hence this report paints a fuller picture of the ways in which people and organisations experience change as a result of Choices Plus. The ratio does not "stand alone"; it must be understood in the context of all that is uncovered.

3.2 Choices Plus SROI Study Methodology

The following steps summarise the approach that was taken to completing the Study.

- 1 The scope, purpose and duration of the Study subject was agreed with Gingerbread NI
- 2 All stakeholders deemed to be material to the Study were identified by a Steering Group, formed by Gingerbread NI, which helped to guide and input into the research process.
- 3 Stakeholders were consulted to understand the change that each experienced
- 4 Inputs, outputs and outcomes of Choices Plus were identified and mapped (in consultation with each stakeholder group)
- 5 Indicators and financial proxies (means of evidencing and assigning monetary value to outcomes) were assigned to each of the outcomes, again in consultation with stakeholders
- 6 The SROI Ratio was calculated
- 7 The SROI Ratio was discounted to ensure the social value reflected all factors (in addition to Choices Plus) that influenced the outcomes
- 8 The SROI Report was drafted and finalised, incorporating feedback from members of the Steering Group

The Steering Group formed to guide the SROI process met three times and offered valuable insight, with particular

³ Cabinet Office, Office of the Third Sector: A Guide to Social Return on Investment, 2008

⁴ Cabinet Office, Office of the Third Sector: A Guide to Social Return on Investment, 2008

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concern for presenting inputs, outputs and outcomes and giving consideration of the use of indicators and financial proxies (though stakeholders were also involved in this). Outside of meetings, members were available for advice and information for which the researcher is very grateful. Members also reviewed a draft version of this report. Membership was made up of:

- Dr Ann Marie Gray: Senior Lecturer in Social Policy & Administration, University of Ulster. Research interests include: gender; women and decision making; lone parents; young women and social policy; and health policy in Northern Ireland.
- John Mallon: Department for Employment & Learning (DELNI) involved with the Department's Steps to Work Programme which is to assist people who are unemployed or economically inactive to find and sustain employment.
- John Morgan: Resource & Communications Director, HEAT (Heat, Energy & Associated Technology), employer and provider of a Choices Plus work experience placement from September 2006 to June 2008.
- Peter McCartney: Centre Manager, Community-Based Learning, Belfast Metropolitan College
- Annette O'Hagan: A former (during Study period) Choices Plus participant, she undertook welfare advice training and is now employed as an Advice Worker with Gingerbread NI.
- Anne Sweeney: Assistant Director, Gingerbread NI
- Avril McLoughlin: Choices Plus Project Officer, Gingerbread NI
- Karen McCann: Training Manager, Gingerbread NI

3.3 Scope, Purpose and Duration of the Study

3.3.1 The Study's Scope is:

- Retrospective in approach, covering a study period of 1 September 2007 to 1 April 2010, with results extrapolated over a six -year period (to 1 September 2013).

It was originally thought that Choices Plus would be best suited to a forecast SROI study (using trends from previous years to forecast what social and economic value Choices Plus is likely to generate in future years). However, given the current economic climate and the associated employment uncertainties in the short to

medium term, it was decided that a more realistic picture of Choices Plus' impact would be portrayed with a retrospective Study. However, because Choices Plus has a long-term impact upon participants, and because many of the Choices Plus participants' aspirations relate to long-term career aspirations, it was decided that results would be extrapolated over a six -year period.

- Includes 163 Choices Plus participants from the Study period (though, as will be explained in later Sections, those who participated in the recruitment process but failed to start or who withdrew from Choices Plus very early on (within one month of their start date) have been excluded from some calculations).

3.3.2 The Study's Purpose

The purpose of the Study is to help Gingerbread NI to demonstrate to funders and other stakeholders the social, educational and economic value being generated by Choices Plus.

It is of great importance to Gingerbread NI that Choices Plus complements and adds demonstrable value to mainstream provision. In calculating the social, educational and economic value created by Choices Plus, this SROI Study will provide Gingerbread NI with a much clearer picture of the extent to which it is adding value to mainstream provision and contributing to the employability rates of Northern Ireland's lone parents.

3.3.3 The Study's Duration

Once the social and economic value that has been generated over the study period (September 2007 to 1 April 2010) has been calculated, it will be extrapolated over a six - year period, resulting in an SROI ratio for the period September 2007 to September 2013. Whilst Choices Plus participants remain on Choices Plus for one or two years, it may take many years (six or more) for many of the Choices Plus participants to realise the full value of their participation. It was not thought to be practical to extrapolate results any further than six years for this, Gingerbread NI's first SROI Study, but tracking Choices Plus participants in the future will give the organisation a more accurate picture of whether or not this extrapolation period is adequate for future SROI Studies.

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3.4 Stakeholders and Materiality

Rationale for the Inclusion and Exclusion of Stakeholder Groups (as confirmed by the Steering Group)

| Stakeholder Group | Reason for Inclusion |
|--|---|
| Choices Plus participants | The participants of Choices Plus are main beneficiaries, most likely to experience significant change as a result of Choices Plus |
| Employers (providers of work experience placements) | All Choices Plus participants are placed with an employer for a work experience placement. It is likely that the Choices Plus participants will make some impact on the organisation during their time. This may be (positively) to save the organisation time and resources, to add value to the organisation or (negatively) to cost the organisation time and resources. |
| Jobs & Benefits Offices' Advisors | 27% of Choices Plus participants are referred by Personal Advisors at Jobs & Benefits Offices. Advisors may have been involved in offering advice and making suggestions to these individuals for some time. It was assumed, that, Choices Plus holds the potential to reduce the time the Advisors are required to spend supporting eligible clients, freeing up their time to devote to other clients/work. |
| Child Care Providers | Choices Plus assists Choices Plus participants with childcare costs to enable them to attend college and undertake work placements. Choices Plus participants may use this assistance to avail of registered (childminder or nursery) or non-registered (family member) childcare. It was assumed that this would represent additional business to registered childcare providers and additional income to non-registered childcare providers. |
| DELNI's European Unit, the Managing Authority for ESF. | It was thought likely that Choices Plus would have some impact on DELNI, as administrator of the ESF funding Programme. |
| Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) | There are financial implications of Choices Plus participants moving into paid employment and becoming less dependent upon benefits; increased revenue from tax and National Insurance contributions and reduced benefits payments. |
| Stakeholder Group | Reason for Exclusion |
| Family members of Choices Plus participants | It was originally thought that the Study may consult with Choices Plus participants' family members, to understand how Choices Plus impacted upon family life. However, the complexity of family circumstances, plus the research difficulties associated with consulting with Choices Plus participants' children rendered it too complex to attempt. Some impact on family members will be incorporated through capturing data relating to use of family members for non-registered childcare provision and Choices Plus participants will be asked to reflect on the impact participation has had on family life in general. |
| Other Professional Referral Agents | Individuals can be referred to Choices Plus by Social Workers, Health Visitors and other professionals (in addition to the JBO Advisors already referred to). There was discussion at the Steering Group about whether the impact of these referrals on their workloads could be explored but it was decided that the impact was likely to be too negligible to be regarded as material. |
| Further Education (FE) Colleges & Private Training organisations | Choices Plus participants undertake a qualification at Level 3 or above through a FE College or private training organisation. Belfast Metropolitan College made a very useful contribution to the discussions at the Steering Group meetings which highlighted that Choices Plus may represent value to Colleges, in terms of their social inclusion strategy and income generation. Time and resource constraints meant that it was not possible to include the Colleges as a Stakeholder for this SROI Study although it may be appropriate for Gingerbread NI to consider their inclusion in future SROI Studies. |

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Materiality

Those stakeholders excluded were believed to be not material either because the value of Choices Plus to them was minimal (in terms of the true social or economic value generated) or the stakeholder groups were too diverse to be able to measure with any accuracy.

It is the belief of the Steering Group that the groups that were selected are the key, material stakeholders of relevance to the Choices Plus Study. That is, through the material outcomes of Choices Plus, the stakeholder groups experience:

- direct financial or social gain as a result of Choices Plus;
- social gain (or social value) that resonates with societal norms and public policy that could generally be regarded as being in society's interest (this is of particular pertinence to Gingerbread NI which strives to represent the interests of lone parents in an ever-changing and ever-more-complex public policy context);
- the impact of the "core" purposes of the Choices Plus (as set out in Section 2 and aligned to Gingerbread's vision and purpose);
- changes regarded as significant to Gingerbread's peers (other organisations working in a relevant field, such as DELNI in its capacity as deliverer of other employability programmes for lone parents); and
- changes that are sufficiently relevant and significant to the stakeholders that they are likely to impact upon their decisions and/or behaviour.

The preceding five points highlighting how Choices Plus 's outcomes (as experienced by stakeholders) are to be regarded as material were summarised from *Redefining Materiality; Practice and Public Policy for Effective Corporate Reporting* published by AccountAbility (www.accountability.org.uk) in July 2003.

3.5 Profile of Each Stakeholder Group

3.5.1 Choices Plus participants

The Study incorporates all 163 Choices Plus participants between September 2007 and 1 April 2010. All Choices Plus participants were lone parents. In Years 1 and 2, Choices Plus participants may have been in employment before registering (though in reality only a small minority were). In April 2009, the selection criteria for participants changed; it became an ESF requirement that Choices Plus participants were in receipt of Income Support or Job

Seekers' Allowance. That continues to be the case.

Whilst Choices Plus did not have regional recruitment targets to meet, Choices Plus participants were drawn from throughout Northern Ireland (with a comparatively even spread). There was one male lone parent participant in the year 2008/09 and two in 2009/2010. Of these, one left early, one completed and one progressed to a second year (not yet completed).

In the 2007/08 intake, 9 out of 54 Choices Plus participants (17%) progressed to a second year on Choice Plus. In the 2008/09 intake, 14 out of 58 (25%) progressed to a second year. By 1 April 2010 (the cut-off for this Study), approximately 28 out of 74 Choices Plus participants (38%) had plans to complete a second year.

The Choices Plus participants come from many backgrounds and came to be lone parents through a variety of circumstances. Some found themselves to be single mothers at a comparatively young age. Others became single through divorce or separation. Choices Plus has, for them, been part of the journey of adjusting to life as a single parent.

The age profile over the Study period was as follows:

| | |
|---------|------|
| 16 – 19 | 3.5% |
| 20 – 24 | 14% |
| 25 – 49 | 80% |
| 50+ | 2.5% |

23% heard about Choices Plus through advertising or word of mouth and 17% through a Further Education College and made independent approaches to Gingerbread. 17% heard about Choices Plus through having first participated in or benefited from Gingerbread NI's other programmes and services. 27% were referred by Jobs & Benefits Offices and 16% were referred by other organisations / agencies (including social workers and Citizens' Advice Bureaux).

3.5.2 Employers (Providers of Choices Plus Work Experience Placements)

128 employers provided work experience placements, with three employers providing placements to two Choices Plus participants or more. Employers reflect the geographical spread of the Choices Plus participants. The Choices Plus Project Officer helps Choices Plus participants to source placement opportunities where needed, although most find placements through their own local contacts. The breakdown of employers is as follows:

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| | |
|-----|---|
| 29% | Educational (primarily nursery and primary schools) |
| 28% | Voluntary & Community-based organisations (including charity shops) |
| 18% | Commercial (including catering) |
| 15% | Health & Social Care industry |
| 8% | Beauty and hair businesses |
| 2% | Others |

3.5.3 Jobs & Benefits Offices' Advisors

27% of Choices Plus participants were referred by an Advisor from a Jobs & Benefits Office (JBO).

