The evaluation of Head, Heart, Hands

Introducing social pedagogy into UK foster care

Final synthesis report

Samantha McDermid, Lisa Holmes,
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The Centre for Child and Family Research, Loughborough University,
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Executive Summary

Introduction

This is the final report of the evaluation of Head, Heart, Hands. It is part of a suite of reports produced by the independent evaluation team led by the Centre for Child and Family Research, Loughborough University, in partnership with the Colebrook Centre for Evidence and Implementation. Previous reports have explored the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on foster carers and children and young people in the first two years of the programme (McDermid et al., 2014; 2015), the economic impact of Head, Heart, Hands, along with an in-depth analysis of how the programme was implemented (Ghate and McDermid, 2016)[1,2]. In this final report we bring together data presented elsewhere with the final analysis of the **impact of Head, Heart, Hands on those foster carers and children and young people who participated in the programme**. We also examine the linkages between the way that the programme unfolded and the outcomes it has achieved. The aim of the evaluation was to ascertain how far the Head, Heart, Hands programme achieved the aims and objectives outlined in Box 1, by addressing the following over-arching research questions:

1. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer children and young people in foster care?
2. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer foster carers' and their practice?
3. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer the system of supporting children and young people in foster care and their carers?

Head, Heart, Hands was carried out between September 2012 and June 2016, as an ambitious demonstration programme within UK foster care, directly involving both foster carers and staff in fostering services and agencies. Its stated overarching aim was to "*develop a social pedagogic approach within UK foster care, thereby increasing the numbers of young people in foster care who achieve their potential and make a positive contribution to society"*. To achieve this, The Fostering Network identified the following objectives (See Box 1)[3].

[1] Reports on the evaluation of Head, Heart, Hands that have been published to date are available at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/ccfr/research/exploring/project---head-heart-hands.html.

[2] A full description is contained in the main report: (http://www.cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Main_Report.pdf); and a summary of key findings is also available at http://cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Summary.pdf.

[3] For more information about the Head, Heart, Hands programme go to https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/policy-practice/head-heart-hands.

Box 1: The objectives of Head, Heart, Hands

- To develop a professional, confident group of foster carers who will be able to demonstrate that by using a social pedagogic approach, they will develop the capacity to significantly improve the day to day lives of the children in their care.
- To develop social pedagogic characteristics in foster carers. Foster carers will have an integration of 'head, hands and heart' to develop strong relationships with the children they look after.
- To implement systemic change and a cultural shift which will support social pedagogic practice and recognise the central role of foster carers in shaping the lives of children within their care.
- To provide a platform for transformation of the role that foster carers play as part of the child's network.

Source: The Fostering Network (2011) Head, Hands and Heart Bringing up Children in Foster Care: A Social Pedagogic Approach: Funding Proposal. London: the Fostering Network.

Seven demonstration sites (four in England, and three in Scotland) participated in the programme, which consists of a number of activities including: Learning and Development courses provided to up to 40 foster carers per site, employment of Social Pedagogues, "momentum groups"[4] and reviewing the policies and procedures of fostering services through a social pedagogic lens. Social pedagogic support and expertise is being provided by the "Social Pedagogy Consortium"[5].

Methods

The evaluation used a mixed method approach to gather data from a range of key stakeholders, incorporating longitudinal approaches to explore the evolution of the programme over time. The methods are summarised below:

- **Interviews with Head, Heart, Hands fostering households:** Over the course of the entire evaluation **126** semi-structured interviews were carried out with **76** Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and **64** Interviews were carried out with **52** children and young people. In total 76 Head, Heart, Hands households participated in the evaluation, which is an overall response rate of 34%. Some, but not all of the households participated across multiple time points across the evaluation. The findings of this report are primarily drawn from the

[4] These variously named activities consist of regular meetings open to those who attended the Core Learning and Development courses, to refresh, share and continue to explore social pedagogy and how it translates into practice.

[5] The Social Pedagogy Consortium is a group of practice and academic specialists form Jacaranda Development; Pat Petrie, Professor Emeritus at the Institute of Education, University of London; and Thempra Social Pedagogy.

interviews undertaken at Wave 3, which consisted of interviews with **57** Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and **37** interviews with the children and young people placed with them.

- **Survey of Head, Heart, Hands foster carers**: Surveys with Head, Heart, Hands carers were distributed at Waves 1 and 3. Analysis was conducted on 98 survey responses in Wave 1 and 47 responses at Wave 3.
- **Interviews and focus groups with social care staff:** A total of 33 social care staff participated in semi-structured interviews or focus groups.
- **Survey of social care staff:** A survey of social care staff was circulated at Wave 2. Analysis was conducted on 48 responses.
- **Case file data:** Case file data were gathered on 332 children and young people placed with 157 Head, Heart, Hands fostering household from five sites.
- **Secondary analysis of national statistical return data:** These data are recorded and collated at a local authority level and then submitted to the Department for Education (England) and the Scottish Government (Scotland) on an annual basis as part of their mandatory reporting and recording requirements. Data were provided by four (local authority) sites.
- **Financial data:** Expenditure and finance data provided both by the central programme team and the sites was analysed and used to calculate a unit cost of Head, Heart, Hands.

The impact of Head, Heart, Hands

Receptiveness to social pedagogy

Throughout the evaluation a typology has been used to explore the extent to which the foster carers in the interview sample were enthusiastic about social pedagogic practices, the factors that may influence foster carer's receptiveness to Head, Heart, Hands and whether this level of receptiveness has changed over the timeframe of the evaluation. Broadly speaking, the Engaged Adopters were the most enthusiastic about social pedagogy. This group was highly positive about social pedagogy *per se* and claimed that they were incorporating it into their own practice. Defended Sceptics were the most ambivalent about Head, Heart, Hands. They did not report to be negative about the notion of social pedagogy *per se*. Rather, they reported that they were not convinced about the "novelty" of social pedagogy or the impact that it would have on their own practice. The Cautious Optimists were somewhere in the middle of these two groups, reporting to be receptive overall, but tended to describe elements of social pedagogy or specific tools that could be applied to particular circumstances, or with particular children, rather than conceptualising it as an underpinning framework which could be applied to all areas of work with people. Following each interview, the foster carers were grouped into one of these three categories on the basis of their responses.

Encouragingly, over half of the foster carer interview sample in Waves 1 and 3 described themselves as Engaged Adopters, peaking at 70% in Wave 2. The Defended Sceptics represented the smallest proportion of foster carers in each time point, representing 19% of the sample in Wave 1, 7.5% of the sample in Wave 2, and 11% of the sample in Wave 3. Of the sample of foster carers who participated in an interview at multiple evaluation time points, 40% (n=13) changed their level of receptiveness over the course of the programme. Three of these foster carers became more positive about the approach, as they reported to be more confident in practicing social pedagogy and able to more clearly articulate the impact that it had on either themselves and/or the child they cared for. The remaining foster carers (n=10:13%) became less enthusiastic about the approach, due to disappointing experiences in how the programme had been implemented.

Almost two thirds of the children's social care staff who participated in the evaluation at Wave 3 identified themselves as Cautious Optimists (69%) and the remaining third (31%) reported that they were Engaged Adopters. Frontline children's social care staff were more likely to describe social pedagogy as one approach among a plethora of different programmes and interventions when compared to the cohort of foster carers. This finding is perhaps unsurprising given that all of the sites were utilising other training programmes and approaches, to support looked after children, during the Head, Heart, Hands programme. It is likely that the frontline children's social care staff (both supervising social workers and children's social workers) would have been supporting foster carers who were applying a range of approaches, making it difficult or unrealistic for them to preference one approach over another.

Throughout the evaluation it was evident that participants identified resonances between their existing approaches to fostering and the principles and values that underpin social pedagogy. Previous evaluation reports have highlighted variances in the extent to which prior familiarity with social pedagogy inhibited or facilitated engagement and enthusiasm with the programme among children's social care staff. Two thirds of the foster carers interviewed at Wave 3 reported that social pedagogy, or aspects of the approach, aligned with their own practice and ethos. Only two foster carers who participated in the evaluation reported that the social pedagogic approach that Head, Heart, Hands provided was entirely new. For a small number of foster carers who participated in the Wave 3 evaluation, the lack of a clear articulation of the unique contribution Head, Heart, Hands made to existing approaches to care, reduced the extent to which they wanted to engage with the programme, and the impact that they believed it to have made on them and the children and young people placed with them (n=6). In contrast, two thirds of the foster carers who were interviewed at Wave 3 reported that the similarities of Head, Heart, Hands to their own approach was a motivating factor to engage with the programme.

Relationships within the fostering household

Almost a third of the foster carers interviewed (n=18:32%) reported that Head, Heart, Hands had empowered and encouraged them to express warmth, respect and genuine affection for the young person. It was noted that the foster carers interviewed expressed affection for the children and young people they cared for prior to Head, Heart, Hands. Foster carers interviewed in Wave 3 reported that while they had not necessarily changed their behaviours towards the children and young people they cared for, they had been reminded, and therefore become more conscious of the significance of the carer-child relationship, since Head, Heart Hands. Other foster carers reported that Head, Heart, Hands had encouraged them further to invest time and effort into nurturing their relationship with the young person and had given them theoretical and practical tools to do so. Concepts such as the Diamond Model, the Lifeworld Orientation and the Common Third were of particular interest in this regard. In this way, the programme had provided a language and a framework in which to think about that relationship. Two thirds of foster carer survey respondents (n=31:66%) reported that their relationships with their fostered child had changed a great deal since attending the Head, Heart, Hands, Learning and Development courses.

These findings were corroborated by the case file analysis which suggested that language associated with familial warmth, respect and genuine regard was used frequently in the children's case files to describe how the carers perceived the fostering household relationships. A number of children

(n=23, 9%) were recorded in the case files as referring to their foster carers in familial terms such as "mum and dad". However, a small number of the case files suggested that the use of familial terms may be selective and linked to children's desire to feel a sense of belonging.

A small number of foster carers who participated in the interviews (n=5:8%) reported that they had become more conscious of the importance of seemingly small, everyday actions that help the child feel cared for and nurtured. Many more foster carers who were interviewed highlighted that the Common Third enabled them to be more conscious of how sharing activities together can create a shared space in which both parties learn together and deepen their relationship. Almost a third of the foster carers interviewed reported that the Common Third encouraged them to reconsider how everyday activities were used to develop their relationship with their fostered child (n=16:28%).

A little under a quarter of the foster carers who took part in the interviews (12:21%) reported that they had been encouraged to share more personal information with their fostered children as a result of Head, Heart, Hands and to use their personal relationship with the child to help them to grow and develop. The concept of the Three Ps was mentioned by these foster carers and was reported to assist them in establishing where the boundaries between the professional, personal and private might be for each individual child, and for each individual foster carer. Like many of the foster carers interviewed, participating frontline children's social care staff from three of the sites reported that the programme had encouraged them to bring more of the personal to their work with the foster carers, allowing them to develop more authentic relationships with them.

Eight (12%) foster carers reported that the concepts and approaches learnt through Head, Heart, Hands, had a positive impact on their relationship with other members of their fostering household. A small number of foster carers reported that they have reconceptualised fostering as a whole family activity, placing greater emphasis on whole family reflection and decision making. For those foster carers who reported that Head, Heart, Hands had a positive impact on their wider family, it is possible to hypothesise that more stable and strong relationships between all members of the fostering household, may create more stable and secure environments in which fostered children can flourish.

A small number of the foster carers who participated in an interview at Wave 3 (n=7:12%) reported that since Head, Heart, Hands, they were more likely to allow the children and young people to participate in activities that they previously would not have allowed them to do. However, frustrations arose when these decisions were not supported by social care staff.

The impact of Head, Heart, Hands on foster carers

The majority of foster carers in the interview sample were able to identify at least one way in which Head, Heart, Hands had influenced them as foster carers (n=54:95%). It is encouraging to note that only three out of the 57 foster carers interviewed reported that Head, Heart, Hands had not impacted on their practice in anyway. Likewise, when asked what the best thing about Head, Heart, Hands was, just under half of the Wave 3 foster carer survey respondents reported that the programme had had a positive influence on their practice (n=21:49%). These findings are corroborated by the case file analysis, which identified at least one way in which the foster carers

were practising social pedagogically in around half of the households included in the case file analysis (n=74:47%).

The view that the theoretical approaches explored through Head, Heart, Hands provided a framework through which to articulate existing knowledge about good practice was commonly cited among the foster carer interviews. These foster carers noted that although they may not have dramatically changed what they were doing with the children and young people on a day to day basis, they were more thoughtful and intentional in their actions. In this way, Head, Heart, Hands was described by some foster carers in the interview sample as enhancing to their practice, enabling them to apply professional knowledge and skills as different circumstances arose. These foster carers were of the view that putting labels on things they were already doing was in itself helpful in making them more mindful of their existing behaviours. A third of the foster carers interviewed reported that the provision of a theoretical framework through Head, Heart, Hands validated their existing approach to care, giving them more confidence that their current practice was along the right tracks (n= 19:33%). It was also reported that the common language prompted through Head, Heart, Hands, enabled some of the participating foster carers to articulate their practice (n=13:22%). The result was a proportion of foster carers in the interview sample who felt more assured in their own skills, and therefore more confident liaising with children's social care staff and advocating for the child.

While a third of the foster carers who participated in the evaluation reported that the provision of a framework for understanding practice was highly valued, this view was not found across the entire sample. Other foster carers in the interview sample were of the view that training went into too much depth, was repetitive at times and relied too much on the theoretical aspects of social pedagogy (n=14:25%). Three of these foster carers expressed frustrations that the courses did not sufficiently explore how to implement the approaches in practice, or take into account the complexities of their children's needs. While these foster carers were in the minority of those who participated in the evaluation, their experiences suggest that sites exploring introducing social pedagogy may benefit from supporting carers in not only understanding the principles of the approach, but in implementing them as well. While many of the foster carers in the evaluation interview sample were highly positive about social pedagogy, the views of some (albeit a small number) in the interview sample suggest that the approach may not be appropriate for everyone.

Around a fifth of the foster carers in the interview sample reported that the programme enabled them to reflect on the influence that their personal and private experiences had on their own fostering (and parenting) (n=11:19%). Other foster carers in the interview sample reported reflection had reduced prolonged periods of stress, through providing frameworks by which they could critically assess challenging periods, to take account of personal feelings of guilt, while not being dictated to by them. Almost half of the foster carer survey respondents reported that meeting other foster carers and developing supportive peer networks to share ideas was the best thing about the Head, Heart, Hands programme (n=20:47%). Similarly, almost a quarter of the foster carers in the interview sample reported that aspects of the programme design had enabled them to develop supportive relationships with other foster carers (n=14:24%). The length of the Core Learning and Development course (eight days) and the experiential and interactive style were reported to have enabled foster carers in the same course cohort to get to know one another and to form bonds that

had lasted until the end of the programme. Those foster carers who attended Head, Heart, Hands events following the Learning and Development courses, such as momentum groups, were able to continue to meet together to maintain those supportive relationships. However, it should be noted that other evaluation reports have highlighted that these groups were typically attended by the most enthusiastic of carers (Ghate and McDermid, 2016), suggesting once again that a "virtuous cycle" may be at play

A small number of foster carers who participated in the evaluation reported that Head, Heart, Hands had resulted in a greater awareness of communication being a two way process whereby one party communicates something and another party interprets it (n=9:16%). Seventy percent of the survey respondents (n=33) reported that there had been a "*great deal of positive change*" in the way that they dealt with conflict or difficult situations. Nearly half of the foster carers interviewed reported that since attending the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses, they had become much less quick to react to circumstances as they arose (n=26:46%). A number of children and young people in the sample also described the positive impact that a calmer, less reactive approach had on their relationships with their foster carers and their own behaviours.

The highly positive perspective of those we interviewed may reflect the particular nature of the sample. Moreover, while only three foster carers could not identify any changes in practice since the commencement of Head, Heart, Hands, others were reticent to state that any changes in their practice were solely down to the programme (n=9:16%) and reported that it was difficult to separate the changes in approach from other contributing factors such as becoming more confident and experienced in fostering generally, or that they had simply got to know the children and young people better over the course of the evaluation timeframe.

The relationship between Head, Heart, Hands and the wider system

Two fifths of foster carers who took part in the interviews during Wave 3 (n=25:43%) reported that their relationship with supervising social workers had improved since Head, Heart, Hands, including three who reported that the relationship had been challenging at the start of the programme. Two thirds of the foster carer survey respondents reported that their relationship with their supervising social worker had improved "*a great deal"* since attending the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses. Similarly, participating frontline children's social care staff from all of the sites reported that the programme had positively impacted on their relationship with foster carers in some way.

Participating foster carers and social workers alike reported that the delivery of the Learning and Development courses to foster carers and children's social care staff simultaneously had had a positive impact on relationships overall and in particular where foster carers had completed the training with their supervising social worker. Almost a third of the foster carer survey respondents (n=13:30%) noted that the joint training approach provided them with opportunities to get to know children's social care staff and as a result feel more part of the team around the child. A number of foster carers and supervising social workers who participated in the evaluation reported that Head, Heart, Hands facilitated a shared approach and a shared language between foster carers and the social worker who supports them. Eleven of the foster carers who took part in interviews at Wave 3

reported that they believed that their status among professionals had improved since Head, Heart, Hands, including two of those who had felt undervalued by their service previously.

A number of foster carers (n=8:14%) and frontline children's social care staff from all of the sites noted that more supervising social workers should have accessed the Learning and Development courses to ensure greater congruence between the approach used by the foster carers and the supervising social workers. Over a third of the foster carers interviewed reported that awareness and practice of social pedagogy among some children's social care staff, and those from other agencies was patchy at best (n=21:37%). Of particular note, were children's social workers, who were characterised by some of the foster carers who participated in an interview as unengaged with the programme and unsupportive of social pedagogic approaches. It is possible that the reported lack of engagement from some children's social care staff was a consequence of the programme design, which limited the number of places available to staff at the Core Learning and Development courses. Children's social care staff who participated in the evaluation from five sites noted that although they would have liked to have attended more of the Heart, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses, workload and time constraints meant that this was not always possible, even if they wanted to. This was compounded by the high turnover of children's social workers. Three children and young people reported that they had frequent changes of social workers, with one reporting that she could not remember the name of her current worker because they changed so frequently. Indeed, the impact of frequent changes in social workers on the outcomes of children in care has been documented elsewhere. (Hemmelgarn et al., 2006; Morgan, 2006; Leeson, 2007; McLeod, 2007).

The lack of congruence of approach was particularly acute when foster carers experienced challenging periods such as in the case of allegations or placement disruptions, where foster carers reported that the way that the service had addressed those difficulties had been at odds with what they had learnt through Head, Heart, Hands. One area of particular frustration identified by a proportion of the foster carers who were interviewed at Wave 3 was the application of a more risk sensible approach. A small number of the foster carers who participated in an interview at Wave 3 (n=7:12%) reported that since Head, Heart, Hands, they were more likely to allow the children and young people to participate in activities that they previously would not have allowed them to do. However, the activities and decisions made by these foster carers with their children and young people had been over-ruled by their social worker in over half of these cases (n=4).

Placement purpose, patterns and experience

An exploration of the needs and circumstances of the sample of children and young people placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers highlighted a considerable degree of heterogeneity. Analysis of the length of Head, Heart, Hands placements highlighted a vast range in placement lengths and also high numbers of placements lasting for less than one month. In contrast, 22 placements lasted for more than five years and all started prior to the commencement of Head, Heart, Hands. There was variability both within and across sites in terms of the numbers of children who were placed with their Head, Heart, Hands carers at the commencement of the programme and those that moved into the placement following the completion of the Learning and Development Courses. There was also variability between the sites in terms of the number of placements that commenced prior to the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses and the number of children that were placed

after the Learning and Development courses. There was a cohort of children who remained with their Head, Heart, Hands carers through to the end of the programme. The number of children who remained with their carers at the end of our data collection time period was small and ranged between four and 17 per site.

To understand more about the experience of Head, Heart, Hands and the impact of the Head, Heart, Hands episode for the children placed, case files were examined for indications of the nature of the relationship between the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and the children and young people placed with them. Encouragingly, nearly two-third of cases were described in positive terms (64%), a minority were negative (10%) and the rest were described in mixed terms (25%). A total of 125 negative statements were identified in 79 cases. The most frequently cited was challenge in the placement relating to a variety of factors, which were indicated to have a detrimental impact on the fostering household relationship (n=70:28%).

The data suggest that the average number of placements experienced by the children in the sample was higher following placement with a Head, Heart, Hands carer when compared to the average number of placements prior to their Head, Heart, Hands episode. In addition, the average days per placement were lower after Head, Heart, Hands. The pattern that emerges is of a cohort of children within the sample of who experienced Head, Heart, Hands who had higher levels of instability prior to Head, Heart, Hands, compared to others who were placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers, and that these children also experienced higher levels of instability following Head, Heart, Hands. It should also be noted that these children tended to experience a shorter Head, Heart Hands episode compared to others in the sample. In this way, it is possible to question the extent to which these children might benefit from the social pedagogic practices, when only placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers for a short period of time. In light of the variable use of Head, Heart, Hands placements, and the heterogeneity of the sample of children and young people placed with them, a meaningful analysis of outcomes at an aggregate level is not viable because it would not be possible to directly attribute changes in outcomes to the Head, Heart, Hands care episode, especially for those children whose placement was particularly short.

The findings do indicate that in three of the four sites early signs of placement stability were detected towards the latter stages of the programme. Given the heterogeneity of the children and their care experience it would not be appropriate to attribute (at an aggregate level) placement (in)stability to the programme.

Seven foster carers interviewed reported that Head, Hands, including The Four Fs and Three Ps had provided them a framework by which they could reflect on placement disruptions. These foster carers reported feeling more able to recover from the emotional impact of those disruptions, to review what they could do differently next time, and crucially, relinquish themselves from a sense of sole responsibility for the placement breaking down as a result. There is some evidence in the case files of Head, Heart, Hands carers supporting children and young people with all aspects of their lives, including emotional wellbeing and educational support. As noted in previous chapters, a cohort of foster carers reported that since undertaking the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses they felt more confident in advocating for the needs of the children placed with them. This finding is corroborated in the case file analysis, which identified evidence of Head,

Heart, Hands foster carers assisting with the referral process for additional support services, for example Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

The costs and value of Head, Heart, Hands

The core programme inputs for Head, Heart, Hands were identified to be: the Learning and Development courses; the embedding of trained Social Pedagogues and the provision of external support to sites. A unit cost for the Head, Heart, Hands programme has been estimated and ranged from £1,919 to £3,012, per annum for a fostering household. Variations in unit costs were attributable to a range of factors, these include: the different level of support provided to the sites by the SPC; the salary paid to the Social Pedagogues and also the number of foster carers that participated in the Head, Heart, Hands programme.

To explore the value of the programme, organisational and child level outcomes were examined to determine whether they could be directly attributed to the Head, Heart, Hands programme. It was evident that value for money analyses at an aggregate level mask the heterogeneity of the programme and as such are open to misinterpretation. Individual cost case studies provide some illustrative examples of potential costs avoided at a case level. However, there were also some cases where there was no evidence of costs avoided.

Head, Heart, Hands no longer exists in the form described in this report, although four of the seven sites had developed clear plans to continue with social pedagogy beyond the lifetime of the programme. To inform future debates about social pedagogic practice and whether it provides value for money, the potential cost inputs for future programmes have been estimated, along with key considerations for how the information can and should be interpreted.

Evaluation participants' views of the programme design

The initial Head, Heart, Hands core courses were identified by previous evaluation reports as a core component of the programme and for some it was the high point of the entire venture (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). The general consensus among the interview sample was that the experiential and participatory approach to learning was positive (n=13:23%) enabling foster carers to engage with the material and to get to know each other as a group. The sessions themselves were characterised as engaging and fun. Only two foster carers reported they did not enjoy this style of learning. One reported that they found the participatory methods *"uncomfortable*", while the other reported that the reflective elements took up too much time which could have been dedicated to the material. Other foster carers in the interview sample were of the view that training went into too much depth, was repetitive at times and relied too much on the theoretical aspects of social pedagogy (n=14:25%). Three of these foster carers expressed frustrations that the courses did not sufficiently explore how to implement the approaches in practice, or take into account the complexities of their children's needs.

The majority of foster carers in the interview sample acknowledged that continuous learning of *some kind* was vital to ensure that they continued with the approach and were able to expand their understanding of social pedagogy (n=37:65%). Almost half of the foster carers in the evaluation interview sample attended one of the continuous learning groups at least once, and the majority found these helpful. Exploration of the implementation of Head, Heart, Hands, however found that

small group work tended to start well but attendance weakened over time (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). The high proportion of foster carers in the evaluation interview sample who engaged in these activities, may suggest that the evaluation interview sample consisted of particularly engaged foster carers, who may not be typical of the wider foster carer population in the sites.

It is perhaps surprising that only a third of the foster carers (n=21:36) and six children and young people who were interviewed at Wave 3 mentioned the Social Pedagogues in their interviews. On the whole, those foster carers and children and young people who mentioned the Social Pedagogues in their interviews were complementary.

Implementation insights and their influence on the impact of the Head, Heart, Hands Programme

Alongside the modules of research designed to assess the final results of Head, Heart, Hands on carers and on young people (in other words, the impact of the programme), the evaluation of Head, Heart, Hands included a substantial module of longitudinal research on the implementation of the programme (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). This work was designed to describe how the programme was put into practice at site level, identify the core features of the programme as implemented, and evaluate the weaknesses and strengths that emerged over time in the implementation model and the implementation process[6].

The research on the impact of the Head, Heart, Hands programme, like the implementation research, has revealed mixed results. The content was well-received: no-one argued with the principles and general ideas of social pedagogy. Aspects of the design were also well received in the impact research, with the Core Learning and Development courses in particular much praised and felt to have been well-delivered. But it is clear from the impact research, and is further illuminated by the implementation research, that the magnitude of disturbance of this programme, both at the level of foster carers, and at the level of sites and the wider system of care, was not as great as was originally hoped (Ghate and McDermid, 2016: 138-139). Social Pedagogues, though core components when viewed through an organisational lens, for example, appeared to be less prominent as change agents when viewed through the lens of individual carers, and of individual case files. There also remained a small but distinct group of foster carers who could not isolate how social pedagogic fostering was different to general good practice, and who were sceptical about its likely impact in their own practice even whilst endorsing the general values and principles. Staff in the implementation study made similar points and had similar reservations. It was also striking that over half the fostering case files made no mention of the programme or the fact that the family was taking part in it; and critically, most carers – even those who were definitely enthused by social pedagogy – still felt by the end of the programme that the wider system within which they offered care to young people was not well-informed about social pedagogy and not always supportive to attempts to provide care that was social pedagogically informed. Of course, these types of effects take time to filter through a system; nevertheless, there was a sense in some sites that more had been hoped for in this regard.

[6] A full description is contained in the final report on implementation: (http://www.cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Main_Report.pdf); and a summary of key findings is also available at http://cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Summary.pdf.

It may be that the costs analysis, in its finding of the high spend on programme administration and process structures and activities, gives some deeper insight into the reasons for the limited reach and limited level of positive disturbance created by the programme as a whole. Combined with the insights from the implementation research, which noted that Site Project Leads and pedagogues all spent substantial time on servicing the requirements of the central programme, there is a strong suggestion here that perhaps not enough of the substantial programme effort was deployed on "front-line" development of social pedagogy; that is, in direct work and face to face contact with foster carers and with staff in the teams around foster children. It may also be, as we noted in the implementation research, that the decision to limit training to just 40 carers and around eight staff in each site was simply too small a number to have substantially and positively disturbed business as usual in the larger sites. Combined with the low level of matching achieved on the Head, Heart, Hands courses between carers and supervising social workers so that they could engage in co-learning (though very powerful, where it happened), the low levels of reach to other personnel in teams around the child (for example, children's social workers) meant that the three "points of the triangle" (the foster carers, supervising social worker and child's social worker) were not reached with equal effect, and the level of diffusion to the wider systems of care was low.

Conclusion

The analysis of the impact data suggests that Head, Heart, Hands enabled a small and particularly committed group of foster carers to make small changes which had a big impact on individual fostering households. The findings outlined in the evaluation are encouraging regarding the contribution that social pedagogy made to increasing the participating foster carers' knowledge of fostering practice and confidence. Participants in Wave 3 reported that they may not have dramatically changed *what they were doing* with the children and young people on a day to day basis, they were more **reflective, thoughtful and intentional** in their actions. In this way, Head, Heart, Hands was described by some foster carers in the interview sample as **enhancing to their practice**, enabling them to apply professional knowledge and skills as different circumstances arose. These foster carers were of the view that **putting labels on things they were already doing** was in itself helpful in making them more mindful of their existing behaviours. Two areas that were highlighted as benefitting from a more reflective approach were **communication** and **dealing with difficult situations and conflict**. A number of foster carers, who participated in interviews, reported that Head, Heart, Hands had assisted them to be more reflective about how they communicated with the child or young person they cared for.

Foster carers operate in a unique space between the professional and the personal: they have a "professional" role in caring for some of the most vulnerable children within a regulated and structured organisational context of Children's Social Care, whilst offering a highly "personal" de facto family environment in which those children and young people can be nurtured. A small number of foster carers who took part in the interviews reported that they had been encouraged to share more personal information with their fostered children as a result of Head, Heart, Hands and **to use their personal relationship with the child to help them to grow and develop**. Models such as the Three Ps were reported to have assisted foster carers in establishing where the boundaries between the professional, personal and private might be for each individual child, and for each individual foster carer. The findings of this evaluation suggest that **social pedagogy may make a particular contribution to assist foster carers to navigate their way through this unique space of**

the professional and the personal. In addition to the enhancement of foster carer practice outlined above, the emphasis placed on the use of self or "Haltung" within social pedagogy appeared to speak to those particular circumstances that foster carers find themselves in. Sites looking to introduce social pedagogy may wish to emphasise how this particular aspect of social pedagogy may make a unique contribution to the field of foster care.

These impacts may be further realised once more time has elapsed. our quantitative analysis highlighted the heterogeneity of the sample of children placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers and the variability in which the Head, Heart, Hands placements were being used. The variable length of the placement, with many of them being short term, resulted in complexities in attributing subsequent care placements, trajectories and outcomes to Head, Heart, Hands.

In light of the discussion above about the reach of the programme, the analysis suggests that the overall impact of the programme was *deep* rather than *wide*. A relatively small proportion of fostering households reported that the programme had reaped substantial benefits, but from the wider perspective these benefits are less evident from the quantitative or cost analyses.

