


Integrating health and early help support: Cost-effectiveness analysis of Sparkbrook Children's Zone

An economic evaluation of the Sparkbrook Children's Zone (SCZ), an integrated health and social care clinic for children and young people (CYP) compared with standard primary care.

Melyda, M., Monahan, M., Bird, C., Roberts, T., Harper, L. and Litchfield, I., 2025. Integrating health care and early years support for children and young people living in deprivation: a cost-effectiveness analysis of the Sparkbrook Children's Zone integrated clinic versus usual primary care in Birmingham, UK. *BMJ Paediatrics Open*, 9(1), p.e003249.

The challenge...

-  Increased strain on the UK healthcare system due to high ED and outpatient visits, especially in deprived areas.
-  Highlighted need for integrated care solutions.



The Sparkbrook Children's Zone (SCZ) Model: an Integrated Solution

What is the SCZ?

The SCZ is a pilot clinic that integrates health and early years support for children and young people in Sparkbrook, a deprived area of Birmingham, UK.

Key services offered:



Local healthcare delivery, including improved management of common conditions like asthma, eczema, and constipation.



Preventive health, including healthy weight, immunisations, oral health, smoking cessation, and Healthy Start vitamins.



Early years family support (Early Help, 0-19 years), addressing social determinants of health.

Sparkbrook
Children's
Zone

The benefits of this model and approach

41.38%

Reduced ED visits

The SCZ model demonstrated a lower proportion of patients attending the Emergency Department compared to standard primary care (a reduction of 41.38%).

£44

Cost saving

The average cost of SCZ per patient was £66 compared with £110 for standard primary care, leading to a cost-saving of £44 per patient.

£617,120

Cost saving potential

If applied to all 14,000 eligible children and young people (CYP), the SCZ model has the potential to save £617,120.

76.3%

Cost effectiveness

There is a 76.3% probability that the SCZ model is cost-effective, as it is associated with lower costs and fewer ED visits compared to standard primary care.



Health inequality

The SCZ model aims to tackle health inequalities by ensuring equitable access to health and social care services, particularly for marginalized populations



Early intervention

The SCZ model emphasises early years support, which is designed to identify and address issues at an early stage, preventing them from escalating into more complex problems.



Integration

The integration of health and social care services within a community setting allows for a more comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of children and young people



Key learning: towards a healthier future for children

Potential cost savings: The SCZ offers a potentially cost-saving approach to delivering integrated health and social care in communities with high levels of deprivation.

Enhancing cost effectiveness: Early Help services play a crucial role in enhancing the cost-effectiveness and overall impact of the SCZ, compared to standard primary care.

Expansion: Policymakers and healthcare providers should consider adopting and expanding similar integrated care models to improve the efficiency and equity of healthcare delivery.

Further research needed: Further robust data and evaluation are necessary to confirm these findings and ensure the scalability and sustainability of such programmes.