3.5.4 Childcare Providers

Childcare providers fell into two categories; registered with the Department for Health & Social Service and non-registered. Choices Plus participants are given the option to send their child(ren) to a registered childcare provider (day nursery or childminder) for which Choices Plus covers the costs, or to ask family members to care for their children, and have Gingerbread provide some remuneration to that individual.

31 registered childcare providers were used over the Study period. Whilst most Choices Plus participants sourced the childcare themselves (with Choices Plus funding the place), the Choices Plus Project Officer was involved in helping to identify suitable childcare options where this was necessary.

60 non-registered childcare providers were remunerated. These non-registered providers were family members (largely grandparents and aunts) of the children. It was the preference of two-thirds of Choices Plus participants to use family members rather than send children to a registered childminder or day nursery.

3.5.5 DELNI's European Unit

Choices Plus is funded under Northern Ireland's ESF Operational Programme. It has two priorities, Priority 1, Helping people into sustainable employment, being the one applicable to Choices Plus. The funding is administered by DELNI's European Unit which assumes responsibility for monitoring Choices Plus' progress (against the targets outlined in Section 2).

3.6 Stakeholder Consultation Methods

| | Stakeholder Group | Number in Group | Consultation Method(s) | Numbers involved in Consultation |
|---|---|-----------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Choices Plus participants | 163 | Questionnaires Focus Groups / Telephone interviews Represented on Steering Group | 130 14 1 |
| 2 | Employers (providers of Work Experience Placements) | 128 | Questionnaires Telephone Interviews Represented on Steering Group | 42 10 1 |
| 3 | JBO Advisors | 7 | Questionnaires | 7 |
| 4 | Childcare Providers – Registered | 31 | Telephone Interviews | 11 |
| 5 | Childcare Providers – Non-registered | 58 | Telephone Interviews | 12 |
| 6 | DELNI's European Unit, the Managing Authority for ESF, which funds Choices Plus | | Invited to participate in telephone interview but decided not to participate in order to maintain impartiality. | |
| 7 | HMRC | | Data relating to Tax, National Insurance, Tax Credits & Benefits payments obtained from Choices Plus participants' records | |

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- 1 **Choices Plus participants:** Questionnaires were issued to 2009/2010 Choices Plus participants at their end-of-year exit interviews, conducted by the Choices Plus Project Officer (though Choices Plus participants completed the forms themselves so that they could feel free to be honest in their responses). Questionnaires for 2007/08 and 2008/09 were conducted by a mixture of telephone interviews and questionnaires returned by post.

Two Focus Groups were planned, one in Derry and one in Belfast. Disappointingly, the one in Derry was cancelled because numbers were too low. The practicalities associated with rearranging (over the summer period) proved to be too difficult. Seven telephone interviews were held with individuals that should have attended this event to compensate. The Focus Group in Belfast was attended by a further seven. Whilst these numbers are comparatively low, they are compensated for by the remarkably high questionnaire return rate.

One lone parent sat on the Steering Group, offering valuable insight from her perspective as a former Choices Plus participant who had successfully achieved her qualification and then entered employment.

- 2 **Employers:** Many of the employers offering placements in 2009/10 completed questionnaires at their end-of-year interviews with the Choices Plus Project Officer (as per Choices Plus participants). Others took the form of telephone interviews.

Follow-up telephone interviews were conducted with those employers whose experiences stood out from the questionnaires and helped to help build a more comprehensive understanding of the employers' experience of change. Included in the follow-up telephone calls were a number of employers whose participant went on to secure employment or to volunteer with the organisation once the registered placement came to an end.

John Morgan, the employer representative on the Steering Group, made a valued contribution, offering his insights and highlighting his priorities, as an employer who had provided a work experience placement for Choices Plus and a businessman.

- 3 **JBO Advisors:** Questionnaires were circulated to the seven JBO Advisors that Choices Plus participants were able to identify as having referred them to the Programme. Given that the Advisors did not report any material changes to their workloads, no further information was sought. However, their returned questionnaires offered valuable insight into the positive changes they witnessed in their clients as a result of Choices Plus.

Childcare Providers: Once consultation with childcare providers began, it became apparent that this stakeholder group should be split into (and hereafter regarded as) two separate stakeholders:

4. **Registered Childcare Providers:** Telephone interviews with registered childcare providers were concerned with establishing whether the payments made by Choices Plus represented additional revenue for their businesses.
5. **Non-registered Childcare Providers:** Telephone interviews with non-registered childcare providers were concerned with establishing the impact that receiving remuneration for caring for Choices Plus participants' child(ren) had on the individual and the wider family circle and home-life.
6. **DELNI's European Unit:** DELNI is the administrator of the ESF funding. As such, a representative from DELNI was invited to participate in a telephone interview for this Study but decided not to participate in order to maintain impartiality. The Head of the European Unit has submitted a comment on this Study which appears in the Executive Summary. A representative of DELNI's Programme Management Team attended Steering Group meetings because Choices Plus is designed to be complementary to mainstream programme provision.
7. **HMRC:** Data regarding the overall impact of Choices Plus on HMRC revenue and payments was sourced from Choices Plus records and financial information provided by Choices Plus participants.

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4. CHOICES PLUS SROI STUDY RESULTS

4.1 The Theory of Change

“The theory of change is an account of how the organisation takes in resources (inputs) to do its work (activities) which leads to direct results (outputs) and longer term or more significant results (outcomes), as well as the part of those outcomes the organisation can take credit for (impacts).”⁵

The presentation of any programme’s inputs, outputs and outcomes, illustrating the causal links between them, is referred to as an ‘Impact Map’. The map helps an organisation to develop its theory of change by providing a framework for a better understanding of how its actions create and instigate change. Gingerbread’s Choices Plus’ Impact Map for can be found in Section 5.

Each year, Gingerbread NI collects information from Choices Plus participants that helps it to understand the “distance travelled” in such areas as: confidence levels; team work; communication; IT skills; and work readiness. Data that enables the organisation to assess its progress towards targets (the number of qualifications gained and the number of lone parents ending up in employment) is also gathered.

This Study will help to build upon Gingerbread NI’s understanding of the impact that Choices Plus has been having (on Choices Plus participants and others). The following sections identify the aspirations, inputs, outputs, and outcomes of Choices Plus, as they relate to each stakeholder. These sections culminate in the creation of an Impact Map. Further consideration will be given to each stakeholder’s experience of change in Section 4.6.

4.2 Stakeholder Aspirations

| Stakeholder 1 | Aspirations for Change (expected change) |
|---------------------------|--|
| Choices Plus participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain (Level 3 or above) qualifications • To make progress towards long-term career aspirations • To secure a job / get back to work • To gain practical work experience • To grow in confidence and self esteem, meet new people and feel less isolated • To prove worth & earn the respect of self and others • To make a better life for self and family in general |

Choices Plus participants fell (largely) into two groups: those whose goal was to attain a qualification at Level 3 and secure employment at that level; and those whose goal was to use the Level 3 qualification, secured through Choices Plus, as a stepping stone towards further career ambitions (requiring them to continue with their studies beyond their time with Choices Plus).

Choices Plus participants with career ambitions beyond what may be secured with a Level 3 qualification had many different motives but two main ones were identified:

- In building a career, Choices Plus participants will fulfil the potential they (and perhaps others) have come to recognise in them. For many lone parents, fulfilling potential takes on an even greater significance, as they seek to demonstrate to themselves and to others that they can succeed despite the many barriers they face. This is aligned with the final aspiration; to prove one’s worth and earn respect.
- Lone parents are the sole household earner. It is important that those who decide to return to education, with a view to increasing their employment prospects, secure a job with a salary that is adequate for them to provide for their family. Attaining the highest qualification possible offers the best potential for moving into higher-earning positions.

The opportunity to gain work experience and so to build confidence and skills (for the very first time or for the first time after a prolonged period out of work) was a vital aspiration for many. The change associated with moving into the working world and becoming economically independent cannot be overstated. One participant reflected: *“It was a really big step for me, between being at home and moving into work. Without Choices Plus I don’t think it would have been possible.”*

⁵ New Economics Foundation (nef) Measuring value: a guide to Social Return on Investment (SROI). 2nd Edition 2008

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| Stakeholder 2 | Aspirations for Change (expected change) |
|---|---|
| Employers providing Work Experience Placements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have opportunity to help an individual who is aspiring to build employability skills That Choices Plus participants will provide the organisation with additional support, freeing up existing staff members' time The placement will create an opportunity for the employer to "give something back to their community" by offering placement and help further its Corporate Social Responsibility benefits |

Most employers were approached by the participant who seemed keen, enthusiastic and motivated. Observing this, plus the hope that the participant would add value to the organisation, in assisting with tasks and freeing up staff time, helped employers to decide to participate. Some comments were:

- We were pleased to have the chance to have some extra help and enjoyed helping the participant progress*
- We offered the placement as the participant proved she was keen to learn*
- The girl approached us and seemed enthusiastic*

The following were the most common anticipated benefits of hosting a participant:

- Enable the organisation to offer services to additional clients, dedicate more time to service users or to offer more one-to-one support (for example, to children in classes)*
- Extra person with some experience to support staff team*
- Free staff members to focus on additional work*
- Promote image of charity / organisation*
- Support with particular tasks such as administration, gardening etc.*
- Input of keen individual with new ideas*

That the placement would create the opportunity for the employer to "give something back to the community" was a stated aspiration of a very small number of employers. It had been expected that Corporate Social Responsibility aspirations (and benefits) would have been more common. That this has not been so may reflect the make-up of the

employers (see Section 3.5.2). Had there been a larger number of commercial organisations, Corporate Social Responsibility may have been a more important factor.

| Stakeholder 3 | Aspirations for Change (expected change) |
|--|---|
| Jobs & Benefits Office Advisors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Choices Plus increases options beyond mainstream provision for JBO clients |

It was important to the Advisors that Choices Plus represented a valuable, additional option to present to their clients, and in so doing, to assist a number of clients to move towards their employment goals.

| Stakeholder 4 | Aspirations for Change (expected change) |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Registered Childcare providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional source of income for business, particularly to fill part-time spaces |

The aspiration for additional business was pertinent only to those registered childcare providers that had difficulty filling part-time slots. Such is the demand for childcare places in Northern Ireland that none were "in need" of the business. (Most have waiting lists for places). However, approximately 25% of the revenue generated was of value. Choices Plus children were typically in childcare for between one and three days per week. Some providers would have been unable (or very unlikely) to have filled part-time slots (such as one day or one and a half days per week) without the Choices Plus business. (Most parents demand between three and five days per week).

| Stakeholder 5 | Aspirations for Change (expected change) |
|---|--|
| Non-registered Childcare providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting a family member who is returning to education / training by providing childcare |

All expressed a willingness to help out by caring for their children whilst they attended College and/or their placement. There was also evidence that the stakeholder group understood and supported the Choices Plus participants' aspirations. *"I wanted to help (name) to do her course to give her a better chance for finding a good job in the future. I have seven children and I believe a higher level of education is very important."*

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| Stakeholder 6 | Aspirations for Change (expected change) |
|-----------------------|---|
| DELNI's European Unit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Choices Plus achieves its targets (as outlined in Section 2 of this report), under Northern Ireland's Operational Programme Priority 1, Helping People into Sustained Employment |

The following is an extract from ESF's European Social Fund Promoter's Manual 2007-13: Northern Ireland ESF Programme:

"Priority 1 [Helping people into sustained employment] will increase employment and reduce unemployment and inactivity by improving the employability of those groups experiencing significant employment gaps such as people with disabilities and health conditions, lone parents and other disadvantaged parents, older workers, young people not in education, employment or training, women and people with no or low qualifications, and other disadvantaged groups, including people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

"The Programme's cross cutting themes are gender equality and equal opportunities and promoting sustainable development, including the creation of sustainable communities."

| Stakeholder 7 | Aspirations for Change (expected change) |
|---------------|---|
| HMRC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benefits payments are reduced and tax and National Insurance contributions rise as Choices Plus participants move into employment |

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

4.3 Stakeholders' Inputs

| Stakeholder | Aspirations for Change | Inputs | |
|------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| | | Stakeholder investment (narrative) | Stakeholder investment (£) |
| Choices Plus participants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gain (Level 3 or above) qualifications To make progress towards long-term career aspirations To secure a job / get back to work To gain practical work experience <i>To grow in confidence and self esteem, meet new people and feel less isolated</i> To prove worth & earn the respect of self and others To make a better life for self and family in general | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Time devoted to attending (& travelling to) college & undertaking coursework Time to attend & travel to placement Adjustments in lifestyle and associated changes in family life required to accommodate time devoted to courses & placements | |
| Employers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have opportunity to help an individual who is aspiring to build employability skills That Choices Plus participants will provide the organisation with additional support, freeing up existing staff members' time To create an opportunity for the employer to "give something back to their community" and benefit from associated Corporate Social Responsibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff (often management) time required to introduce participant, provide any in-house training, assign tasks, supervise and provide feedback Expense associated with external (or in-house) training | £4,134 |
| JBO Advisors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Choices Plus increases options beyond mainstream provision for JBO clients | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time required to explain Choices Plus to relevant clients and make necessary introductions | |
| Registered Childcare Providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional source of income for business, particularly to fill part-time spaces | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff time to meet prospective parent and child, set up contract and settle child into the nursery | |
| Non-registered Childcare Providers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting a family member who is returning to education / training by providing childcare | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time and associated adjustments in own and wider family's lifestyle required to care for child | |
| DELNI's European Unit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That Choices Plus achieves its targets (as outlined in Section 2 of this report), under Northern Ireland's Operational Programme Priority 1, Helping People into Sustained Employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Administration of funding and quarterly monitoring of progress (progress reports submitted by Gingerbread NI) | £575,100 over 30 months of Study period |
| Gingerbread | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Match funding | £309,700 over 30 months of Study period |

* 63% of Choices Plus participants reported that the time, effort and adjustments required in their family life were "worth it". 8% reported that they were "not worth it". The remainder of the Choices Plus participants who submitted questionnaires did not offer a response.

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

Employers' Inputs

52% of employers reported some cost to the organisation, typically staff members' time for training, supervision, and feedback. However, it is noteworthy that over 80% wrote off these costs as "minimal" and did not assign a monetary value. 14% assigned some (nominal) values to their costs,

represented by the figure of £4,134. Overall, associated costs were reported to be:

- as anticipated by 28%;
- less than anticipated by 57%; and
- more than anticipated by 15% of employers

4.4 Choices Plus' Outputs

The following table illustrates each of Choices Plus' outputs, generated over the 30-month study period, as they relate to each stakeholder.

| Stakeholder | Outputs | Quantity |
|---|--|--|
| Choices Plus participants | Number of qualifications gained | *74 qualifications: 12 @ Level 2 46 @ Level 3 13 @ Level 4 3 @ Level 5 |
| | Number of successful work experience placements undertaken | 2007/08: 38 completed 2008/09: 37 completed 2009/10: 55 on course to be completed by June 2010 |
| | Number of social activities undertaken by parents that would not have happened before Choices Plus | 912 social activities per year |
| | Number of Choices Plus participants reporting that Choices Plus has impacted upon family, home-life & other relationships positively | 81 participants (66% of total) |
| Employers | Number of successful work experience Choices Plus participants placed with employer | 130 participants |
| JBO Advisors | Number of Choices Plus participants referred to Choices Plus by JBO Advisors | 44 |
| Registered Childcare Providers | Number of children cared for through registered childcare under Choices Plus | 31 |
| Non-registered Childcare Providers | Number of children cared for through non-registered childcare under Choices Plus | 58 |

* Choices Plus participants' qualifications outputs were drawn from Years 1 & 2. The Study period ends 1 April 2010, before Year 3 qualifications were completed. However, the trends emerging from Year 3 have informed some of the projections that have been made for the period April 2010 to September 2013.

26% of Choices Plus participants were classified as "early leavers". Of these, 28% were recruited but failed to start their course or left very early (within one month of their course beginning). These very early leavers have been removed from the Choices Plus participants' outputs and outcomes calculations. (See Section 4.6.1 for an explanation of Early Leavers).

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

4.5 Choices Plus' Outcomes

The following tables illustrate how each of the outputs (what Choices Plus generates) connects forward to the outcomes (changes for the stakeholder) and backwards to aspirations. SROI is concerned with evidencing and measuring outcomes as “the only way you can be sure that changes for stakeholders are taking place”.⁶ The tables illustrate that one output may meet more than one aspiration and may lead to numerous outcomes

(or options of outcomes). Where aspirations and outcomes appear in **bold and italics**, they represent unintended (positive or negative) outcomes. It is an important element of SROI, to capture all that changes and to distinguish between those outcomes that stakeholders intended (or anticipated) and those that did not. Where aspirations appear in **bold and italics**, it indicates an aspiration that was, perhaps, not present at the outset of Choices Plus, but that emerged as time progressed.

| Stakeholder 1: Choices Plus Participants | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes |
| 1.1 | To gain (Level 3 or above) qualifications | Number of qualifications gained | Choices Plus participants have acquired a building block to contribute to future employability (securing employment /moving onto future study) |
| 1.2 | To make progress towards long-term career aspirations | | Choices Plus participants who have moved onto additional qualifications (beyond Choices Plus) |
| 1.3 | To secure a job / get back to work | | Secured employment contract |
| 1.4 | To gain practical work experience | Number of successful work experience placements undertaken | Secured employment contract |
| 1.5 | | | Led to participant giving something back and carrying on with building skills through voluntary work |
| 1.6 | | | <i>Useful contacts made for future – in that work place and beyond - unintended outcome</i> |
| 1.7 | | | Represents building block for future career aspirations |
| 1.8 | To grow in confidence and self esteem, meet new people and feel less isolated | Number of social activities undertaken by parents that would not have happened before Choices Plus | Reduced feelings of isolation; social activities engaged in are a practical indication of growth in confidence and self esteem |
| 1.9 | <i>To prove worth & earn the respect of self and others</i> | Number of Choices Plus participants reporting that Choices Plus has impacted upon family & other relationships positively | <i>Choices Plus participants have earned respect of family members and other contacts</i> |
| 1.10 | To make a better life for self and family in general | | <i>Choices Plus participants discover that their child(ren) become more motivated to learn as they witness their parent studying and preparing for employment</i> |
| 1.11 | | | <i>Choices Plus participants discover it is difficult to find sufficient time to spend with and be available for their children in addition to attending college, completing course work and undertaking placement.</i> |

⁶ A Guide to Social Return on Investment, Cabinet Office (Office of the Third Sector)

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Outcome 1.1: This outcome represents those participants who did not move into employment, further study or volunteering at the end of their time on Choices Plus. Some have taken the decision to wait until their children are older and others have found that life's unpredictable circumstances (from family illness through to new birth) make it more difficult to proceed than they had anticipated. Others are struggling to find employment, especially in the current economic climate.

Outcome 1.2:

- Of 103 Choices Plus participants in 2007/08 and 2008/09, 25 pursued additional qualifications (beyond Choices Plus):
 - 37% Degrees
 - 22% Diplomas (including Degree access courses)
 - 11% Teaching qualifications (Level 4 or equivalent)
 - 8% HNDs
 - 3% Foundation Degrees
 - 14% Additional NVQ credits
 - 5% Professional qualifications (for example, accounting technician)

Those pursuing additional qualifications were progressing to higher levels of qualifications, (mostly) following career progression routes. Whilst a small number are pursuing non-vocational subjects, most are vocational (teaching, nursing, social work etc.) In the light of the current employment market, it will be increasingly important that Gingerbread NI attempts to channel Choices Plus participants into employment areas that hold the greatest potential for growth – requiring an understanding of the employment market and an ongoing commitment to monitoring employment patterns (discussed further in Section 6).

By 1 April 2010, 38% of Year 3 (2009/10) Choices Plus participants had expressed an intention to pursue additional study; an indication of the more difficult labour market.

For some, pursuing education beyond Choices Plus was an **unintended outcome**. One participant, for example, explained: *"I hadn't expected to want to further my education beyond Choices Plus as I didn't feel capable enough; I had planned just to look for work."* She is going on to complete a 2-year full time HND in Engineering, with a view to *"possibly continuing to a degree."*

Outcome 1.3 (&1.4): Securing employment appears as an outcome in two places to illustrate that the qualification and

the work experience are equally significant contributory factors. Work experience gave participants the confidence that backed up their qualifications or *"piece of paper"*. Whilst the outcome is highlighted twice, the financial proxy attached to it (Section 5) will be counted only once to avoid double counting the value of this outcome in the SROI calculation.

An important distinction has already been made between the 40% of participants who hoped to build a career requiring qualifications beyond Level 3 and those who aspired to secure employment that reflected a Level 3 qualification. A number of the 40% in the former category secured employment during the Study period. The job they secured is a *"stepping stone"*, and not the fulfilment of their ultimate goal. It is because a considerable number aspire to long-term career goals that Gingerbread NI must consider how they track past Choices Plus participants over the medium to long term (as discussed in Section 6).

- Of 103 Choices Plus participants in 2007/08 and 2008/09, 36 secured employment contracts. Of these:
 - 37% were 30 hours per week or more
 - 63% were part-time
 - 79% were permanent contracts.
 - 21% were contracts of between 12 and 36 months

Those who do not aspire to proceed beyond a Level 3 qualification (at least in the short-term) typically secured contracts in such areas as beauty therapy, administration, health & social care and childcare. Those with aspirations beyond Level 3 are typically progressing towards careers in teaching, nursing, social work and counselling, with several other professions including law, accountancy and architecture represented.

Outcome 1.5: Several Choices Plus participants who went on to voluntary work, once their placement finished, spoke of their sense of *"wanting to give something back"*. They found volunteering to be empowering, and, significantly, they believed it was something that they would not have felt sufficiently confident to undertake without having been through Choices Plus.

- 9% of Choices Plus participants pursued volunteering (averaging 20 hours per week) on an ongoing basis upon completing Choices Plus
- A further 10% went on to combine volunteering (averaging 12 hours per week) with Further (or Higher) Education

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

Outcome 1.6: Several participants from the Focus Group and telephone interviews highlighted the *unintended positive outcome* that through the work experience (and to some extent, also their courses), contacts were made that helped to open doors or that they are hopeful may do so in the future. Through one such contact one participant was encouraged to pursue a degree in Management & Leadership.

Outcome 1.8: Throughout the consultations, Choices Plus participants emphasised the significance of the social outcomes. The isolation felt by lone parents is a considerable barrier to feeling able to contribute to community life and participate in what many may regard as an “ordinary” social life. Up to 25% of Choices Plus participants socialise approximately once per month (with and without children), attributing this to the confidence, opportunities and new contacts developed, through their course as well as their placement.