Given the positive findings regarding the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on a proportion foster carers, the findings regarding the impact of the programme on the wider system are disappointing. Should a similar programme to introduce social pedagogic practices be undertaken greater attention must be paid to ensuring that greater diffusion of the approach is achieved. The core programme activities were primarily undertaken with foster carers. While work was carried out with social care staff, priority was given to foster carers on the Learning and Development Courses. Social care staff themselves noted that they would have like to have more opportunity to engage with the programme, but workload and other pressures made that difficult at times. In this way, foster carers were the primary "unit of influence" for the programme.

The significance of *enhancing* foster carers' practice should not be underplayed. Foster carers are a vital resource supporting countless vulnerable children and young people. The findings also suggest that aspects of social pedagogy may offer a unique contribution to assist foster carers in identifying and developing their distinctive role in the team around a child in foster care. However it was also clear that sites wishing to introduce social pedagogy may benefit from exploring how the maximum number of foster carers might benefit from the most positive learning from the programme (including learning related to both its content and its design). They would also need to pay closer attention to ensuring that the systems are in place to support them and to ensure that children and young people placed in foster care are able to thrive and flourish.

Recommendations

Sites continuing with, or exploring the introduction of social pedagogy may wish to consider:

- How to reach the optimum proportion of team around the child personnel including foster carers and those who make decisions about the child's placement and pathways.
- Ways to ensure that all children's social care staff working with fostering households are aware and supportive of social pedagogic principles.

- A clear articulation of the unique contribution that social pedagogy could make to foster care and wider practice. It may be of benefit to explore the synergies between social pedagogy and existing practice, as well as emphasising the areas which may be enhanced through an adoption of the approach.
- Ways to reassure foster carers and others of the service's commitment to social pedagogy. It may also be of benefit to ensure that all parties have a realistic view of what might be achieved within a given timeframe.
- Sites who have participated in the programme may also benefit from ensuring that foster carers are aware of continuation and sustainability plans, to avoid unnecessary disengagement.
- That foster carers, and social care staff are proficient in not only understanding the principles of the approach, but in implementing them as well. An exploration of how different principles may translate into different circumstances may also be of benefit.
- To inform the value for money debates, it would be necessary to control some of the heterogeneity highlighted in this report in future similar programmes.

Sites exploring programmes to enhance practice for looked after children may benefit from:

- A clearly developed Theory of Change at the outset of the implementation of any new practice, or innovation with defined and measurable outcomes and associated indicators.
- The involvement of foster carers (and other recipients) with key aspects of programmes, including a contribution to training and giving presentations at awareness raising events. This may increase foster carers and others confidence in themselves, help to develop further skills, and reassure them of their value to the service.
- The development of programmes that include an element of co-learning between members of the team around the child.
- Opportunities for training and other programmes to facilitate peer support between foster carers.
- Explore how experiential and participatory methods might be introduced to training, while ensuring those with a more technical mind-set are offered practical and implementable strategies and solutions.

PART 1: Setting the scene: Background and introduction

In this section we provide contextual information about the Head, Heart, Hands evaluation. This includes an overview of the aims and parameters of the evaluation, along with the evaluation methods and sample.

We also give a summary introduction to the Head, Heart, Hands programme and social pedagogy and its relevance to children's social care in the UK.

1. Introduction

This is the final report of the evaluation of Head, Heart, Hands. It is part of a suite of reports produced by the independent evaluation team led by the Centre for Child and Family Research, Loughborough University, in partnership with the Colebrook Centre for Evidence and Implementation. The overall evaluation was designed in modular form, with separate components for addressing each of the three over-arching research questions outlined below. The evaluation was segmented into three time points: "Wave 1" at the commencement of the programme and at two subsequent intervals throughout the evaluation period ("Waves 2 and 3"), to examine the extent of the short, medium and longer term impacts of the programme. Data were analysed (and reports produced) at each of these time points. In this way, longitudinal approaches were introduced to the evaluation design. These previous reports have explored the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on foster carers and children and young people in the first two years of the programme (McDermid, et al., 2014; 2015), the economic impact of Head, Heart, Hands, along with an in-depth analysis of how the programme was implemented (Ghate and McDermid, 2016)[7], [8]. In this final report we bring together data presented elsewhere with the final analysis of the **impact of Head, Heart, Hands on those foster carers and children and young people who participated in the programme**. We also examine the linkages between the way that the programme unfolded and the outcomes it has achieved.

The aim of the evaluation was to ascertain how far the Head, Heart, Hands programme achieved the aims and objectives outlined in Box 1, by addressing the following over-arching research questions:

1. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer children and young people in foster care?
2. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer foster carers' and their practice?
3. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer the system of supporting children and young people in foster care and their carers?

The detailed research questions are listed in Appendix A.

[7] Reports on the evaluation of Head, Heart, Hands that have been published to date are available at http://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/ccfr/research/exploring/project---head-heart-hands.html

[8] A full description is contained in the main report: (http://www.cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Main_Report.pdf); and a summary of key findings is also available at http://cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Summary.pdf.

Structure of the report

This report is structured in four parts: In **Part 1** we provide an overview of the programme, including an introduction to social pedagogy and its application in the UK fostering context. An overview of the structure of the central programme team, the fostering services who participated in the programme and a summary of the way that social pedagogic practices were introduced into the fostering services is also given. We also provide a summary of how the evaluation was undertaken, and some of the particular challenges of evaluating the impact of a programme of this nature. **Part 2** explores the main findings of the evaluation and starts with an exploration of the evaluation participants' receptiveness to social pedagogy and goes on to examine the findings with regards to the impact that Head, Heart, Hands had on foster carers, children and young people and those that support them. We examine the impact of the programme on the relationships between the participating foster carers and the children and young people they care for, including an assessment of the impact of the programme on placement patterns, purpose and experience. An exploration of the views of foster carers and their supervising social workers on relationship between social pedagogic approaches and the current system(s) of care in the UK is presented. An overview of the views and experiences of the participating foster carers on the programme design, along with an analysis of the costs and potential value of the programme are also presented. In **Part 3** we provide an exploration of how selected implementation findings may help us to understand the impact of the programme for children and young people and their foster carers. We explore two sets of factors that bear on the success of the programme from the perspective of these intended ultimate beneficiaries; the *design* of the Head, Heart, Hands programme, and the social pedagogic *content* that was delivered as part of the programme and in **Part 4** we bring together the overall messages presented in this report with the findings from the implementation evaluation of Head, Heart, Hands to discuss the implications and recommendations for future similar endeavours.

2. What is Head, Heart Hands?

Head, Heart, Hands commenced in 2012 as an ambitious demonstration programme within UK foster care, directly involving both foster carers and staff in fostering services and agencies. Its stated overarching aim was to "*develop a social pedagogic approach within UK foster care, thereby increasing the numbers of young people in foster care who achieve their potential and make a positive contribution to society*". To achieve this, The Fostering Network identified the following objectives (See Box 1).

Box 1: The objectives of Head, Heart, Hands

- To develop a professional, confident group of foster carers who will be able to demonstrate that by using a social pedagogic approach, they will develop the capacity to significantly improve the day to day lives of the children in their care.
- To develop social pedagogic characteristics in foster carers. Foster carers will have an integration of 'head, hands and heart' to develop strong relationships with the children they look after.
- To implement systemic change and a cultural shift which will support social pedagogic practice and recognise the central role of foster carers in shaping the lives of children within their care.
- To provide a platform for transformation of the role that foster carers play as part of the child's network.

Source: The Fostering Network (2011) Head, Hands and Heart Bringing up Children in Foster Care: A Social Pedagogic Approach: Funding Proposal. London: the Fostering Network.

Box 2: Head, Heart, Hands and Social Pedagogy

"The Head, Heart, Hands programme refers to social pedagogy as a blend of academic knowledge and research (head), an understanding of emotions (heart), and practical skills and activity (hands) to help fostered children thrive. It puts foster carers at the heart of the child care team, and aims to empower them to help fostered children build relationships and make sense of their world in a way that leads to stability, better outcomes and long term wellbeing. At the same time the programme recognises that in order to develop a social pedagogic approach to foster care, changes are needed in the wider system that influences the way foster carers view and relate to their fostered children – both the immediate system of the fostering service and connected children's services, and also the wider political and societal system.

Social pedagogy is an overarching framework for social care in many continental European and Scandinavian countries. However, the framework is socially constructed, reflecting the values of society, and therefore the Head, Heart, Hands programme and evaluation is exploring how the framework can be applied in the UK, rather than 'importing' a model of care."

Evaluation Team, 2013

What is social pedagogy?

Social pedagogy is both a theoretical discipline and a professional field. Drawing on a range of social science disciplines, it is principally concerned with practices that facilitate "*the integration of individuals into a society, and the fulfilment of their potential"* (Cameron, 2016). Social pedagogy has been described as "*education in its broadest sense"* (Petrie et al., 2006) whereby "*education*" in this

context refers to the development of the whole person, including their academic and psycho-social development and their position as a citizen within a society. In this, and partly reflecting the discipline's development in post-war Germany, there has been a strong underpinning emphasis on rights-based and democratising approaches within social pedagogic theory and practice, including the democratisation of everyday life (*c.f.* Sünker, 2006).

Social pedagogy is predicated on a series of key ethical and moral underpinnings and is based on philosophical considerations about the inherent value of human beings (Eichsteller and Holthoff, 2011). Social pedagogic practices can be described as the bringing together of the Head, Heart, and Hands for the task of working with people: An amalgamation of professional knowledge, drawing on a range of social science disciplines, and critical self-reflection (Head), empathy and the use of one's own experiences and personality (Heart), and practical actions and activities (Hands) (Cameron and Moss, 2011). Authors agree that social pedagogic practices can be described as a way of thinking or a way of being, rather than solely as a method or a set of tools that can be applied to a specific task (Petrie, 2007; Hämäläinen, 2012). In this sense social pedagogic practices are "*not so much about what is done, but more about how something is done"* (Eichsteller and Holthoff, 2011:33).

In many European countries Social Pedagogues are recognised as a specific professional designation. Following professional Bachelors training of between three and four years, and sometimes after further postgraduate study, Social Pedagogues are employed to work in a range of social welfare contexts, including adult social care, youth work, the justice and probation service, in addition to child welfare, free time and early childhood services. In recognition of this, throughout this report we make a distinction between **Social Pedagogues**, to denote those with the aforementioned professional designation, and **social pedagogic practitioners**, to denote practitioners of any kind (including foster carers, social workers and other social care personnel) who have integrated social pedagogic principles into their practice to differing degrees.

There is considerable heterogeneity across the discipline of social pedagogy, as is the case for any established theoretical discipline, such as psychology or sociology (Berridge et al., 2011; Hämäläinen, 2012). Different traditions have developed across different countries and contexts, whereby some principles are emphasised over others, or different interpretations of the models and concepts are employed. Whilst it has been possible to identify some unifying features of social pedagogy for foster carers (explored in Appendix B), Petrie (2007) notes that it may be more valuable to refer to "pedagog*ies*" than social pedagogy as a single entity. In the evaluation of Head, Heart, Hands, we regularly observed this diversity amongst a culturally mixed group of stakeholders, and instances of debate about how social pedagogy could be exemplified in the field were reported as common by evaluation participants (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). It is not uncommon to observe a range of practices among professionals within any field. Nevertheless, the heterogeneity of the field of social pedagogy is of particular note to the evaluation. Social pedagogy is not a set of techniques of practices that are applied. Rather practitioners are encouraged to adapt and arrive at different conclusions for different circumstances in different contexts. Social pedagogy cannot therefore be defined as an "intervention" in the traditional sense. Rather it is a philosophy or an approach to working with people that brings theory and practice together.

Therefore, the particular elements of social pedagogy that have been emphasised for the Head, Heart, Hands programme (as outlined in Box 3 below) were influenced by the particular perspectives and backgrounds of the Central Delivery Partners.

Box 3: What is social pedagogy as defined by the Social Pedagogy Consortium

"Social pedagogy was defined in the early nineteenth century as a field for theory, policy and practice. It is sometimes referred to as education in its broadest sense in that, unlike much formal education, it takes a holistic view, seeking to support physical, emotional, intellectual and social wellbeing, and to promote social agency and resilience. The phrase Head, Heart and Hands signifies this holistic approach. In public policy, social pedagogy refers to measures that take such a broadly educational approach to social issues. It is also an academic field in its own right, with its own theories as well as drawing on those from disciplines such as psychology and sociology.

Social pedagogy is a recognised profession in much of Europe, with social pedagogues working across a wide age range. The ethics of today's social pedagogy are based in democratic and emancipatory values and it prizes opportunities for cooperation. Social pedagogue's practice centres on building relationships often in the course of everyday activities, but also via creative and out-door pursuits. Reflection, leading to practical outcomes is seen as essential. The Head, Heart, Hands programme set out to deliver models and theories that fostered reflection and would put social pedagogy principles into action."

Social Pedagogy Consortium, 2016

Social pedagogy in the UK

While social pedagogy is common across continental Europe, it is less well understood in the UK. Interest has grown since the 1990s (Cameron, 2016). However, the adoption of social pedagogy as an approach or as a profession in the UK remains embryonic. Some universities have started to include social pedagogy into social work training courses, and a smaller number have introduced degree and masters programmes on social pedagogy, alongside other complementary subjects (Hatton, 2013). Some local authorities have started to introduce training programmes on social pedagogy across different service areas. Regional development networks have begun to emerge, such as the Social Pedagogy Development Network[9], which brings advocates for the approach from a range of fields together. As a parallel development to Head, Heart, Hands, a proposed Social Pedagogy Professional Association aims to support the recognition and quality assure social pedagogic practices in the UK (see Appendix C).

Until recently, attempts to introduce social pedagogy into UK practice have predominantly focused on residential care (Berridge et al., 2011; Eichsteller and Holthoff, 2012), or on multiple service areas (Milligan, 2009; Moore et al., 2013). In this way, Head, Heart, Hands was distinctive in its attempts to introduce the approach exclusively to foster care. The field of fostering presents some unique features. While many foster carers are highly skilled practitioners who care for children and young

[9] For more information see http://www.thempra.org.uk/spdn/

people who typically present with more complex needs than are found in the wider population, they are not professionals in the sense that "*foster carer*" is not recognised as a distinctive professional designation. Foster carers are subject to a number of statutory regulations, they are not, however, employees of any one fostering service. While they receive a great deal of training and support, there are no formalised training and qualification frameworks that foster carers are required to obtain prior to being approved. Some authors advocate for the professionalisation of foster care, whereas other studies highlight concerns regarding the impact that professionalisation would have on foster children's perception of foster carers' motivations (McDermid et al., 2012). Foster carers' practice is located within the family setting, takes place within the family home, and in some cases foster carers act as de facto parents (Courtney and Thoburn, 2009). While fostering can be highly rewarding, the challenges of caring for some children and young people can extend beyond normative experiences of parenting (Murray, Tarren-Sweeny and France, 2011). Research has found that foster carers can experience a great deal of emotional stress through events and circumstances such as placement disruptions, difficult relationships with birth parents and cases in which the Children's Social Care employees and foster carers disagree about where a child should live (Wilson, Sinclair and Gibbs, 2000). In summary, foster carers operate in a unique space between the professional and the personal. This evaluation, therefore, examines the particular contribution Head, Heart, Hands made to that most distinctive of fields.

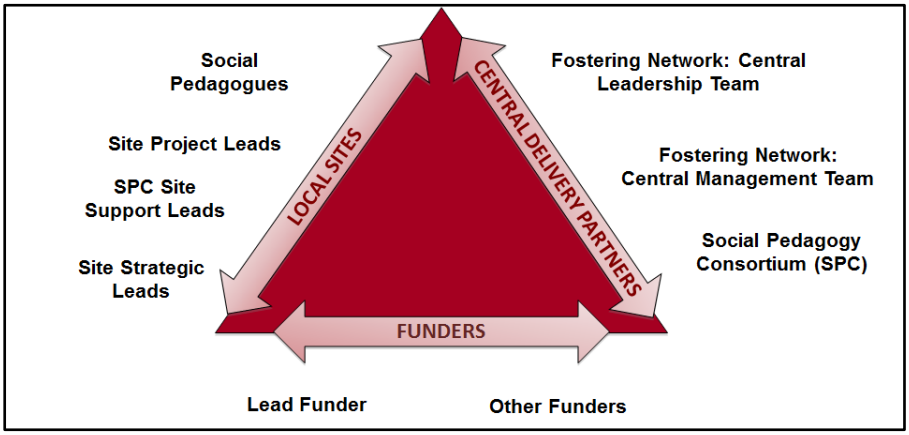
Social pedagogy in the UK: The evidence base

The evidence base on the impact of social pedagogy on children's services in the UK remains in its infancy. A recent overview identified ten studies (including interim findings from the evaluation of Head, Heart, Hands) that have evaluated the impact of social pedagogic training (Cameron, 2016). The overview suggests that social pedagogic training might provide attendees with a theoretical framework for practice; a common language across different sections of the workforce; appreciation of teams and team working; new skills (or a re-evaluation of existing ones); understanding of critical reflection; and a different appreciation of assessing risk. Two studies also found a reduction in the number of critical incidents following social pedagogic training in residential care (Skinner and Smith, 2013; Moore et al., 2013), while another study found that introducing social pedagogic practices into residential settings had limited impact on the children and young people (Berridge et al., 2011). Most substantially, Cameron notes there is a lack of evidence that social pedagogic training impacts wider organisational contexts. However, differences in methodologies across largely small scale studies or studies undertaken in a short timescale, and the highly context specific nature of social pedagogic practices, makes it difficult to draw nationally generalisable conclusions.

The structure of the programme

Head, Heart, Hands was carried out between September 2012 and June 2016. As shown in Figure 1 the programme can be separated into the national programme, which consisted of the Central Delivery Partners and Funders and the local sites within which the programme was delivered.

Figure 1 Funding, leadership, management and delivery structure of Head, Heart, Hands [+]



[+] Ghate and McDermid, 2016.

The programme at a national level[10]

The Head, Heart, Hands programme was co-funded by a consortium of seven philanthropic donors. Each contributed a portion of a £3.7 million grant over four years from 2012 to 2016. Operationally, the programme was designed and led by **The Fostering Network,** a national children's charity working with foster carers and fostering services. To support the delivery of the programme, the Fostering Network contracted a 'delivery partner', the **Social Pedagogy Consortium** (**SPC**), a group of practice and academic specialists in social pedagogy, consisting of Jacaranda Recruitment Ltd, Pat Petrie, Professor at the UCL Institute of Education and ThemPra Social Pedagogy CIC. The consortium advised and guided The Fostering Network on programme strategy. The SPC also wrote the base resources (including the programme's "reference tool"), and designed and led the "Learning and Development" courses for foster carers and staff. Jacaranda and Thempra also gave support to sites (one or two designated "**Site Support Leads**" per site). In addition to this basic structure, there were a variety of reference and advisory groups attached to the project.

The structure of the Head, Heart, Hands programme at a local level

Seven local sites, three in Scotland and four in England, participated, co-funding the work through salary contributions and with direct and in-kind resources including senior staff time. The sites included two independent foster care providers (IFP's), one private, one voluntary; and five local authorities. Two sites in Scotland were treated as a single entity for some purposes of the programme, although these sites were treated by the evaluation as independent project sites since they functioned as such. The sites were selected through competitive application and were specifically chosen to offer a range of different contexts in which to explore how the programme could work. All but one site had some prior exposure to social pedagogy or to social pedagogues, although this varied in intensity. To protect confidentiality the sites are identified by colours throughout this report. The characteristics of the sites are summarised in Appendix D. While the programme in it's entirely spanned a period between September 2012 and June 2016, the principal activities in the local sites were undertaken between January 2013 and December 2015. This timeframe allowed for preparatory, and consolidation activities to be undertaken prior to and following the site work.

[10] Adapted from Ghate and McDermid, 2016

Each site had an operational **Site Project Lead** for the programme, a person at service or team manager level, who was pivotal in local implementation. Site leads were accountable for the local project work, usually line-managed the social pedagogue(s), and led on reporting and day to day liaison with The Fostering Network. Site leads were supported by **Project Strategic Leads**, usually at Head of Service or Assistant Director level. These people approved the site's involvement and were kept sighted on the project's activities, they usually sat on the project steering group, but were not normally involved in day to day operational decisions.

As a condition of taking part in the programme, sites were intended to employ two Social Pedagogues each, and were given funding to cover 50% of the salary of two full time staff. The Social Pedagogues were appointed to work approximately half time on Head, Heart, Hands and half time on other duties, including in some sites as Supervising Social Workers with statutory duties, where they were qualified to practice in the UK. In reality, the two smallest sites employed one Social Pedagogue each, and in another site it was agreed that three Social Pedagogues would each spend 33% of their time on Head, Heart, Hands to allow an incumbent Social Pedagogue to support the programme alongside the two recruited specifically for the programme. The Social Pedagogues provided a range of expert inputs to develop sites' social pedagogic learning and activities, as well as supervising foster care placements in cases or holding other social work roles. The role that the Social Pedagogues played in the programme is explored extensively in the implementation evaluation (Ghate and McDermid, 2016).

Describing the programme

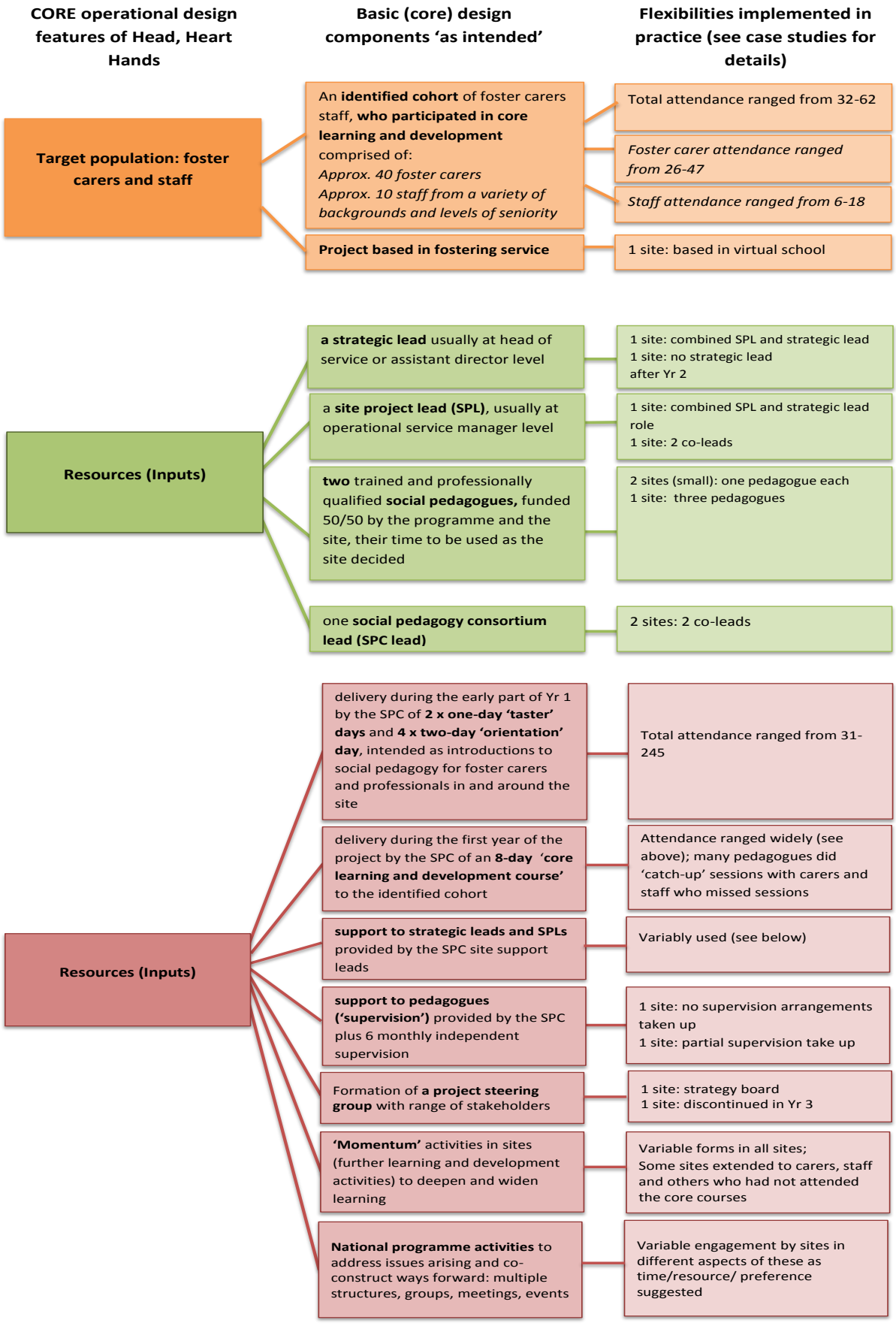
The activities and inputs that formed the Head, Heart, Hands programme varied considerably across the sites. This variability is explored in greater detail in Ghate and McDermid (2016). There were relatively few fixed parameters that were defined at the outset and the expressed intention was to let each site develop its own model within an exploratory framework. Indeed, flexibility at the local level has been shown to be an essential element in other large scale programmes (Day et al., 2016). The implications of this highly flexible approach on the evaluation are explored further below. In Figure 2 we describe our own analysis, as evaluators, of what we have assessed to have emerged as the basic operational design components of Head, Heart, Hands at a national level.

One common component was a set of Learning and Development courses that were provided by the SPC in each of the sites, starting with a "Taster" day, a two day "Orientation" course and a "Core" course consisting of eight days. The Orientation course was designed to be a stand-alone course, or the first two days of the Core course. These courses were primarily attended by foster carers, but some places were made available to other social care personnel including social workers. As determined by the programme designers the Core Learning and Development courses were intended to be delivered to cohort of **40** foster carers (up to 20 each in the two smaller sites), and up to **eight** staff from a variety of backgrounds and levels of seniority. In actuality the Learning and Development course attendees varied across the sites. The number and type of attendees are detailed in Appendix E. The Learning and Development courses were designed to draw on a range of learning styles, in particular experiential and discursive techniques. Social pedagogy places a strong emphasis on the use of the group as a resource (be it a family, or attendees of a training course). Therefore, the Learning and Development courses were designed to encourage group working, trust and relationships. A set of **core social pedagogic principles**, applied through the use of **tools and**

models, were explored as part of the Learning and Development courses. These models are indicated by bold text, and are defined throughout this report. All participants of the Core course were provided with a Head, Heart Hands “Reference Tool”.

Following the Learning and Development courses the sites provided a range of continuous learning opportunities to cement the learning for the cohort who attended the Core courses, and as way to spread some of the learning to other foster carers and staff who had not been able to participate. The particular way these activities were undertaken across the sites varied considerably. In addition, all of the sites developed further Learning and Development activities. All of the sites delivered additional one or two day sessions throughout the duration of the programme, and three of the sites had begun to deliver eight day courses by the end of the evaluation time period. Unlike the initial Learning and Development programme additional activities were primarily delivered by the Social Pedagogues, and others, including in one site, foster carers, albeit with considerable support and guidance from SPC colleagues. A wealth of other Learning and Development activities were also undertaken, and included social work team training, lunch time seminars and workshops. A range of reference materials were also developed, including booklets about social pedagogy.

Figure 2 The core operational components



3. Methods and methodological considerations and limitations

Within this chapter we outline the key methods used and the sample of evaluation participants included in this report. We also explore the ethical and methodological considerations and limitations of this evaluation. This information has been included to ensure transparency of our approach and to facilitate replication of the methods, as and when required. Accompanying tables are provided in Appendix F. Further methodological considerations regarding the design of the Head, Heart, Hands programme, and social pedagogy itself, are explored in the implementation evaluation (Ghate and McDermid, 2016)[11].

Overall evaluation approach

In recognition of the complexities highlighted above the evaluation sets out to establish:

- the ways in which the principles and philosophy of social pedagogy have been understood within the programme;
- how that has impacted on practice;
- the way in which those changes in practice impacted on the lives of children and young people.

The aim of the evaluation was to ascertain how far the Head, Heart, Hands programme achieved the aims and objectives outlined in Box 1, by addressing the following over-arching research questions:

1. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer children and young people in foster care?
2. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer foster carers' and their practice?
3. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer the system of supporting children and young people in foster care and their carers?

The methods were designed to identify and analyse these various components in a robust and realisable way. After consideration of the requirements of the project and the resources available, we chose a longitudinal, mixed method approach, without an external comparison group.

Parameters of the evaluation

Our previous evaluation reports (McDermid, Holmes and Trivedi, 2015) have highlighted the need to distinguish between *social pedagogy per se*: the approach, philosophy, framework, or set of values underpinning practice, and the *Head, Heart, Hands programme*: the programme designed to introduce that approach to seven fostering services in the UK. Throughout this report we refer to both the social pedagogic *content* that was delivered as part of the programme, and the *design* of the Head, Heart, Hands programme. "Head, Heart, Hands" refers to both **"**the programme", and **"**the approach being developed within the participating fostering services". To this end, while it is *not* possible to have Head, Heart, Hands without social pedagogy, it *is* possible to have social pedagogy without Head, Heart, Hands.

[11] A full description is contained in the main report: (http://www.cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Main_Report.pdf)

In this way, this evaluation cannot be defined as an evaluation of social pedagogy *per se*, but an analysis of the approach as it has been articulated **through the particular lens of the programme**. Moreover, given the heterogeneity of the field noted in Chapter 2, what is presented throughout this report are the views of social pedagogic practices **as articulated by the evaluation participants,** rather than the authors' own interpretations of social pedagogic theories and practice. However, given the relationship between the Head, Heart, Hands programme and social pedagogy, it is expected that this report will contribute to a better understanding of the potential impact of future routes into social pedagogy, and the wider exploration of the use of social pedagogy in the UK. Moreover, the sites have reported the intention to continue to embed social pedagogic approaches (albeit in different ways) beyond the Head, Heart, Hands programme. The evaluation therefore considers the implications for both the sites who participated in Head, Heart, Hands as they continue beyond the timeframe of the programme, and for other services that may be considering the introduction of social pedagogy into their own practice approaches.

Evaluation design

The evaluation was separated into three distinct, but inter-related modules to address the three sets of research questions identified above:

Module 1:	The impact on children and young people
Module 2:	The impact on foster carers
Module 3:	The impact on (and of) the system

As explored in more detail below, at the analysis stage, Modules 1 and 2 were brought together to shift the focus of the evaluation away from foster carers and the children placed with them as distinct groups, towards an understanding of the fostering household. The evaluation was undertaken over four years (48 months) commencing on 1 October 2012. The evaluation was designed to encompass project set up, followed by three data collection periods and analysis and write up of these.

