

HeadStart Kent

Knowledge Seminar Four Report

What Have We Learnt? Where Are We Going?

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BACKGROUND

This was the fourth and final knowledge seminar of the HeadStart Kent Pilot. The first Seminar in September 2014 focussed on defining resilience and the second seminar in January 2015 focussed on measuring outcomes of resilience. The third Seminar in May was an opportunity for current HeadStart projects to discuss their progress so far. This fourth Seminar focused on HeadStart's aims for Phase Three, developing a theory of change and why this is so important. The final seminar covered the following elements:

- An overview of HeadStart Phase Three
- Learning from Phase Two and the Knowledge Seminars
- Creating a Theory of Change: the process so far and plan
- Activity: Theory of Change for HeadStart Kent
- The importance of providers developing their own TOC

AN OVERVIEW OF HEADSTART PHASE THREE

HeadStart has secured more funding from the Big Lottery between January and July 2016 to help us develop Phase Three ready for implementation, building on what we have done in Phase Two. Resilience is still central to HeadStart but the focus has shifted to building the mental wellbeing of 10-16 year olds. (Please see attached Big Lottery slides and those of Angela Ford's Seminar presentation). There is an emphasis in this phase on the client journey. Confidence in local leadership and sustainability beyond the HeadStart programme is vital. The Big Lottery have liked the use of match funding in Kent. Two participation workers (one in East/South Kent and one in North/West Kent) have recently been appointed in Kent so young people will be continually and robustly involved in HeadStart and supported to do so. Big Lottery have said they want to see a clear mission, target population, outcomes and then from this to design the programme.

Outcomes and short term activities that Big Lottery want to see are trusted adults, the domains, safe spaces etc. They encourage workforce development and see emotional wellbeing being everyone's business. They want to see commitment and engagement from leaders and stakeholders, with clear accountability, strategic thinking and sustainability. They will tender out for a support and development partner to work with us. An Academic Resilience workshop was run over the summer and ideas for how this can be taken forward are being explored. The theory of change for the next phase is being drafted. We are planning on running market engagement workshops early November. The draft strategy for Kent for Phase Three will enable discussion and we want partners to feel like they have been involved and had a say. Schools are the 'funnel of activity' universal service.

LEARNING FROM THE HEADSTART PROJECTS

This section highlights some of the challenges faced during the pilot phases as well as the learning from the 3 previous seminars.

Challenges

The Big Lottery's lack of clarity of focus for the project and for the evaluation has had an impact on the broader HeadStart Programme and the projects that have been involved. This has impacted on how projects were selected and rolled out and issues related to evaluation. The critique offered here in no way reflects a sense that this is the responsibility of any group of people but rather due to systemic and strategic issues about how the programme was initiated. The ground work needed to ensure a coherent model and evaluation framework were implemented was not undertaken. This has led to a scattered approach that may impact on well-being but possibly not resilience

Linking broader aims of HeadStart programme to what projects actually do and the need for projects to fit what they do with the broader aims of HeadStart has raised challenges for both parties. The co-construction of a definition of resilience across Kent and a coherent theory of change that projects can be commissioned reviewed against are key. However there is a tension of working collaboratively with commissioned services. Kent does need to acknowledge the challenge that this poses in a market driven economy where projects are competing for commissions and where some of the stakeholders have a level of autonomy that will allow them to go in their direction in spite of a county-wide view.

Learning from the Projects and the Knowledge Seminars

- **Increase in Strengths Based Approaches**

Overall there are a lot of new projects in place throughout Kent. There is certainly an increase in the number of environments conducive with positive wellbeing for children and young people. Professionals from a number of different agencies are clearly moving toward a strengths based approach (rather than deficit) that is conducive with enhancing resilience processes. A number of the projects are clearly embracing principles of co-production with the young people.

- **Focus on Universal Approaches**

There does seem to be a gap in terms of any targeted approaches focusing on children and young people who would benefit the most i.e. those at serious risk of adversity. For example a focus could have been on children living in complex families where there are mental health problems, drug and alcohol misuse and many more. It is these families where the parents have multiple needs, experiencing risk and adversity that we have strong evidence base on how to intervene and promote

resilience. Instead it seems the money has just been adsorbed in to mopping up gaps in what should be universal provision.

- **Talents and Interests Neglected as a Domain**

There also appeared to be very few examples where the children and young people were offered any opportunity to develop new talents or interests, a critical domain. This highlights a consistent problem throughout HeadStart Kent in that it is not linking back the activities and services they are providing to a resilience framework and certainly not covering many domains. Throughout the knowledge seminars the resilience wheel has been used as an example that could have been used as an anchor, or adopted a different evidence based framework to anchor activities to.

- **Evaluating Impact**

In terms of demonstrating impact or demonstrating outcomes with any of the programmes this is going to be extremely problematic. There was very little (if any) baseline data collected at the beginning of HeadStart and where projects are collecting data this is not consistent between the partner organisations preventing any meaningful comparison.