“It’s hard to interact with other people when you spend so much time at home on your own with children. It helped me to see how crucial it is to get out and socialise, even though it’s hard to.”

“The social side of the overall impact is important to lone parents. I was so isolated and had no confidence to meet people. Being in FE brought me into my community.”

“Choices Plus widened my social circle. I am now mixing with all ages and types.”

Outcome 1.9, 1.10 & 1.11: The determination to prove their ability and worth, to themselves, their children and to others was a motivating factor for a considerable number of the Choices Plus participants. Once this had been established, it paved the way for changes to many, different relationships.

The positive role modelling offered to children is an important outcome, testified to by 40% of Choices Plus participants.

- *“Now I am working I am setting a good example to my children”*
- *“It’s good to be able to show the kids you can study at any age.”*
- *“It sets a good example for the children, them seeing me do my homework”*
- *“My study helped me to help the children with their school work. There’s even been mother / daughter rivalry over exam results!”*

However, for approximately 20%, the opposite of this outcome is true. The time taken up with College, coursework and placements was time away from children that both children and parents found difficult to adjust to. For some, this led to an early withdrawal from Choices Plus as the pressure on family life became too much. (Section 4.6.1 for a discussion on early leavers’ rates).

Stakeholder 2: Employers Providing Work Experience Placements

| | Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 2.1 | To have opportunity to help an individual who is aspiring to build employability skills | Number of successful work experience Choices Plus participants placed with employer | Benefit participant brings to the employer in terms of freeing up other staff members to pursue additional work plus fresh ideas they bring to the organisation |
| | Participant provides organisation with additional support, freeing up existing staff members’ time | | |
| 2.2 | Opportunity for employer to “give something back to their community” by offering placement and reap benefit | | Benefits to employer of investing in local community (CSR-related value) |
| 2.3 | <i>Choices Plus participants grow in confidence & ability during placement to extent that employment / volunteering is the end result</i> | | <i>Choices Plus participants moving into employment or voluntary work with placement provider – unintended outcome</i> |

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Outcome 2.1: 95% of employers reported that their expected benefits (Section 4.2, Stakeholder Aspirations) were realised. Staff time was freed up to pursue additional work as a result of an extra pair of hands, or, in the case of many educational and voluntary settings, service users were given greater one-to-one attention (and hence the quality of care the organisation was able to provide improved). In gathering completed questionnaires, the Choices Plus Project Officer conducted telephone and face to face interviews (many with placements who had hosted a 2009/10 participant would have been taking place irrespective of the SROI Study). It may be natural to assume that with such a favourable outcome, only employers with positive experiences were sufficiently motivated to return questionnaires, yet this is not the case. An explanation for such a high number of successful placements is offered in Section, 4.6.2.

A small number of less successful placements is inevitable. Two employers recorded disappointment, receiving a “poor student” who was not able or willing to make the contribution to the organisation that they had hoped for.

Outcome 2.2: Social Corporate Responsibility outcomes were not widely reported, with just two employers stating that either they “would mention the placement in a funding application” or “had demonstrated our commitment to the community by highlighting the placement provision on public tenders.” Given the small response rate, this outcome has been deemed to be not material.

Outcome 2.3: The value of the additional volunteering time that many Choices Plus participants carried on contributing, to their placement organisation or a different school or voluntary organisation, was represented according to the average value assigned by those host organisations. Whilst some went on to enter employment, no additional value was assigned to this by the employers concerned. It had been thought that employers may report savings associated with recruitment and/or training costs, when they employed a work experience placement participant, but this did not prove to be sufficiently significant to be material to the Study.

| Stakeholder 3: Job Advisors | | | |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| | Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes |
| 3.1 | That Choices Plus increases options beyond mainstream provision for JBO clients | Number of Choices Plus participants referred by JBO Advisors | JBO Advisors freed up to pursue other work as a result of reduction in time required to support clients |

Outcome 3.1: None of the JBO Advisors consulted reported that they experienced any time freed up to pursue other work as a result of referring clients to Choices Plus. Beyond the referral, Advisors were still required to conduct a compulsory six-monthly interview with the Choices Plus participant. For this reason, this outcome cannot be regarded as material.

| Stakeholder 4: Childcare Providers (Registered) | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| | Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes |
| 4.1 | Additional source of income for business, particularly to fill part-time spaces | Number of children cared for through registered childcare under Choices Plus | Additional source of business opened up to registered providers (childminders and day nurseries) |

Outcome 4.1: Approximately 25% of the income received by registered childcare providers represented true additional revenue. (75% cannot be accounted for as businesses reported that they would have filled these spaces without Choices Plus).

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

Stakeholder 5: Childcare Providers (Non-Registered)

| | Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes |
|-----|--|--|--|
| 5.1 | Wanting to help out their friend / family member by providing some childcare | Number of children cared for through non-registered childcare under Choices Plus | Income is made available to non-registered childcare providers, as they are remunerated, providing for higher disposable incomes for households. The opportunity to spend time alone with the child |

Outcome 5.1: Non-registered childcare providers reported that, as most are on a relatively low income, the extra money from Choices Plus made a significant difference. In addition, as most Choices Plus participants were at home full-time with their children previously, the childcare providers are reported to be pleased to have the opportunity to spend some time alone with their grandchild or niece or nephew.

Several Choices Plus participants who may have availed of funding for non-registered childcare claimed not to have been aware that this provision was available. It is, perhaps inevitable, that there will always be a small number of Choices Plus participants who fail to access all of the provision that is available through Choices Plus because they misunderstand (or do not take on board) information provided.

Stakeholder 6: DELNI's European Unit

| | Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes |
|-----|---|---|---|
| 6.1 | That Choices Plus achieves its targets (as outlined in Section 2 of this report), under Northern Ireland's Operational Programme Priority 1, Helping People into Sustained Employment | Qualifications gained and employment contracts secured by Choices Plus participants | *It has not been possible to identify outcomes that relate to ESF or to DELNI |

* DELNI's European Unit (in its capacity as funder) did not participate in the consultation

Stakeholder 7: HMRC

| | Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 7.1 | Choices Plus participants become less dependent on benefits as they become more economically active and independent of state provision | Number of Choices Plus participants securing employment contracts | Reduction in benefits payments being made to Choices Plus participants |
| 7.2 | | | Increased revenue through tax & National Insurance contributions as a result of Choices Plus participants moving into employment |

Outcomes 7.1 & 7.2: The value of these outcomes to HMRC was established from Choices Plus participants' records. Details are illustrated in Appendices 1 & 2.

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

4.6 The Experience of Change

This section highlights the ways in which stakeholders experienced a change in their circumstances as a result of Choices Plus. Importantly, it also incorporates a discussion of what stakeholder attributed these changes to. It is an important aspect of SROI that stakeholders have the opportunity to identify those aspects of Choices Plus that were most significant in affecting change (positive or negative, intended or unintended).

4.6.1 Choices Plus Participants

Those Choices Plus participants who secured employment or moved onto further study experienced a great deal of significant change, principally:

- greater financial independence for themselves and their family;
- growth in self esteem and confidence levels;
- the opportunity to model a lifestyle that they want their children to aspire to (i.e. going out to work or study rather than remaining dependent on state benefits long-term); and
- securing the respect of family members and others whom, the lone parents felt, had previously "written them off" as "economically inactive lone parents"

When asked to identify which elements of Choices Plus they found most helpful for preparing to enter employment/further study, Choices Plus participants gave the following response:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| All elements had equal impact | 57% of total |
| Of the remainder (most Choices Plus participants selected at least 2 elements): | |
| The ongoing mentoring and support from the Gingerbread staff | 38% |
| Financial assistance with books / travel costs | 31% |
| The work experience placement | 25% |
| Help with childcare payments and with finding suitable childcare | 17% |

Nearly all Choices Plus participants struggled at some points in time with the heavy time commitment the course and the placement required (but particularly the course and associated coursework). Those who successfully completed Choices Plus, despite difficulties, cited the following as significant motivating factors:

- Choices Plus covering their expenses; *"I may have started but I wouldn't have stuck at it. The expense of getting to College would have been such an easy excuse for me to quit. Having them paid meant I didn't have a 'get out'."*
- Support from the Choices Plus Project Officer that *"really did take the hassle out of everything"* and indicated that had Gingerbread NI had understood and accounted for their circumstances.
- The Choices Plus participants' own self motivation and strong determination that they wouldn't end up in *"any job"* that would not reflect their abilities and earnings potential.
- The fact they were doing it for their children; to provide a better future and offer a role model.
- Seeing the positive impact that what they had achieved so far was having on themselves, their children and family life in general
- Support received through the FE College (from tutor and fellow students)

The level of commitment Choices Plus required of lone parents meant that, over the Study period, 26% withdrew early. This statistic hides some important breakdowns which help paint a fuller picture:

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| Category of “Early Leaver” | |
|--|-----|
| * Participant pulled out very early on, after registering with Choices Plus but before (or immediately after) College course commenced | 28% |
| **Time commitment required to complete course or placement became too great for family and personal reasons | 25% |
| **Unforeseen problems or circumstances in life required withdrawal (for example, family illness and one participant who got married) | 25% |
| Unforeseen changes in the course required individual to pull out (e.g. change in campus or course cancelled) | 5% |
| ***Left to take up employment | 7% |
| Childcare costs were not being met adequately | 3% |
| Participant decided to change (career) direction and course was no longer relevant | 7% |

* Changes introduced to registration means that Choices Plus participants will not now be considered to have started on Choices Plus until they have registered for their course.

** Of those who pulled out because of the time commitment or unforeseen problems, approximately 50% had already gained significant outcomes, reporting that they had achieved either the qualification or the work experience they hoped to. 75% received the support and careers guidance they had hoped for and felt more self-confident as a result of their time on Choices Plus. 70% felt more ready to enter paid employment than before. 30% have plans to complete their course (through Choices Plus or independently) once their personal circumstances change.

*** Two Choices Plus participants who returned questionnaires left early to take up employment, one of whom attributes her employment offer to the experience and confidence she gained on Choices Plus.

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

CHOICES PLUS PARTICIPANTS IN FOCUS:

1. SARAH FROM DUNGIVEN

Sarah started Choices Plus in September 2008. By the end of the April 2010, she was nearing completion of two years, with just several exams left to sit before securing an Access Certificate in Health & Social Sciences. (She has also completed British Sign Language Level 2). *"I don't think I could have afforded to do the Access Certificate without Choices Plus. The childcare and travel costs especially would have made it impossible, especially as I have one child with special needs."*

"The first year of the course was great, but when I moved onto the Access course in second year, I really considered giving up. My main incentive for staying was the care my daughter was getting in her crèche. She has special needs and the chance for her to mix with children her age and make friends was a real boost, to the extent that, when she was assessed, her social skills were found to be above average."

"I had to work hard to fit in study, but I did find that the Maths I did in Year 1 helped me to help the older children with their Key Stage exams."

Sarah undertook her work placement with a voluntary sector organisation. *"I really enjoyed it. It helped build my social skills and IT skills and I'm still going to volunteer there."*

She attributes the changes she has experienced in her own and family life to *"getting out, meeting people, using my brain, being lifted up out of my home situation and seeing that there are opportunities out there. Gingerbread made it all easier for me."*

Sarah is proceeding to a Level 4 adult numeracy teaching qualification in September 2010, with a view to teaching essential skills.