The implementation evaluation ("Module 3") was designed to describe how the programme was put into practice at site level, and to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the implementation model that emerged over time. The implementation research involved all seven sites in three waves of data collection between 2013 and 2016, with 234 individuals contributing data at the different time points. The implementation research included the participation of Site Project Leads, the Social Pedagogy Consortium Site Support Leads, the programme Social Pedagogues, children's social workers and children's social care managers, strategic decision makers in local authorities and also staff at The Fostering Network and from the Funders' board. The methods utilised for Module 3, are outlined in detail in Ghate and McDermid (2016). In the remainder of this chapter we outline the methods, and methodological considerations and limitations, used for Modules 1 and 2, which are the main focus of this report.

The evaluation cohort

As shown in Figure 2 above, the target population for Head, Heart, Hands was an identified cohort of foster carers and staff who participated in the Core Learning and Development activities delivered at the commencement of the programme. We consequently identified those foster carers and social

care staff as the evaluation cohort. Throughout this report they are referred to as the **Head, Heart, Hands foster carers** and **Head, Heart, Hands social care staff.**

We recognise that a substantive range of additional activities were undertaken with foster carers, children and young people and social care staff and those from other agencies who may, or may not have, participated in those Learning and Development courses. These activities included direct interventions with other foster carers and children and young people undertaken by the Social Pedagogues, social pedagogy activity days, the additional Learning and Development activities, reflective activities and review of policies and procedures to reflect a social pedagogic approach. These activities developed and unfolded over time. However, our evaluation was commissioned *specifically* to focus on the cohort of foster carers who attended the initial set of Learning and Development courses delivered between January 2013 and May 2014 in each of the participating sites. Therefore this report captures the learning and impact from their experiences of Head, Heart, Hands.

Comparison group

As stated in the invitation to tender document (The Fostering Network, 2011) the commissioners and funders of this evaluation did not want to commission a randomised control trial and furthermore indicated that the evaluation funds should be used to focus on foster carers and young people involved in the Head, Heart, Hands programme. As such, the overall evaluation approach can be described as a longitudinal, pre-post-test method, without an external comparison group.

Focus on fostering households

The analysis and presentation of the findings of the qualitative data have been structured around the impact of the Head, Heart, Hands programme on fostering households rather than separating the impact on children and young people and their foster carers. Our rationale for taking this approach is as follows:

- A focus on the "fostering household" reflects a number of key social pedagogic principles, such as the centrality of relationships, and the concepts of the life-space and of an everyday world orientation ("*Alltagsorientierung*"). This approach allowed us to both analyse and present the findings through a social pedagogic lens.
- The separation of the impact to an individual child is artificial given that the foster carers were the primary unit of influence for the vast majority of the Head, Heart, Hands programme. Foster carers were given priority for attendance at the programme of Learning and Development courses , and given that their training influences the household lifespace and the relationships and practices within that lifespace.
- A reduction of duplication in reporting: many of the findings resonate for both the children and young people interviewed and their foster carers. Separation out of the impact on each individual, through having separate sections focused on either the foster carers, or the children and young people, would have resulted in duplication across the report, and constrain our ability to identify (dis)connections between impact or influence on the participating carers and children.
- Similarly, a focus on foster care households facilitated an exploration of the impact on other family members, such as the sons and daughters of foster carers.

- In this way, the reporting is intended to reflect the data analytic approach, which utilises the triangulation of data from foster carers and children and young people in their care. During a detailed two day analysis session held at Loughborough University on 18 and 19 May we found it particularly beneficial to analyse the interview transcripts from the foster carer, the child placed with them and the child's life map, and triangulate the key messages. This was further strengthened when we were able to analyse data from multiple time points for a specific foster care household, including households that have experienced placement changes. This case-based approach, with an emphasis on analysis across (as well as within) data sources corresponds to other research which utilises multiple data points within a household (e.g. Boddy et al., 2016; McDermid et al., *forthcoming*).
- We consider this to be a necessary approach to incorporate the findings from Module 3 and in particular the sphere of influence of Head, Heart, Hands within the fostering household, and the "wider system". This systemic framing allows attention to the potential benefits of the child to be contextualised, including bringing together foster carers' experience of whether they perceive themselves to be part of or to be working alongside (or in tension with) the "system".

Where relevant the inclusion of quantitative analyses of child level outcomes has been integrated throughout the report.

Interviews with fostering households

Foster carers who had attended the Head, Heart, Hands Orientation and/or Core Learning and Development courses between January 2013 and May 2014, and the children and young people placed with them were invited to participate in an interview. Information packs were sent to all foster carers participating in the Head, Heart, Hands programme which included details for both foster carers and the children and young people placed with them about the evaluation and inviting them to participate. To maintain data confidentiality the packs were prepared by the evaluation team, and distributed by the sites. This ensured that the names and addresses of foster carers and children and young people were not passed to us without their permission. A freepost reply card was included in the packs. Those foster carers and children and young people who were interested in finding more out about the evaluation completed this card and returned it to the evaluation team. In order to maximise the sample of fostering households, we also attended a number of Head, Heart, Hands events to promote the evaluation and to encourage foster carers and the children and young people placed with them to participate.

Prior to the interviews we discussed the process with participating foster carers, and where appropriate the child or young person. This ensured that interview participants were fully informed about the purpose of the evaluation and what taking part involved. This also enabled the researcher to have some background knowledge of the child or young person to tailor the techniques and methods to be used as part of the interview. For instance, younger children were invited to draw or play with Lego during the interview to make it feel more relaxed. At the end of this discussion we confirmed with the interviewee that they were still happy to take part in the evaluation. Signed consent was also obtained at the beginning of each interview. Age appropriate consent forms were developed for the children and young people who participated. The children and young people who participated in an interview were given a £15 gift voucher as a thank you for their time.

The interviews were primarily conducted face to face, although some were conducted over the phone or via Skype at the request of the participant. The interviews were semi-structured and explored:

- Information about the foster carer and the child and/or young person placed with them.
- The foster carer's views on the Head, Heart, Hands programme including:
    - The Learning and Development courses.
    - Other activities associated with the programme.
- The impact social pedagogy had on the foster carers own practice.
- The foster carer's relationship with the children and young people placed with them.
- The foster carer's views on the impact of social pedagogy on the wider system.

The interviews with the children and young people also explored:

- The people who are in the young person's life and the relationship they have with them.
- The routine and activities the young person does, and how the decisions are reached.
- What the young person enjoys and finds difficult about the things above.
- What choices (agency) does the young person have day to day, in their care, and in future?

The children and young people who participated in an interview were also invited to draw a "life map" to facilitate a discussion of how they perceive their life-world and to help them feel more relaxed during the interview. The child or young person drew the people and places that were important to him or her as well as the different activities they enjoyed doing. In the course of drawing the map the interviewer asked questions about why different people and places were important, what they liked about them and other questions related to those shown above.

Interviews were audio-recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts of interviews were read, coded and summarised using a standardised thematic framework, based on key themes. Verbatim quotations are used throughout this report, presenting individual participants' perspectives to illustrate points of analysis.

Fostering Household sample

Over the course of the entire evaluation **126** interviews were carried out with **76** Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and **64** Interviews were carried out with **52** children and young people. In total 76 Head, Heart, Hands households participated in the evaluation, which is an overall response rate of 34%. The number of households who participated across the whole evaluation by site is shown in Appendix F

Some, but not all of the households participated across multiple time points across the evaluation. Table 1 shows the number of households who participated at different time points and Table F.2 in Appendix F shows the number of foster carers and children and young people who participated at each time point.

Table 1 Participation of household at each evaluation time point

Evaluation time point	Number of households
Participated in Wave 1 only	6
Participated in Wave 1 and Wave 2	2
Participated in all three Waves	17
Participated in Wave 2 only	10
Participated in Wave 2 and Wave 3	12
Participated in Wave 3 only	29
Total	**76**

While as Table 1 above shows, some foster carers and children and young people participated in multiple time points, this was not the case for the whole sample. While all foster carers and children and young people were followed up at each time point (when they had given permission to do so), and invited to participate in a second or third interview, some declined to participate in subsequent interviews. A range of reasons were provided for declining to participate in a follow up interview, including personal or familial circumstances, or reporting that they "*had nothing more to add*". Due to the variance in the sample it is not possible to make direct comparisons between each time point. The samples at each time point included different participants, and have been treated as distinct rather than tracking the same participants over the whole evaluation time period.

This report primarily draws on interviews with **57** Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and **37** interviews with children and young people placed with them. The findings from interviews conducted during Waves 1 and 2 can be found in previous evaluation reports (McDermid et al., 2014; 2015). Three of the children and young people who participated in an interview during Wave 3 were identified as being formally diagnosed with a special educational need or disability. The majority of the children were aged between 11 and 13 years and were placed with long term foster carers. Of the sample of Head, Heart, Hands foster carers who participated in Wave 3 of the evaluation, three began fostering at the start of the programme and a further six had been fostering for two years or less at the start. Seven foster carers had 20 years or more experience fostering. The average length of time as a foster carer was 11.5 years. Of those foster carers who participated in an interview at Wave 3, eight had no child in placement at the time of the interview. The largest proportion of carers had one child placed (n=23) at the time of the interview. Further detail about the interview sample is given in Appendix F.

The representativeness of the sample of fostering households

The sample of fostering households who participated in the evaluation should be not considered to be representative of the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers as a whole. The reader is encouraged to exercise some caution when generalising the findings of this evaluation for a wider population, due to the possible sample bias precipitated by both the programme design and the way that foster carers were recruited into the evaluation. Firstly whilst, in three sites, all foster carers within the service, or within a specific team attended the Core Learning and Development courses, in the remaining four sites foster carers were *invited* to attend the Learning and Development courses, and therefore self-selected to participate in the programme. Whilst in these sites, some foster carers

were targeted or strongly encouraged to attend, others self-selected into the programme on the basis that it interested them. In this way, in these sites we might expect that those who chose to attend the courses had a predisposed interest or affinity with the ideals advocated by the programme. It is important to highlight, that other reasons for not attending the course may be at play. For instance, those with an interest in social pedagogy may have been unable to attend for practical reasons. However, self-selection of any kind may have introduced some sampling bias to the type of foster carers who were included in the evaluation cohort. This is explored further in Chapter 4.

Secondly, the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and children and young people self-selected to participate in the evaluation. This was in part due to ethical considerations: it was not ethical for us to have the names of the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers without their express permission and so it was not possible within data protection laws to randomly select and contact foster carers to invite them to participate in the evaluation. Consequently it is likely that the interviews were conducted with the most positive of the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers, selected from amongst the most receptive across the site. As a result the findings of the interviews with the foster carers and children and young people cannot be relied on as representative of everyone who was trained, nor as an indication of what might happen if the approach was scaled up.

We have attempted to mitigate the inherent sample bias within the evaluation by the collection and analysis of case file and management information data. Nevertheless caution should be exercised when generalising some of the findings to a wider population.

The foster carer survey

A survey was circulated to all foster carers who had attended either the Head, Heart, Hands Orientation or Core courses in each of the demonstration sites during Waves 1 and 3. The survey was made available both online and on paper. The research team worked alongside the sites to ensure the survey was available in the most appropriate format for their foster carers.

In response to feedback on earlier iterations of the survey completed in Wave 1, the survey circulated during Wave 3 was designed to be brief and concise. It was designed to collect quantitative data and foster carers' views on:

- The impact that Head, Heart, Hands had on:
    - Their practice
    - Their relationship with their fostered child or children
    - Their relationship with their supervising social worker and their child or children's social worker
- The different elements of social pedagogy that had been of particular benefit
- Their views on the Head, Heart, Hands programme

Where possible, responses were sought using a Likert scale to provide quantifiable measures. The survey also invited respondents to comment on what they thought was the best thing about Head, Heart, Hands. Forty three respondents completed this question with a wide range of comments.

It was initially intended that a comparison between the responses between different timeframes would be carried out. However, in light of the changes made to the survey between the timeframes a direct comparison was not viable. Some comparisons between the responses from surveys have been made, but these are limited in scope. The surveys were designed to be anonymous to ensure the most accurate views were gathered from foster carers. As a result, it was not possible to link individual survey responses to either previous data collection time points, or to interview data. Each sub-sample is treated as distinct and compared as a whole, rather than tracking individual's responses over time.

To achieve a broad view of the survey data set and findings, the data were analysed using a mix of tests in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), including descriptive statistics, frequencies, correlations and analysis of variance. Where appropriate, measures of statistical significance were also carried out. Comments were analysed using basic content and discourse analysis. Measures of significance were made using the appropriate tests.

The foster carer survey sample

In Wave 1 a total of 108 survey responses were received from foster carers, ten of which were excluded from the analysis where there was an insufficient proportion of the survey completed. Analysis was conducted on 98 surveys. More information about the Wave 1 survey can be found in McDermid et al. (2014). In Wave 3 65 respondents accessed the survey. One duplicate entry was identified and excluded, along with one response from a social work team leader. In addition, 16 respondents had not engaged in the initial Head Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses completed between January 2013 and May 2014, and were therefore not part of the evaluation cohort. These respondents were also excluded from the analysis. The analysis was conducted on 47 surveys.

An overall response rate of 20% was obtained across all sites. This varied between the sites however, and ranged between 5 – 50% across the sample. No responses were received from the Yellow Site. The breakdown of respondents is shown in Appendix F. Of those, the vast majority had completed the core courses and only one respondent (from the Pink Site) had completed the Orientation course and had not continued on to the Core Course.

It was originally intended that an analysis of responses by type of course and by site would be conducted. However, only one respondent had completed the Orientation course and had not continued to attend the Core course. Moreover, a very low response rate was obtained in some sites and it was therefore not statistically viable to carry out a meaningful comparison of responses between sites.

Focus groups and interviews with social care staff

A total of 33 front line children's social care staff participated in the evaluation data collection as part of the implementation evaluation at Wave 3. Twenty eight staff members participated in a series of eight focus groups and the remaining five staff participated in a face to face interview. The majority of the social care staff participants were supervising social workers (n=27) and six were family support workers. Of those who participated in the evaluation 10 had attended the Core Learning and Development courses and half of those had attended with at least one foster carer on

their case load. Four had attended the two day Orientation days and not the Core course. The remaining staff members were either in a team with one of the Social Pedagogues or had attended one of the various other events associated with the programme.

Semi-structured, thematic guides were used to ascertain front line workers' views on the impact of social pedagogy on their own practice, and the practice of the foster carers they supervise, along with their impressions of the implementation process. Groups and interviews generally lasted for around one and half hours.

Interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded with permission and transcribed verbatim. While the interviews and groups were conducted as part of the implementation evaluation, it became evident that the discussions shed light on key issues explored in this final report about the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on foster carers and the children and young people. Transcripts of interviews and the focus groups were re-read, coded and summarised within and across sites using a standardised thematic framework, based on key themes to inform the findings presented in this report.

Survey to social care personnel

The second wave of data collection included an online survey to be distributed to social care personnel across each site. The survey was designed to measure the following aspects:

- The awareness and understanding of the Head, Heart, Hands programme
- Attitudes towards the Head, Heart, Hands programme
- Differences of this programme from "foster care as usual"
- Implications for policy strategy and practice
- Identified changes as a result of the programme
- The implication of changes for the system

The link to a site-specific survey was sent to each site to distribute among their social care personnel. The survey was designed to be completed by the following personnel:

- Supervising social workers
- Children's social workers
- Family support workers
- Independent reviewing officers
- Operational and strategic managers

The demonstration sites distributed the survey to their social care personnel on behalf of the evaluation team. The Purple and Green sites also distributed the survey link among their foster carers. These responses were not included in the final analysis. Exclusions were also applied to Social Pedagogues, because they took part in an interview, and those who started the survey but did not answer any questions were also removed. In total, analysis was conducted in 48 social care staff surveys[12] which was approximately a 15% return rate.

[12] Due to the way the questions were filtered some of the questions received very low response rates.

The social care staff survey sample

After the exclusion criterion was applied there were 48 respondents included in analysis[13] (approximately 15% return rate). Appendix F shows the number of responses received and included in the analysis, by job role.

Case file analysis

A retrospective analysis of the electronic case files of children placed with Head, Heart, Hands foster carers was carried out at the end of the programme. The aim of the case file analysis was to understand more about the fostering household, to build a contextual view about the children supported in Head, Heart, Hands placements and to explore further the impact of the programme on the fostering households, with a focus on family integration and reported changes within the fostering household over time.

A template was devised (and piloted with a sample of cases in one of the sites) to extract the case file data and included the following areas:

- Evidence in the case file of foster carer(s) using social pedagogic approaches[14];
- Information on foster carer confidence;
- Information on quality of care and changes to the care provided by foster carers;
- Details on placement stability and transitions from placements;
- Information on "social pedagogic interventions[15]";
- Views of the child;
- Information on the needs, additional services received and outcomes for the child as recorded in the case file.

The time period for examining documents was from the start of the Head, Heart, Hands programme to the end of the data collection for the evaluation (September 2012 to March 2016). Documents from different time points were reviewed. The records of looked after or pathway plan review for the child was the most common data source, followed by the annual foster carer review. Other types of information reviewed included: case summary notes; foster carer monthly diary or weekly recording submissions; fostering team minutes; children's consultation questionnaires; end of placement questionnaire; supervision notes; complaint letters and foster carer profile information.

Case file analysis sample

Data were collected from case files in five of the seven sites. Each of the sites provided information to the evaluation team on the foster carers[16] who had attended the Head, Heart, Hands Orientation

[13] Due to the way the questions were filtered some of the questions received very low response rates.
[14] The case file information about carer's practice was reviewed based on the Head, Heart, Hands attributes (See Appendix B) and whether, on balance, there was evidence to show foster carer(s) using social pedagogic approaches. The results of this analysis were cross-checked between the team of researchers.
[15] 'Social pedagogic interventions' were defined as: a.) specific pieces of direct work with individual carers, young people or families; b.) groups aimed at enhancing social pedagogic practice (variously named 'momentum groups, actions learning sets etc.); c.) social pedagogy activity day and holiday events run and organised by Social Pedagogues; d.) Social Pedagogue as supervising social worker for the case.
[16] Information provided by sites: foster carer's first name; type of placement foster carer approved for; date the core training for foster carer expected to finish.

and/or Core Learning and Development courses along with details on the children placed with them for the duration of the evaluation[17]. Two sites only provided information on the children and young people placed with Head, Heart, Hands foster carers at the commencement of the programme. The information provided by the sites formed the sample for the case file data collection.

Table 2 Number of children and fostering households included in the case file analysis

Site	Potential number of children	Actual number of children's files included in analysis	Potential number of fostering households	Actual number of fostering households included in analysis
Green	23	19	21	15
Blue	40	40	28	25
Orange	79	66	43	38
Purple	141	120	39	39
Yellow	194	87	42	40
Total	477	332 (70%)	173	157 (91%)

In total, case file data from 332 children and young people placed in 157 Head, Heart, Hands fostering households were included in the analysis. Case files were examined for 70% (n=332) of children known to have been placed in Head, Heart, Hands fostering household and 91% of the fostering households (n=157). This represents 85% of the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers in the five sites where the case file analysis was conducted and 67% of the total number of carers from across all of the sites. Two of the sites did not provide information on additional children placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers. The findings presented in Part 2 are based on 334 records as two of the children included appeared twice as they were placed with two different Head, Heart, Hands carers.

Not all of the potential case files were included in the data collection, cases were excluded from the analysis when:

- the child was placed with the Head, Heart, Hands carer for less than one month;
- the placement was primarily a respite arrangement;
- the foster carer did not complete the Core Learning and Development courses.

Case file data collection

The data collection template was used for each case and information sought from the time period the child was living with the Head, Heart, Hands carer. In addition, where possible, a specific search for key words: "social pedagogy" or "Head, Heart, Hands" was conducted. Relevant data from the case file was inputted direct to the template, which was password protected and held on a secure (encrypted) storage device.

As found elsewhere, the nature and availability of data in the case files varied across the sites, particularly in relation to outcomes and services received (McDermid, 2008; Ward, Holmes and

[17] Information provided by sites: child's date of birth or age; information on how long the child had been looked after; start date of the placement; placing authority (for fostering agency sites).

Soper, 2008; Holmes et al., 2010; Holmes and McDermid, 2012). The amount and quality of information available per case file varied and was influenced by a number of factors such as:

- All of the sites had different computer systems for managing case file information. In some sites some of the information required pre-dated the current client information system and was archived and therefore not available, which meant that it was not possible to access the full range of documents for some children.
- In some case files access was denied and so limited information was collected.
- In a small number of cases the record was not found (child identification number supplied was inaccurate).
- A small number of fostering households included in the information from sites were actually carers for a different agency and so their information was not available on the system.
- In some sites the child had left the care of the site so no follow up data was available.

It is likely that the nature and detail of recording in relation to Head, Heart, Hands and references to social pedagogy was affected by number of factors such as:

- The degree to which the case file author had been exposed to social pedagogy.
- The degree to which the carer was engaged with social pedagogy is likely to influence how much is recorded in the case file.
- The degree to which the client information system had been adapted to capture recording about Head, Heart, Hands or social pedagogy. One site (Blue) had introduced three specific data entry fields to their case file recording system relating to social pedagogy to record social pedagogy events; social pedagogy interventions and social pedagogy case discussion.
- The type of document accessed, which may have affected the amount of information collected on Head, Heart, Hands.
- The *type* of site. For example in the independent fostering agency sites children's looked after reviews were not always available but information on the foster carer was more likely to be available.

The data were read, coded and summarised and key themes emerged. The data were analysed using a mix of tests in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), including descriptive statistics, frequencies and correlations. Comments were analysed using content analysis.

This method provided an analysis of *what is recorded,* which will vary in quality and completeness, rather than a complete picture of all of the experiences of fostering households. It is also restricted to *what is accessed* from the files, and given the large sample of children, and volume of documents contained within cases, the case file analysis represents a snapshot of the potential information on children and fostering households. However, the case file analysis provided vital insights into a wider sample of fostering households, and was less impacted by the potential sample bias that was inherent in the qualitative data elements.

Secondary analysis of national datasets

The quantitative component of our evaluation included the secondary analysis of national datasets (SSDA 903 in England and CLAS in Scotland; Department for Education, 2014; Scotxed, 2015). These data are recorded and collated at a local authority level and then submitted to the Department for Education (England) and the Scottish Government (Scotland) on an annual basis as part of their mandatory recording and recording requirements. The same requirements are not applicable to independent and voluntary providers; as such SSDA 903 and CLAS data were not available for inclusion from the two independent and voluntary fostering providers. Data are recorded on the key characteristics and needs of all children looked after during the financial year period (spanning from 1st April to the 31st March), along with the types of placements and key events such as changes in placement, legal status or a return home from care. The data are longitudinal and gathered at a child level and therefore provide a vital resource which can be aggregated and analysed in a range of ways (McDermid, 2008).

Data were provided by four sites (Pink, Yellow, Orange and Purple) for the two financial years prior to the commencement of Head, Heart, Hands (2010-11 and 2011-12). Two sites provided data for the four years over which the programme was undertaken (2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16). In the Pink and Purple sites data were not available for the final year (2015-16). The information provided for the identification of the fostering households for the case file data collection were used to mark the children who were placed in Head, Heart, Hands fostering households at any point during the evaluation period. The unique child identifier and the date of birth were used to locate the individual child in the data set. One site only provided information on the children and young people placed with Head, Heart, Hands foster carers at the commencement of the programme. The sites provided information about the start and end dates of the placement with the Head, Heart, Hands fostering household to ensure that it was possible to identify when the child was "in" the programme.

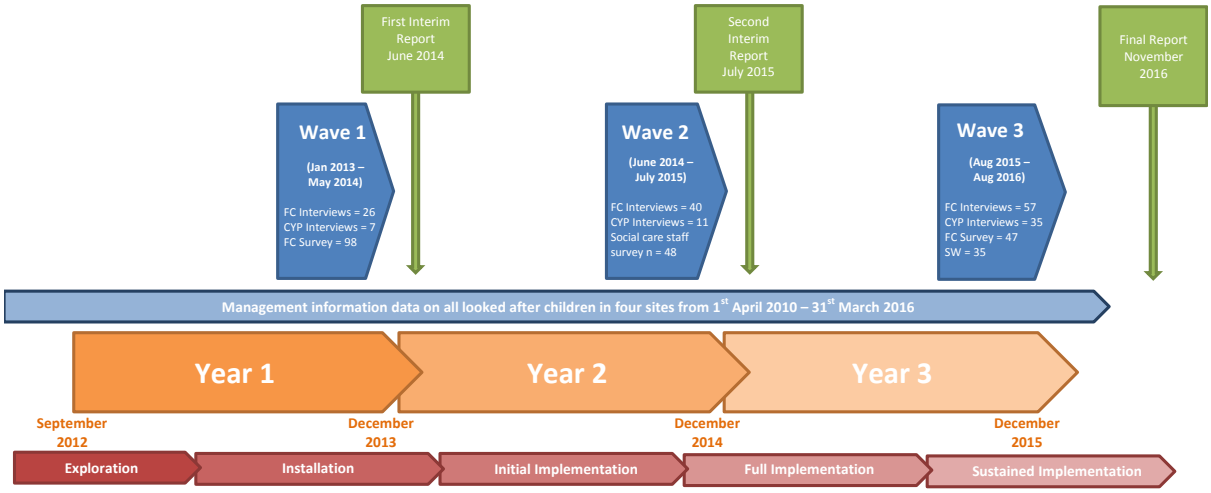
However, some challenges were encountered in the matching process. Of the possible 513 children identified by the sites, 336 were found in the SSDA 903 or CLAS data sets. In 46 instances the child was not found among the national return data. In 173 cases the child was located but none of the dates of their placements in the data matched the dates provided by the site. Consequently it was not possible to be confident which of their placements were with the Head, Heart, Hands foster carer and these children were not included in the analysis. A number of possible reasons why the cases were unable to be matched were identified:

- A small number of children were living with the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers under circumstances which are not included in the SSDA 903 or CLAS data, such as Special Guardianship Orders, or Staying Put arrangements, or the child became adopted.
- A small number of foster carers included in the information from sites were actually carers for a different agency, or had a child placed with them from another local authority and so the child or young person was included in the national return data.
- Children in receipt of respite care were frequently not identifiable in the data. This is because of the way that respite placements are handled in the return data. Respite is regularly recorded as a separate placement. Therefore, inclusion of respite in the analysis would skew the data, suggesting a higher frequency of placement changes.

- Errors in the data, such as missing variables.

These challenges are not unique to this evaluation and similar studies have encountered comparable difficulties with matching data across data sets, and missing data (Bazalgette, Rahilly and Trevelyan, 2015; Sebba et al., 2015). In total 65% of the possible children who were placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers in the four sites where national data sets were available were matched. These children (n=326) experienced 854 placements over the six year period. The analysis was carried out using the Cost Calculator for Children's Services (CCfCS), purpose designed software developed by the Centre for Child and Family (CCFR) evaluation team (Ward, Holmes and Soper, 2008). Appendix G provides an overview of the CCfCS tool, methods and underpinning conceptual framework.

Figure 3 Evaluation timeline against implementation stages



Box 4: Glossary of key terms

- **The Funders:** a consortium of seven philanthropic donors
- **Lead funder**: The KPMG Foundation, who originated the programme, chaired the consortium, and engaged actively in various activities during the whole course of the programme.
- **Central leadership team:** the senior executive leadership team of The Fostering Network, then the Operations Director (new in post from late 2014).
- **Central management team**: small team of staff at The Fostering Network who provided programme management and support, including the programme manager, the programme officer, and various administrative assistants.
- **Central programme team**: jointly, the leadership and management teams at The Fostering Network).
- **The Social Pedagogy Consortium** (**SPC**): a group of practice and academic specialists in social pedagogy contracted by The Fostering Network.
- **Central Delivery Partners:** jointly, The Fostering Network teams and the SPC team.
- **Sites:** the seven fostering agencies in locations receiving funding to implement Head, Heart, Hands in their fostering service.
- **Site Project Leads**: the individuals responsible for local Head, Heart, Hands project management and team leadership in each of seven sites.
- **SPC Site Support Leads:** members of the SPC assigned to specific sites to support the SPL and the pedagogue(s) in that site.
- **Site Strategic Leads:** authorising senior individuals within the sites, usually Assistant Director, Board or Head of Service level.
- **Social Pedagogues:** professionals, all with degree-level qualifications in social pedagogy obtained in a variety of countries outside the UK.
- **Social pedagogy trained practitioners:** practitioners of any kind (including foster carers and social care personnel) who have integrated social pedagogic principles into their practice to differing degrees.
- **Head, Heart, Hands foster carers**: those foster carers who attended the Core Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses.

PART 2: Impact of Head, Heart, Hands

In this section we explore the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on foster carers, children and young people and the children's social care staff who supported them. We draw on the analysis of the interviews with fostering households, surveys to Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and children's social care staff, case file analysis, secondary analysis of statutory datasets (SSDA 903 in England and CLAS in Scotland) and interviews and focus groups with children's social care staff. We also provide an analysis of the costs and potential value of the programme.

Throughout this section of the report we provide verbatim quotes and a number of case studies to illustrate the key findings. To preserve the anonymity of the evaluation participants we have changed identifiable details and given participants pseudonyms. Bold text has been used to highlight key themes or findings, or where the findings relate to key social pedagogic models, or characteristics of social pedagogic carers.

4. Receptiveness to social pedagogy

Throughout the evaluation a typology has been used to explore the extent to which the foster carers in the interview sample were enthusiastic about social pedagogic practices, the factors that may influence foster carer's receptiveness to Head, Heart, Hands and whether this level of receptiveness has changed over the timeframe of the evaluation. The groupings are shown in Box 5. These categories should not be conceptualised as mutually exclusive or clearly defined groups. Rather they are three categorisations within a spectrum, along which some participants have moved throughout the duration of the evaluation. These categories are intended to be **illustrative** of the differing levels of enthusiasm and receptiveness for the particular form of social pedagogy introduced through Head, Heart, Hands. While they go some way to demonstrate the differing degrees of enthusiasm for social pedagogic principles identified in the sample, they also mask some of the nuances in the data, which will be explored throughout the remainder of this report.

Box 5: Head, Heart, Hands groups

Engaged Adopter

These people have a great deal of enthusiasm for adopting social pedagogic practice. They are passionate about social pedagogy and the impact that it may have. They show a commitment to adopting the approach into their everyday practice, and in a range of contexts or situations.

Cautious Optimist

People in this group have a general interest in social pedagogic practice or identify with key principles. They describe social pedagogy that is a tool that can be used at certain times or for certain circumstances.

Defended Sceptics

These people are generally positive about social pedagogy, but are not convinced about the impact that it will have on their own practice, while acknowledging that it may be helpful for other people.

