

Summary

Introduction

The 'Deltaplan Kwaliteitsverbetering Gezinsvoogdij' (Deltaplan Quality Improvement Family Supervision Order) was a two-year project commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Justice. One of its main goals was to develop a new method for working with families that are under a supervision order. This development has taken place between October 2002 and January 2005, and was based on the document *Leiding geven aan verandering* (Vedivo, 2002 - LGAV; Guiding Change). This document recommends a more intensive cooperation between families and their guardians, and an improvement in the way a supervision order is carried out.

At the same time as LGAV was being developed, the WODC commissioned PI Research (Duivendrecht, The Netherlands) to evaluate the merits of this new method in so-called pilot teams. It was investigated whether the new method met with the goals that were set by the Ministry of Justice. The results were published in 'Bescherming in ontwikkeling' (Slot, Van Tooren & Bijl, 2004; Protection under construction / development). At that time it wasn't possible to report decisive results about: (1) the duration of supervision orders, (2) the number and duration of outplacements during a supervision order. The current study concentrates on these two topics.

Research method

A pre-analysis was carried out to collect information about (a) the current use of LGAV in the former pilot teams (b) the type of method used in control teams. The question was whether the method-use in the former pilot teams still differed significantly from the method-use in the control teams. This information is crucial to interpret any differences that are found between the pilot and control teams.

In January 2006 information was collected about the mean caseload of all pilot and control teams on 1 July 2005. Following this, two family guardians of each team were interviewed by phone. The newly developed 'Quick Scan'-questionnaire was used to assess the level of LGAV-use. In February 2006 the file analysis started, using the 'Zorgpunten Analyse Protocol-Kort' (ZAP-Kort; Areas-of-Concern Analysis Protocol). This instrument enables standardized data-collection from files. In contrast to 'Bescherming in ontwikkeling' (Slot et al., 2004) file analysis was also conducted in the control teams.

Results

There were three main questions in the pre-analysis:

- a) *Does the (development of the) mean caseload of pilot teams differ from control teams?*

It can be concluded that the mean caseload of the pilot teams remained as low as in the last couple of years. All pilot teams had a caseload less than 1:17 (including custody cases), which was the determined norm. The mean caseload of the control teams remained stable over the last couple of years. Nevertheless, the caseload in the control teams is about one-third higher than in the pilot teams.

b) Do the former pilot teams still work according to the LGAV-method?

All interviewed family guardians of the former pilot teams stated that they still worked according to the LGAV-method. Their level of use of the new method was determined at level 5: making small adjustments to improve the effectiveness. On the other hand, the 'Quick Scan'-questionnaire showed that a number of crucial elements of LGAV weren't carried out automatically by family guardians. All in all there's a moderately positive answer to the question whether the former pilot teams still work according to the LGAV-method.

c) Does the method-use in the former pilot teams differ significantly from the method-use in the control teams?

All interviewed family guardians of the control teams stated that LGAV wasn't implemented in their team yet. Their score on the 'Quick Scan'-questionnaire was significantly lower than the average score of the former pilot teams. Some elements of LGAV are also carried out by family guardians of control teams. Nevertheless, the method-use in the former pilot teams still differs significantly from the method-use in the control teams.

The two main questions concerning the file-analysis were:

1. Does the (development of the) duration of supervision orders in pilot teams differ from control teams?

It can be concluded that the mean duration of supervision orders in the period of 2002-2004 has decreased significantly for both pilot and control teams. The average supervision order, that started in 2002, lasted for 25 months. Supervision orders that started in 2004 had an average duration of 15 months. As this decrease is true for both pilot and control teams, it can not be accredited to LGAV. On the other hand, it has to be noted that about 55% of the supervision orders in both groups hadn't ended at the time of the file analysis. The mean duration of supervision orders will have to be adjusted upward once all cases have ended.

2. Does the (development of the) number and duration of out-of-home placements during a supervision order in pilot teams differ from control teams?

In both pilot and control teams about two out of three children experienced an out-of-home placement. The number and duration of out-of-home placements remained stable over the period of 2002-2004. There were no significant differences between pilot and control teams. It has to be concluded that the number and duration of out-of-home placements during a supervision order have not decreased since the implementation of LGAV.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the former pilot teams still work according to the LGAV-method. Their method-use differs significantly from the method used by control

teams. LGAV hasn't led to a significant decrease of the duration of supervision orders, and the number and duration of out-of-home placements yet. In regard to the efficiency of care-administration and the type of out-of-home placements, there are significant differences between the former pilot and the control teams.

Recommendations

A number of crucial elements of LGAV weren't carried out automatically by family guardians of the former pilot teams. It is recommended that more attention be paid to program integrity. One of the possibilities is to develop an instrument which monitors the level of LGAV-use of family guardians. The 'Quick Scan'-questionnaire could serve as a model for this LGAV-monitor. Finally it is recommended that at the start of the supervision order more attention be paid to family-criteria such as the type and severity of problems, strengths and difficulties of families, and the urgency of the situation. In accordance with this differentiation, family guardians can be trained how to use LGAV in different types of families. Future research will have to control for these variables in effect-analyses, as they might influence the intensity and duration of supervision orders.