2. CATHERINE FROM MAGHERA

Catherine *"really needed to do the Foundation course in Hospitality & Tourism, but didn't know how I would finance it until I heard about Choices Plus"*. She is due to complete the course in December 2010. There is a large volume of work to keep on top of and *"...there are times when I just don't know how I will do it, but I get a newsletter from Gingerbread. The stories in it keep me going, and the Choices Plus Project Officer's help really has taken the hassle away for me."*

Catherine has worked in the hospitality business for many years. Since becoming separated from her husband, the evening and weekend commitments have become impossible, so she knew she needed to become more qualified in order to *"get further"* and out of shift work. She is interested in hospitality and customer service training and has achieved her A1 NVQ Assessors Award (in addition to the Foundation course) through Choices Plus. She has already started to apply for Assessors' positions and believes *"The change for me will be enormous. The scope that I will now be able to apply for."*

3. ANGELA FROM BELFAST

Angela was already in her second year of a Diploma in Counselling when her JBO Advisor referred her to Choices Plus. *"The relief to know that I could be helped with course fees and finding a placement, when I was feeling so low, was enormous."* Also of importance to Angela was the freedom associated with having access to funds to buy some books because *"I couldn't spend hours in library, away from the children."*

The opportunity to complete this Diploma is *"massive to me. Much bigger than the degree I had before I became divorced. Through it, I think I've been able to teach my sons that you can turn things around. They have a respect for me now and I've taught them that education is about changing your life; not just about getting the piece of paper at the end."*

By the end of the Study period, Angela was completing her Diploma and building experience hours, planning to build up freelance clients so that her work could be designed to fit around family life.

The Choices Plus participants' names have been changed in these Case Studies

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4.6.2 Employers Providing Work Experience Placements

The employers' anticipated benefits were discussed in Section 4.2. The unexpected benefits were diverse, including:

- Our Choices Plus participant was working one-to-one with children with special needs
- Our participant wrote a new induction manual & training manual for new staff members
- She provided additional support to our nursing staff and was very popular with the patients
- She was friendly and cheerful and our customers enjoyed dealing with her
- The participant made good contacts for our organisation, through her course
- We gained new knowledge and approaches from what she had been learning on her course

- She raised the awareness of our organisation amongst others
- Her input into our organisation was valuable, as a lone parent, offering her perspective
- We found a person we would happily work with in the future and recommend to others
- We had the satisfaction of seeing the participant develop, knowing we had contributed to that

77% believed the Choices Plus Project Officer's support was significant in contributing to the success of the placement (and hence to the employer's positive experience). 47% found that the experience of hosting a Choices Plus participant was different to previous experiences of work experience students, attributing this distinction to: higher levels of motivation and determination amongst Choices Plus participants; greater experience and maturity; and less need for supervision.

EMPLOYERS IN FOCUS:

1. ULSTER CANCER FOUNDATION SHOP, BELFAST

The Relief Manager at the Ulster Cancer Foundation's Charity Shop on Belfast's Upper Newtownards Road spoke of the "fabulous" Choices Plus participant, placed with the shop in 2008, one day per week. The "best volunteer we've had for eight years", she "increased our sales with keeping a tidy shop, putting together attractive clothes displays and ensured return custom with her good service." Dependable and reliable, with good manners and the willingness to take time with customers, the participant's contribution added value to the shop.

Of the Gingerbread support, the Manager commented; "It reinforces the placement training and helped the participant to feel supported, with the chance for feedback. It was easy to liaise with Gingerbread about any difficulties and to work within Choices Plus objectives and guidelines."

2. CAMPBELL & SHORT PROPERTIES, DERRY

The placement supervisor spoke of a Choices Plus participant who brought "much-needed organisation to the running of our office." The participant made a contribution to the company that was beyond their original expectations. Having had experience with accounts, she applied this and contributed in a way that was of real value.

Campbell and Short found the placement to be "a worthwhile experience" to the extent that the participant's placement supervisor commented "Provided the economic conditions are favourable, I would love to be in the position to be able to offer her a job in the new year (2011)."

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4.6.3 JBO Advisors

Whilst Advisors did not report experiencing any significant change to their workloads, it is noteworthy that they reported observing considerable improvements in Choices Plus participants they had referred (self confidence, motivation and desire to succeed in the labour market).

4.6.4 Registered Childcare Providers

The experience of change for the registered child care providers was minimal, though most interviewed remembered the parent and child in question. They were aware of their circumstances and impressed by the parents' motivation and Choices Plus in general.

4.6.5 Non-registered Childcare Providers

The two primary changes were:

- the opportunity to spend time alone with a grandchild or niece or nephew; and
- the chance to receive some financial remuneration for the care being given

The following quotes illustrate the difference that these made to the stakeholders' lives:

- *"As I am a basic person, the extra money has been a great help."*
- *"... the money has been a big help..."*
- *"... the money helped towards getting things for my own kids when I needed it"*
- *"It is a good opportunity to spend some time alone with my granddaughter."*
- *"it is great as I get to see more of him; we get on really well."*

4.6.6 DELNI's European Unit

Although the project is funded by ESF, administered through DEL's European Unit, it is not possible to comment on any changes that the Department may have directly experienced as it decided not to participate in order to maintain impartiality.

4.6.7 HMRC

HMRC's experience of change cannot be commented upon. However, the financial impact on it is summarised in the overall addition to revenue and reduction in benefits payments made (as set out in Section 5.2).

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5.1 Indicators and Financial Proxies Selected to Represent Outcomes

| Stakeholder 1: Choices Plus Participants | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes | Indicator of Outcomes | Financial Proxy | |
| 1.1 To gain (Level 3 or above) qualifications | Number of qualifications gained | Choices Plus participants have acquired a building block to contribute to future employability (securing employment/moving onto future study) | No. qualifications gained by those not yet in employment or with no immediate plans for future study | Future earnings potential of these (Level 3) qualifications gained through Choices Plus | |
| 1.2 To make progress towards long-term career aspirations | | Choices Plus participants who have moved onto additional qualifications (beyond Choices Plus) | No. Choices Plus participants who pursue further qualifications, inspired by Choices Plus | Future earnings potential of these (Level 4 or degree) qualifications | |
| 1.3 To secure a job / get back to work | | Secured employment contract | No. Choices Plus participants who secure employment contracts & attribute it to Choices + | Total earnings of those in employment | |
| 1.4 To gain practical work experience | Number of successful work experience placements undertaken | Secured employment contract | Number of employment contracts secured by Choices Plus participants | Total earnings recorded by those who have secured employment and who attribute this to Choices Plus. Counted only once (under 1.3) to avoid double counting. | |
| 1.5 | | Led to participant giving something back and carrying on with building skills through undertaking voluntary work | No. participants who went on to undertake voluntary work (in placement or elsewhere) | Value of additional volunteering time to employer. Accounted for under Outcome 2.3 to avoid double counting. | |
| 1.6 | | Useful contacts made for future – in that work place and beyond | | | |
| 1.7 | | Represents building block for future career aspirations | Value of experience for those not yet in employment or with no immediate plans for future study | What they would have earned, had they been employed, for their contribution to work experience placement | |
| 1.8 To grow in confidence and self esteem & meet new people and feel less isolated | Number of social activities undertaken by parents that would not have happened before Choices Plus | Reduced feelings of isolation and indication of growth in confidence and self esteem | Investment made by Choices Plus participants in engaging in social activities | Average money spent by Choices Plus participants on social activities | |
| 1.9 To prove worth & earn the respect of self and others | Number of Choices Plus participants reporting improvements in family & other relationships | Choices Plus participants have earned respect of family members and other contacts | Number of Choices Plus participants reporting improved relationships at home | No proxy identified | |

SECTION 5: THE IMPACT MAP

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

| Stakeholder 2: Employers Providing Work Experience Placements | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes | Indicator of Outcomes | Financial Proxy | |
| 2.1 | Participant provides organisation with additional support, freeing up existing staff members' time | Number of successful work experience Choices Plus participants placed with employer | Benefit participant brings to the employer in terms of freeing up other staff members to pursue additional work plus fresh ideas they bring to the organisation | Number of employers reporting that their participant was an asset to the organisation | Value that the employer assigns to the time the participant spent with their organisation (through questionnaire responses) |
| 2.2 | Opportunity for employer to "give something back to their community" by offering placement and reap benefit | Benefits to employer of investing in local community (CSR-related value) | Number of employers reporting CSR-related value of providing placement | * Value that the employer assigns to this outcome (through questionnaire responses) | |
| 2.3 | Choices Plus participants grow in confidence & ability during placement to extent that employment / volunteering is the end result | Choices Plus participants moving into employment or voluntary work with placement provider | Number of employers reporting participant has moved into employment or remained in voluntary capacity with organisation | **Value that the employer assigns of the additional volunteering time contributed to the organisation. | |

* This outcome has been found to not be material as insufficient numbers of employers reported that it was significant to their business

** Recruitment savings associated with employing Choices Plus participants after placements were not significant enough to be regarded as material to the Proxy; volunteering time only is counted

| Stakeholder 3: Jobs & Benefits Offices | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes | Indicator of Outcomes | Financial Proxy | |
| 3.1 | That Choices Plus increases options beyond mainstream provision for JBO clients | Number of Choices Plus participants referred by JBO Advisors | JBO Advisors freed up to pursue other work as a result of reduction in time required to support clients | Total reduction in contact time (hours) reported by JBO Advisors, once successful referrals have been made | **Cost per hour of an Advisor's time |

** This outcome has been found to not be material as, out of 7 questionnaires returned from JBO Advisors, none reported a reduction in contact time with clients as a result of Choices Plus referrals

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

| Stakeholder 4: Childcare Providers (Registered) | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes | Indicator of Outcomes | Financial Proxy |
| 4.1 Additional source of income for business | Number of children cared for through registered childcare under Choices Plus | Additional source of business opened up to registered providers (childminders and day nurseries) | Number of extra hours of childcare (and therefore business) reported as additional to business | Payments made by Choices Plus to nurseries & childminders that would not otherwise have been received |

| Stakeholder 5: Childcare Providers (Non-registered) | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes | Indicator of Outcomes | Financial Proxy |
| 5.1 Recognition for childcare provision often already being provided and improvement in standard of living | Number of children cared for through non-registered childcare under Choices Plus | Income is made available to non-registered childcare providers, as they are remunerated for their provision of care for Choices Plus participants' children. This provides for higher disposable incomes for households. | Number of Choices Plus participants claiming for non-registered childcare costs | Total payments made to non-registered providers of childcare that they would not otherwise have had access to. |

| Stakeholder 6: DELNI's European Unit | | | | |
|--|---|--|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes | Indicator of Outcomes | Financial Proxy |
| 6.1 Choices Plus achieves its targets under NI's Operational Programme Priority 1, Helping People into Sustained Employment | Qualifications gained & employment contracts secured by Choices Plus participants | It has not been possible to identify outcomes that relate to ESF or to DELNI | | |

| Stakeholder 7: HMRC | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| Aspirations | Outputs | Outcomes | Indicator of Outcomes | Financial Proxy |
| 7.1 Benefits payments are reduced and tax and National Insurance contributions rise as Choices Plus participants move into employment | Choices Plus participants securing employment contracts | Reduction in benefits payments being made to Choices Plus participants | Overall reduction in benefits being paid to Choices Plus participants | Rates of benefits payable (HMRC website) and Choices Plus records |
| 7.2 | | Increased revenue through tax & National Insurance contributions as a result of Choices Plus participants moving into employment | Overall tax and NI contributions made by Choices Plus participants | Tax & NI values (HMRC website) and Choices Plus records |