Broadly speaking, the Engaged Adopters were the most enthusiastic about social pedagogy. This group was highly positive about social pedagogy *per se* and claimed that they were incorporating it into their own practice. Typically, Engaged Adopters reported that Head, Heart, Hands had led to substantially positive changes, either in their own practice, or for the child or young person they cared for. Although commented on less frequently, some Engaged Adopters also reported that Head, Heart, Hands had led to changes at the site itself. At the other end of the spectrum the Defended Sceptics were the most ambivalent about Head, Heart, Hands. They did not report to be negative about the notion of social pedagogy *per se*. Indeed, only one of the interviewees across the whole evaluation (interviewed during Wave 1) stated that they did not like the approach. Rather, the Defended Sceptics reported that they were not convinced about the "novelty" of social pedagogy or the impact that it would have on their own practice. The foster carers in this group did agree that it may be valuable for others. The Cautious Optimists were somewhere in the middle of these two groups, reporting to be receptive overall, but tended to describe elements of social pedagogy or specific tools that could be applied to particular circumstances, or with particular children, rather than conceptualising it as an underpinning framework which could be applied to all areas of work with people. Cautious Optimists were also more likely to highlight limitations in either social pedagogic approaches or the manner in which it had been implemented within their site.

Following each interview, the foster carers were grouped into one of these three categories on the basis of their responses. Table 3 shows the distribution of foster carers across the groups at each time point. Encouragingly, over half of the interview sample in Waves 1 and 3 described themselves as Engaged Adopters, peaking at 70% in Wave 2. The Defended Sceptics represented the smallest proportion of foster carers in each time point. However, some caution is warranted when comparing the samples of foster carers at each time point. As noted above the samples at each time point included different participants, and have been treated as distinct rather than tracking the same participants over the whole evaluation time period. Of the sample of foster carers who did participate in an interview at multiple evaluation time points, 40% (n=13) changed their level of receptiveness during the programme, two of these in Wave 2, and 11 in Wave 3. Three of these foster carers became more positive about the approach, as they reported to be more confident in practicing social pedagogy and able to more clearly articulate the impact that it had on either themselves and/or the child they cared for. The remaining foster carers in the interview sample (n=10:13%) became less enthusiastic about the approach. Overwhelmingly, these foster carers reported that disappointing experiences in how the programme had been implemented as their reason for becoming less enthusiastic about the approach (this is explored further in Chapter 7).

Table 3 Distribution of foster carers across the groups at each evaluation time point

	Number and percentage of foster carers in each type [A]					
	Wave 1		Wave 2		Wave 3	
Type	n	%	n	%	n	%
Engaged Adopter	14	*53*	28	*70*	32	*56*
Cautious Optimists	7	*27*	9	*22*	19	*33*
Defended Sceptics	5	*19*	3	*7.5*	6	*11*

[A] Percentages have been rounded, and may therefore not total 100.

The data from Wave 3 suggest that there was some variance in the proportion of foster carers in each category across the sites. The Orange site had the highest proportion of Engaged Adopters, and the Purple site had the highest proportion of Defended Sceptics, whereby half of the Defended Sceptics were from this site. No Defended Sceptics were identified among those foster carers who were interviewed at Wave 3 from the Blue, Green and Pink sites. While differing proportions of the types were identified across each of the sites, these differences were not found to be statistically significant. When considering the different implementation strategies and characteristics of those sites with a higher proportion of Engaged Adopters or Defended Sceptics, no significant patterns emerged. The data were analysed to explore whether a range of factors, including type of placement and length of time as a foster carer, influenced the extent to which the foster carers interviewed were receptive to the programme. It is of note that five of the six Defended Sceptics had been fostering for over ten years. However, it should also be noted that one fifth of the Engaged Adopters had also been fostering for ten years or more. The analysis also found no statistically significant relationships. This suggests that factors other than site characteristics and foster carer demographics are likely to influence the extent to which foster carers may be receptive to social pedagogy.

During Wave 3, frontline children's social care staff who participated in the evaluation were invited to identify which of the three ideal types most closely represented their own views and experiences of Head, Heart, Hands. Of those who did (n=29), almost two thirds (69%) identified themselves as Cautious Optimists and the remaining third (31%) reported that they were Engaged Adopters. Positively, no Defended Sceptics were identified and none of the participating frontline children's social care staff expressed explicit rejection of social pedagogy and there was general support for the approach. Frontline children's social care staff were more likely to describe social pedagogy as one approach among a plethora of different programmes and interventions when compared to the cohort of foster carers. This finding is perhaps unsurprising given that all of the sites were utilising other training programmes and approaches, to support looked after children, during the Head, Heart, Hands programme (such as Dialectic Behaviour Therapy, Multi-dimensional Treatment Foster Care, KEEP and other therapeutic approaches). It is likely that the frontline children's social care staff (both supervising social workers and children's social workers) would have been supporting foster carers who were applying a range of approaches, making it difficult or unrealistic for them to preference one approach over another[18]. Where concerns have been raised regarding the numbers of social workers who have been engaged in the programme (see Chapter 7 and Ghate and McDermid, 2016), it is encouraging to note that those who have been engaged, expressed general support for the approach.

Articulating the distinction between social pedagogic fostering from fostering as usual

Previous evaluation reports have highlighted variances in the extent to which prior familiarity with social pedagogy inhibited or facilitated engagement and enthusiasm with the programme among children's social care staff (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). Prior awareness of social pedagogy was found to be a "*double edged sword*" among children's social care staff in the implementation evaluation, whereby a sense of familiarity with the approach created a precedent for social pedagogic work in some sites, it may also have decreased the expectation that there would be new learning from the project in others.

[18] The fit between social pedagogy and other approaches is explored further in Ghate and McDermid (2016).

Similar challenges in establishing whether affinity or prior knowledge of social pedagogy helped or hindered engagement among the foster carers who participated in the evaluation have been identified throughout the study. For a small number of foster carers who participated in the Wave 3 evaluation, the lack of a clear articulation of the unique contribution Head, Heart, Hands made to existing approaches to care, reduced the extent to which they wanted to engage with the programme, and the impact that they believed it to have made on them and the children and young people placed with them (n=6). In contrast, two thirds of the foster carers who were interviewed at Wave 3 reported that the similarities of Head, Heart, Hands to their own approach was a motivating factor to engage with the programme.

Throughout the evaluation it was evident that participants identified resonances between their existing approaches to fostering and the principles and values that underpin social pedagogy. For example, during Wave 1, foster carer survey respondents were asked whether they would describe themselves as fostering in a social pedagogic way prior to Hand, Heart, Hands. Most of the survey respondents who answered this question (n=89:87%,) were of the view that they were already fostering in a social pedagogic way before attending the Learning and Development sessions. Almost half of foster carers interviewed at Wave 1 (n=10:45%) reported that they were already practicing in a social pedagogic way prior to the commencement of the programme. Likewise, respondents to the children's social care staff survey in Wave 2 were asked whether they were already applying the approach before Head, Heart, Hands was introduced. In total over half (n=27:56%) of respondents indicated they were using social pedagogic approaches in their work at least "*in some ways*"; and 11 selected "*a great deal*". Following the general trend, two thirds of the foster carers interviewed at Wave 3 reported that social pedagogy, or aspects of the approach, aligned with their own practice and ethos. Only two foster carers who participated in the evaluation reported that the social pedagogic approach that Head, Heart, Hands provided was entirely new. The extent to which Head, Heart, Hands built on and enhanced existing approaches to fostering, and the impact that this had, will be explored in more detail throughout this report.

However, the synergies between social pedagogy and what can be termed "*fostering as usual",* raises two important questions regarding the particular sample of foster carers who, firstly participated in the programme, and secondly, participated in the evaluation. Given the reported pre-existing resonances with social pedagogy found among a number of foster carers in the sample, it is possible to question the extent to which Head, Heart, Hands built on already strong foundations. To address this question, the evaluation attempted to engage foster carers who had attended the taster and orientation days, but not the core courses, with little success. Furthermore, it is pertinent to question whether those foster carers who did participate in the evaluation were more likely to be receptive to social pedagogy and more positive about the programme. In this way, caution is warranted when generalising the findings of the qualitative interviews with foster carers to a wider population.

Box 6: Summary of key findings: Receptiveness to social pedagogy

- Throughout the evaluation a typology has been used to explore the extent to which the foster carers in the interview sample were enthusiastic about social pedagogic practices, the factors that may influence foster carer's receptiveness to Head, Heart, Hands and whether this level of receptiveness has changed over the timeframe of the evaluation. The typology is outlined in Box 5.
- Encouragingly, over half of the foster carer interview sample in Waves 1 and 3 described themselves as Engaged Adopters, peaking at 70% in Wave 2.
- The Defended Sceptics represented the smallest proportion of foster carers in each time point, representing 19% of the sample in Wave 1, 7.5% of the sample in Wave 2, and 11% of the sample in Wave 3.
- Of the sample of foster carers who participated in an interview at multiple evaluation time points, 40% (n=13) changed their level of receptiveness over the course of the programme. Three of these foster carers became more positive about the approach, as they reported to be more confident in practicing social pedagogy and able to more clearly articulate the impact that it had on either themselves and/or the child they cared for. The remaining foster carers (n=10:13%) became less enthusiastic about the approach, due to disappointing experiences in how the programme had been implemented.
- Almost two thirds of the children social care staff who participated in the evaluation at Wave 3 identified themselves as Cautious Optimists (69%) and the remaining third (31%) reported that they were Engaged Adopters.
- Frontline children's social care staff were more likely to describe social pedagogy as one approach among a plethora of different programmes and interventions when compared to the cohort of foster carers. This finding is perhaps unsurprising given that all of the sites were utilising other training programmes and approaches, to support looked after children, during the Head, Heart, Hands programme. It is likely that the frontline children's social care staff (both supervising social workers and children's social workers) would have been supporting foster carers who were applying a range of approaches, making it difficult or unrealistic for them to preference one approach over another.
- Throughout the evaluation it was evident that participants identified resonances between their existing approaches to fostering and the principles and values that underpin social pedagogy. Previous evaluation reports have highlighted variances in the extent to which prior familiarity with social pedagogy inhibited or facilitated engagement and enthusiasm with the programme among children's social care staff.
- For a small number of foster carers who participated in the Wave 3 evaluation, the lack of a clear articulation of the unique contribution Head, Heart, Hands made to existing approaches to care, reduced the extent to which they wanted to engage with the programme, and the impact that they believed it to have made on them and the children and young people placed with them (n=6).
- In contrast, two thirds of the foster carers who were interviewed at Wave 3 reported that the similarities of Head, Heart, Hands to their own approach was a motivating factor to engage with the programme.

5. Relationships within the fostering household

In light of recent concerns regarding the quality of support provided to looked after children, greater emphasis has been placed on the need to return to relationship based approaches to caring for vulnerable children across policy, practice and research arenas (*c.f.* Ruch, Turney and Ward, 2010; Munro, 2011; Murphy, Duggan and Joseph, 2012). In 2009, the Children Schools and Families Select Committee report on looked after children, stated that relationships should be placed at the heart of the care system (House of Commons, 2009). More recently, The Munro Review of Child Protection (Munro, 2011) and the Care Inquiry (The Care Inquiry, 2013) have brought together findings from a range of sources to highlight the importance of strong and stable child-adult relationships to safeguarding children who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Research has suggested that outcomes for children in public care are enhanced when they are in trusting, stable relationships. Such relationships also promote resilience and encourage participation in civic life (Sinclair and Wilson, 2003; Cameron, 2013). Previous studies have also highlighted the emphasis that children and young people in care place on knowing that there is someone "there for you"(Sinclair and Wilson, 2003; Cashmore and Paxman, 2006; Cameron, McQuail and Petrie, 2007; Schofield and Beek, 2009; Fernandez and Barth, 2010; Boddy, 2013). Other studies have found that knowing that carers have their best interests at heart and have affection for them provides a stable framework for young people in care, through which they are able to interpret other aspects of care, for example punishments and sanctions (Cameron, McQuail and Petrie, 2007).

The development of authentic, nurturing relationships is at the core of social pedagogy, and consequently the Head, Heart, Hands programme. A range of principles and concepts covered by the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses were intended to strengthen the relationship between the foster carer and the child. In turn, for practitioners social pedagogic relationships are central to allowing the child to grow and develop a range of skills, competencies and personal attributes (Petrie et al., 2006; Cameron and Moss, 2011). In this way social pedagogic practices are intended to both *nurture* genuine relationships between individuals, and are the source through which *nurturing* of the individual can take place. As Eichsteller and Holthoff note: "*Social pedagogy is brought to life through the relationship between the professional and the subject*" (2011:42). In this section of the report we explore how the relationships between members of the fostering household were characterised, the impact that Head, Heart, Hands had had on those relationships, and the ways in which those relationships had impacted on the interviewees.

The nurturing of relationships: The impact of Head, Heart, Hands on relationships

Overall, evaluation participants reported that Head, Heart, Hands had had a positive impact on relationships within the fostering household. Two thirds of foster carer survey respondents (n=31:66%) reported that their **relationships with their fostered child** had changed a great deal since attending the Head, Heart, Hands, Learning and Development courses. Moreover, to explore the aspects that respondents most closely associated with social pedagogy, the foster carer survey displayed 23 different terms. Respondents were invited to select which of these terms they thought were the key principles of the approach. Four of the terms are considered as not being associated with social pedagogy, the remaining 19 were either directly, or indirectly associated with social pedagogy. The data suggest that evaluation participants placed a great deal of emphasis on the centrality of relationships within Head, Heart, Hands. The most frequently selected terms were: child

centredness (n=39:83%), honest relationships (n= 37:79%) and doing activities together (n=36:76%). The majority of the foster carers interviewed during Wave 3 (n=40:70%) and one quarter of the children and young people (n=9:25%) interviewed also reported that Head, Heart Hands had resulted in a positive impact on their relationship, albeit to differing degrees. Social pedagogy emphasises the interplay between theory and practice, and it is in the area of relationships that this interplay is most evident across the evaluation sample.

Genuine positive regard

All social pedagogic practice is predicated on the inherent value of all human beings (Eichsteller and Holthoff, 2011:36). In this way, social pedagogy stresses that relationships between the social pedagogic practitioner and the child should be authentic and include a genuine emotional connection. Almost a third of the foster carers interviewed (n=18:32%) reported that Head, Heart, Hands had empowered and encouraged them to express **warmth, respect and genuine affection** for the young person. It was noted that the foster carers interviewed expressed affection for the children and young people they cared for *prior to* Head, Heart, Hands, and much of what was discussed as part of the Learning and Development courses was not entirely new. Rather, the Learning and Development courses aimed to enable the attendees to critically reflect on their relationships and to draw on social pedagogic theories to further enhance relational work. As noted in previous evaluation reports, evaluation participants describe these social pedagogic theories as "hooks" upon which familiar good practice principles were hung (McDermid, et al., 2015; Ghate and McDermid, 2016). As such, foster carers interviewed in Wave 3 reported that while they had not necessarily changed their behaviours towards the children and young people they cared for, they had been reminded, and therefore become more ***conscious*** of the significance of the carer-child relationship, since Head, Heart, Hands.

This emphasis on genuine affection was reflected in the children and young people interviews. The interview data suggest that there was a great deal of affection between foster carers and the children and young people interviewed. Children described their foster carers as *"nice, kind, people"*, who they could talk to if they were worried about anything, who supported them and took care of them. It was evident that, on the whole, the children and young people felt affection towards their foster carers. For instance one child reported that they felt "*happy*" living with their foster carers "*because I love [my foster carers]*".

Existing research has found that children and young people in care often want to be treated in the same way as birth children within the fostering households, and difficulties can arise when they feel differentiated from a foster carer's own sons and daughters (Cashmore and Paxman, 2006; Cameron, McQuail and Petrie, 2007). Language associated with familial warmth, respect and genuine positive regard was used frequently by foster carers to describe the children. One foster carer captured the views of many when she remarked that her fostered child was "*like a daughter to me"*. Likewise, the children and young people used warm and frequently familial language to describe their foster carers. Almost half of the children interviewed noted that their foster home, was, in essence, a de facto family (n=18:49%). These children referred to their foster carers as "mum and dad", and birth children and other fostered children as their "brothers and sisters". The children and young people's life maps showed a network of relationships associated with the foster family including foster grandparents and the foster carer's own birth children, and family pets. Of the eight

children who completed a life map, only one included her birth family on her map. However, this child *only* drew a picture of her birth family, which may have been an expression of her desire to return to them. Examples of how some of the children and young people described their foster carers are shown in Box 7.

Box 7: Children and young people's descriptions of their foster carers

"[This] is my family now, […] I see [other fostered child] as a sister now, which is really nice. I never had a sister and we get along like a house on fire. […] Here it is completely different, they are more family, […]. In other placements they just sort of [say], 'Do what you want', they don't care. Here [...] I just feel at home, […] Before they were [foster carers' names] and now I am calling them Mum and [...] Dad. And you know it is really nice that one of their friends, [name] that lives just down the road, he is like now like a granddad and it is really nice that I have actually got a family you know what I mean? It is really lovely." (Young person Interviewee)

"It is not like a normal foster carer's house, it is more of a family environment. I feel more comfortable here than I do at my proper parents' house […] It feels like a family, not a job. It is not like they have took on a job, they have took on a family." (Young person Interviewee)

"I like living here a lot, […] I mean, I don't know where to start. […] It's kind of like the little things really, you know, just sitting talking, having a laugh, just general stuff like that really. […] Especially when, being in foster care, the important [thing is] trying to make it a normal life. I don't feel any differently treated to when I see [foster carers] with their own children. You know, obviously, there's meetings and stuff that come into play. But, on a daily basis, […] you don't feel alienated in any way. I'm always included in the family discussion, et cetera. […] Well, to be fair, I've seen it from the other end of the scale as well because I was in a foster placement before here, and I chose to move because, well, the opposite end of the scale, I didn't really feel that welcome, I didn't feel happy living there" (Young person Interviewee)

These findings were corroborated by the case file analysis which suggested that language associated with familial warmth, respect and genuine regard was used frequently in the children's case files to describe how the carers perceived the fostering household relationships. A number of children (n=23, 9%) were recorded in the case files as referring to their carers in familial terms such as "mum and dad". However, a small number of the case files suggested that the use of familial terms may be selective and linked to children's desire to feel a sense of belonging.

While it was not an express aim of the programme for children and young people to become familiar with social pedagogy, some children did describe their understanding of the approach. As noted in Box 8, the children and young people tended to emphasise the relational elements.

Box 8: Children and young people's descriptions of social pedagogy

We asked the children and young people we interviewed what they knew about social pedagogy. This is what they said:

> *"I know that social pedagogy it is about, I think, bringing out our diamond within, that is what [my foster carer] said and it is there to help us […] It is how to conduct yourself around children and how you need to help children to be the best of their abilities*."

> *"I think there is something where the grown up has to let the child do most of the things when they are doing things with the child. I don't know, it is something like that because I was told by our [foster carer] that you usually let the child do most of the things when you're with them and just go "that is good "or "you are doing well" and things like that."*

> *"It is how the views of children, how you like treat them and things like that I think."*

> *"It is like not saying no straight away and then you have got to think about it and then you do with the hands and it comes from the heart."*

Other foster carers reported that Head, Heart, Hands had encouraged them further to invest time and effort into nurturing their relationship with the young person and had given them theoretical and practical tools to do so. In this way, the programme had provided **a language and a framework in which to think about that relationship**. A small number of the foster carers who participated in the interviews (n=7:8%) reported that they **had developed the ability to reflect on their relationship with the child and on incidents and exchanges in their shared day to day lives.** They reported that since attending the Head, Heart, Hands training they took time at the end of the each day to reflect on their relationship with their child and to consider whether anything could be changed.

> "*[Head, Heart, Hands] did help me to become much more […] reflective in terms of the […] the interactions that happen. You know if things have gone well, haven't gone well or whatever, any kind of miscommunication going on. […] So it has been useful in terms of just thinking through […] what may have happened or whatever ,so I think in terms of my reflections I think it has been quite useful."* (Foster carer interviewee).

The **Diamond Model** was noted by over a quarter of the foster carers interviewed (n=15:26 as being a helpful tool in which to conceptualise and talk about the nurturing potential of relationships. It was evident that the model had been particularly meaningful for some households, and four children and young people interviewed made explicit reference to the **Diamond Model** themselves. For instance, one child commented that "*the Diamond Model makes you feel special*". Other foster carers (n=12: 21%) reported that the **Lifeworld Orientation** model, reminded them to understand the unique characteristics of the individual children and young people.

Box 9: Definition – The Diamond model

ThemPra's Diamond Model symbolises one of the most fundamental underpinning principles of social pedagogy: there is a diamond within all of us. As human beings we are all precious and have a rich variety of knowledge, skills and abilities. Not all diamonds are polished and sparkly, but all have the potential to be. Similarly, every person has the potential to shine out – and social pedagogy is about supporting them in this. Therefore, social pedagogy has four core aims that are closely linked: well-being and happiness, holistic learning, relationship, and empowerment.

Eichsteller, G., and Holthoff, S., (2011) Conceptual foundations of social pedagogy: a transnational perspective from Germany *In:* Cameron, C., and Moss, P. (eds.). *Social Pedagogy and working with children and young people: where care and education meet*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Box 10: Definition - Lifeworld Orientation

The life-world orientation starts from the premise that social pedagogic practice can only be successful where it meets individuals in their everyday reality, focusing on their "direct experiences, their living contexts, their life skills and the strength of their self-responsibility" (Grunwald and Thiersch, 2009:132). Taking the everyday life-world as a starting point for practice requires a Haltung underpinned by respect – unconditional appreciation of who the other person is – and by tact – to know when to respectfully challenge a person to leave their comfort zone and enter their learning zone.

Eichsteller, G., and Holthoff, S., (2011) Conceptual foundations of social pedagogy: a transnational perspective from Germany *In:* Cameron, C., and Moss, P. (eds.). *Social Pedagogy and working with children and young people: where care and education meet*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

The impact of HHH on other relationships in the fostering household

Our previous interim reports have highlighted that foster carers, most notably, Engaged Adopters, stated that social pedagogy had not only impacted on their relationships with their fostered children but had influenced all aspects of their life. While Head, Heart, Hands was designed to develop foster carers' skills and characteristics in relation to their fostered children, the impact that the programme had on the wider fostering households in the interview sample was even more prominent at Wave 3. Eight (12%) foster carers reported that the concepts and approaches learnt through Head, Heart, Hands, had a positive impact on their relationship with other members of their fostering household. They noted that the tools and strategies for deepening relationships with fostered children are as readily applicable to sons and daughters, and were of the view that these approaches had positive results. Of particular note was the **Lifeworld Orientation,** which had enabled these foster carers to better understand and appreciate their own sons and daughters (including birth and adopted children).

Unlike other forms of children's social care intervention, fostering occurs in the family home. Moreover, social pedagogy is an approach to working with others that is not unique to foster care,

and, as in many continental European countries, can be applied to a range of sectors and relationships. It is therefore, perhaps unsurprising that for some fostering households, albeit a small proportion, Head, Heart, Hands was reported to have had an impact across the lifespace. Indeed, a small number of foster carers reported that they have reconceptualised fostering as a whole family activity, placing greater emphasis on whole family reflection and decision making. As one foster carer noted:

> *"[Head, Heart, Hands] made us think differently about the impact on the whole family, and also, to discuss it with the whole family [...] which we may not have done if I hadn't have been on the programme. […] It is as a result of the Head, Heart, Hands programme, […] that we're able to discuss [situations] more [with our own children] and bring everything out more into the open. [...] Whereas I think, before, it might not have got discussed about how they felt or how we were feeling, particularly. But I think, as a result of the programme and the training that I've had, that we've had to discuss things that, have been issues because they do have such a big impact on the whole family."* (Foster carer interviewee).

In one site (Orange) some foster care profiles[19] had been remodelled to incorporate Head, Heart, Hands attributes. In the instances where this re-modelled profile had been used, the case file analysis identified a sense of the whole fostering household approach and ethos.

Previous research has explored the impact that fostering can have on the sons and daughters of foster carters (Höjer, Sebba and Luke, 2013). Evidence suggests that including sons and daughters in the decision to foster, informing them about the individual children and young people that might live with them, and ensuring that birth children have protected time with their parents, may reduce detrimental impact that fostering can have on some (but not all) birth children. Research also suggests that the concerns about the impact that fostering has on birth children is one factor that may lead to some foster carers ceasing fostering and placement breakdown (Wilson, Sinclair and Gibbs, 2000; McDermid et al., 2012). The evidence in this evaluation is tentative and based on a small number of foster carers. However, for those foster carers who reported that Head, Heart, Hands had a positive impact on their wider family, it is possible to hypothesise that more stable and strong relationships between all members of the fostering household, may create more stable and secure environments in which fostered children can flourish. Fostering services exploring introducing social pedagogy may benefit from considering how social pedagogy may be used to inform the development of the relationships across the whole household.

The Common Third

In social pedagogic practice, everyday actions and activities are seen as meaningful and an opportunity to further develop the carer-child relationship (Cameron, McQuail and Petrie, 2007; Cameron and Moss, 2011). A small number of foster carers who participated in the interviews (n=5:8%) reported that they had become more *conscious* of the importance of seemingly small, everyday actions that help the child feel cared for and nurtured. For example, following a Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development session one foster carer reported asking her fostered son

[19] A foster carer profile provides information about a foster carer, including the type of placements they are approved for, along with some personal information about them, their home and their family.

(aged 11) what he valued about their relationship. To her surprise he replied "*good food and the stuff that you just take for granted*".

Box 11: Definition - The Common Third

This concept explores how an everyday activity, such as preparing a meal, can become the catalyst for development beyond, for example, learning to cook, or eating a nice lunch. Holthoff and Junker Harbo (2011) note that "*the Common Third highlights that doing 'something' together is a brilliant opportunity to get to know each other, to develop strong relationships. The important thing here is the process, not the product*". Essential to the common third is the environment within which such activities are undertaken, emphasising that all parties are equal. An activity that can be jointly shared enables the pedagogue to bring their own personally (likes and dislikes!) into the relationship, helping that relationship to develop in a real and authentic way.

Thempra (no date, a) *Social Pedagogy – training pack: Social Pedagogic concepts*. [online] http://www.socialpedagogy.co.uk/downloads/Social%20Pedagogic%20Concepts.pdf

Many more foster carers who were interviewed highlighted that the **Common Third** enabled them to be more conscious of how sharing activities together can create a shared space in which both parties learn together and deepen their relationship. Almost a third of the foster carers interviewed reported that the Common Third encouraged them to reconsider how everyday activities were used to develop their relationship with their fostered child (n=16:28%). The Common Third was frequently cited in interviews with foster carers conducted throughout the evaluation. During Wave 1 of the evaluation it was noted that there was some disparity between the foster carers' concept of the Common Third. The majority of examples, described the Common Third as a way to use an everyday activity in order to *teach the child something* and only four examples emphasised the way in which the Common Third might be used to enhance relationships. In contrast, during Wave 3 only three mentions of the Common Third could be described as purely designed to teach the child something (as opposed to deepening their relationships). The data gathered at Wave 3 suggest that conceptualisations of the Common Third have shifted away from more instrumental definitions that focus on the task, to a tool that is closer to the articulation of the common third in social pedagogic theory, primarily focused on the relationship.

These carers reported being more **intentional** about spending time together, and more **conscious** of how the child seemed to be engaging with them during those activities. As one foster carer noted since Head, Heart, Hands he had been:

> *"Doing more alongside and together with the child, making that conscious effort to try and be included in each other's activities [...] So if am going out for a run or something, before I would have thought I am going out for a run. Now I think is there anybody who is not in school, who is around in the day would they want to be included in that? Should we do it together? And it might not be the type of run that I would go on my own but could I change it slightly to be an experience that would suit us both."* (Foster carer interviewee).

It was evident that the children and young people in the interview sample particularly valued the activities that foster carers and children and young people do together *per se*. When asked what they liked about living with their foster carers, the first thing that was mentioned in 40% of the children and young people's interviews was the activities they share with their foster carers. In one example, when asked what made him feel settled with his foster carers, another child said "*We do activities together sometimes […] walking, chatting and bike riding*". A number of the children and young people reported that doing activities together helped them to build their relationship with their foster carer and helped them to feel special and cared for (n=8:22%). For one child, the fact that her previous foster carers did not do very much with her was reason enough to state that they "*weren't very good […] we didn't really do much*". Later she explains that, in contrast, her current foster carers made time to spend with her specifically:

> *"What I really like is sometimes when […], me and [foster carer] get a DVD, [...] and we will get some sweets in and a takeaway kind of meal, quick one in the microwave and we will watch like a DVD […] it is just relaxing"* (Young person interviewee).

The activities mentioned by the foster carers and the children and young people in the interview sample were varied and included sports, games, films, cooking and cleaning. What was evident from the interviews was that the Common Third provided a framework for foster carers to be more conscious of creating opportunities to utilise everyday life, and something that is already important to the child, to create a deeper and more nurturing carer-child relationships.

One of the aims of the **Common Third** is to build trust between the social pedagogic practitioner and the child, through the child's experience of engaging in activities, and thereby cultivating the child's self-confidence and sense of value (Petrie, 2011). The interviews suggest that the Common Third was being used to develop trust between the members of the fostering households, and providing opportunities to bond. Although useful for the fostering household across the spectrum, the Common Third was at times used early on in placements or where relationships were identified as being challenging. An example of how the Common Third helped to build trust between a young person and her foster carers is given in Box 12.

The findings of the evaluation suggest that the Common Third in particular had assisted a proportion of the foster carers who participated in an interview at Wave 3 to **undertake practical activities in and out of the home** and to **understand how different activities can be used to build a relationship.**

Box 12: Case study example use of the Common Third

Emily, Duncan and Lynn

Emily was 19 years old when she participated in the Head, Heart, Hands interview. She was living independently when we spoke to her, but had lived with Duncan and Lynn for the previous two years. Emily explained that initially she had not been keen on moving in with her new foster carers. She enjoyed her previous placement because there were other young people there and she said that:

> *"When I first went [to live with Duncan and Lynn] I was kicking and screaming, I was like "I am not going to [live there]". […]I am not going to lie, I was quite resentful. Yes especially towards [Duncan and Lyn] but towards the situation, […] And for the first, I don't know, first three weeks I didn't want anything to do with them, I just sat in my room."*

Duncan told us that the Common Third is one of the tools covered on the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses that had particularly stood out to him. He told us that:

> *"[The] Common Third [is important] because I think I am looking for a place where I can have a helpful conversation with the child. So let's discover what does the child like doing? […] So they would be excited about the fact that we are going to go and do something that they enjoy doing and that then provides the potentially non-confrontational kind of environment where we can chat. And perhaps while we're skating around or whatever it is that we're doing we can actually discover a little bit more about their feelings […] [The Common Third] gets them doing something they really enjoy so their mind is less focused on their anxieties but through that activity have an opportunity to perhaps allay some of their anxieties."*

Duncan used to take regular walks. Following a fall out with one of her friends, Duncan invited Emily to join him. During the walk, they talked about the fight Emily had had with her friend and what she could do about it. After that, Duncan and Emily went on regular walks. She said

> *"So I just started going with him and it became, honestly like the best therapy I have ever had. I mean I used to be ready to go for a walk before him after a couple of months, I was in the chair, [asking] "Come on are we going? Are we going?" Loved it. And that was when you just talked about everything. I would talk about how stupid school was or college or you know and it became that I was so much more chilled in my other lives because I knew right if I just make a mental note of this and wait until [we went on the walk] and then I ask [Duncan's] advice."*

Later she described how important Duncan and Lyn had become to her, and she continued to see them regularly once she had moved into onto living independently.