- **Theory of Change and Use of Evidence**

There seemed to be an issue of understanding the 'what' and 'why' of Theory of Change by the projects. Most projects did not have an explicit theory of change. This is of concern as a theory of change is vital in terms of explaining the aims of the project, its expected outcomes, how it expects to achieve these i.e. how project activities link to achieving these outcomes and how they plan to measure it. Linked to this is the issue of evidence and how it is used. Often projects were undertaken with no reference to the evidence on which it was based. There seemed to be a misunderstanding that a project needed to be evidence based and therefore an innovation or new project does not need a theory of change or evidence. However any innovation that wants to demonstrate evidence needs to be clear about how it is proposing to meet its aims and outcomes and should be using evidence to argue for the logic or rationale for why they have chosen to do things in the way they have. If there is no evidence in an area then projects need to be clear about this and the project needs to set out a clear argument for how they plan to evidence it themselves. Innovative approaches that are less tried and tested are vital for developments in this field however they should still be grounded in a credible theoretical model of change.

In terms of evidence for projects it seemed that often projects were not critical of the evidence bases or of their own evidence. It is much more helpful to be tentative and critical in the conclusions made about one's evidence and be open to the fact that the field of resilience or emotional wellbeing is a complex one and it is hard to be conclusive. The Social Research Unit /NESTA offers a set of Standards of Evidence

that projects should be encouraged to explore and use when thinking of their own evaluations.

- **The Role of the Knowledge Seminars and their Impact**

There is a need to consider the role of the Knowledge Seminars. It appears that despite them proving valuable information to the project team, in their current format they are having limited impact on the projects views and understanding of resilience.

What is needed for the Way Forward?

The following are the long term issues that need to be addressed:

1. There is a need to develop an overarching framework for emotional wellbeing so staff/agencies can 'sign up' to this. This needs a clear conceptualisation of resilience i.e. how is it defined and what is the theory of change.
2. Based on this evidence based approaches can be mapped onto this conceptualisation and projects commissioned based on this.
3. There needs to be a coherent system for evidence based evaluation ensuring that each element of the system is clear on how they evidence outcomes and impact
4. An evidence matrix / outcomes framework is key to measuring emotional wellbeing in its varying forms across services.
5. Need to ensure that thought is given to measurement at a county level (what does this tell us about Kent's progress in terms of improving resilience in young people), a service level (how does the service know it's contribution to the overall picture is effective) and an individual level (how do we ensure that outcomes are meaningful for the work with individual young people).
6. In light of some of the tensions in co-constructing with commissioned services we would recommend that KCC is clear with the outcome framework / metric they are wanting from these services. There is a need in the county for a common data strategy for comparison. If KCC take the lead they can develop a framework with suggested measures. In this way you can avoid 'self report' on the part of partners and find a way of capturing the data independently or through a third party who is not commissioned to do the actual work.

CREATING A THEORY OF CHANGE: THE PROCESS SO FAR AND PLAN

Eileen McKibbin explained A Theory of Change is needed for Big Lottery's third aim for Phase Three - developing a robust evidence base. ToCs explain the outcomes we want to achieve, how we plan to get there, and connections. Doing this at the start is important. The presentation outlined standards of evidence (NESTA): Level 1

is having a ToC, before you can even get to Level 2 (Monitoring). Level 3 is an impact evaluation. HeadStart has to have to have a ToC in its programme design (please see attached slides).

The formative evaluation of HeadStart activities so far has shown it has benefitted from considerable good will from others. The evaluation so far has shown that interventions were accepted more when families/young people were involved and local context plays a big role in the success too. (See presentation slides). Learning so far will inform the developing ToC.

The current ToC draft is a working document, and begins with need to identify cohorts/context/ problem in order to achieve outcomes. A coherent ToC will result in everyone being clear why we're doing what we're doing, strategically. We can then can develop more detailed ToCs and local/intervention ToCs.

Discussion

Jim Winter said about the links between specialist and universal services and accessing between the tiers (universal, additional, intensive, specialist). Jim said Universal should cover the whole spectrum. Jo Tonkin asked about the barriers for this, are there barriers within practice, understanding, or the voice of the young people? Jim said it had felt like the link between Universal and Specialist had been lost, this has started to change within KCC. Angela emphasised that HeadStart is Universal and Early Help. Jo said the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy focusses on all aspects of a young person's life. Elizabeth Bull said years ago there was a mantra "*don't refer, collaborate*", and this is worth thinking about.

David Weiss said models like the tiers spectrum are good for us to understand where the money is being invested, however individuals and whole families can change, so we need no barriers/thresholds for young people and their families, we need to be flexible/intelligent and sometimes models do not portray this coherently. Rebecca O'Neill gave an example of a young person being mentored through Brogdale, this mentor followed the young person through school to a PRU, then back again to school. Jo said this example linked in with the domains model (secure base) and that consistency works for young people. Jim said about the potential conflict between emotional wellbeing and resilience with school academic agenda focus. Eileen said will need to work with schools to see if improved wellbeing impacts attendance/attainment etc. Jim said schools often focus on short-term progression rather than long term wellbeing. Angela said HeadStart has a challenge over 5 years to show we can make a difference in this aspect. Jo said we can influence schools and share the 'message' of HeadStart. Eileen linked this back to BIG's third aim – Big Lottery want HeadStart to contribute to the national and local policy debate. Angela said HeadStart needs to show adding value to existing interventions, this is the difference.