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

5.2 Calculation of SROI Values

| Stakeholder 1: Choices Plus Participants | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|----------------------|
| Outcome | Indicator | Financial Proxy | Source for Proxy | Value of Proxy | Quantity | Value (over 6 years) |
| 1.1 Choices Plus participants have acquired a building block to contribute to future employability (securing employment/moving onto future study) | No. qualifications gained by those not yet in employment or with no immediate plans for future study | Future earnings potential of these (Level 3) qualifications gained through Choices Plus | *Average "better off" earnings of those who secured employment reflecting their qualification | £7.73 per hour for 2010, rising 2% per annum | 29 Choices Plus participants to secure employment over final 3 years | £278,616 |
| 1.2 Choices Plus participants who have moved onto additional qualifications (beyond Choices Plus) | No. Choices Plus participants who pursue further qualifications, inspired by Choices Plus | Future earnings potential of these (Level 4 or degree) qualifications | *Average starting salaries of cross section professions cited | £18,220 net for 2011, rising 2% per annum | 28 to secure employment reflecting higher qualifications | £545,995 |
| 1.3 Secured employment contract | No. Choices Plus participants who secure employment contracts & attribute it to Choices + | Total earnings of those in employment | *Feedback from participants re employment earnings | £7.73 per hour for 2010, rising 2% per annum | 47 secured employment over study period | £1,009,817 |
| 1.4 Secured employment contract | Number of employment contracts secured by Choices Plus participants | Counted only once (under 1.3) to avoid double counting. | | | | |
| 1.5 Led to participant giving something back and carrying on with building skills through undertaking voluntary work | No. participants who went on to undertake voluntary work (in placement or elsewhere) | Value of additional volunteering time to employer | Average value cited by employers re value of additional volunteering in questionnaires | Accounted for under Outcome 2.3 to avoid double counting | | |
| 1.6 Useful contacts made for future – in that work place and beyond | Number of participants reporting this to be the case | No proxy assigned. Outcome will not be valued in SROI calculation | | | | |
| 1.7 Represents building block for future career aspirations | Value of work experience for those not yet in employment or with no immediate plans for future study | What they would have earned, had they been employed, for their contribution to work experience placement | Average value cited by employers re value of additional volunteering in questionnaires | £6.80 per hour | 14,355 hours over 30-months Study period | £110,502 |
| 1.8 Reduced feelings of isolation and indication of growth in confidence and self esteem | Investment made by Choices Plus participants in engaging in social activities | Average money spent by Choices Plus participants on social activities | * Average cost of 4 social activities cited by participants at Focus Group | Average of £9 per activity | 912 activities per year | £38,909 |
| 1.9 Choices Plus participants earn respect of family members and other contacts | No. participants reporting improved relationships | No proxy assigned. Outcome will not be valued | | | | |

*please refer to Appendices 1 & 2 for demonstration of how values were calculated

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

| Stakeholder 2: Employers Providing Work Experience Placements | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|----------|
| Outcome | Indicator | Financial Proxy | Source for Proxy | Value of Proxy | Quantity | Value (over 6 years) | |
| 2.1 | Benefit participant brings to the employer in terms of freeing up other staff members to pursue additional work plus fresh ideas they bring to the organisation | Number of employers reporting that their participant was an asset to the organisation | Value that the employer assigns to the time the participant spent with their organisation (through questionnaire responses) | Feedback from employers' consultation questionnaires | Average of £6.80 per hour | 33,6409 placement hours | £233,059 |
| 2.2 | Benefits to employer of investing in local community (CSR-related value) | Number of employers reporting CSR- related value of providing placement | Value the employer assigns to this outcome (questionnaire responses) | Response from employers not sufficiently material to assign value | | | |
| 2.3 | Choices Plus participants moving into employment or voluntary work with placement provider | Number of employers reporting participant has moved into employment or remained in voluntary capacity with organisation | Value that the employer assigns of the additional volunteering time contributed to the organisation. | Telephone interviews with relevant employers | £6.50 per hour | 18,480 hours of volunteering time | £202,065 |
| Stakeholder 3: Jobs & Benefits Offices Advisors | | | | | | | |
| Outcome | Indicator | Financial Proxy | Source for Proxy | Value of Proxy | Quantity | Value (over 6 years) | |
| No outcomes material to the SROI calculation | | | | | | | |
| Stakeholder 4: Childcare Providers – Registered | | | | | | | |
| Outcome | Indicator | Financial Proxy | Source for Proxy | Value of Proxy | Quantity | Value (over 6 years) | |
| 4.1 | Additional source of business opened up to registered providers (childminders and day nurseries) | Number of extra hours of childcare (and therefore business) reported as additional to business | Payments made by Choices Plus to nurseries & childminders that would not otherwise have been received | Choices Plus records of payments made to registered childcare providers | 25% of total Payments made by Choices Plus to businesses | 25% of total payments of £27,900 represent additional revenue | £6,975 |

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

| Stakeholder 5: Childcare Providers – Non-Registered | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|----------------------|
| Outcome | Indicator | Financial Proxy | Source for Proxy | Value of Proxy | Quantity | Value (over 6 years) |
| 5.1 Income is made available to non-registered childcare providers, as they are remunerated for their provision of care for Choices Plus participants' children. This provides for higher disposable incomes for households. | Number of Choices Plus participants claiming for non-registered childcare costs | Total payments made to non-registered providers of childcare that they would not otherwise have had access to. | Choices Plus records of payments made to registered childcare providers | Payments made to non-registered childcare providers by Choices Plus | Total payments made by Choices Plus, worth £22,866 | £22,866 |
| Stakeholder 6: DELNI's European Unit | | | | | | |
| Outcome | Indicator | Financial Proxy | Source for Proxy | Value of Proxy | Quantity | Value (over 6 years) |
| No outcomes material to the SROI calculation | | | | | | |
| Stakeholder 7: HMRC | | | | | | |
| Outcome | Indicator | Financial Proxy | Source for Proxy | Value of Proxy | Quantity | Value (over 6 years) |
| 7.1 Reduction in benefits payments being made to Choices Plus participants | Overall reduction in benefits being paid to Choices Plus participants | Rates of benefits payable (HMRC website) and Choices Plus records | Gingerbread NI income records for Choices Plus participants | ** | ** | £570,120 |
| 7.2 Increased revenue through tax & National Insurance contributions as a result of Choices Plus participants moving into employment | Overall tax and NI contributions made by Choices Plus participants | Tax & NI values (HMRC website) and Choices Plus records | HMRC website to calculate for tax & National Insurance contributions | ** | ** | £470,933 |

**please refer to Appendices 1 & 2 for demonstration of how HMRC reduction in payments & increased in tax & NI contributions were calculated, based on employment secured

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

5.3 Discount Rates

It is necessary to “discount” the values generated by the financial proxies to account for “real life”. The following methods are adopted for SROI:

Attribution: An assessment of how much of the outcome was caused by the contributions of other organisations or people.

Deadweight: An assessment of how much of the outcome would have happened anyway, even if Choices Plus did not exist.

Displacement: An assessment of how much of the outcome displaced other activities or outcomes that would otherwise have occurred. ***This was not thought to be relevant to the Choices Plus Study as it is unique in its provision throughout Northern Ireland.***

Drop-off: Beyond the Study period, the amount of outcome that can be attributed to Choices Plus may reduce as stakeholders become more influenced by various other factors. However, the long-term impact of Choices Plus (up to six years) means that some (employment) outcomes will not materialise until after the Study period. Drop off rates will not be applied to those outcomes that can only start to be valued in Years 2.5 and following.

| Outcome | Indicators with Financial Proxies | Discount | Discount Value | Rationale |
|---------|--|-------------|----------------|---|
| 1.1 | Value of qualification for those who have not yet moved into employment or with no immediate plans for future study | Attribution | 15% | Allows for appropriate proportion of factors including “self motivation” and “assistance from the College”, cited by Choices Plus participants as contributing factors, helping towards the completion of qualifications. |
| | | Deadweight | 15% | 10% of Choices Plus participants would have pursued course independently. 20% were unsure. 15% deadweight assumes that half of those “unsure” would have undertaken the course of study |
| | | Drop off | n/a | Calculations based on future earnings potential, allowing for 20% per annum drop in employment rates (by those who secure employment) |
| 1.2 | Number of Choices Plus participants who report they have moved onto a further qualification, inspired by Choices Plus experience | Attribution | 0% | Only those instances where Choices Plus participants believe it would not have been possible without Choices Plus have been included |
| | | Deadweight | 15% | Accounts for those who would have pursued their course, independent of Choices Plus |
| | | Drop-off | n/a | Calculations based on future earnings potential |
| 1.3 | Number of employment contracts secured by Choices Plus participants | Attribution | 0% | Only those instances where Choices Plus participants believe it would not have been possible without Choices Plus have been included |
| | | Deadweight | 15% | Accounts for those who would have pursued their course, independent of Choices Plus |
| | | Drop-off | n/a | Calculations based on future earnings potential, allowing for 20% per annum drop in employment rates (by those who secure employment) |
| 1.7 | Value of work experience for those not yet in employment or further study | Attribution | 15% | Accounts for the contribution made by the employments towards a successful placement |
| | | Deadweight | 0% | Placements would not have taken place without Choices Plus |
| | | Drop-off | 75% | Impact of placements falls away once placement ceases |

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

| Outcome | Indicators with Financial Proxies | Discount | Discount Value | Rationale |
|---------|---|-------------|----------------|--|
| 1.8 | Social activities undertaken | Attribution | 10% | Accounts for classmates at College and others the Choices Plus participants met (through Choices Plus) influencing decisions to socialise |
| | | Deadweight | 0% | Activity reported to be as a direct result of confidence and social opportunities built through Choices Plus |
| | | Drop off | 10% | A small drop-off rate has been applied to allow for other influential factors. Activity will grow and not diminish as Choices Plus participants continue to grow in confidence and build friendships into the future |
| 2.1 | Number of employers reporting that their participant was an asset to the organisation | Attribution | 10% | Most employers reported that they found they had to contribute “minimal” supervision / training time |
| | | Deadweight | 0% | Placements would not have taken place outside of Choices Plus |
| | | Drop-off | 75% | Small impact of some Choices Plus participants’ contributions will “live on” in the life of the organisations |
| 2.3 | Number of employers reporting participant has moved into employment or remained in voluntary capacity with organisation | Attribution | 15% | Accounts for contribution of the employer in the decision to remain in volunteering role |
| | | Deadweight | 0% | Placements would not have taken place outside of Choices Plus |
| | | Drop-off | 15% | Average rate at which Choices Plus participants pull out of volunteering each year (bearing in mind that as some withdraw, others increase their volunteering over future years). |
| 4.1 | Number of extra hours of childcare (and therefore business) reported as additional to business | Attribution | 0% | All business attributed to Choices Plus |
| | | Deadweight | 0% | Only income regarded as “additional” by stakeholder has been included |
| | | Drop-off | 100% | The payments cease once the participant leaves Choices Plus |
| 5.1 | Number of Choices Plus participants claiming for non-registered childcare costs | Attribution | 0% | All income was attributed to Choices Plus |
| | | Deadweight | 0% | All income was attributed to Choices Plus |
| | | Drop-off | 100% | The payments cease once the participant leaves Choices Plus |