> *"Honestly there is nothing that they wouldn't do for anyone, I love them to pieces […] you know honestly best… probably one of the best years of my life when I lived there."*

Nurturing equitable relationships

Equality of relationships is described by Boddy (2011) as a cornerstone of social pedagogy. Social pedagogy recognises that a relationship between an adult and child is nonetheless a relationship between two people, and while the adult may have knowledge and experience beyond that of the child's, the social pedagogic practitioner's role is to use that knowledge to support (rather than to have power over) the child (Boddy, 2011). While a large number of foster carers reported that they were naturally child focused in their approach, the interview data suggest that Head, Heart, Hands reinforced this view. A third of the foster carers reported that the tools covered on the Learning and Development courses enabled them to be both more mindful of the power dynamics between the carer and the child, and to put practical strategies in place in order to redress those dynamics (n=19:33%).

While a number of foster carers who participated in the interviews reported that they had always offered fostered children a choice of the kinds of activities they want to do, five reported that they had **further understood** the empowering impact that choice had on children since attending the Head, Heart, Hands, Learning and Development courses. These foster carers had subsequently made a greater effort to invite the child to choose the kind of activities they wished to do. As Boddy notes "*this understanding of equality means that the conception of the young person's rights in that relationship goes beyond what is stipulated in procedures and legislation. Their participation in, and responsibility for, decision making is enabled by the pedagogue through dialogue and listening – as one person to another*" (2011:117). Reflecting this view, one foster carer noted:

> "*He has got a choice. [It is] so empowering the child, that's something huge in our house now. This little boy's never had any control. He was taken into care, he's been taken away from his family. He had no control over it, no say in it. So yes, empowering him on a daily basis is a huge thing in this house. He always has choices, even when he doesn't like them he still gets a choice, and just to make him feel like a valid person. […] So it's important that he has a choice, he has a say".* (Foster carer interviewee).

Other foster carers in the interview sample (n=8:14%) reported that letting the child or young person take the lead during Common Third activities was vital to allowing them to feel a degree of equality, in addition to feeling valued, trusted and empowered. As Petrie notes one of the aims of this concept is to create a mutual focus for the social pedagogic practitioner and the child, who cooperate together with a shared goal or shared task. The task neither belongs to the adult nor the child, but creates an entity of third mutual ownership (Petrie, 2011:79). In this way, the Common Third enables traditional power dynamics between the adult and the child to be equalised (even if it is just for the period of the task), building trust and mutual respect between the two parties. Such examples from the sample of foster carers who we interviewed include letting a child navigate a route, be responsible for walking the dogs, and showing the foster carer how to do things that the child knows how to do, but the foster carer does not. One foster carer, after encouraging a young person to map read during a walk remarked that the young person *"said: 'that [wasn't a] walk. That was an adventure!' They did see the fun in deciding for themselves"*. An example of allowing the child to take the lead from the case file analysis is given in Box 13. Other foster carers who participated in the interviews at Wave 3 reported that by doing something new, where both carer and child were equivalent in their experience and understanding of a task or activity created an opportunity to be

more equal with the child (n= 5:8%) These foster carers reported that they were able to demonstrate to the child that everyone feels out of their **comfort zone** at times, and this brought them closer together, strengthening the bond between them. A small number of the foster carers who participated in an interview at Wave 3 (n=7:12%) reported that since Head, Heart, Hands, they were more likely to allow the children and young people to participate in activities that they previously would not have allowed them to do. Examples included walking to school on their own, assisting with preparing meals by chopping food, and sporting activities. These foster carers were of the view that that these activities were in the best interest of the child and allowing their fostered children to undertake these activities empowered them, taught them specific skills and let the children and young people feel trusted.

Box 13: Example of letting the child take the lead

"When taking young person to opticians, [the carer] allowed [young person] to lead the way and choose which bus to get on. [The] young person felt really good that they were able to do it and carer felt good that the young person was able to do it. Also used model to get young person to think about what would do if bus broke down on way to college; young person come up with solution that [they would] get on next bus that came along. Carer said [Head, Heart, Hands] was a really positive training experience as if something doesn't work you don't give up you just try another model or method until you find one that works for you. [Carer] felt it gives carers more authority to make decision and made her feel more empowered as wasn't relying on others telling foster carers what to do". (Case file).

Being offered choice was highlighted as being extremely important by a small number of children and young people in the interview sample (n=6:17%). These young people reported that being offered a choice made them feel cared for, and empowered, by their foster carers. The types of choices being offered were both large and (seemingly) small, but were perceived by the young people themselves as having the same level of impact. For instance, one of these young people was offered the opportunity to decorate her room when she first moved in with her foster carers. In response she said that "*Yes, the respect I get [here] is amazing"*. Another noted that:

> *"In a way, [being given choices] makes bonding a lot better. And it reduces the resentment and rebellion in a person. Like, if a someone says, "Right, you're doing this", and say, you're not quite happy with that decision, then, you're obviously going to automatically, be like, "Hang on a second, I don't like this". Whereas, if you discuss it, it's more like, "Okay, what do you want to do?'" And then, you'll all work together on the same objective. Which, in the end of the day, kind of avoids a lot of problems*" (Young person interviewee).

A personal professional practice

As Eichsteller and Holthoff note, a professional social pedagogic relationship is informed by the personality of the pedagogue. Social pedagogy proposes that what enables that relationship to be nurturing to the child is the ability of the practitioner to bring in his or her personality to enrich and authenticate that relationship while ensuring that personal experience is only shared or introduced

into that relationship when it will enhance the child's own experience (Eichsteller and Holthoff, 2011:42). To facilitate the bringing together of the 'Head, Heart, Hands' of social pedagogic practices, the professional understanding and theoretical knowledge (the head), must be brought together with tacit knowledge and genuine positive regards (the heart) through practical action (the hands). Social pedagogic practices, therefore, require a careful balance between the personal and the professional. This balance is, perhaps, of particular concern for foster carers. As one foster carer in the interview sample observed: "*when people are living in your home, there's quite a lot that they see, [laughs] […] There's things, obviously, that's kind of personal to you and then there's more of a professional type element"*. Boddy notes that "*The key to the relationship is, therefore, the combination of the personal and professional in the relationship. The recognition that both are necessary, but neither are sufficient, becomes critical in addressing the challenges of bringing up children away from their families of origin*" (2011:115).

Box 14: Definition – The Three Ps

The "Three Ps" is a tool for structured reflection. The Ps are: Professional (the pedagogues training, knowledge, theoretical underpinning), Personal (the personal relationship between the pedagogue and the child or young person) and Private (how our the pedagogues' private understanding and/or perspective affect any one interaction). In social pedagogy each of these overlap, and are always present in any social interaction. As such, they should be considered in any reflection.

Social Pedagogues are aware of the interplay between each P and use the 3P model in supervision and on their own to reflect upon practice, understand the impact the child or young person may have on them and to improve practice and the relationship with the child.

"Although the Private P is something which Social Pedagogues do not share with the child or young person; it is imperative that practitioners are:

- *able to recognise when their reactions to a child may have something to do with what is private to them, and*
- *able and open to discussing this in professional supervision so that a deeper understanding of self is gained and practice is improved*"

Thempra (no date, b) *Social Pedagogy – training pack: Social Pedagogic concepts*. [online] http://www.socialpedagogy.co.uk/downloads/Social%20Pedagogic%20Concepts.pdf

A little under a quarter of the foster carers who took part in the interviews (12:21%) reported that they had been encouraged to share more personal information with their fostered children as a result of Head, Heart, Hands and **to use their personal relationship with the child to help them to grow and develop**. These foster carers reported that they had found it useful to share their own experiences and challenges of childhood with the children and young people they cared for to build positive relationships. They also reported that it enabled them to share information and advice, and reassure the young people that others experience challenges. Other participating foster carers reported that honesty was vital to ensuring that the child or young person trusted them. In one such

example, a foster carer reported that he had shared the fact that he himself had been fostered with his young person; something that he had never done before. He noted that:

> *"By sharing that part of me […] those bonds are becoming closer and actually this young person is learning that I am not that much different from a lot of other people, [...] but actually there are other people in the same boat*". (Foster carer interviewee).

The concept of the **Three Ps** was mentioned by these foster carers and was reported to assist them in establishing where the boundaries between the professional, personal and private might be for each individual child, and for each individual foster carer. These foster carers reported that they used the model to reflect on whether enough, or too much had been shared with the children in their care, and what should be kept private. Other foster carers in the interview sample reported that the Three Ps helped them to reflect on and regulate their own private emotions, ensuring that only what was helpful for their fostered children was shared. As one foster carer noted:

> *"These kids with quite complex needs can evoke quite strong feelings in you and, just the nature of the work, […] It is really, really difficult. [Head, Heart, Hands, has helped me] to be aware that actually, that's okay to be, [laughs] it's okay to have those feelings yourself and to, sometimes, when you think about the Three Ps, it was like, really easy way of working, to have that private side."* (Foster carer interviewee).

One young person's view of the importance of foster carers sharing personal aspects with the children and young people they care for is shown in Box 15.

Like many of the foster carers interviewed, participating frontline children's social care staff from three of the sites reported that the programme had encouraged them to bring more of the personal to their work with the foster carers, allowing them to develop more authentic relationships with them.

Box 15: Case study: A young person's view of the importance of the personal

Matthew and John

Matthew was 17 when he spoke to us. He had been living with John for about six months before John attended the Learning and Development courses. Before moving in with John, Matthew had been in several placements and had struggled to settle in with John. Matthew described to us how he kept out of John's way at first.

John told us how he purposely gave Matthew his own space, but invited him to a range of different family activities including his son's wedding. Slowly Matthew started to open up to John about different challenges he was facing and John talked about his own experience and how he had handled similar difficulties. Matthew said of John:

> *"[When foster carers are open with you] you start to realise this is an actual human being, I found there is a lot of my foster carers and a lot of everyone else they weren't human to me. They were just like little robots. Especially social workers, they are the worse. I have never known my social worker's surname never mind if they had children or anything. Very, very closed off, private, private, private. But they also want to pry in to your life because they are sort of in charge of your life per se. And as soon as you open up and stuff, you start to humanise them, you start to go, do you know what, they actually are proper people […] and you realise [my foster carer] is a normal person, [..] and it is with that connection which made me feel do you know what? I am not going to cut him out, […] But I was like the connection was so much deeper because I respected him as a human as well and the minute he started showing his flaws, the minute you see that, you are like oh you know what? You don't have to be perfect all the time. You really don't and that is what, yes that is what I love about [my foster carers].*

Box 16: Summary of key findings: Relationships within the fostering household

- Almost a third of the foster carers interviewed (n=18:32%) reported that Head, Heart, Hands had empowered and encouraged them to express warmth, respect and genuine affection for the young person. It was noted that the foster carers interviewed expressed affection for the children and young people they cared for prior to Head, Heart, Hands. Foster carers interviewed in Wave 3 reported that while they had not necessarily changed their behaviours towards the children and young people they cared for, they had been reminded, and therefore become more conscious of the significance of the carer-child relationships, since Head, Heart Hands.
- Other foster carers reported that Head, Heart, Hands had encouraged them further to invest time and effort into nurturing their relationship with the young person and had given them theoretical and practical tools to do so. Concepts such as the Diamond Model, the Lifeworld Orientation and the Common Third were of particular interest in this regard. In this way, the programme had provided a language and a framework in which to think about that relationship.
- Two thirds of foster carer survey respondents (n=31:66%) reported that their relationships with their fostered child had changed a great deal since attending the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses.
- These findings were corroborated by the case file analysis which suggested that language associated with familial warmth, respect and genuine regard was used frequently in the children's case files to describe how the carers perceived the fostering household relationships. A number of children (n=23, 9%) were recorded in the case files as referring to their foster carers in familial terms such as "mum and dad". However, a small number of the case files suggested that the use of familial terms may be selective and linked to children's desire to feel a sense of belonging.
- A small number of foster carers who participated in the interviews (n=5:8%) reported that they had become more conscious of the importance of seemingly small, everyday actions that help the child feel cared for and nurtured. Many more foster carers who were interviewed highlighted that the Common Third enabled them to be more conscious of how sharing activities together can create a shared space in which both parties learn together and deepen their relationship. Almost a third of the foster carers interviewed reported that the Common Third encouraged them to reconsider how everyday activities were used to develop their relationship with their fostered child (n=16:28%).
- Eight (12%) foster carers reported that the concepts and approaches learnt through Head, Heart, Hands had a positive impact on their relationship with other members of their fostering household. A small number of foster carers reported that they have reconceptualised fostering as a whole family activity, placing greater emphasis on whole family reflection and decision making.
- A small number of the foster carers who participated in an interview at Wave 3 (n=7:12%) reported that since Head, Heart, Hands they were more likely to allow the children and young people to participate in activities that they previously would not have allowed them to do. However, frustrations arose when these decisions were not supported by social care staff.
- A little under a quarter of the foster carers who took part in the interviews (12:21%) reported that they had been encouraged to share more personal information with their fostered children as a result of Head, Heart, Hands and to use their personal relationship with the child to help them to grow and develop. The concept of the Three Ps was mentioned by these foster carers and was reported to assist them in establishing where the boundaries between the professional, personal and private might be for each individual child, and for each individual foster carer.

6. The impact of HHH foster carers: The development of the "professional heart"

Central to the aims and objectives of the Head, Heart, Hands programme is the development of professional, confident foster carers using social pedagogic approaches and exhibiting the qualities and attributes described in Appendix B. As noted above, social pedagogy stresses that personal experience and tacit knowledge are necessary for effective care, but are not sufficient alone. They must be brought together with professional knowledge and understanding. This is what Boddy refers to as "*the professional heart*" (Boddy, 2011). As noted in Chapter 2, social pedagogy is both a theoretical discipline and a field of practice. It is a way of thinking that influences the way that people behave. Throughout the evaluation, the findings of the interviews with foster carers and children and young people they support suggest that Head, Heart, Hands impacted on both the way that participating foster carers *thought* about their foster carer practice and the *things that they did* with children and young people. Our findings on the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on foster carers and children and young people in Waves 1 and 2 are explored in previous evaluation reports (McDermid et al., 2014; 2015).

By Wave 3 the majority of foster carers in the interview sample were able to identify at least one way in which Head, Heart, Hands had influenced them as foster carers (n=54:95%). A degree of variation in the extent of that influence was identified across the sample. It is encouraging to note that only three out of the 57 foster carers interviewed reported that Head, Heart, Hands had not impacted on their practice in anyway. A number of foster carers in the interview sample reported that in the final year of the evaluation social pedagogic principles had begun to embed into their way of being as foster carers. They described social pedagogic practices as becoming normalised (n=8:14%).

When asked what the best thing about Head, Heart, Hands was, just under half of the Wave 3 foster carer survey respondents reported that the programme had **had a positive influence on their practice** (n=21:49%). The Wave 3 foster carer survey respondents were also asked if the Learning and Development courses had positively or negatively changed their approach to their work by rating on a scale of zero to ten (with ten being the highest) the extent to which a change had occurred across a number of factors. The scores were grouped to show whether respondents reported to have experienced different levels of change according to the following parameters:

- Score of 10 – 8 = a great deal of change
- Score of 7 – 5 = some change
- Score of 4 or less = little or no change

The average (mean) was also calculated and is referred to as the "change score". The higher the score, the more likely the survey respondents were to have experienced a positive change as a result of Head, Heart, Hands. The scores by site were calculated. However, as noted in Chapter 3 low responses rates in some sites meant that it was not statistically viable to carry out a meaningful comparison of responses between sites. The findings are detailed in Table 4 below and noted in relevant sections throughout this report.

Table 4 The levels of change that have occurred since attending the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses

	Little or no change		Some change		A great deal of change		Mean change score	
	n	*%*	n	*%*	n	*%*		*n*
Your self confidence	1	*2.1*	16	*34*	30	*63.8*	8.1	*46*
Knowledge of caring for foster children	4	*8*	32.9	*15*	28	*59.6*	7.9	*47*
The way you deal with conflict or difficult situations	3	*6*	11	*23.4*	33	*70.2*	8.3	*47*
The way you deal with difficult behaviour	4	*8.5*	11	*23.4*	32	*68.1*	8	*47*
The way you make decisions about day to day activities	14	*29.8*	11	*23.5*	22	*46.8*	6.2	*47*
The activities you do with your fostered child	3	*6.5*	14	*30.4*	29	*63*	7.8	*45*
Your relationship with your fostered child	5	*10.6*	11	*23.4*	31	*66*	7.6	*47*
Your relationship with your supervising social worker	8	*17*	8	*17*	31	*66*	7.4	*47*
Your relationship with your fostered child's social worker	14	*29.8*	9	*19.1*	24	*51.1*	6.5	*47*

Encouragingly, the Wave 3 foster carer survey analysis also suggested that Head, Heart, Hands resulted in changes to foster carers' practice (albeit to differing degrees).

These findings are corroborated by the case file analysis, which identified that a proportion of the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers continued to use social pedagogic approaches throughout the duration of the evaluation. The case file information about carer's practice was reviewed based on the Head, Heart, Hands attributes (Appendix B) and whether, there was evidence to show foster carer(s) using social pedagogic approaches. This review took into account explicit references to Head, Heart, Hands models, and a second order analysis where specific models were not explicitly mentioned by the case file author, but it was sufficiently clear from the text that models and social pedagogic theories such as The Common Third and Reflection were being drawn on. The results of this analysis were cross-checked (inter-rater reliability) between the team of researchers.

Our analysis identified at least one way in which the foster carers were practising social pedagogically in **around half of the households included in the case file analysis** (n=74:47%). Table H.1 in Appendix H shows the breakdown of evidence of the use of social pedagogic approaches by site. There were 83 fostering households (53%) where our analysis of case records found no explicit or implicit reference to social pedagogic approaches or the impact of Head, Heart, Hands although this does not necessarily mean that the approaches were not being used. As noted in Chapter 3, it is likely that the nature and detail of recording in relation to Head, Heart, Hands and references to social pedagogy was affected by a number of factors, including the degree to which the case file author had been exposed to, and engaged with, social pedagogy. Therefore, while there is evidence

that around half of the children included in the case file analysis had been exposed to social pedagogic practices, it is possible that this figure was higher, but had not been recorded within the case files.

The case file analysis explored the links between the descriptions of the relationships between the fostering household and the extent to which evidence was found that social pedagogy was being used by the foster carers. The relationships in the fostering household are described as positive in 62% of case files of children where there was evidence of a social pedagogic approach being used (n=84). By contrast, fostering household relationships were described as positive in 43% of cases where there was no evidence of a social pedagogic approach. Moreover, in cases where there was evidence of social pedagogic approaches being used by foster carers a higher average number of positive themes were identified. However, it is not possible to confidently state whether social pedagogic practices led to better relationships within the fostering household, or whether fostering households with more secure and stable relationships are more likely to be able to adopt social pedagogic approaches.

Encouragingly, the Wave 3 foster carer survey analysis and the interviews with foster carers suggested that Head, Heart, Hands resulted in changes to foster carers' practice (albeit to differing degrees). However, while only three foster carers could not identify any changes in practice since the commencement of Head, Heart, Hands, others were reticent to state that any changes in their practice were **solely** down to the programme (n=9:16%). These foster carers reported that it was difficult to separate the changes in approach from other contributing factors such as becoming more confident and experienced in fostering generally, or that they had simply got to know the children and young people better over the course of the evaluation timeframe. Others reported that their method had changed more as a result of a change in placement, as different children require different approaches. Nevertheless, the findings of the evaluation, suggest that for many of the participating foster carers, Head, Heart, Hands had been a contributing factor to enhancing their practice.

The personal and the private: The impact of Head, Heart, Hands on the foster carers themselves

Around a fifth of the foster carers in the interview sample reported that the programme enabled them to reflect on the influence that their personal and private experiences had on their own fostering (and parenting) (n=11:19%). A small number of foster carers reported that the **Lifeworld Orientation** and the concept of **Haltung** had enabled them to explore the impact of their own childhood experiences on them personally, in addition to how it informs their fostering (n=6:11%). As a result, these foster carers reported that they had been able to make small adjustments to the way that they care for their fostered child, and in some instances had shared these experiences with the child to enable the child's own development.

Box 17: Definition - Haltung

Haltung roughly translates as attitude, mind-set, ethos. Haltung is based on our values, our philosophy, our notions about morality and our concept of mankind. Haltung guides our actions and by our actions we live out our Haltung. All of these affect how we conceptualise the people we interact with, which in turn affects how we behave towards them and colours their behaviour towards us. In social pedagogy, Haltung expresses an emotional connectedness to other people and a profound respect for their human dignity. The Swiss pedagogue, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) stated: *"I seek education towards humanity, and this only emanates through love"* (Pestalozzi, 1964:226). The pedagogic task requires a congruent Haltung that reinforces this aim, brings it to life and transcends all pedagogic practices.

Adapted from: **Eichsteller, G., and Holthoff, S., (2011) Conceptual foundations of social pedagogy: a transnational perspective from Germany *In:* Cameron, C., and Moss, P. (eds.). *Social Pedagogy and working with children and young people: where care and education meet.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. P. 36-37**

While fostering can be highly rewarding, the challenges of caring for some children and young people can extend beyond normative experiences of parenting (Murray, Tarren-Sweeny and France, 2011). Fostering can result in distinct periods of stress and strain. Reducing the impact of strain may have an important impact on foster carers and children and young people alike. Previous research has found that higher disruption rates are found among strained carers and stress is one factor influencing decisions to cease fostering (Farmer, Lipscombe and Moyers, 2005; Wilson, Sinclair and Gibbs, 2000). Other foster carers in the interview sample reported the ways in which Head, Heart, Hands had highlighted the need for foster carers to take care of their own wellbeing. Most notably for these carers in the interview sample, reflection was reported to have reduced prolonged periods of stress, through providing frameworks by which they could critically assess challenging periods, to take account of personal feelings of guilt, while not being dictated to by them. As one noted:

> *"I think the biggest thing for me is I am kind of myself and I really understand that importance of my own wellbeing to be well and fit and happy so I can then look after other people. That is definitely something I lacked before social pedagogy […] I can see how that has benefited the children that I look after, my husband, my mum, various different relationships. I am quite passionate about that and I really do see the difference in myself. I am a lot happier and content, and yes I think that is the biggest thing for me." (Foster carer interviewee).*

Peer support

As noted above, social pedagogy places a strong emphasis on the use of the group as a resource and the Learning and Development courses were designed to encourage group working, trust and relationships. It is, therefore, encouraging to note that this emphasis on group working was identified as a positive element of the programme by foster carers from both the interview and survey samples. Almost half of the foster carer survey respondents reported that **meeting other foster carers** and developing supportive peer networks to share ideas was the best thing about the Head, Heart, Hands programme (n=20:47%). The notion of bringing together a group of carers with a

common goal or ethos was also highlighted as being extremely valuable by six of those foster carer survey respondents. Similarly, almost a quarter of the foster carers in the interview sample reported that aspects of the programme design had enabled them to develop supportive relationships with other foster carers (n=14:24%). The length of the Core Learning and Development course (eight days) and the experiential and interactive style were reported to have enabled foster carers in the same course cohort to get to know one another and to form bonds that had lasted until the end of the programme. Those foster carers who attended Head, Heart, Hands events following the Learning and Development courses, such as momentum groups, were able to continue to meet together to maintain those supportive relationships. However, it should be noted that other evaluation reports have highlighted that these groups were typically attended by the most enthusiastic of carers (Ghate and McDermid, 2016), suggesting once again that a "virtuous cycle" may be at play.

These foster carers reported that the peer supportive relationships were an important part of their experience of the programme, and existing research suggests that these groups may have a lasting impact, if those peer relationships are maintained. Peer support between foster carers has been found to facilitate emotional and practical support, providing opportunities for carers to learn from one another's experiences (Ivanova and Brown, 2010), and be reassured to discover that others have faced similar challenges (Pallett et al., 2002). Studies have highlighted the benefit of a shared understanding between foster carers and the value that foster carers place on talking to someone who knows what it is like (Nutt, 2006; McInerny, 2009; Cavazzi, Guilfoyle and Sims, 2010; Blythe et al., 2011; Sebba et al., 2016). Peer support has also been linked to decreasing foster carers' stress, reducing disruptions in placements, and improvements to the retention of foster carers (Luke and Sebba, 2013). In the light of the evidence of the impact of peer support from this and other studies, it may be advantageous for sites to consider how these supportive networks that have developed between participating foster carers might be maintained, and how to ensure that other foster carers may engage with them. Moreover, fostering services implementing other similar training programmes may benefit from exploring how these supportive peer networks may be developed and encouraged through the programme design.

The professional heart: The impact of the programme on foster carer practice

Almost a quarter of the foster carers reported that they had learnt **new approaches or tools** (n=10:24%), including reflective practice, Lifeworld Orientation and the Common Third, that they had used within their own household. One survey respondent wrote: *"the addition of other strategies such as "The Common Third" that are amazingly simple and amazingly effective"* was the best thing about the programme. Survey respondents also reported that Head, Heart, Hands had influenced the way that they deal with difficult behaviours (n=32:68%) and the activities that foster carers do with their fostered children (n=29:63%). Similarly, a small number of the foster carers who participated in an interview at Wave 3 (n=9:16%) reported that the practical tools explored on the Learning and Development courses, including the Common Third (explored elsewhere in this report) provided them new ways of working with the children.

More commonly cited among the evaluation participants, however, was the view that the theoretical approaches explored through Head, Heart, Hands **provided a framework through which to articulate existing knowledge about good practice**. Around a third of the foster carers were interviewed at Wave 3 (n=20:35%), and frontline children's social care staff from five of the sites

reported that the provision of a framework for existing practice was a key outcome of their participation in the programme. These evaluation participants reported that as a result they had become more **reflective and conscious** of their actions and how they may or may not be nurturing for the child. These foster carers noted that they may not have dramatically changed *what they were doing* with the children and young people on a day to day basis, they were more **thoughtful and intentional** in their actions. As one foster carer remarked:

> *"What I found with the course is that it hasn't really changed what I do so much as deepened my understanding of why I do it. [...] [It] has made me more aware of things I would probably have done instinctively. And I reflect on them more […], I'm just more aware of what I'm doing and why I'm doing it."* (Foster carer interviewee).

In this way, Head, Heart, Hands was described by some foster carers in the interview sample as **enhancing to their practice**, enabling them to apply professional knowledge and skills as different circumstances arose. These foster carers were of the view that **putting labels on things they were already doing** was in itself helpful in making them more mindful of their existing behaviours:

> "*Having, labels for things makes you a bit more conscious of, oh, this is what I am doing even though you were doing it anyway*" (Foster carer interviewee).

Evidence that the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers were more intentional in their actions was also found in the case files of 24 (15%) fostering households. Similarly, around two thirds (n=28:60%) of the foster carer survey respondents reported that the programme had **improved their knowledge of caring for fostered children**. Of those who commented on the most impactful or best thing about Head, Heart, Hands, around a third (n=15:35%) reported that the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development Courses h**ad validated their existing approaches, and provided a language or framework for them**. One respondent wrote: *"I was already doing these things with our foster children, but now have a name for it"* and another commented that Head, Heart, Hands had helped him "*realise I am on the right track with children in helping to build their confidence in themselves*".

While a third of the foster carers who participated in the evaluation reported that the provision of a framework for understanding practice was highly valued, this view was not found across the entire sample. Other foster carers in the interview sample were of the view that training went into too much depth, was repetitive at times and relied too much on the theoretical aspects of social pedagogy (n=14:25%). Three of these foster carers expressed frustrations that the courses did not sufficiently explore how to implement the approaches in practice, or take into account the complexities of their children's needs. These foster carers were of the view that the implication during the training was that they just needed to implement the strategies and they would work. As one foster carer described:

> *"It sort of has made me feel a bit guilty sometimes or a bit inadequate if I am honest because I totally […] buy in to what [Head, Heart, Hands] is trying to do and say and I think they are all very, you know, reasonable good approaches and that is what I liked about it. […] But when they are not working, [...] then you think, oh God, well I am trying these things that are, you know, on the course, from the course, but it is going really*

badly wrong so it must be [that] I am not communicating well enough or I am not empowering enough or whatever and you start to feel a bit inadequate [...] It felt as if you should just be able to do all of these things and then it will be fine. And if it's not going right then you must be doing something wrong. And it wasn't really acknowledged how difficult it was and they don't necessarily work" (Foster carer interviewee).

While these foster carers were in the minority of those who participated in the evaluation, their experiences suggest that sites exploring introducing social pedagogy may benefit from supporting carers in not only understanding the principles of the approach, but in implementing them as well. Further opportunities and support to foster carers to implement these strategies may enable more foster carers to engage with the programme. However, while many of the foster carers in the evaluation interview sample were highly positive about social pedagogy, the views of some (albeit a small number) in the interview sample suggest that the approach may not be appropriate for everyone.

Communication

A small number of foster carers who participated in the evaluation reported that Head, Heart, Hands had resulted in a greater awareness of communication being a two way process whereby one party communicates something and another party interprets it (n=9:16%). **Non-violent communication** was mentioned by a small number of foster carers who participated in an interview, as having assisted them not only to understand communication with their fostered child or young person, but to be more reflective about how they communicate with them. This notion was enhanced through the **Lifeworld Orientation** model, whereby foster carers acknowledged the individual children's own experiences from the filter through which they interpret any interpersonal communication. These foster carers were of the view that as a result they were more conscious of not only what was being said to children and young people and children's social care staff, but also, what was being heard (n=9:16%). These foster carers reported thinking carefully about how and when they raised a variety of subjects with their children and young people. One foster carer noted:

"I am more aware of communication. […], trying to gauge what is going on in their minds, being mindful of what they're thinking and how they may be experiencing situations […] That is the kind of area that I think helped me with if you like […] I have got greater awareness of it than before." (Foster carer interviewee).

An awareness of how the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers communicated with the children and young people they cared for was also a feature in the case files reviewed. Just under a third of the fostering households where the use of social pedagogy was identified, contained evidence of foster carers' awareness of communication (n=24:32%). Whilst only a minority of case files explicitly referenced specific social pedagogic concepts such as **Watzlawick communication axioms** or **Non-violent communication practice,** more case files (n=22) contained information about the carers general approach to communication which resonated with social pedagogic principles. Evidence in these cases often emphasised the importance of listening to the child, promoting open and authentic dialogue and spending time getting to know the child; one carer described this as *"listening to what [children] say, and don't say, in order to tailor response and actions"*. Another carer summed up *"being clear and honest in our communication"* as being central to their practice.