Activity: Appreciative Enquiry to inform developing ToC

Related to the draft 'contexts/problem/goal', Eileen McKibbin asked attendees in groups to:

- Discover – What has been working well throughout the HeadStart programme?
- Dream – What would improve it?
- Design – Planning and Prioritising
- Destiny – Actions

(Please see Appendix 1 for the output form this activity).

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROVIDERS DEVELOPING THEIR OWN TOC

Mark Kerr discussed the steps to creating a ToC (need a goal, preconditions, interventions, indicators and a narrative). Logic models should not be a fixed graphic, it is up to the organisation to create their own model. ToCs are timely processes, at least 6 months to a year to create. The idea is to work backwards from the desired goal. Evaluation is from beginning to end. Soft outcomes can be refined as project moves forward and discovering new positive outcomes. Angela emphasised clear outcomes and the reasons behind doing what we are doing. Jo emphasised the importance of young people being able to articulate what it is that they need. (Please see attached slides for more detail).

APPENDIX 1: APPRECIATIVE ENQUIRY TO INFORM DEVELOPING TOC

DISCOVER

What's working well?

- Domain model to identify risk factors – practitioners using this to identify things they may not have picked up on before. Starting point and review
- Subtle approach with dealing with subjects
- Universal – links with young healthy minds
- Informal space – non-judgemental outsider
- Professionals working together - more barriers breaking
- Identification of young people at risk of exploitation (gangs/CSE/drugs)
- Detached Youth Worker
- Police JFMP – young people prior to convictions
- If working on positive / assets work with children – we need to do it with adults too
- Most schools are 'good' or 'outstanding' – how do EHWB link into Ofsted standards?
- 'Pockets' of good practice
- Schools can access support from services – equitable access through WFT(?) / Early help
- Emotional health and well-being is seen as the 'norm' and is talked about

DREAM

What would be good?

- A fixed domain model to roll out across Kent for all practitioners. Use domains with parents? Safeguarding? Output of domain assessment = coping techniques / strategies
- Better communication within schools so that pastoral team understand HS – strengthened marketing
- Good quality information sharing system e.g. Posters, Intelligence, etc.

- YP to have an identified person in school which they can talk to
- Every young person has an appropriate person to turn to in a time of adversity
- Actively join up – too many people operate funding in isolation
- The targeted services such as SCS always link to universal services
- Bi-annual data collection
- SDQ's
- Funding long term – not just 3-5 years
- Having structure / resources to divert / facilitate activities / interventions. More staff
- Less reactive, more proactive

- More responsive service – all partners including Specialist Children’s Social Services
- Joint understanding goals / families
- Not such rigid thresholds
- Information sharing – link SS databases to schools re DA at home
- The way schools approach trauma – it can make the trauma worse on a young person at home
- An appropriate way of talking to young people’s parents is needed in a non-threatening way
- Age appropriate resources
- Need to have community involvement and buy in so that people stay committed and it is cost effective
- All schools are safe spaces – PSHE delivered everywhere
- There are pathways and services for young people not in schools e.g. school refusers
- Educational setting see EHWP as prime need / provision
- Staff receive appropriate training and can implement approaches – and want to

DESIGN

Planning and Prioritising

- Self-assessment for schools linked to domains. Transition domain assessment to take from Yr6-Yr7 with new school information

Theory of change for each individual. So:

- Domains assessment highlights areas to work on and identifies outcomes
- Then develop theory of change for work with the young person – similar to an action plan – work through this to then achieve outcomes
- Domains review assessment with young people which gives them a record of their strengths and their coping strategies

Community engagement

- Not all schools are safe places for young people
- Need to engage Voluntary sector Youth Provision, leisure provision, religious centres
- Looking at impact / behaviours / use of social media on YP life and family life
- Think broader than just schools
- Revisit young people’s wishes
- How do you keep relationships in the thoughts during design and commissioning
- Designated person for young person?
- Do schools have counsellors? FLO’s? Pastoral teams? – capacity

- Safeguard relationships at all costs. They can be sabotaged by commissioning protection
- Interim / proxy measures
- Lending library or resources – online, age appropriate, actual
- Make resources available to all children and young people, including academic resources. Make them free
- To develop programmes where children can experience ‘challenge’ in a safe place?
- Is this in conflict with an academic agenda that is totally focused on ‘progress’ and success?

DESTINY

Actions

- School improvement meeting to highlight link to domains
- Spread the word of HeadStart
- Early help alert system re DVA e.g. Bexley
- Develop alert systems where people can send/disseminate concerns using triage better
- Develop plays / art projects to subtly deliver messages
- Scope volume
- Schools / partners mapping current resources
- Information sharing
- Linking individuals into family units
- Workable development – rolling programme and appropriate staff (key trainer)
- Is there training in place for schools regarding resilience and how to promote it in their work with individual children?