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

| Outcome | Indicators with Financial Proxies | Discount | Discount Value | Rationale |
|---------|---|-------------|----------------|---|
| 7.1 | Overall reduction in benefits being paid to Choices Plus participants | Attribution | 0% | Only employment secured that Choices Plus participants believe would not have been possible without Choices Plus has been included in calculation |
| | | Deadweight | 0% | Only employment secured that Choices Plus participants believe would not have been possible without Choices Plus has been included in calculation |
| | | Drop-off | n/a | Calculations based on future earnings potential, allowing for 20% per annum drop in employment rates (by those who secure employment) |
| 7.2 | Overall tax and NI contributions made by Choices Plus participants | Attribution | 0% | Only employment secured that Choices Plus participants believe would not have been possible without Choices Plus has been included in calculation |
| | | Deadweight | 0% | Only employment secured that Choices Plus participants believe would not have been possible without Choices Plus has been included in calculation |
| | | Drop-off | n/a | Calculations based on future earnings potential, allowing for 20% per annum drop in employment rates (by those who secure employment) |

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

5.4 Choices Plus' SROI Calculation and Ratio

| | | Discount Rate Applied: 3.5% | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|--|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| | | Social Value generated over each time period, accounting for discount rates: | | | | |
| Outcome | Inputs | *Sept '07 April '10 | April '10 April '11 | April '11 April '12 | April '12 April 13** | April '13 Sept '13 |
| 1.1 | | | £20,696 | £68,482 | £118,612 | £70,826 |
| 1.2 | | | £18,950 | £110,620 | £254,048 | £162,377 |
| 1.3 | | £217,278 | £229,902 | £244,760 | £215,350 | £102,527 |
| 1.7 | | £97,614 | £9,761 | £2,440 | £610 | £76 |
| 1.8 | | £18,468 | £6,648 | £5,984 | £5,385 | £2,423 |
| 2.1 | £4,134 | £205,877 | £20,588 | £5,147 | £1,287 | £161 |
| 2.3 | | £102,102 | £34,715 | £29,507 | £25,081 | £10,660 |
| 4.1 | | £6,975 | | | | |
| 5.1 | | £22,866 | | | | |
| 6.1 | £575,100 | | | | | |
| 7.1 | | £53,093 | £147,722 | £147,722 | £147,722 | £73,861 |
| 7.2 | | £44,430 | £121,858 | £121,858 | £121,858 | £60,929 |
| G'bread | £309,700 | | | | | |
| TOTALS | £888,934 | £768,703 | £610,840 | £736,520 | £889,953 | £483,840 |

* This column represents 30-month study period (hence is not comparable to subsequent columns)

** This column represents final 6-month period of the six-year period (hence is not comparable to two previous columns).

A discount value of 3.5% was applied over the six-year period. This is in line with the Government's Green Book, which requires that public money be discounted at a rate of 3.5% per annum.

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| TOTAL PRESENT VALUE (PV) | £3,160,156 |
| NET PRESENT VALUE (PV minus investment) | £2,271,222 |
| SOCIAL RETURN £ per £ | 3.5559955 |
| SROI Ratio 1:3.56 | |

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5.5 Sensitivity Analysis

The sensitivity analysis explores the impact on the SROI ratio of changing some of the Study's assumptions. Discount rates thought to be significant were amended to clarify the impact of changing attribution, deadweight or drop-off. Outcome values generated from questionnaires were adjusted to determine the impact of changing particular values, given questionnaires results were extrapolated over the full stakeholder group.

| | Outcome Selected for Analysis | Current Value / Rate | Amended Value / Rate | Current SROI Ratio | Amended SROI Ratio |
|-----|--|---|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1.2 | Number of Choices Plus participants who report they have moved onto a further qualification, inspired by Choices Plus experience | Attribution: 0% | Attribution: 30%: Whilst only those who reported that they would not have moved onto higher education without Choices Plus were accounted for, influence of other factors on decision to continue in higher education, this alteration allows for the possibility of the influence of other factors | 3.56 | * 3.40 |
| 1.3 | Number of employment contracts secured by Choices Plus participants | 40% drop in those securing employment beyond 2010 to account for economic down-turn | Employment rate follows 2008 / 09 trends throughout remainder of period (2010 – 2013) | 3.56 | * 4.01 |
| 2.1 | Number of employers reporting that their participant was an asset to the organisation | Attribution: 10% | Attribution: 30% | 3.56 | 3.49 |
| 2.3 | Number of employers reporting participant has moved into employment or remained in voluntary capacity with organisation | Drop off: 15% | Drop off: 35% | 3.56 | 3.50 |

*Amended rates incorporate the knock-on effect on Outcomes 7.1 & 7.2 (difference in payments made and total Tax & NI revenue generated by HMRC)

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Choices Plus: SROI Study

6 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions Regarding Choices Plus

Choices Plus' SROI ratio of costs to benefits is 1:3.56. This means that for every £1 spent between 1 September 2007 and 1 April 2010, £3.56 of social and economic return will be generated over the six year period (September 2007 to September 2013). Given that the Choices Plus participants' future earnings potential calculations have been adjusted downwards by 40% (from 2008 & 2009 trends) to reflect the current employment difficulties means that, even in a difficult employment market, Choices Plus represents a considerable return of investment.

The current climate renders the investment in skills and experience that Choices Plus is engaged in more (and not less) important. Those individuals graduating from Choices Plus in June 2010 and beyond may face particular difficulties in finding employment because of the economic downturn, but what they have achieved will give them a competitive edge now and be of considerable additional value once the employment market improves. Indeed, in these more difficult times, Choices Plus is fulfilling one of ESF's objectives; to raise equality of opportunity for those groups (including lone parents) who face additional barriers to participation in the labour market.

The consultations with Choices Plus participants highlighted the complex difficulties lone parents face, from poor self esteem associated with isolation and lack of opportunity through to financial struggles and the personal difficulties associated with (in many instances) breakdown in relationships. One participant who attended a Focus Group, and who is making progress she is proud of, still spoke of the ongoing "three steps forward, two steps back" nature of life. That Choices Plus can be adapted to suit each participant's needs and circumstances is an evident and necessary strength.

Gingerbread NI is aware that the intrinsic support and, at times, more intense intervention, offered by Choices Plus is necessary, being critical to its success rates. Such support and intervention are offered with respect to: facilitating access to childcare; helping with finding suitable courses; ongoing careers guidance to help with realistic future planning; and ongoing "trouble shooting" of unforeseen difficulties as they arise.

The objectives Choices Plus agreed with the funder, ESF, are summarised below:

- 1.1 Recruit 150 lone parents
- 1.2 Assist 150 lone parents to gain qualifications at NVQ level 3 or higher through part-time study over longer periods than mainstream programmes, providing assistance childcare, travel and subsistence and outreach support visits to ensure high completion rates.

Gingerbread NI's target was to ensure 120 lone parents (40 per year) gained relevant qualifications.

- 1.3 Assist 150 lone parents to progress towards employment by providing: careers advice; work experience; welfare rights advice incorporating "better off" calculations; and support with job search applications.

Gingerbread NI's target was to enable 50 lone parents to secure employment over the three years of the funding. (Year 1: 16, Years 2 & 3: 17 each)

By 1 April 2010, 58 individuals had successfully completed one or more Level 3 qualification, 74 qualifications in total having been achieved:

- 12 at Level 2
- 46 at Level 3
- 13 at Level 4
- 3 at Level 5

Whilst the full targets may not have been realised in Years 1 & 2, 14 Year 2 Choices Plus participants proceeded into the Year 3 intake (2009/10). Their qualifications, plus those of the 74 2009/2010 Choices Plus participants fall outside of the timescale of this Study (as these participants had not completed their courses until June 2010).

By 1 April 2010, 36 individuals had secured employment. Of these: 37% of contracts were 30 hours per week or more; 63% were part-time. 79% were permanent; the remainder were for at least 12 months. Under more "normal" economic conditions, it would be fair to assume that Gingerbread NI would be on track to meet the target of 50 for the three-year period. If it is not met, it will reflect the current employment market and not progress of Choices Plus to date.

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Some of the key social values generated by Choices Plus have been highlighted below:

- £1,009,817 (net in real terms) by employment contracts secured as a result of qualifications achieved through Choices Plus and successful work experience placements undertaken. (Based on "better off" calculations)
- £278,616 (net in real terms) in potential future earnings by those individuals who have not yet, for a variety of reasons, secured employment (or pursued further training). (Based on "better off" calculations)
- £545,995 (net in real terms) in potential future earnings by those individuals who, inspired by Choices Plus, went on to pursue additional qualifications at higher levels. (Based on "better off" calculations)
- Organisations that hosted work experience placements assigned £233,059 worth of value to the benefits they experienced
- The overall value of Choices Plus to HMRC was £1,041,051 (accounting for reductions in benefits paid and revenue from tax and National Insurance received)

The social and economic value that is being generated by Choices Plus, primarily through qualifications and work experience placements, illustrates the importance of investing in the skills and qualification levels of those individuals in society who are most likely to struggle if not adequately supported. That 85% of Choices Plus participants would not have undertaken their original qualification without the support of Choices Plus (and gone on to access the subsequent opportunities) is sufficient evidence alone of the importance of such an intervention.

The Choices Plus participants recognised the value of their achievements, even in the light of current economic difficulties. One reflected; *"Though I have grown in abilities and knowledge it is difficult to compete for employment due to economic climate. I hope that will improve in the future."*

The present economic situation represents an excellent opportunity for Gingerbread NI to invest in lone parents' employability skills for the future and to take a more considered and strategic approach to how future Choices Plus participants' interests and aspirations may be channelled. Whilst Choices Plus participants are offered careers advice, the current situation renders it all the more important that *"Choices Plus must consider how it can encourage participants into those careers and employment sectors that are most likely to hold realistic employment prospects (in the short to medium term). The concern ought to be that the participant will end up in a job that reflects the level of qualification they have attained and that the participant will specialise according to what are likely to be growth industries. The current climate creates the opportunity for Gingerbread to take a step back and analyse where these opportunities are likely to be in five to seven years' time."* (John Morgan, Resource & Communications Director, HEAT (Heat, Energy & Associated Technology) and Employer-Representative on Steering Group.