For another carer their approach was something which extended throughout their household: "*as a family we take time to hear the child and support the best way forward for the child*".

Box 18: Definition - Non-Violent Communication

Non-violent communication is based on the work of the American psychologist Marshall Rosenberg. It emphasises how we can engage with other people in a way that avoids judgments and conflict by expressing feelings and needs. Through this, Rosenberg argues, we can empathise with each other and connect with other people as equal human beings, recognising our commonalities rather than our differences. Essentially, non-violent communication is underpinned by the idea that we all have the capacity to be compassionate with others but often don't have the language that allows us to understand each other's emotions and needs. Violence and conflict happen as a result, when we try to meet our needs but can't find a way of doing this in a manner that recognises or understands other people's feelings and needs.

Within social pedagogical settings, non-violent communication is intended to achieve several aims: to help children understand their own feelings and needs and how these might influence their behaviour (for instance, what they are thinking and feeling when they are angry and lash out), to show children that we care about them by empathising with their emotions and giving them emotional support, to deescalate and resolve conflicts in a way that enables children to understand how others might be feeling. All of this serves to strengthen the relationship between the social pedagogue and the child and set in motion important learning processes for the child.

Thempra (no date, c) *Social Pedagogy – training pack: Social Pedagogic concepts*. [online] http://www.thempra.org.uk/social-pedagogy/key-concepts-in-social-pedagogy/nonviolent-communication/

The Common Third was also utilised by foster carers when they needed to talk to children and young people about sensitive or difficult subjects. A small number of foster carers reported that they had employed this technique, to ensure that the young person felt safe and comfortable during difficult conversations. They reported that the shared activity provided a welcome distraction for both foster carer and child if the topic became too overwhelming or if one party needed time to think (n=8: 14%). One foster carer noted that:

> "*I use the car sometimes when I'm taking him somewhere, to gently talk about difficult stuff. [He's] not facing me then. [He] can look out the window, can turn the radio up [if he feels uncomfortable]*" (Foster carer interviewee).

Foster carers, and children and young people, reported that this approach made these kinds of interactions much easier and less stressful.

In addition to being more reflective about what they might be communicating to children and young people, these foster carers also reported that they had become more reflective about what their children and young people were communicating to them.

Dealing with conflict and difficult circumstances

Seventy percent of the survey respondents (n=33) reported that there had been a "*great deal of positive change"* in the way that they **dealt with conflict or difficult situations**. Nearly half of the foster carers interviewed reported that since attending the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses, they had become much less quick to react to circumstances as they arose (n=26:46%). These foster carers described taking, even just a few moments to assess a situation before reacting. The **Lifeworld Orientation** was cited by a third of the participating foster carers as a useful reminder to understand precisely **what emotions a particular child might be expressing through "*difficult*" behaviours** and **to ensure that the correct response was given**, rather than simply acting on instinct (n=21:31%). One foster carer who took part in the interviews described how she came to understand that her young person's behaviour was a result of her feeling unsettled. She reported that she reacted in a way that she felt was addressing the young person's feelings and not the behaviour. The young person described it as follows:

> *"Within the first couple of months […] I got to the point where I pushed [Foster carer] in the end. And I went outside and I really regretted it and I was crying and I thought I had lost my placement and [foster carer] just came over and gave me a hug and was like "Don't worry [..] you're not losing your placement for it" and I was like "oh my god that must mean that she actually cares". I have never had that, [...] look I am still here now and you know I am pretty much part of the family, [...] I think that just made the relationship even stronger*" (Young person interviewee).

Conceptualising difficult situations and conflict as a potential opportunity for a young person to grow is an essential element of social pedagogic practices (Kleipoedszus, 2011). Some of the participating foster carers reported that waiting for the right moment to address an issue did not mean that it did not get addressed. Rather it was addressed more effectively, when neither foster carer or child's emotions and anxieties were not overly heightened. This approach was identified as being particular effective for children who struggled to express their emotions and tended to communicate in a confrontational way.

The interview participants, including some foster carers and children and young people alike, reported that this approach, coupled with a greater awareness of interpersonal communication, created a calmer, more nurturing environment. As one foster carer remarked:

> *"Before [Head, Heart, Hands] I would probably have argued, you know, continued the discussion and it probably would have blown out of proportion. You know there would have been a lot of upset. I think now I can be more calm about it [now]. Then we can sort out the situation afterwards when they are ready"* (Foster carer interviewee).

Almost a quarter of the children and young people interviewed also noted that a less confrontational, calmer approach was valuable (n=8:23%), with a number commenting that they are given time to calm down when arguments arise. One young person noted:

> *"Because it is such a chilled environment, I just didn't get as worked up, do you know what I mean? [...] But the thing is if you're really, really angry, and someone is giving*

you zilch anger. Like no emotion, they are giving you emotion but not anger you just, I hate to say [it but] you get bored of being angry [...] What is the point? And most of the time when you're shouting, no one is listening to you. It was kind of like an instant change and I was just like "oh, if you talk here, you actually are going to get more of what you want". (Young person interviewee).

Another noted:

"The lady I was with [before], sometimes [shouted], but that makes you want to shout at them, which I did. But, here, […] they're calm to you, so you talk to them calmly, and you think about what you're saying. Whereas when you're shouting, you don't think about it, you just say whatever's in your head. […] I look up to them and I see how they act when things are wrong, or when something happens. […] I take it from them, how they talk to me, and how I talk to them. [...] If they order [some takeaway] and it doesn't come, how they act, instead of shouting at them, they talk to them calmly and they state the facts. [Before] I would have had a go at them, and shouted at them.[...] But I've realised that that isn't the way to do it, because then they won't be, on your side, if you're shouting at them. Whereas, if you're clam and you tell them the facts, they will be [more helpful]". (Young person interviewee).

Box 19: Case study of a more reflective approach to conflict

Alisha, Jennifer and Michael

Jennifer and Michael has been fostering for about a year before they attended the Head, Heart, Hands Core Learning and Development courses. Michael described how the emphasis on reflection helped him to feel much more confident and calm since being part of the programme. He said that:

> *"I can't say that I was ever somebody who has never lost his temper, but my temper is much more even because I look at things in a different way, in a more balanced way and I take my time to think about things more and reflect on things. I think that gives you chance to not react instantly and angrily to things. And that makes life better for myself, and my wife, as well as for [Alisha]."*

Alisha had been living with Jennifer and Michael for about three years when we spoke to her. She was 17 and had been in care since she was 11. Alisha described how she had struggled to control her emotions in the past. When she first moved in with Jennifer and Michael she had lost her temper several times, and whilst she was never violent to them, had damaged some of their possessions. She described how the calmer approach Michael described had helped her:

> *"I was naughty from the first time I went in to care. But then it just got worse and worse and when I got here these guys helped me and with all their training they have had, […] They deal with things differently to most foster carers, they really do and they have helped me so much. It has made me into who I am today. But I am not anything like that, what I was before. [...] Instead of getting angry or shouting or you know getting worried or showing that they were angry or upset with what was going on, they would just be calm and talk to me calmly. As much as they were angry inside, or something, they would just talk to me calmly […] No matter what I was doing, I could be a horrible person and they would still talk to me calmly and stuff and I think that is the approach that you should do, […] not lose your temper because that just rages me to be honest. If someone is losing their temper with me then it just gets worse and worse. So if someone keeps calm then eventually I just calm down."*

Foster carer confidence

A third of the foster carers interviewed reported that the provision of a theoretical framework through Head, Heart, Hands validated their existing approach to care, giving them more **confidence that their current practice** was along the right tracks (n= 19:33%). It was also reported that the **common language** prompted through Head, Heart, Hands enabled some of the participating foster carers to articulate their practice (n=13:22%). The result was a proportion of foster carers in the interview sample who felt **more assured in their own skills**, and therefore more confident liaising with children's social care staff and advocating for the child (see Chapter 7 below). In essence, the development of a conceptual framework and being more able to describe the how and why of things they were already doing, created a more professional and confident perception of self among these foster carers. A small number of foster carers who participated in the evaluation also reported that

involvement with Head, Heart, Hands programme activities, such as presenting at conferences and facilitation of subsequent social pedagogy training, also increased their self-confidence.

The foster carer survey respondents reported that Head, Heart, Hands had increased their confidence. Almost two thirds (n=30:63.8%) of the survey respondents reported that Head, Heart, Hands had resulted in "*a great deal of change*" in their confidence levels. In addition, around a third of those respondents who commented on the best or most impactful thing about the programme cited an increase in confidence (n=14:33%), either in their own skills as a foster carer such as this respondent who stated they were "*feeling more confident about my fostering ability*" or in the extent to which the site valued their contribution to the care of the child. As one respondent noted: "*It has given us the self-esteem to be on the 'same footing' as the other professionals*".

Similarly, half of the foster carers who were interviewed reported that their confidence had increased in some way during the programme. This theme was picked up by the children and young people interviewed, three of whom noted that their carers seemed to increase in confidence following the Learning and Development courses. As one young person noted:

> *"[My foster carer has] got more confident with doing some stuff. [He has said] "Hang on, right, I can do this" (...), "let's do another thing from my training", see if that works as well".* (Young person interviewee).

The data presented here are promising regarding the extent to which the programme had positively impacted the foster carers who participated in the evaluation. The data suggest that a large proportion of the foster carers who took part in an interview were able to identify at least one small change that they had made to enhance their practice as a result of Head, Heart, Hands. Primarily these changes were associated with how the foster carers think about their practice, rather than their behaviours. However, readers may benefit from exercising some caution in interpreting the results, given the methodological considerations and limitations outlined in Chapter 3.

Box 20: Summary of key findings: The impact of Head, Heart, Hands of foster carers

- The majority of foster carers in the interview sample were able to identify at least one way in which Head, Heart, Hands had influenced them as foster carers (n=54:95%). It is encouraging to note that only three out of the 57 foster carers interviewed reported that Head, Heart, Hands had not impacted on their practice in any way. Likewise, when **asked** what the best thing about Head, Heart, Hands was, just under half of the Wave 3 foster carer survey respondents reported that the programme had had a positive influence on their practice (n=21:49%).These findings are corroborated by the case file analysis, which identified at least one way in which the foster carers were practising social pedagogically in around half of the households included in the case file analysis (n=74:47%).
- The view that the theoretical approaches explored through Head, Heart, Hands provided a framework through which to articulate existing knowledge about good practice was commonly cited among the foster carers interview. These foster carers noted that although they may not have dramatically changed what they were doing with the children and young people on a day to day basis, they were more thoughtful and intentional in their actions.
- A third of the foster carers interviewed reported that the provision of a theoretical framework through Head, Heart, Hands validated their existing approach to care, giving them more confidence that their current practice was along the right tracks (n= 19:33%). It was also reported that the common language prompted through Head, Heart, Hands enabled some of the participating foster carers to articulate their practice (n=13:22%). The result was a proportion of foster carers in the interview sample who felt more assured in their own skills, and therefore more confident liaising with children's social care staff and advocating for the child.
- Around a fifth of the foster carers in the interview sample reported that the programme enabled them to reflect on the influence that their personal and private experiences had on their own fostering (and parenting) (n=11:19%). Other foster carers in the interview sample reported reflection had reduced prolonged periods of stress, through providing frameworks by which they could critically assess challenging periods, to take account of personal feelings of guilt, while not being dictated to by them.
- Almost half of the foster carer survey respondents reported that meeting other foster carers and developing supportive peer networks to share ideas was the best thing about the Head, Heart, Hands programme (n=20:47%). Similarly, almost a quarter of the foster carers in the interview sample reported that aspects of the programme design had enabled them to develop supportive relationships with other foster carers (n=14:24%).
- A small number of foster carers who participated in the evaluation reported that Head, Heart, Hands had resulted in a greater awareness of communication being a two way process whereby one party communicates something and another party interprets it (n=9:16%).
- Seventy percent of the survey respondents (n=33) reported that there had been a "*great deal of positive change*" in the way that they dealt with conflict or difficult situations. Nearly half of the foster carers interviewed reported that since attending the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses, they had become much less quick to react to circumstances as they arose (n=26:46%). A number of children and young people in the sample also described the positive impact that a calmer, less reactive approach had on their relationships with their foster carers and their own behaviours.
- The highly positive perspective of those we interviewed may reflect the particular nature of the sample. Moreover, while only three foster carers could not identify any changes in practice since the commencement of Head, Heart, Hands, others were reticent to state that any changes in their practice were solely down to the programme (n=9:16%) and reported that it was difficult to separate the changes in approach from other contributing factors such as becoming more confident and experienced in fostering generally, or that they had simply got to know the children and young people better over the course of the evaluation timeframe.

7. The relationship between Head, Heart, Hands and the wider system

Foster carers do not care for children and young people in a vacuum. The fostering household is part of a wider network of relationships which include children's social care professionals, teachers, health professionals and other adults working to support them. These networks operate within wider local organisational contexts and national legislative and regulatory structures. This is what Ghate refers to as the *invisible infrastructure'* that surrounds any programme or intervention (2015:4). One of the aims of Head, Heart, Hands is to inform that infrastructure. As noted in Box 1, one of the objectives of Head, Heart, Hands was "*to implement systemic change and a cultural shift which will support social pedagogic practice and recognise the central role of foster carers in shaping the lives of children within their care*". In this way, the wider system could be considered a key "recipient" of the programme.

However, like any new intervention, the extent to which that context will facilitate or inhibit the adoption of the approach is of key importance (Ghate, 2015). A number of studies have suggested that the extent to which social pedagogic practices can embed into different contexts has been affected by the culture of child welfare systems (Lorenz, 2008; Stephens, 2009; Berridge et al., 2011; Eichsteller and Holthoff, 2012), regulatory frameworks (Bengtsson et al., 2008, Berridge et al., 2011), along with perceived and actual commitment to the approach across the whole organisation (Berridge et al., 2011; Cameron and Moss, 2011; Eichsteller and Holthoff, 2012). By contrast, many authors have highlighted the "*impossibility of isolating"* social pedagogy from its context (Coussée et al., 2010:797, see also Lorenz, 2008; Stephens, 2009). Others go further and argue that social pedagogy seeks to influence society, rather than just being influenced by societal contexts (Sünker, 2006). Therefore, in addition to democratising relationships between individuals, social pedagogy seeks to democratise society itself. Thus exists a complex interplay between the extent to which social pedagogic practices *impact the system*, or are *impacted by the system.*

The extent to which the wider system might be receptive to, and influenced by, Head, Heart, Hands was a key issue of concern for participants throughout the evaluation. During previous evaluation time points, participating foster carers reported that the extent to which the wider system was receptive to social pedagogy was identified as the biggest barrier to the programme having the maximum impact. Similar concerns were been raised during the final evaluation time point. Some foster carers in the interview sample reported that while they had continued to embed social pedagogic approaches into their own practice, the extent of the impact had been inhibited by the wider systems context. As noted above ten foster carers in the interview sample (n=10:13%) became less enthusiastic about the approach as a result of disappointing experiences in how the programme had been implemented. More promisingly, there is some evidence from the Wave 3 data collection to suggest that other participating foster carers were more optimistic about the impact that Head, Heart, Hands has had on their own interactions with parts of the wider system, most notably with supervising social workers.

The relationship between Head, Heart, Hands and the systems context from the perspective of the implementation of the programme has been covered in depth elsewhere (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). This section will explore the mixed picture identified in Wave 3 of the relationship between

Head, Heart, Hands and the wider system from the perspective of the foster carers, children and young people and the frontline children's social care staff who support them.

Relationships with supervising social workers

In addition to their statutory function, supervising social workers play a significant role in the support of foster carers, and by implication, the children and young people placed with them. The provision of effective support and guidance, including regular interactions with supervising social workers, consistently emerges as a key factor in the retention of foster carers (McDermid et al., 2012). The foster carers interviewed painted a varied picture of relationships with supervising social workers. The majority of the foster carers who participated in an interview who discussed this relationship reported feeling well supported generally (n=13:60%), while others reported that the support was insufficient (n=9:40%). Workers who contacted foster carers infrequently, were unavailable at times of crisis, along with frequent changes of social worker resulted in the foster carers in the interview sample feeling unsupported, isolated and unvalued.

Two fifths of foster carers who took part in the interviews during Wave 3 (n=25:43%) reported that their relationship with supervising social workers had improved since Head, Heart, Hands, including three who reported that the relationship had been challenging at the start of the programme. Two thirds of the foster carer survey respondents reported that their relationship with their supervising social worker had improved "*a great deal*" since attending the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses (n=31:66%, mean change score *7.4*[20]) . One survey respondent reported that the best thing about Head, Heart, Hands was the "*improved relationships with other professionals*" and another commented that since participating in Head, Heart, Hands "*There is no us and them. We are equal*".

Similarly, participating frontline children's social care staff from all of the sites reported that the programme had positively impacted their relationship with foster carers in some way. Some supervising social workers reported that the programme had **reinforced** the importance of their relationships with the foster carers they support and had made them more attuned to ensuring those relationships were functioning well. As one supervising social worker noted:

> *"What I've learned [through Head, Heart, Hands] has been validating and quite freeing, in a way. To have an approach that justifies you investing time into relationships. There's a justification there for investing your resources in something that is not going to be seen by court, or picked up on an inspection. It's about your practice and not your paperwork. We all come into the job to do the practice and not the paperwork and it's nice to have an approach that really values that."* (Children's social care staff focus group attendee).

Participating foster carers and social workers alike reported that the delivery of the Learning and Development courses to foster carers and children's social care staff simultaneously had had a positive impact on relationships overall, and in particular where foster carers had completed the training with their supervising social worker. Almost a third of the foster carer survey respondents (n=13:30%) noted that the joint training approach provided them with opportunities to **get to know**

[20] Where a score of 10 - 8 = a great deal of change, 7- 5 = some change and 4 or less = little or no change.

children's social care staff and as a result feel more part of the team around the child. A small number foster carers who took part in the interviews during Wave 3 reported that Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses had given them greater insight into children's social care staff members' perspectives and the particular stresses and constraints they were under (n=7:12%). For some of the participating foster carers it was important to be reminded that, despite differences in opinion and approach, foster carers and social workers shared the goal of working for the best interest of the child. Participating supervising social workers from one site in particular (Orange) noted that the principle of equality in relationships was reinforced by the fact that the training was delivered to both foster carers and children's social care staff. One social worker from this site commented:

> *"The great thing with pedagogy is that it promotes relationships not just between carers and the children but with everyone. It is all encompassing. So to get [foster carers] involved from the very beginning at the same level with us, we were already breaking down those barriers, that sense of inequality if you like. It was invaluable"* (Children's social care staff focus group attendee).

The general view across evaluation participants was that the co-learning approach adopted by the programme design was a key factor in enhancing the relationships between participating foster carers and supervising social workers. Where this was working well, the result was that each understood the other more clearly, and creating more equitable and effective working relationships as this foster carer described:

> *"Social workers have opinions of foster carers and foster carers have an opinion of the social workers, and just by bringing them together in a group where you're learning the same thing at the same time, for everybody at the sort of same level, […] It just made us work better as a team, because what we were essentially doing was putting the child first, you know? So it was kind of like, well, we all want the best for the child, let's see what we can do, to change, like, our practices, to support the child.*" (Foster carer interviewee).

For a number of foster carers and supervising social workers who participated in the evaluation reported that Head, Heart, Hands facilitated **a shared approach and a shared language** between foster carers and the social worker who supports them. A small number of foster carers who participated in an interview (n=4), and supervising social workers from four of the sites reported that they had started to use some Head, Heart, Hands models, such as the **Three Ps** and the **Four Fs** in their supervision. In particular, children's social care staff who participated in the evaluation from four of the sites commented that, in their view, the use of a shared language not only raised the status of foster carers, but allowed supervising social workers and the foster carers they support to work more effectively as a team. Likewise, a small number of case files (n=12) recorded that they had started to use some Head, Heart, Hands models in their supervision or annual review meetings.

Improved relationships between foster carers and their supervising social workers were most prominent where both parties had attended the Learning and Development courses together, ***and*** were supportive of the approach. The converse was also evident from the data. Four foster carers

who took part in the evaluation at Wave 3 reported that their relationship with their supervising social worker remained unchanged, and for others, frustrations arise where supervising social workers continued to be unengaged in the programme (n=8:14%). Indeed, diffusion of social pedagogy across the site had been highlighted in previous evaluation reports as a key challenge for the implementation of the programme (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). A small number of foster carers who participated in the evaluation at Wave 3, echoed these sentiments, and raised concerns regarding the number of supervising social workers who had engaged with the programme. These foster carers were of the perspective that the number of fostering households who might be impacted by social pedagogy would be limited where the proportion of supervising social workers attending the Learning and Development courses was small. These foster carers reported that increasing opportunities for supervising social workers to attend social pedagogy training would be of great benefit.

Frontline children's social care staff from all of the sites echoed the views of foster carers and noted that ideally more supervising social workers should have accessed the Learning and Development courses to ensure greater congruence between the approach used by the foster carers and the supervising social workers. Frontline staff who participated in the evaluation at Wave 3 in one site in particular raised concerns regarding the extent to which they were able to fully support the foster carers who had engaged with the programme, when their own knowledge of social pedagogy was limited. Children's social care staff who participated in the evaluation from five sites noted that although they would have liked to have attended more of the Heart, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses, workload and time constraints meant that this was not always possible. Sites may benefit from exploring how more supervising social workers might have access to social pedagogy learning and development. In the first instance, targeting the social workers who are allocated to foster carers who have already adopted the approach may be of particular advantage.

The Orange site introduced additional social pedagogy training, which supervising social workers will be required to attend. Moreover, this training was being co-facilitated by foster carers, who reported that, not only did this approach enhance their own confidence and understanding of social pedagogy, but created a more equal relationship between foster carers and children's social care staff. This approach was viewed extremely positively by the foster carers from this site, reassuring them that the fostering service was committed to the approach beyond the life of the Head, Heart, Hands programme.

Relationships with the wider fostering service

Like support from supervising social workers, the extent to which foster carers feel respected, listened to and valued by their fostering service has been associated with retention (McDermid et al., 2012). Eleven of the foster carers who took part in interviews at Wave 3 reported that they believed that their status among professionals had improved since Head, Heart, Hands, including two of those who had felt undervalued by their service previously. The development of more open equitable relationships with supervising social workers noted above appear to have influenced the extent to which foster carers in the interview sample felt respected by their service as a whole. Those foster carers who felt more valued by their fostering service were more likely to report that their relationship with their supervising social worker had improved. However, other foster carers in the interview sample expressed disappointment at the extent to which Head, Heart, Hands raised

the status of foster carers in their view, despite assurances that this was one of the aims of the programme. One commented:

> *"I go to Looked after review, I sit there, I'm working with whatever child it is. [...] 24/7. I go in there and I say, 'Well this is what I think is best for [the child]". The social workers will say, "No, this is what we think". It doesn't matter because they've got the degree or whatever. […] As a foster carer we are just accommodation."* (Foster carer interviewee).

Other foster carers who were interviewed expressed concerns that while their own worker was supportive to the approach, other children's social care staff, the wider service context and the policies of the fostering service were not be as receptive.

The lack of congruence of approach was particularly acute when foster carers experienced challenging periods such as in the case of allegations or placement disruptions. Three foster carers reported that they had experienced difficulties with their placements and had found the way that the service had addressed those difficulties had been at odds with what they had learnt through Head, Heart, Hands. This added to already frustrating and challenging experiences for the foster carers. Similarly, frontline staff who participated in the evaluation from two sites also expressed concerns regarding the extent to which local systems were consistent with social pedagogic principles. These supervising social workers who participated during Wave 3 noted that the tendency towards accountability and bureaucracy within local authorities, and the statutory role as a supervising social worker at times appeared to be at odds with the more flexible and creative approaches advocated by social pedagogy. The findings regarding the inconsistency of approach across the team around the child identified by the evaluation participants is perhaps unsurprising given the limited reach of the programme at a system level identified by the implementation evaluation[21].

Despite the concerns raised by some evaluation participants, aspects of the Head, Heart, Hands programme design appear to have provided opportunities for dialogue between some of the foster carers who took part in the evaluation and representatives of the fostering service, including social workers and team managers. A small number of foster carers reported that policies and procedures implemented by the fostering service were not child centred enough, and more importantly, did not reflect social pedagogic principles (n=5:8%). Foster carer participants from two of the sites (Blue and Orange, n= 3) reported that they had been involved in the review of policy and procedures, including foster carer supervision paperwork, to introduce a social pedagogic lens to key operational aspects of the fostering service. They reported that their involvement in this process had not only reassured them that the service was committed to social pedagogy more broadly, but had enabled them to influence these operational aspects, making them feel like valued members of the team.

Likewise, a small number of foster carers interviewed from the Orange Site were of the view that the attendance of team managers at Head, Heart, Hands events, helped them to develop relationships between foster carers and more senior representatives of the service. The result was to break down

[21] The impact of the programme at a system level, including the diffusion of, and commitment to social pedagogy across the site, is explored at length in Ghate and McDermid, 2016 and can be found http://www.cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Main_Report.pdf);

some of the (perceived) barriers and created a lesser sense of us and them. While the number of foster carers in the interview sample who reported this was small (n=5:8%), the impact on their views on the extent to which the service was committed to social pedagogy was profound. It may be advantageous for fostering services exploring social pedagogy to develop mechanisms through which foster carers can be involved in the more systemic aspects of the programme.

Almost a third of foster carers in the interview sample reported that they felt more confident voicing their views and advocating for the child (n=17: 30%). They reported that this was in part a consequence of increased confidence in their skills as foster carers more generally (as noted above) and in part a consequence of a renewed sense of the rights of the child being paramount. As one foster carer described:

> *"We had a situation where we had a social worker for [foster son]. Social worker came in, and she was very risk averse,[..] And I was able to use the language that I had [learnt on Head, Heart, Hands], and I (was) able to use the knowledge for that, to be able to explain to her why that wasn't in [foster son]'s best interest*" (Foster carer interviewee).

Another explained:

> *"Because [social pedagogy] gives you things to reflect on, you know, whereas, you just did it, you didn't really know if it was working or not, it just helps me, it's given me more confidence when I'm working with other professionals*" (Foster carer interviewee).

The wider team around the child

Fostered children are part of a wider network of support that includes the foster carer, their supervising social worker and their own social worker, along with a myriad of other professionals who may be involved in the case. Our previous evaluation reports have highlighted the need for the diffusion of Head, Heart, Hands to extend beyond a core group of foster carers, and their fostering service (Ghate and McDermid, 2016).

Over a third of the foster carers interviewed reported that awareness and practice of social pedagogy among some children's social care staff, and those from other agencies was patchy at best (n=21:37%). Adoption and permanence social workers, education and health professionals were all mentioned by foster carers who participated in the evaluation at Wave 3 as being key to the care of children and young people, and therefore key potential recipients of social pedagogy training. Of particular note, however, were children's social workers, who were characterised by some of the foster carers who participated in an interview as unengaged with the programme and unsupportive of social pedagogic approaches. This was the case across the whole sample, including foster carers from local authority and independent fostering services. Only one foster carer who was interviewed reported that their child's social worker was supportive of the approach.

Analysis of the foster carer survey suggests that foster carers' relationships with their children's social worker were the least affected by the programme, with around a third (n=14) stating that there have been "*little or no change*" in that relationship since the commencement of the programme.

Of the 18 foster carer survey respondents who identified something they would like to change about Head, Heart, Hands over half reported that they would like more people to undertake the training (n=10:56%), six of those reported that more social workers should be trained in social pedagogy. One respondent noted that

> *"I would like to see more social workers and care team managers attending the course in its entirety, rather than dropping in and out. I felt disappointed that the social pedagogy course sessions were not prioritised for them, […] It seemed to me that this created a hierarchical structure, because foster carers had prioritised the course, whereas Social Workers and Care Managers were perceived to have more important work elsewhere".* (Foster carer survey respondent).

A third of foster carers who took part in an interview at Wave 3 highlighted the need for training to be provided across the team around the child. A small number of foster carers in the interview sample (n=3:5%) reported that the high workload that many children's social care staff had prevented them from prioritising social pedagogy Learning and Development activities, even if they wanted to.

As noted in Chapter 3, the case file analysis provided an exploration of *what is recorded in relation to social pedagogy,* in addition to enabling a contextual and longitudinal perspective of fostering households. In view of this, given that case files are predominantly completed by social care staff, an analysis of the extent to which social pedagogy and Head, Heart, Hands was mentioned explicitly in case recording provided another view on the extent to which those staff have engaged with and assimilated Head, Heart, Hands. The case files were reviewed for explicit mentions of

"Head, Heart, Hands", "social pedagogy" and "Social Pedagogue", along with the names of the individual Social Pedagogues in each of the sites from which case file data were collected. There were few direct mentions of the term Head, Heart, Hands or social pedagogy in the case files (n=46:30%). The Orange site was an exception, where this terminology was used in a small number of foster carer profiles to structure information about the carers (this was as a direct result of participation in the Head, Heart, Hands programme). However, when the case files were examined for references to the specific core features of the Head, Heart, Hands programme (such as attendance at the Learning and Development courses, momentum groups or activity days) more recording was evident. Table 5 summarises the number of specific references to Head, Heart, Hands by site. In some sites (Blue and Green) there was a higher proportion of recording observed in contrast to the Purple site where very limited references to Head, Heart, Hands were found. However, as noted above, there were more references to specific models and tools within individual case files. The implications of this are explored further in Chapter 11.

Table 5 Specific mentions of Head, Heart, Hands in case files, by site

Site	Explicit reference to Head, Heart, Hands activities in case files
Blue	17 (68%)
Green	8 (53%)
Orange	8 (21%)
Purple	0 (0%)
Yellow	13 (32%)
Total	46 (of 157) fostering households (29%)

The two sites in which the highest numbers of mentions of social pedagogy were identified (Blue and Green), were the two smallest sites included in the case file analysis. As explored in Ghate and McDermid (2016) smaller sites might (but not necessarily) facilitate greater diffusion of the programme across a wider staff group. Therefore, greater exposure to the programme may be a feature in these sites.

The relatively small numbers of explicit references to the programme in the case files is somewhat disappointing. As noted in Chapter 3 other factors may influence the way in which Head, Heart, Hands was referenced in the case files. Therefore, some caution is warranted when generalising these findings if taken in isolation. Nevertheless, the case file analysis corroborates the findings elsewhere in the evaluation, including the interviews and survey with foster carers and most significantly the implementation evaluation, that the diffusion of the programme across the wider team around the child was less than optimal.

It is possible that the reported lack of engagement from some children's social care staff was a consequence of the programme design, which limited the number of places available to staff at the Core Learning and Development courses. Appendix E outlines the number of attendees at the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses by site. A relatively small number of children's social care staff attended the Core Learning and Development courses: 33 (who were not supervising social workers) in total, and a further 298 attended the two day Orientation course across all seven sites. This was compounded by the high turnover of children's social workers. Three children and young people reported that they had frequent changes of social workers, with one reporting that she could not remember the name of her current worker because they changed so frequently. Indeed, the impact of frequent changes in social workers on the outcomes of children in care has been documented elsewhere. Research has found a correlation between the positive organisational culture and lower staff turnover, and improved quality of service and outcomes for service users (Hemmelgarn et al., 2006). Moreover, frequent changes of social worker hinder the process of relationship formation between children and young people and the social workers who support them (Morgan, 2006; Leeson, 2007; McLeod, 2007). Nevertheless the lack of awareness of and sympathy for social pedagogic practice was a source of particular frustration for a large number of foster carers who took part in the evaluation. They raised concerns regarding the potential for, and incidences of, inconsistencies of approach across the team around the child.

One area of particular frustration identified by a proportion of the foster carers who were interviewed at Wave 3 was the application of a more risk sensible approach. As noted above, a small number of the foster carers who participated in an interview at Wave 3 (n=7:12%) reported that since Head, Heart, Hands, they were more likely to allow the children and young people to participate in activities that they previously would not have allowed them to do. However, children's social workers were characterised by a small number of evaluation participants as being more risk averse (n=4). The result was that activities and decisions made by these foster carers with their children and young people, were over-ruled by their social worker. In one example, a young person had been attending a particular sports activity, which the foster carer had reported to be extremely beneficial. It was reported that he was increasing in confidence, meeting other children and taking part in something he enjoyed. Both foster carer and young person recalled how his children's social worker had requested that he ceased attending the activity following an injury. This frustrated the foster carer who reported that injuries were a 'normal' risk for children who participate in sports. Removing the child from the activity further marked him out as different from his peers. While these examples were found among a small proportion of the overall sample, the foster carers involved expressed a great deal of frustration. They reported that, in their view, the decisions made by the children's social workers undermined the principles they had learnt on Head, Heart, Hands. The examples have not been provided here to conclude whether the children's social worker made the correct decision or not. Rather to emphasise the extent to which a portion of the participating foster carers became frustrated at the lack of congruence in approach across the service. For instance, one foster carer who took part in an interview reported that a lack of congruence of approach between the whole team around this child created a sense of instability and a lack of confidence that she could fully invest in the approach:

> *"So, holistically […] I can carry on my care, in a bubble, and I can do this lovely work, but, at some point, I'll be told, "No, you can't do that"* (Foster carer interviewee).

While it is not uncommon for differences of opinion or approach to occur across members of the team around the child, sites exploring the introduction of social pedagogy may benefit from ensuring that these differences do not undermine the approach in the view of foster carers, leading to them becoming disillusioned.

Despite concerns raised by a number of participating foster carers that a lower than optimum number of children's social care staff had engaged with the programme, the findings of the survey to children's social care staff suggest that a proportion of children's social care staff who had engaged in the programme had made positive changes to their practice as a result. The children's social care staff survey respondents were asked if the Learning and Development courses had positively or negatively changed their approach to their work. Respondents indicated on a scale the extent for the positive or negative effect; a scale from -5, "*Extremely negatively*" to 5, "*Extremely positively*". Of the 20 responses, overall the change experienced was positive (Mean=2.75, n=20), which suggests a moderate level of positive change made to the respondents practice.

The children's social care staff survey respondents were also invited to rate the degree of positive or negative change that had occurred since attending the Learning and Development courses, based on 10 statements. Positive changes in practice were identified in the following areas: the way

respondents interact with children and young people (M=2.2, n=31), and how respondents think about their job role (M=2.2, n=31). The areas of least perceived positive affect are how respondents interact with birth families (M=1.6, n=31), and interactions with line managers (M=1.5, n=31). However, caution should be taken when generalising these findings. The children's social care staff survey obtained a response rate of 20%, and it is possible that only those children's social care staff that were most engaged in the programme completed it.

Sites exploring introducing social pedagogy may benefit from considering how to ensure that all staff are aware of and sympathetic to the approach. Flexible learning and development opportunities may facilitate staff who are unable to attend a longer training course to engage with the approach. Independent fostering services may benefit from exploring how children's social workers from placing fostering services may also be engaged in social pedagogic practices, to ensure a congruence in approach across all members of the team around the child.

The organisational context

All new innovations require the system context to be receptive if they are to be successfully established (Ghate, 2015). While many foster carers who participated in the interviews during Wave 3 recognised that their own fostering service and/or individuals within it were committed to social pedagogic practices, a third of the foster carers interviewed raised concerns regarding the extent to which the wider context aligned with social pedagogic approaches (n=20: 33%). Bureaucracy and risk aversion were identified as pervading features of the current British system of Children's social care (Berridge et al., 2011; Cameron and Moss, 2011), features which the foster carers in the interview sample thought may hinder the practice of social pedagogy. Other incongruences between social pedagogy and the wider system identified by the foster carers who took part in an interview at Wave 3 included the dominant language of deficit rather than a strengths based approach, failure to consult with children and young people and time and monetary constraints over-riding child centric (or Lifeworld Orientation) approaches.

One foster carer in the interview sample noted that the system was restrictive to social pedagogy, even for the Social Pedagogues, one of whom was her supervising social worker. She reported that the time spent with the Social Pedagogue was dominated by logistics and *"management"* rather than allowing sufficient time for reflective supervision. These foster carers reported that the impact of social pedagogy practice would be limited unless greater synergies between the approach and the wider system could be achieved. As one foster carer noted:

> *"I think [Head, Heart, Hands] was very good, it was very focused on foster carers, which, in itself was good because it gave foster carers the feeling that they were really valued. [...] But I think it needs a package of all sorts of things around it. You know, because there's no good just doing social pedagogy training, but LAC reviews need to be set up in a socially pedagogic way. Reflective supervision needs to be carried out in a social pedagogic way. It needs to run through as a thread through everything we do, you know."* (Foster carer interviewee).

In many ways the participating foster carers' assertion that social pedagogy should be diffused across the whole systems context is an indicator of their commitment to the approach. As reported

above, some foster carers in the interview sample raised practical challenges when approaches across the team around the child and the system supporting them do not align. However, others reported that wider systems change was necessary because social pedagogy provided an approach to caring for children and young people that was more aligned to children's needs. Nevertheless, research has demonstrated that even the least complex innovations can take up to four years to reach sustained implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005). Wider systems and cultural change across a system as complex and varied as children's social care is likely to take a great deal longer. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that whole systems change had not been achieved in the timeframe of the Head, Heart, Hands programme. To avoid foster carers becoming disillusioned, sites may benefit from presenting **realistic expectations** of what might be achieved within any given programme timeframe. Rather, a staged approach to change may be more appropriate, whereby sites explore, identify and target particular arenas for their efforts. As shown here, the greatest change appears to be with supervising social workers and, where these have been identified, the impacts of those changes have been profound for foster carers. Sites exploring introducing social pedagogy may benefit from concentrating their efforts to ensuring both supervising social workers and children's social workers are aligned with the approach.

The findings of the evaluation suggest that there remains a long way to go regarding foster carers' sense of equality to their fostering service. However, there is some evidence to suggest that the involvement of foster carers in decision making about individual cases and with regard to the wider operational aspects of fostering, may ensure that they feel more assured by the sites' commitment to social pedagogy.

Box 21: Summary of key findings: Head, Heart Hands and the wider system

- Two fifths of foster carers who took part in the interviews during Wave 3 (n=25:43%) reported that their relationship with supervising social workers had improved since Head, Heart, Hands, including three who reported that the relationship had been challenging at the start of the programme. Two thirds of the foster carer survey respondents reported that their relationship with their supervising social worker had improved "a great deal" since attending the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses.
- Similarly, participating frontline children's social care staff from all of the sites reported that the programme had positively impacted their relationship with foster carers in some way.
- Participating foster carers and social workers alike reported that the delivery of the Learning and Development courses to foster carers and children's social care staff simultaneously had had a positive impact on relationships overall, and in particular where foster carers had completed the training with their supervising social worker.
- Almost a third of the foster carer survey respondents (n=13:30%) noted that the joint training approach provided them with opportunities to get to know children's social care staff and as a result feel more part of the team around the child. A number of foster carers and supervising social workers who participated in the evaluation reported that Head, Heart, Hands facilitated a shared approach and a shared language between foster carers and the social workers who support them.
- Eleven of the foster carers who took part in interviews at Wave 3 reported that they believed that their status among professionals had improved since Head, Heart, Hands, including two of those who had felt undervalued by their service previously.
- A number of foster carers (n=8:14%) and frontline children's social care staff from all of the sites noted that more supervising social workers should have accessed the Learning and Development courses to ensure greater congruence between the approach used by the foster carers and the supervising social workers. The lack of congruence of approach was particularly acute when foster carers experienced challenging periods such as in the case of allegations or placement disruptions, where foster carers reported that the way that the service had addressed those difficulties had been at odds with what they had learnt through Head, Heart, Hands.
- One area of particular frustration identified by a proportion of the foster carers who were interviewed at Wave 3 was the application of a more risk sensible approach. A small number of the foster carers who participated in an interview at Wave 3 (n=7:12%) reported that since Head, Heart, Hands, they were more likely to allow the children and young people to participate in activities that they previously would not have allowed them to do. However, the activities and decisions made by these foster carers with their children and young people had been over-ruled by their social worker in over half of these cases (n=4).
- Over a third of the foster carers interviewed reported that awareness and practice of social pedagogy among some children's social care staff, and those from other agencies was patchy at best (n=21:37%). Of particular note, were children's social workers, who were characterised by some of the foster carers who participated in an interview as unengaged with the programme and unsupportive of social pedagogic approaches.
- It is possible that the reported lack of engagement from some children's social care staff was a consequence of the programme design, which limited the number of places available to staff at the Core Learning and Development courses.

8. Placement purpose, patterns and experience

One of the four objectives of the Head, Heart, Hands programme (as outlined in Box 1 of this report) was to develop foster carers with the capacity to significantly improve the day to day lives of the children in their care. As we have presented earlier in this report foster carers indicated that Head, Heart, Hands had provided a theoretical and practical framework through which they could think about their existing practice and that it had provided them with a greater awareness of the centrality of relationships and the importance of communicating effectively with children. Furthermore, foster carers referred to Head, Heart, Hands as leading them to reflect on day to day activities resulting in a more thoughtful and intentional approach to what they were doing with children in their care. They reported being more confident in their own abilities, and therefore more confident to advocate for the needs of the child.

Within this chapter we now focus on the placement experience of the children placed with Head, Heart, Hands foster carers. We also consider the Head, Heart, Hands placement within the children and young people's care trajectory (encompassing both placements before and after Head, Heart, Hands) and their purpose. Throughout this chapter we draw on data from the case file analysis and also include a secondary analysis of national datasets (SSDA 903 in England and CLAS data in Scotland) for the local authority sites that are required to collect these data on an annual basis[22]. We position the findings of this evaluation, in relation to the placement experience, within the wider existing evidence base and highlight the complexity of attributing placement stability to specific programmes. To illustrate the different care trajectories that the sample children experienced[23], a series of case study examples are included in this chapter.

Heterogeneity as a defining factor

As we have indicated throughout earlier sections of this report, Head, Heart, Hands was not a clearly defined programme with set parameters. As such the way in which it was implemented and used in the seven sites varied considerably. Furthermore, the heterogeneity of the foster carers that participated in the programme has been highlighted, both in terms of their recruitment to the programme and the type of care they provided (for example, the inclusion of "specialist foster carers" in one of the sites).

Our secondary analysis of the national datasets for a sample of children (n=328) placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers highlighted further heterogeneity in terms of the needs, circumstances and past case histories of the children and young people. We explore in detail throughout this chapter the heterogeneity of the programme, the carers and the children and young people and how this consequently led to difficulties attributing placement stability and outcomes for the children and young people placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers. These difficulties are not unique to this evaluation: other authors have noted that understanding the outcomes for children in care is an incredibly complex task, not least because their own experiences (both prior to and following

[22] The SSDA 903 and CLAS data sets include similar but not the same variables. For some of the analysis included in this chapter it has not been possible to report the analysis for all four local authorities.

[23] A purposive sampling technique has been used to identify the children for the case study examples. The case studies have been chosen to illustrate key evaluation findings, rather than to be representative of the sample as a whole. Key information has been changed to protect the identities of the evaluation participants.

placement), characteristics and personal circumstances are so diverse (Boddy, 2013; National Audit Office, 2014a). Furthermore, Sellick, Thoburn and Philpot (2004) highlight that the measurement of outcomes for children in care are highly complex and are subject to many interacting variables: the more complex the circumstances, the more difficult it is to attribute success (or otherwise) to any one factor or type of placement.

The needs and circumstances of the children placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers

An exploration of the needs and circumstances of the children and young people placed with Head, Heart Hands carers highlighted the heterogeneity of the sample. A secondary analysis of the national data sets for the local authority sites identified that the Head, Heart, Hands placement was the first in the care trajectory for 40% of the sample children; the rest of the children had experienced multiple placements prior to being placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers. For the children who had been looked after prior to Head, Heart, Hands, the longest episode of care was seven years. A small number of young people were also identified to be living with their former foster carers under Staying Put arrangements when the programme commenced (n=7). The age range of the children also varied but was not equally spread across the sample: a quarter of the children were aged under four at the point at which they were placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers whilst just over half (55%) were aged 13 or over.

In addition to the length of time the children and young people had been in care prior to Head, Heart, Hands we used the "need code" from the English national statistical returns to explore the reason for them becoming looked after. Just over half (56%) of the children and young people became looked after as a result of Abuse or Neglect and a fifth (22%) had been placed due to Family Dysfunction. However, as found in other studies, the categories for identifying the needs of children in the national statistical returns are not mutually exclusive. Local authorities however, are required to only select one category for each child. Therefore, they may mask a range of complex and multifaceted needs and circumstances found across the sample (Holmes et al., 2010).

To further understand the needs of the children in the sample and to explore whether there was any correlation between their emotional and behavioural needs and placement length, we carried out a secondary analysis of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) scores for the children placed in the three English local authorities (Scottish local authorities do not collect or report SDQ scores as part of their national statistical returns). The SDQ is a standardised tool which measures emotional and behavioural wellbeing based on a range of parameters (Goodman 1997). In England a single score (0 – 40) is required for each child between the ages of four and 16 looked after continuously for at least 12 months. A child or young person is considered to have low levels of need if they obtain a score of 0-15, have some identifiable needs if they have a score of 16-19, and high levels of need with a score of 20-40. This data had not been completed for all children in the sample and completion rates were too low to carry out any tests of statistical correlation. For the small sample of children for whom the SDQ data were available (n=73:19%) their scores ranged from 11 to 38. As noted in Chapter 3, poor completion and reporting of SDQ scores has recently been highlighted by Bazalgette and colleagues (2015). They note that despite being a statutory requirement for children in care in England, only 25% of all local authorities had a SDQ completion rate of 90% or above while 8% of local authorities (12 areas) had a completion rate of 30% or lower,

with three local authorities apparently returning no data at all. The poor completion of SDQ scores has also been highlighted by Sebba and colleagues (2015).

Placement purpose

Before we explore the length of placements with Head, Heart, Hands carers, and the patterns of placements that both preceded and followed these, we consider the purpose of the placements. During the course of the evaluation it became evident that the sample of Head, Heart, Hands carers included kinship and respite carers. The type of Head, Heart, Hands placements, as defined by the placement type codes in the national returns, and the proportion of foster carers in each of these categories are detailed in Table 6.

Table 6 Head, Heart, Hands placement types

Placement type	Yellow		Orange		Purple		Pink	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Supported lodgings	0	*0*	2	*2*	1	*1*	0	*0*
Kinship/Friends and family care	3	*2*	10	*10*	1	*1*	1	*2*
Foster care	134	*92*	89	*88*	110	*98*	48	*98*
Mother and baby	1	*1*	0	*0*	0	*0*	0	*0*
Temporary placement	8	*5*	0	*0*	0	*0*	0	*0*
Total	146	*100*	101	*100*	112	*100*	49	*100*

During the latter years of the programme, the national statistical returns in England differentiated between long term foster care (fostering for permanence) and other foster care placements (Department for Education, 2015). Of the foster care placements in Table 6 above that were included in these latter returns (n=295), 46% were long term placements, and 54% were categorised as 'not long term'. As shown in Table 6 Head, Heart, Hands placements in the Yellow site also included temporary, short-term episodes of care.

Placement length and the Head, Heart, Hands episode

Given the heterogeneity of the types of Head, Heart, Hands carers (as defined in the national statistics) and detailed in Table 6 above, variability in the length of the placements with Head, Heart, Hands carers is to be expected. By their very definition temporary placements are not meant to offer long term stability, but serve a specific purpose at a given time in a child's care trajectory. However, our analysis of the length of Head, Heart, Hands placements highlighted a vast range in placement lengths including high numbers of placements lasting for less than one month. The placement lengths for each of the four local authority sites are detailed in Table 7 below. In three of the sites (Yellow, Orange and Purple) there was evidence of Head, Heart, Hands placements lasting for only one day, whereas the shortest placement in the Pink site lasted for 49 days. Furthermore the highest proportion of placements in the Yellow, Orange and Purple sites lasted for less than 31 days. The Pink site also had the highest proportion of longer term placements with Head, Heart, Hands carers: 22 placements lasted for more than five years and all started prior to the commencement of Head, Heart, Hands.

Table 7 Length of Head, Heart, Hands placements

Length of Head, Heart, Hands placement	Number of Head, Heart, Hands placements			
	Yellow	Orange	Purple	Pink
Less than 31 days	53	27	27	0
1 to 3 months	19	15	16	3
3 to 6 months	19	15	16	1
6 to 12 months	17	13	15	5
1 to 2 years	15	12	12	5
2 to 3 years	11	8	7	3
3 to 4 years	5	6	6	6
4 to 5 years	3	2	3	4
5 years or more	4	12	10	22
Mean	312.01	532.12	494.93	1580.22
Median	100.5	169.5	164	1504
Standard deviation	503.37	755.31	723.77	1078.76
Range (min and max)	[1,2906]	[1,3641]	[1,3641]	[49,3790]
Observations	146	110	112	49

Remaining with Head, Heart Hands carers

There was variability both within and across sites in terms of the numbers of children who were placed with their Head, Heart, Hands carers at the commencement of the programme and those who moved into the placement following the completion of the Learning and Development courses. There was also variability between the sites in terms of the number of placements that commenced prior to the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses and the number of children that were placed after the Learning and Development courses. This information is summarised in Table 8.

Table 8 Number of children placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers before and after the Learning and Development courses

	Yellow	Orange	Purple	Pink
Head, Heart, Hands placement started after the completion of the Learning and Development course	123	87	88	47
Placement commenced before the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development course	33	49	46	43
Total	156	136	134	90

Furthermore, there was a cohort of children who remained with their Head, Heart, Hands carers through to the end of the programme. The number of children who remained with their carers at the end of our data collection time period (31 March 2016: three months after the completion of the Head, Heart, Hands programme) was small and ranged between four and 17 per site. Ruby's story in Box 22 below provides an illustrative example of a child who was placed with Head, Heart, Hands foster carers shortly after the commencement of the programme, and remained with them for the duration of the evaluation.

Box 22: Ruby's story

Ruby, Gordon and Carol

Ruby was ten years old when she was placed in local authority foster care with a Care Order. Upon entering care in November 2011, Ruby showed some signs of emotional and behavioural needs. She seemed to be falling behind her peers at school, which her social worker reported was possibly due to the trauma of her early childhood experiences. She stayed with her first foster carers for eight months, and then in July 2013 she moved in with Gordon and Carol. Gordon and Carol were very experienced foster carers who had recently completed the Head, Heart, Hands Core Learning and Development courses. When she first moved in with them Ruby did not want to engage in any community activities, but after a while found that she enjoyed playing tennis with Carol. Ruby and Carol continue to play tennis together. At the end of the data collection period (March 2016), Ruby was aged 14 and was still living with Gordon and Carol. Her social worker noted that it was evident that Ruby was settled, and had formed a positive relationship with her foster carers. Her emotional and behavioural needs seemed to be lessening and her confidence was increasing. She was meeting her targets at school and was planning to attend a university taster session.

Relationships with Head, Heart, Hands carers

To understand more about the experience of Head, Heart, Hands and the impact of the Head, Heart, Hands episode for the children placed, case files were examined for indications of the nature of the relationship between the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and the children and young people placed with them. The information collected was from a number of sources such as the children's social workers, foster carers and the children themselves, as recorded within key case file documentation. The information available was reviewed and a number of themes identified; a count of the number of themes per case was then undertaken. The information gathered was not intended to be a definitive assessment of the quality of the fostering household relationships. Rather it focused on whether the case file demonstrated, on balance, a positive recording of the relationship. To this end it is constrained by a number of limitations (these are explored more fully in Chapter 3).

All 334 case file records were examined. Each case was categorised as showing broadly "*positive descriptions*", "*mixed descriptions*" or generally "*negative descriptions*" based on the analysis of the information in the case files regarding fostering household relationships and the identified positive or negative themes. Encouragingly, as Table 9 illustrates, nearly two-thirds of cases were described in positive terms (64%), a minority were negative (10%) and the rest were described in mixed terms (25%). Case file descriptions were not assigned in 87 cases (26% of all children's files).

Table 9 Case file descriptions of Head, Heart, Hands fostering household relationships [B]

Description in case file	Number	Percentage (%)
Positive description	159	64
Mixed description	62	25
Negative description	26	10
Total	247	99

[B] Percentages have been rounded and may therefore not total 100.

Descriptions of the fostering household relationships were available for three quarters of cases (n=247 cases: 74%). In total, nearly 600 positive descriptions were identified in the 247 available case files and these were grouped into 19 themes. These themes are detailed in Appendix E. The most common theme was related to descriptions of how stable the placement was considered to be (n=112:45%), followed by children and young people's positive views of the placement (n=83:33%), and whether the child or young person was thought to be making progress (n=70:28%). The least commonly cited themes were the use of the word "love" (n=8:35) and where the carer supports the birth family relationship (n=8:35).

The case files were also examined for negative descriptions or statements regarding the relationships within the fostering household. These descriptions included factors that were both *internal*, such as those referring specifically to the relationship within the household, and *external factors*, such as the young person's lack of engagement with education, that were placing additional strain on the relationships between them and their foster carers. A total of 125 negative statements were identified in 79 cases. The most frequently cited was challenge in the placement relating to a variety of factors, which were indicated to have a detrimental impact on the fostering household relationship (n=70:28%). Concerns within the placement were identified in just under 10% of the placements (n=22:9%) and allegations against the foster carer were identified in 6 cases. As Table 9, above shows around one in 10 of the relationships were described in broadly negative terms within the case files. In the small number of case files (n=26) where relationships were characterised as negative, there were varied factors recorded such as the impact of the young person's deteriorating behaviour and the ability of the foster carer to manage this. For some young people the 'pull factor' of home was described as a negative influential factor in their ability to form relationships within the fostering household and for others, birth family contact was cited as having a destabilising impact on the placement.

Moving on from Head, Heart, Hands

The national statistical returns were also examined to explore the number of placements children experienced prior to and following placement in a Head, Heart, Hands fostering household. The data indicate that the average number of placements experienced by the children in the sample was higher following placement with a Head, Heart, Hands carer when compared to their average number of placements prior to their Head, Heart, Hands episode. In addition, the average placement length was shorter following a Head, Heart, Hands episode. These data reveal that a cohort of children experienced shorter placements, and more frequent changes of placement following their Head, Heart Hands episode. The analysis of the care trajectories for the sample children highlighted substantial variability in the stability of their placements. Given the heterogeneity of the children and their care experience it would not be appropriate to attribute (at an aggregate level) placement (in)stability to the programme. The findings do indicate that in three of the four sites early signs of placement stability were detected towards the latter stages of the programme.

The national statistical returns were also examined to explore the reasons for Head, Heart, Hands placements ending. As other large scale studies of the care system have revealed (Skuse and Ward, 2003; Wilson, Sinclair and Gibbs, 2000; Ward, Holmes and Soper, 2008) children move to a variety of destinations and this was the case for the sample of children in the national statistical return data. The reasons for placements ending are shown in Table 10

Table 10 Reason Head, Heart Hands episode ceased [C]

Reason episode ceased	Yellow		Orange		Purple	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Not recorded	32	22	67	66	20	18
Moved to another placement	70	47	21	21	83	74
Residence order granted	0	0	1	1	0	0
Special Guardianship order granted to foster carers	5	3	4	3	2	2
Special Guardianship order granted to other carers	0	0	1	1	0	0
Return home to birth family	31	21	1	1	3	2
Move to independent living	1	1	3	3	1	1
Move to adult residential care	0	0	1	1	0	0
Placement ended for another reason	7	4	2	2	3	2

[C] Data were not available in the Pink site.

As shown in Table 10, the most commonly cited reason for children moving on from their Head, Heart, Hands episode was to move to another placement. Further analysis of the national statistical returns facilitated an analysis of the type of placement directly following a Head, Heart, Hands episode. The most common destination was to another foster placement: around two thirds of the children in each of the sites moved on from a Head, Heart, Hands placement to another foster care household. A small number of children (n=20) moved into a subsequent placement with other Head, Heart, Hands carers. In two sites, around 10% of the children moved into a residential care placement, which is likely to be an indication of their higher levels of needs.

The pattern that emerges is of a cohort of children with higher levels of instability both prior to and following their Head, Heart, Hands placement. However, it should also be noted that these children tended to experience the shorter Head, Heart Hands episode. As noted above, a proportion of children were only placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers for a month or less. In this way, it is possible to question the extent to which these children might have benefited from the social pedagogic practices as detailed in the preceding chapters. As noted elsewhere in this report, a range of factors external to the placement may ultimately determine where a child is placed. This is illustrated in Ashley's story, in Box 23.

Box 23: Ashley's story

Ashley, Simon and Julia

Ashley was three years old when she was first placed in care in March 2002 with a Care Order. Following a stable placement lasting 8 ½ years, Ashley experienced four subsequent placements between October 2010 and May 2015, including two short episodes of being placed with her parents, which lasted four and 16 days respectively. In May 2015 she moved in with Simon and Julia, who had attended the Head, Heart, Hands Core Learning and Development courses two years prior to Ashley moving in with them. When Ashley moved in with Simon and Julia she had high levels of emotional and behavioural needs and had been diagnosed with special educational needs. Ashley found it hard to settle into the placement. Her social worker reported that she wanted to live with her sister and had difficulties integrating into the fostering household. In July 2014 Ashley experienced an unplanned move from her Head, Heart, Hands placement, and went to live with another foster family. Ashley was still placed with these subsequent carers in March 2016.

The implementation and the design of the programme may have influenced the heterogeneity of the sample and extent to which we might expect Head, Heart, Hands to have an *attributable* impact on subsequent care trajectories and placement patterns. It is undeniable that some staff at differing levels of seniority have engaged with, and gained from, the programme. However, evaluation participants, including foster carers (as outlined in Chapter 7) and participants from the sites themselves (as outlined in the implementation evaluation), have repeatedly reported that there was insufficient diffusion of the approach across the sites at the systemic level. Indeed, as noted in Chapter 7, the lack of congruence of approach between members of the team around the child was particularly acute when foster carers experienced challenging periods such as in the case of placement disruptions.

While foster carers play a prominent role in the day to day decision making processes for the children in their care, definitive decisions on placement moves are typically made by children's social workers, or other agency decision makers, such as independent reviewing officers and members of decision making panels. In this way, it is possible to argue that the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on placement stability will be limited unless a whole systems approach is taken to ensure sufficient diffusion across all parties working with a child is sympathetic to the approach. This issue is particularly acute for the independent fostering services, who have limited influence on decisions regarding where a child might be placed. It is therefore, perhaps somewhat unrealistic within the timeframe and scope of the programme and this evaluation to identify measurable and attributable changes in placement patterns at the aggregate level.

As noted above, some children also remained with their Head, Heart, Hands carers for the duration of the study. There was also evidence of children moving into other permanence arrangements, including a small proportion of Special Guardianship Orders being granted to Head, Heart, Hands carers, and children returning home to their birth families, which was most prominent in the Yellow site where this was the experience of a fifth of children placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers. Managed and planned moves were also a feature of the sample. The picture that emerges is one of a high degree of variability, in which children placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers experienced a range of care trajectories, and evidence that Head, Heart, Hands placements had been used for a

variety of purposes. This is perhaps unsurprising given that Head, Heart, Hands was not a clearly defined programme with set parameters, such as a predetermined optimal placement length. In light of the heterogeneity of the sample, it is not possible to meaningfully attribute changes in placement patterns directly to Head Heart, Hands.

Managed moves

The national datasets do not provide an explanation for the reason for placement moves, we therefore return to our analysis of the case file records to offer deeper understanding about the experience of moving placement and whether these moves were planned. Case files were examined to explore whether placement endings for the 165 children who had left their Head, Heart, Hands carers were described as "planned" or "unplanned". It was not possible to categorise from the case file data examined whether the move was planned or unplanned in 40% of the cases. Analysis of the case files found that around four in ten children who left their Head, Heart, Hands carer did so in a planned way (n=67:41%) whilst for just under a fifth their move was described as being unplanned (n=32:19%). It was estimated that 10% of those children for whom case file data were examined experienced an unplanned move at some point during the Head, Heart, Hands programme. The proportion of unplanned placement endings was estimated in 2015 to be in the region of 6% of all children in foster care (Ofsted, 2015). It was not possible to match the needs of the children placed with Head, Heart, Hands foster carers with those who experienced unplanned endings nationally. Therefore, these figures are provided for context only and should not be used for direct comparison.

The case files of those who had left in an unplanned way were examined to look at reasons given and contributing factors. The number of times these factors were identified is shown in Table 11. The most common explanations centred around either a young person's behaviour or the foster carer's decision to end the placement. Overall, there appeared to be a combination of issues both internal to the placement as well as external influences. However, as Box 24 suggests the case file records show that there can often be a myriad of contributing factors, which also change over time.

Table 11 Unplanned moves: Information in case files on contributing factors [D]

Contributing factors to unplanned moves	Number of occurrences
Foster carer led	12
Young person's behaviour	12
Unable to manage level of need within placement or keep young person safe (absconding; risk of CSE; safety in area); specialist provision requested	8
Child expressed being unhappy in placement	5
Influence of others for example impact of contact on stability of placement; Section 20 status removed by parent; other children in household	4
Allegation	4
Young person led, for example, moved in with partner	2
Concerns about the placement	2

[D] Information not available on all cases; some case files had more than one reason given.