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6.2 Recommendations for Future SROI Reports

There are areas of potential additional social value that could not, for various reasons, be captured by this, Gingerbread NI's first SROI Study. Gingerbread NI is encouraged to put measures in place so that additional areas of potential value can better be understood and, if proved to be material, incorporated into future Studies.

| | Context of Recommendation | Recommendation |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Choices Plus does have objectives and targets (see Section 2). However, it may be appropriate to add to these in the light of the Outcomes that have been identified in this Study. | Gingerbread NI may wish to consider formulating written objectives that correlate with the participants' outcomes identified in this Study to help the organisation to assess the extent to which the outcomes are being realised on an ongoing basis. |
| 2 | To facilitate future SROI Studies, Gingerbread NI may wish to establish a clearer and more accurate picture of Choices Plus participants' economic circumstances as they move through Choices Plus and into the future. | That Gingerbread NI gives consideration to recording participants' income at each stage of Choices Plus and beyond (all benefits including Housing Benefit received before and after employment in addition to earnings). This would help to facilitate valuing participants' earnings (and HMRC revenue) for future SROI Studies. |
| 3 | Gingerbread NI has a Social Impact Tracker database and tracking of Choices Plus' past participants does take place. | In the light of this SROI Study, and with a view to conducting further Studies in the future, Gingerbread NI may wish to consider the optimal number of years over which the outcomes (employment, higher education etc.) of past participants should be tracked. Is six years (the duration of this Study) an adequate time period for assessing the long-term impact of Choices Plus? |
| 4 | Gingerbread NI offers a range of programmes and services to lone parents across Northern Ireland. It was difficult ascertain how much Choices Plus participants accessed these. | That Gingerbread NI take steps to find out the extent to which Choices Plus participants access other Gingerbread NI services, and what (if any) value (or costs) this represents to the organisation and the Choices Plus participants in question. |
| 5 | It is important that Gingerbread NI establish a full understanding of what contributes to Choices Plus' participants' success in securing employment and how these aspects of Choices Plus can be strengthened. | For future SROI studies, Gingerbread NI may wish to consider consulting those employers who employ Choices Plus participants, to further their understanding of what aspects of Choices Pus' intervention in the candidate's life helped them to secure employment. Aligned to this, it may be appropriate for Gingerbread NI to explore the possibility of hosting an Employer Forum; an opportunity for employers to guide the future priorities of Choices Plus. |
| 6 | Choices Plus participants undertake qualifications at local FE Colleges | Gingerbread NI may wish to consider including FE Colleges as a Stakeholder in future SROI Studies and, more immediately, to develop closer working relationships with the Colleges (perhaps formalising the process by which participants take up College places) so that it is possible for Colleges and Gingerbread NI to track the full (economic and social) value of Choices Plus to these institutions. |

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APPENDIX 1: IMPACT MAP: ASSUMPTIONS MADE & CALCULATIONS USED

1. OUTCOMES 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3

- Over each year from 2008 to 2013, assume 2% annual wage inflation (ref: Annual Survey of Hours & Earnings, <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=285>)
- Choices Plus participants' earnings are based on "better off" calculations. I.e. the impact on the individual's overall income of moving into employment (taking into account reductions in receipt of benefits). Housing benefits have been excluded from calculations as insufficient information was available to include them in calculations accurately. (See Future Recommendations).
- Where Choices Plus participants have secured employment, an overall 12% drop off in employment each year has been assumed, to account for those in 1 & 2 year contracts and for those who will lose their jobs. For Outcome 1.3, whilst projections of numbers moving into employment in 2010, 2011 & 2012 have been based on actual levels achieved by Choices Plus participants in 2008 and 2009, figures have been revised downwards by 40% to reflect the difficult current economic climate.
- Calculations are demonstrated in Appendix 2

Outcome 1.1: Potential earnings for those who secured Level 3 qualification but who had not, by April 2010, secured employment or pursued further study.

- 61% secured employment or pursued further study, leaving 39% of 149 (59 Choices Plus participants).
- Assume 45% of these individuals (across the 3 intakes) secure employment that reflects their qualification within the 3 coming years: 29 Choices Plus participants in total:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Secured employment in September 2010 | 8 into employment @ Level 3 |
| Secure employment in September 2011 | 12 into employment @ Level 3 |
| Secured employment in September 2012 | 9 into employment @ Level 3 |

Outcome 1.2: Potential earnings for those who have gone on to pursue additional Further / Higher qualifications.

- 25% of 2007/08 & 2008/09 pursued further study, 70% at degree/ diplomas/ teaching qualification level.
- 70%; 18 Choices Plus participants. Assume 14 secure a job that reflects their qualification by the end of their further study (assumed to be 3 years beyond completion of Choices Plus): 14 people moving into "graduate" jobs by the end of the Study period:

| | |
|----------------|---|
| September 2011 | 7 people moving into graduate positions |
| September 2012 | 7 people moving into graduate positions |

(Study period is not long enough to show 2009/10 intake progressing to graduate positions)

- Potential earnings @ graduate level for 4 most commonly-occurring graduate courses:

Starting salary of teacher, 2010: £21,588

Source: <http://www.tda.gov.uk/Recruit/becomingateacher/startingsalary.aspx>

Starting salary of nurse, 2010: £20,710

Source: http://www.rcn.org.uk/support/pay_and_conditions/pay_rates_2009_-_2010

Starting salary of Social Worker 2010: £24,500

Source: http://ww2.prospects.ac.uk/p/types_of_job/social_worker_salary.jsp

Starting salary of Counsellor 2010: £24,000 -

Source: <http://careersadvice.direct.gov.uk>

Average Gross Salary for Graduate examples:

2011: £23,617

2012: £24,089

- 30% of the 25% who pursued additional qualifications from 2007 and 2008 did so at "intermediate level" (between Level 3 & degree)
- Up to 40% of the 2009 intake plan to pursue further study
- Therefore, an average of 30% of all 149 Choices Plus participants from Study period pursue further study, 30% at intermediate level; 14 Choices Plus participants throughout the 3 years secure employment that reflects their qualification within 2 years, earning between Level 3 and graduate (£10 per hour in 2010) averaging 30 hours per week.

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September 2010: 4 Choices Plus participants @ Intermediate level employment
September 2011: 5 people @ Intermediate level employment
September 2012: 5 people @ Intermediate level employment

Outcome 1.3: Earnings of those who have secured employment

- 36% (37 Choices Plus participants) from Years 1 & 2 moved into employment. Assume 40% reduction in individuals moving into employment in 2010 due to economic climate.
- Average hourly rate of starting salaries recorded by 2007/08 and 2008/09 Choices Plus participants who secured employment was £7.73 per hour. Average number of hours worked per week was 25 hours per week.

September 2008 20 into employment (from 2007/08)
September 2009 17 into employment (from 2008/09)
September 2010 10 into employment (from 2009/10)

Outcome 1.7: Placement value (in terms of building experience) for those not yet in further study or employment

- 55% Choices Plus participants end up in employment / further study. Therefore, for 45% of Choices Plus participants, placement must be valued as building block for future:
- Total number of placement hours over period: 31,900
45% of 31,900 = 14,355 hours X £6.80 per hour: £97,614

Outcome 1.8: Value of Social Activities Undertaken by Choices Plus participants

- Outcome relevant to 25% of three-year sample; 38 Choices Plus participants
1 activity per month alone that would not have happened without C+ for one year
1 activity per month with child(ren) that would not have happened without C+ for one year
- Activities cited to represent social interaction (by participants at Focus Group):

Frequency X cost per year:

- Cinema (alone) Movie House: £5.50 X 6 = £33.00
- Pub (alone) 2 pints: £8.00 x 6 = £48.00
- Swimming (with children) 1 adult & 2 children (BCC): £7.50 X 6 = £45.00
<http://www.belfastcity.gov.uk/leisurecentres/prices.asp>
- Café (with children). £5 x 3 persons = £15 X 6 = £90

Total Annual Expenditure on social activities per participant: £216.00

£216 X 38 Choices Plus participants: £8,208 for 12 months = £684 per month

£684 per month X 30 months (Study period) = £20,520 for 30 months

Outcome 2.1 (Employers)

- Total number of placements over period: 75 completed plus additional 55, 75% completed averaging 290 hours per placement
- Average value placed on work experience placements, by employers: £6.80 per hour:
(75 + 41) = 116 placements X 290 hours = 33,640 hours X £6.80 = **£228,752**

Outcome 2.3 Value of Choices Plus participants' Volunteering

- 9% volunteering an average of 20 hours per week
- 10% volunteering an average of 12 hours per week (in addition to further study)
9% of 149 = 13 Choices Plus participants for 20 hours per week (averaging 42 weeks per year):
10% of 149 = 15 Choices Plus participants for 12 hours per week (averaging 42 weeks per year):
13 X 20 X 42 = 10,920 hours + 15 X 12 X 42 = 7,560 hours = **18,480 hours** (per year)
Year 1 (Sept 07-April 08) – no volunteering
Year 2 (April 08 – April 09) – 1/3 of total generated volunteering
Year 3 (April 09 – April 2010) – 2/3 of volunteering
18,480 hours x £6.50 per hour (benefit from voluntary p'ment questionnaires) = **£120,120**

Outcome 7.1 & 7.2 (HMRC)

Calculations displayed in Appendix 2

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APPENDIX 2: CALCULATIONS FOR OUTCOMES 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3

| OUT-COME | Years | Gross Salary | Net Salary | No. in employ | Total Tax & NI Paid | Total Net Earnings | Average Pre-employ Benefits | Average Post-employ Benefits | Difference in income | HMRC: Tax & NI | HMRC Benefits Diff | "Better off" Income 30% Discount | |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------|------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1.1 | 10 - 11 | £10,945 | £9,665 | 8 | 10240 | £77,324 | £57,232 | 39040 | £59,132 | | | Ap 10-11 | 20,696 |
| | 11 - 12 | £11,219 | £9,859 | 18 | 24480 | £177,463 | £128,772 | 87840 | £136,531 | | | Ap 11-12 | 68,482 |
| | 12 - 13 | £11,499 | £10,057 | 26 | 37492 | £261,485 | £186,004 | 126880 | £202,361 | | | Ap 12-13 | 118,612 |
| | TOTALS | | | | £72,212 | £516,271 | £372,008 | £253,760 | £398,023 | £72,212 | £118,248 | | £278,616 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 15% Discount; 1.2 Total | |
| 1.2 (a) | 10 - 11 | £15,912 | £12,904 | 4 | 12032 | £51,616 | £28,616 | £21,588 | £44,588 | | | Ap 10-11 | 18,950 |
| | 11 - 12 | £16,224 | £13,120 | 9 | 27936 | £118,080 | £64,386 | £48,573 | £102,267 | | | Ap 11-12 | 110,620 |
| | 12 - 13 | £16,551 | £13,345 | 13 | 41678 | £173,485 | £93,002 | £70,161 | £150,644 | | | Ap 12-13 | 254,048 |
| | TOTALS | | | | £81,646 | £343,181 | £186,004 | £140,322 | £297,499 | £81,646 | £45,682 | | 162,377 |
| 1.2 (b) | 11 - 12 | £23,617 | £18,220 | 7 | £37,779 | £127,540 | £50,078 | 35966 | £113,428 | | | | |
| | 12 - 13 | £24,089 | £18,546 | 14 | £77,602 | £259,644 | £100,156 | 71932 | £231,420 | | | | |
| | TOTALS | | | | | £115,381 | £387,184 | £150,234 | £107,898 | £344,848 | £115,381 | £42,336 | |
| | 1.2 TOT. | | | | | £197,027 | £730,365 | £336,238 | £248,220 | £642,347 | £197,027 | £88,018 | £545,995 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | 15% Discount | | |
| 1.3 | 08 - 09 | £10,418 | £9,292 | 20 | 22,520 | £185,848 | £143,080 | 97600 | £140,368 | | | Study Period | 217,278 |
| | 09 - 10 | £10,678 | £9,477 | 32 | 38,432 | £303,274 | £228,928 | 156160 | £230,506 | | | Ap 10-11 | 229,902 |
| | 10 - 11 | £10,945 | £9,665 | 42 | 53,760 | £405,948 | £300,468 | 204960 | £310,440 | | | Ap 11-12 | 244,760 |
| | 11 - 12 | £11,164 | £9,859 | 35 | 45,696 | £345,056 | £250,390 | 170800 | £265,466 | | | Ap 12-13 | 215,350 |
| | 12 - 13 | £11,388 | £10,056 | 31 | 41,283 | £311,734 | £221,774 | 151280 | £241,240 | | | Ap - Sp13 | 102,527 |
| | TOTAL | | | | 201,691 | 1,551,861 | 1,144,640 | 780,800 | 1,188,021 | £201,691 | £363,840 | | £1,009,817 |
| TOTALS | | | | | | | | | £470,930 | £570,106 | | £1,834,429 | |

Choices Plus

for lone parents

Qualifications : Work Experience : Support

gingerbreadni
supporting one parent families

Central Office
169 University Street
Belfast, BT7 1HR
T: 028 9023 1417
enquiries@gingerbreadni.org
www.gingerbreadni.org



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028 9090 0069
www.gaugeni.com