Box 24: Example of placement moves from case files

Factors influencing placement changes

"Placement remained stable for number of years but since last review placement increasingly challenging and young person physically violent and aggressive to foster carer. Number of factors impacted on placement stability: young person began therapy which appeared to bring trauma to forefront; young person not feel part of family; foster carer not been physically well; young person not had contact with family for number of months (had been promised contact by social worker but not happened yet); not had social worker for considerable amount of time. At disruption meeting it was recognised that a plan had been put in place to prevent breakdown but this was not possible".

"Child very clear not wish to return to former Head, Heart, Hands carer; [they] felt that boundaries were strict...But [young person] says had some happy times, but things got worse when another child came to live there."

"Placement not come to an end because of any difficult behaviour by child but foster carers' personal circumstances changed and [there was a] change in [their] wish to be long term carer. Placement became difficult as it was perceived carer not committed to child and not meeting needs. Child had believed would been cared for by Head, Heart, Hands carer until adulthood. The ending of the placement was described as very difficult".

Our case file analysis further explored whether these moves from Head, Heart, Hands carers were planned or unplanned. The destination with the highest proportion of unplanned moves was to a placement with another foster carer. These cases constituted a third of the children in the sample. Conversely, for those children who moved on to live with a member of their birth family the change was described as planned. Table E.3 in Appendix E provides a breakdown of the destination of those children who moved placements during the evaluation time frame. Ryan's story in Box 25 provides an example of a planned move.

Box 25: Ryan's story

Ryan, Tina and Doug

Ryan was five years old when he was placed with Doug and Tina in August 2012. This was his first placement away from home. In February 2013 Doug and Tina started the Core Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development course, six months after Ryan came to live with them. They reported that the underpinning values of social pedagogy resonated with their own ethos and approach to fostering. Ryan's social worker reported that he quickly settled into the placement with Doug and Tina and had formed a good attachment with them. Ryan stayed in his Head, Heart, Hands placement for 11 months, and in that time he made progress developmentally, socially and emotionally. In July 2015 Ryan's aunt was granted a Special Guardianship Order and following a period of planning Ryan went to live with her.

Boddy (2011) highlights the pivotal connection between relationships and placement stability: placement breakdowns are not only changes in where a child or young person lives, but often constitute a breakdown in the relationship. The case file analysis explored the links between whether the relationships within the fostering household were rated as positive, negative or mixed,

and whether the child remained with their Head, Heart, Hands foster carer for the duration of the evaluation. The analysis found, unsurprisingly, that those children who remained with their Head, Hands, Heart carers had a higher average number of positive themes identified in their case notes (mean number = 3.3) compared to those cases where the child had left the Head, Heart, Hands placement (mean number = 2.03). This indicates that the relationships were described in stronger terms for those who stayed but those who left still had *positive aspects* in how their relationship was described in the case files. In other words, while relationships are identified as being key to placement stability, it is not necessarily the case that children *only l*eave placements because the relationship with their foster carer was not ideal.

Nevertheless, trusting and supportive relationships between carers and children can take time to develop and are sometimes compounded by the adverse experiences that some children have prior to any one particular placement (Wade et al., 2010). The data gathered in this evaluation regarding the impact that Head, Heart, Hands may have on strengthening relationships and dealing with conflict and challenging situations (explored in Chapter 6) suggest that in some cases, Head, Heart, Hands **may go some way to creating the conditions in which** such supportive relationships can be formed. This does not guarantee that the emphasis on relationships found in Head, Heart, Hands will secure placements in all cases. However, it may enhance placement stability for *some* children and young people.

The process of placement change

As Sinclair and colleagues (2007) remind us, leaving a placement is not necessarily negative. As part of our exploration of the experiences of the fostering households we differentiated between *the placement change event* and the *process of changing placements*. A further distinction has been made between whether the event and/or the process were positive or negative. This can be conceptualised as outlined in Figure 4. Exploration and categorisation in this way facilitated an analysis of the impact of the Head, Heart, Hands programme on how changes in placement were experienced by both children, young people and their carers.

Figure 4 Placement change and the process of placement change

The reason for the placement change event was positive and the process was carried out as a "managed move" (+ve/+ve)	*Placement broke down but the process was carried out as a "managed move" (-ve/+ve)*
The reason for the placement change event was positive but the move was instantaneous (emergency move) (+ve/-ve)	*Placement broke down and the move was instantaneous (emergency move) (-ve/-ve)*

Process of placement change

Reason for placement change

Analysis of how the relationship was viewed and how the move was managed in the case files, was examined for the group who had left their placement with a Head, Heart, Hands carer during the programme. As may be expected, those who left in a planned way were more likely to have positive

descriptions recorded in their case files. Moreover, as Sinclair and colleagues (2007) remind us placement changes are not necessarily negative especially if a child is unhappy where they are living. Such references were rare (n=20) but highlight the importance of awareness of a young persons' feelings and wishes.

Of key concern to the children and young people in the interview sample was the feeling that their foster carers would not give up on them, giving them a greater sense of stability and security. It was evident from the interviews that a sense of security in knowing that someone would support the practical and emotional needs of the young people in care was high on the agenda for many of the fostering households. This view was expressed by one young person who described their foster carers as:

> *"…really trustworthy and you know they are not going to give up on you. We have gone through loads, which most of my old carers would have just said that is enough but they have sorted it through with me […] I have had quite a lot of moves and this has been my second longest at the minute so I think it [I feel settled here because] the fact of what we have gone through, that they helped try and sort it out, and they have never been... they have never said if that happens again you're out or anything like that, they have always said we will work it through."* (Child or young person interviewee).

One young person who was interviewed made several references throughout the discussion that she knew that her foster carers would not give up on her, despite several challenges she had faced. She noted that

> "*R: The other places were quite disappointing.*
> *I: Were they?*
> *R: Because they just, whenever there was an issue they just gave up. […] Whereas here they haven't. And it feels… I said to [carers] the other day, if like, if I was with my Mum and Dad they couldn't just dump me the minute I do something wrong and that is what I like about here because they don't just dump you"* (Child or young person interviewee).

This sense of stability continued even after they had stopped living with their foster carers. Two young people who were living independently at the time of the interview, reported that their foster carers had played an instrumental role in supporting them into independence, and four reported that they still had regular contact with their foster carers even after they had moved out.

Placement disruptions can be as detrimental to foster carers as they are to children and young people. Feelings of inadequacy, guilt or failure after a placement breakdown, have been found to be associated with carers ceasing to foster (McDermid et al., 2012) and disruptions to placements can be periods of substantial stress for all involved. Seven foster carers interviewed reported that Head, Heart, Hands, including **The Four Fs** and **Three Ps**[24] had provided them with a framework by which they could reflect on placement disruptions. These foster carers reported feeling more able to recover from the emotional impact of those disruptions, to review what they could do differently

[24] A definition of the Three Ps can be found on page 65.

next time, and crucially, relinquish any sense of being solely responsible for the placement breaking down. In this way the process of placement change was described by these foster carers as being less negative as a result. The interviews and case file analysis also provided further examples of Head, Heart, Hands helping carers to feel more confident in contributing to decisions about a placement change or a "managed move", when they otherwise may not have felt able to. This approach was reported to be much more satisfactory for the foster carers involved. This was most effective where the relationship between the foster carer and the supervising social worker was described as supportive and effective. Box 26 provides an example of one such case of a positive managed move.

Box 26: Case study Example of a managed move

Paul, Stephanie and Ryan

Paul and Stephanie had been fostering for five years when they attended the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses. Their supervising social worker also attended. They were approved for long term placements, but prior to Head, Heart, Hands had experienced a number of placement break downs, which Stephanie described as taking an emotional toll. Stephanie admitted blaming herself when a child moved on from a placement with them, which made it difficult for her to feel confident in developing a relationship with a new child. After attending the Head, Heart, Hands, Learning and Development courses, Paul and Stephanie described using a number of the reflective tools with their supervising social worker to help them to discuss those feelings of inadequacy. She said:

> *"I think what it is, is the reflection, the ability to stand back [...] [Children can do] all sorts of [challenging] things, and it is very easy to get worn down and start to take it all personally, […] I have always reflected in my head but there is something about writing it down. It is about writing it down and it is also about having a format to follow, you know what are the facts, what has just happened? What were the feelings? What feelings were going on for me? What could have been going on for her? You know and the sort of just that sort of process of working through it logically I think. Because I think without that you would just get to the point where you were worn down and the child hated you, you couldn't stand them anymore and they have to go."*

Ryan was 17 when he spoke to us. He had lived with Paul and Stephanie for about a year before Head, Heart, Hands started. Ryan had been diagnosed with a severe attachment disorder and although he had settled in with Paul and Stephanie well, Paul and Stephanie felt that Ryan needed more intensive specialist support.

Stephanie described how her supervising social worker, herself and Ryan worked together to find a specialist placement, that was more suited to Ryan's particular needs. Ryan described how he felt included in the decision to move him into a different placement and Paul and Stephanie continued to be an important part of Ryan's life. Ryan stayed in the specialist placement for two and a half years before moving to independence, and described how important Paul and Stephanie had been to him in preparation for the move:

> *"I used to do my washing, my ironing, you know things like that [at Paul and Stephanie's] and they used to give me advice and support about that because they want… because I have always said since I moved with them, I have always wanted my own house, I have always wanted my own place and because of them, now I have got it, you know? Now I have got what I wanted to achieve which I really wasn't expecting at this time in my life, [...] I would say that the only reason why I have got the support that I have got now and the placement is because of them, I wouldn't know what to do without them."*

Ryan chose to move close to Paul and Stephanie when he moved to independence, so he could continue to see them regularly. Stephanie described the experience as follows:

> *"I think I would have done it differently before, I think before I would have just completely panicked, I would have felt that we had failed him, […] I would have been really quite worried about it I think. And of course I was still worried about it but I think I could use just the way I felt about myself and the more confidence I had built about my ability through social pedagogy, helped me through that period and enabled me to not panic quite so much etc.; not lay all the responsibility on me and realise that [YP] is a 17 year old, he is exercising his rights to you know to his opinion and what he wants to do with his life and I think I could see it through his eyes better and didn't put it all on me, thinking it was me doing it. So I think I was able to support him more because of that and ... I didn't take it personally myself which I think I might have done before"*

Box 27: Definition - The Four Fs

The Four Fs is a model of reflection that provides a structure that supports you to separate facts from feelings – but values both as equally important. When you're in a difficult situation, or feeling stressed and overwhelmed, it can sometimes feel hard to understand what's happened, and plan what to do next, because the feelings and emotions you're dealing with can get in the way of the facts. Equally, in these situations, it can sometimes be hard to really understand how you're feeling, and deal with that appropriately, because you may be ignoring your emotions while you try and establish the facts. The Four Fs model is very simple, but foster carers have found that it has given them a valuable structure to work through this challenge.

1. **FACTS :** An objective description of what has happened
2. **FEELINGS:** A description of the feelings connected to the facts
3. **FINDINGS:** What sense can we make of the facts and the feelings? What do we learn from looking at both?
4. **FUTURES:** What can we put into action? What can we do better or differently next time?

The Fostering Network (no date) *Social Pedagogy in practice: Building resilience* [online] https://www.thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/sites/www.fostering.net/files/content/spip-building-your-resilience.pdf

The outcomes for children placed with Head, Heart, Hands foster carers

Throughout this report we have provided qualitative evidence of the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on foster carers and the children and young people placed with them. In light of the variable use of Head, Heart, Hands placements, and the heterogeneity of the sample of children and young people placed with them, a meaningful analysis of outcomes at an aggregate level is not viable because it would not be possible to directly attribute changes in outcomes to the Head, Heart, Hands care episode, particularly for those children whose placement was particularly short.

There is some evidence in the case files of Head, Heart, Hands carers supporting children and young people with all aspects of their lives, including emotional wellbeing and educational support. As noted in previous chapters, a cohort of foster carers reported that since undertaking the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses they felt more confident in advocating for the needs of the children placed with them. This finding is corroborated in the case file analysis, which identified evidence of Head, Heart, Hands foster carers assisting with the referral process for additional support services, for example Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

Box 28: Summary of key findings: Placement purpose, patterns and experience

- An exploration of the needs and circumstances of the sample of children and young people placed with Head, Heart Hands carers highlighted a considerable degree of heterogeneity.
- Analysis of the length of Head, Heart, Hands placements highlighted a vast range in placement lengths and also high numbers of placements lasting for less than one month. In contrast, 22 placements lasted for more than five years and all started prior to the commencement of Head, Heart, Hands.
- There was variability both within and across sites in terms of the numbers of children who were placed with their Head, Heart, Hands carers at the commencement of the programme and those that moved into the placement following the completion of the Learning and Development Courses. There was also variability between the sites in terms of the number of placements that commenced prior to the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses and the number of children that were placed after the Learning and Development courses.
- There was a cohort of children who remained with their Head, Heart, Hands carers through to the end of the programme. The number of children who remained with their carers at the end of our data collection time period was small and ranged between four and 17 per site.
- To understand more about the experience of Head, Heart, Hands and the impact of the Head, Heart, Hands episode for the children placed, case files were examined for indications of the nature of the relationship between the Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and the children and young people placed with them. Encouragingly, nearly two-third of the cases were described in positive terms (64%), a minority were negative (10%) and the rest were described in mixed terms (25%). A total of 125 negative statements were identified in 79 cases. The most frequently cited was challenge in the placement relating to a variety of factors, which were indicated to have a detrimental impact on the fostering household relationship (n=70:28%).
- The data suggest that the average number of placements experienced by the children in the sample was higher following placement with a Head, Heart, Hands carer when compared to the average number of placements prior to their Head, Heart, Hands episode. In addition, the average days per placement were lower after Head, Heart, Hands. The pattern that emerges is of a cohort of children with higher levels of instability prior to Head, Heart, Hands, also experienced higher levels of instability following Head, Heart, Hands. However, it should also be noted that these children tended to experience a shorter Head, Heart Hands episodes. In this way, it is possible to question the extent to which these children might benefit from the social pedagogic practices.
- In light of the variable use of Head, Heart, Hands placements, and the heterogeneity of the sample of children and young people placed with them, a meaningful analysis of outcomes at an aggregate level is not viable because it would not be possible to directly attribute changes in outcomes to the Head, Heart, Hands care episode, particularly for those children whose placement was particularly short.
- Seven foster carers interviewed reported that Head, Hands, including The Four Fs and Three Ps had provided them a framework by which they could reflect on placement disruptions. These foster carers reported feeling more able to recover from the emotional impact of those disruptions, to review what they could do differently next time, and crucially, relinquish themselves from a sense of sole responsibility for the placement breaking down as a result.
- There is some evidence in the case files of Head, Heart, Hands carers supporting children and young people with all aspects of their lives, including emotional wellbeing and educational support. As noted in previous chapters, a cohort of foster carers reported that since undertaking the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses they felt more confident in advocating for the needs of the children placed with them. This finding is corroborated in the case file analysis, which identified evidence of Head, Heart, Hands foster carers assisting with the referral process for additional support services, for example Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.

9. The costs and value of Head, Heart, Hands

Introduction

Having explored the different components of the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on fostering households and the relationship with the wider system, we now focus on the costs and value of the programme. Our underpinning conceptual and theoretical framework to carry out this component of the evaluation is detailed within Appendix G, along with an overview of the Cost Calculator for Children's Services (CCfCS) tool which was used to carry out the quantitative, secondary analysis of nationally applicable datasets and to explore the costs of the care pathways of the children placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers (SSDA 903 data set in England and the CLAS data set in Scotland).

As outlined earlier in this report and discussed in detail in the final Head, Heart, Hands implementation report (Ghate and McDermid, 2016) the programme was framed by the funders and the delivery partners as "exploratory". By this, they meant that each site would be encouraged to develop their own delivery model for social pedagogy in fostering, unconstrained by central prescription about what form that should take. In this way, it was hoped learning about a range of different interpretations of how social pedagogy could be delivered on the ground in the specific setting of foster care would emerge. As explored in more detail in Chapter 2, Head, Heart, Hands was not a clearly defined programme consisting of a common set of identifiable practices "*of known dimensions*" (Fixsen et al., 2005), or a set of prescribed activities implemented with consistency across all sites. Moreover, there are no current plans to scale and grow the Head, Heart, Hands as a discrete programme. In this way, developing a "single cost" of Head, Heart, Hands would be misleading to a degree that it would mask some of the flexibilities inherent in the programme.

However, in practice, activities across sites shared similarities and there were some standardised elements, or functions, as outlined in Part 1. There was a core package of resources (including human resources – the Social Pedagogues) provided by the funding and more or less consistently offered in each site. There was also a national management and support infrastructure created by the delivery partners. To estimate the costs and to analyse the value of the Head, Heart, Hands programme, we have had to move towards categorising the key programme inputs, while still acknowledging the importance of a flexible design which can respond to the specific contexts, which has been a key feature of the Head, Heart, Hands programme throughout.

While "Head, Heart, Hands" no longer exists in the form described in this report, as noted by Ghate and McDermid, (2016) four sites have firm plans to continue with some elements, precipitated by their participation in the programme. Indeed, there is a growing interest in the potential for social pedagogy to inform Children's Social Care Services across the UK. The formation of the Social Pedagogy Professional Association (SPPA) is an example of the response to this growing interest (See Appendix C for further information about SPPA). Therefore, there is a growing need to understand the economic impact of such endeavours. As such, in this chapter we consider the key **Head, Heart, Hands programme inputs** to be costed in terms of their "form" and their "function" and outline a menu of different costs, which can be used to inform future developments of social pedagogic practice in the UK, across different contexts. We also provide a set of unit costs for the Head, Heart, Hands programme. The unit costs have been calculated following a thorough analysis and

categorisation of the programme expenditure data[25]. In recognition of the commercial sensitivity of the expenditure data, financial data reported in this chapter have been aggregated and rounded. To understand the value of Head, Heart, Hands we explore whether these costs can be offset by the impact and outcomes achieved by the programme. The value of the programme is considered both in terms of financial and societal changes.

Programme inputs: Categorisation

Our previous, interim evaluation reports have focused on our approach to explore the cost inputs of the Head, Heart, Hands programme (Holmes, McDermid and Trivedi, 2014; McDermid, Holmes and Trivedi, 2015). Within these reports we emphasise the necessity to distinguish between different types of cost and the rationale for categorising the cost inputs utilising the COINS method (The Cost in Implementing New Strategies) developed by Saldana and colleagues (2014). As outlined throughout this report, the aim of this evaluation is to explore the impact of the impact of the Head, Heart, Hands demonstration programme, rather than of social pedagogy *per se*. It is vital that the costs outlined here are not artificially high, because they include the costs associated with the demonstration programme *in addition to* the costs of social pedagogic practices. Categorisation using the COINS method (summarised in Box 29) facilitates a distinction and therefore separation, of the costs associated with being involved in a demonstration programme, from those associated with programme delivery.

Box 29: Categorisation of cost inputs

- *The ongoing costs associated with the new practice*. These may include the costs of the staff time associated with new or additional processes, assessments or practices; meetings, groups or sessions provided as part of the practice; and any additional staff required to deliver the approach or intervention.
- *The costs associated with implementing the new practice*. These costs may include the costs incurred through training or coaching in the new practice; the recruitment of new staff; and planning and review activities that form part of the installation stage of implementation.
- *The costs associated with being part of the demonstration or pilot programme*. These costs may include the costs of travel to programme meetings or steering groups; and staff time to undertake additional monitoring, reporting or evaluation activities.

Form and function

In recognition of the high levels of variability across the programme, we had to develop a conceptual framework to estimate the costs of Head, Heart, Hands that took account of the variability, and identified clearly defined core components that could be translated into a unit cost. Whilst the way that Head, Heart, Hands appeared at a local level varied, it was evident that a core set of functions were required to introduce social pedagogic practice. Each site carried out those functions in a range of different forms that also evolved over time. Therefore, as part of our analytical process to move towards defining the core components which constitute the cost inputs, we undertook an iterative process to explore the function and forms of the different elements of the Head, Heart, Hands

[25] The Head, Heart, Hands programme spanned four financial years and the expenditure data that were provided were for those four financial years. The Social Pedagogues were only in post for up to three years (Jan 2013 to December 2015) but preparatory programme activities commenced prior to the Social Pedagogues being in post.

programme. This work was also intended to build on the core components and their flexibilities as shown in Figure 2. Our analysis shows that whilst there were both variation and similarities in the forms of the activity, each form of activity fulfilled specific functions.

In the first instance a set of functions were identified. These were the core activities that were recognised as being necessary for the introduction of Head, Heart, Hands in any fostering service. Each function was realised in a range of forms in each site. It was the stated aim of the Social Pedagogy Consortium that these forms were both "integrated" and "compensatory" (Fixsen et al., 2005). Integrated forms are those through which the underpinning philosophy, goals, knowledge and skills of the overall programme are expressed through the way in which the form is delivered. For example, as noted in previous chapters, the Learning and Development courses were designed to encourage group working, to reflect the emphasis that social pedagogic theory placed on the group as a resource. Compensatory forms were developed so that weaknesses in one form can be overcome by strengths in another. The set of functions and forms that have underpinned the cost analysis are detailed in Table 12.

Table 12: Functions and forms of Head, Heart, Hands

Function Basic (core) design components	Form(s) Flexibilities implemented in practice	Cost Category
Social pedagogic interactions and activities undertaken with families, including foster carers and children and young people. This includes any direct work undertaken by those whose practice is informed by their understanding of social pedagogy	Social Pedagogue (as distinct from a Social Pedagogical Practitioner) as Supervising Social Worker	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
	Social Pedagogical Practitioner as Supervising Social Worker (this includes any Supervising Social Worker who has attended the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development course and whose practice is informed by their understanding of social pedagogy)	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
	Social pedagogy interventions with families: direct work with families undertaken within by a Social Pedagogue, where Social Pedagogue is NOT the Supervising Social Worker)	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
	Social Pedagogy activities and events including activity days, outdoor activities and social events	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
Social pedagogic practice at a site level. This is what has been described as 'social pedagogy in action' among some of the implementation evaluation participants and includes any activity or interaction where social pedagogic perspectives are offered to site staff (as distinct from fostering households which is covered above)	Formalised (planned) social pedagogic input into team meetings such as reflection exercises introduced into some team meetings. These activities are likely to be undertaken by the Social Pedagogues and social pedagogic practitioners	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
	Informal (or unplanned) social pedagogic input between fostering service staff, and Social Pedagogues (and social pedagogic practitioners). This includes, for example, specific conversations about cases and more general issues and how they might be understood (meaning making) through a social pedagogic lens.	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
	Review of policies and procedures (including paperwork) to reflect a more social pedagogic approach undertaken through both planned interactions (for example, where a group is brought together to review such paperwork) and unplanned conversations about the paperwork (and its application)	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
	Involvement of Social Pedagogues in the recruitment and approval of foster carers, including involvement at panels.	1. Ongoing costs associated with the new practice

	Social Pedagogues involvement in existing training	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
Ensuring flexible learning and consolidation opportunities. This function includes those more structured initial opportunities to learn about social pedagogic principles and practice, and formal and informal ways through which to consolidate this learning	1 day taster session	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
	2 day orientation sessions	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
	8 day core sessions	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
	Consolidation: Open groups for those who attended the Core courses AND those who did not ('Action Learning Sets''/Momentum Groups'/'Dialogue Groups')	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
	Consolidation: One to one catch up sessions with Social Pedagogues	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
	Initial or consolidation: Development of resources, including social pedagogy booklet and manual	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
Nurturing of the integrity of social pedagogic practice specifically for the Social Pedagogues. This would include exploration of the influence and pull of the context on practice and finding a balance between adaptability and integrity of practice	Social pedagogic supervision of the Social Pedagogues undertaken by the SPC Site Support Lead	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme (unless additional SPC support has been commissioned. In which Case 1. On-going costs associated with the new practice)
	Group supervision (6 monthly)	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
Nurturing of the integrity of social pedagogic practice specifically for social pedagogic practitioners and social pedagogy trained practitioners. These activities are specifically for those who might identify themselves as using social pedagogy to (albeit to different degrees) and might include the formal (planned) and informal (unplanned) exploration of how social pedagogic practice might be adopted in real situations	Follow up groups for those who attended the Core courses ('Action Learning Sets''/Momentum Groups'/'Dialogue Groups')	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
	Social Pedagogic consultation of the Site Project Lead by the SPC Site Support Lead	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme (unless additional SPC support has been commissioned. In which Case 1. On-going costs associated with the new practice)

Stimulating a supportive receiving environment. This includes any activity designed to promote and support the further development of social pedagogic practice across the site. Activities that might increase receptiveness and demystifies (dependent on the starting point of the organisation) and generate demand for further training. It is an ongoing process	Awareness raising presentations to other teams (internal)	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
	Awareness raising presentations to other teams (external)	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
	Social pedagogy conference	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
	Champions programme (also referred to as the 'promoters' programme	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
	Attendance of Social Pedagogues and/or social pedagogic practitioners at meetings (such as senior managers meetings) to highlight the influence and impact of social pedagogy	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
	Development of materials about social pedagogy	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
Leadership and direction at the local (site) level. This includes the management and leadership of the programme itself (in the form of the Site Project Lead) and decision making at all levels of the organisation hierarchy. This function might also include influencers (change agents) through support from those who are most influential (as distinct from powerful) within the particular organisation. The forms may vary depending on the particular leadership styles of individuals and of organisations	Strategy or steering groups	1. On-going costs associated with the new practice
	Open space events	2. The costs of implementing the new practice
	HHH Site Project Lead oversight	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
	SPC Site Support Lead	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme (unless additional SPC support has been commissioned. In which Case 1. On-going costs associated with the new practice)
	Support from Central programme team	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
	Sustainability planning and actions at the local level. In many cases this includes input from the SPC	2. The costs of implementing the new practice

Leadership and direction at the national (programme) level. This includes the ensuring the maintenance momentum of the Head, Heart, Hands programme as a whole, sharing of practice across the programme, tanking and motivation	Attendance and hosting Review and Reflection Groups	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
	SPC Site Support Lead	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
	Attendance and hosting national practice group meetings	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
	Attendance and hosting national conferences	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
	Theory of Change work	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
	Sustainability planning and actions at the national level. In many cases this includes input from the SPC.	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
	Involvement of the SPC in the national programme functions	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
Evaluation and monitoring, reflection and review at national and local levels	Participation in and facilitation of evaluation activities	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme
	Completion of funders reports	3. The costs associated with being part of the demonstration programme

A distinction should be made between the *activities* associated with different forms and their *unit costs* (Ward, Holmes and Soper, 2008; Holmes and McDermid 2012). Two different forms may require different types of activities, but those activities may take an equivalent amount of time, and therefore incur the same unit cost. We recognise that in providing unit costs, some of the variability in the activities required may be masked. It was intended that by defining the core components in this way could help us move toward standardised activities that would be required when undertaking an endeavour of this nature, but allowing some flexibility to take the particular context into account.

Programme inputs: Core components

As reported in the final implementation evaluation report (Ghate and McDermid, 2016) it has been possible to distil the Head, Heart, Hands programme to its most basic **core components**. As such, the programme had three core features that were applied in a (relatively speaking) standardised form across all sites:

- A core training ('Learning and Development') programme based on social pedagogic principles, values and methods for a defined cohort of (approximately) 40 carers in each site and (notionally) with around eight staff, designed and delivered by the SPC.
- The embedding of trained Social Pedagogues within fostering services, doing a mix of project-related social pedagogic development work and some social work activities.
- The provision of external support to sites and to individual pedagogues delivered by the SPC.

The role of the SPC to support the programme at both a national and site level is summarised in Box 30 below and is explored in more detail in the final evaluation implementation report (Ghate and McDermid, 2016).

In addition, there were a number of **variably implemented components**, including:

- whether Social Pedagogues appointed to the programme were also registered to practice social work ("dual role" pedagogues) and thus could undertake statutory fostering social work in fostering households;
- the amount of direct work undertaken by pedagogues with families or with children and young people, and whether this was alone or jointly with other colleagues;
- the extent of review and redrafting of policies and operational procedures by Head, Heart, Hands project teams within site fostering services;
- nurturing organisational conditions and work with leadership teams;
- nurturing practice sharing and development;
- programme awareness raising within sites.

Box 30: The role of the Social Pedagogy Consortium

Text provided by the SPC, 2016

"The SPC contributed to the development, set up (including the assessment and selection of sites and recruitment of the sites' Social Pedagogues) and running of the programme: the writing of the Learning and Development programme, including creation of materials and facilitation of the courses; guidance to the central programme team nationally; and support for the sites, with one or two SPC site support leads per site.

Central to this role was building and maintaining strong professional relationships with site project teams. Alongside the guidance from local Social Pedagogues, they provided formal and informal support to the site team, guiding their reflections and planning, including any necessary local adaptations. SPC site support leads also engaged site stakeholders in obtaining further long-term support for social pedagogy. Importantly, they aimed at an appropriate level of coherence and consistency across the programme, taking into account any variance in the local contexts and the professional background and practice cultures of the employed Social Pedagogues. They were in frequent, regular contact with the site teams, locally contextualised, for: monthly pedagogical supervision for the Social Pedagogues (and 6 monthly group supervision across sites); attending site strategy/steering groups and other programme development meetings; guidance on developing social pedagogic materials; developing and (co)-facilitating other programme-related courses.

Nationally, the SPC supported the Fostering Network in developing their understanding of social pedagogy and the application of social pedagogy in fostering. This included a two-day social pedagogy introduction course. The SPC liaised with the central programme team remotely on a monthly basis, and met on average five times per year for coordination and programme development. They also participated in the quarterly programme learning network meetings, which brought together site project teams, the SPC and The Fostering Network. An SPC member served on the Programme and Advisory Boards".

Social Pedagogy Consortium, 2016

In the following sections of this chapter we consider the different programme inputs at both the national and site level with an initial focus on the time spent on the various components. We also explore the "in kind" inputs and the value of them.

Inputs at a national level

The main support infrastructure of the Head, Heart, Hands programme was the Central Delivery Partners, consisting of the Central Leadership Team, the Central Management Team and the Social Pedagogy Consortium (SPC) (see Chapter 2). The Central Management Team was responsible for the operational leadership of the programme. They provided project support, overall governance of the programme and ensured the programme was carried out on time and to budget.[26] The SPC supported the delivery of the programme and their role is outlined in Box 30 above. The implementation of the Head, Heart, Hands programme was, therefore, supported by a range of national activities or inputs. Many of these activities were specifically associated with being part of a

[26] Given that the role of the Central Management Team was to support the demonstration programme and as such would have been classified as COINS Category 3, as detailed above, these costs have not been included in the unit costs presented later in the chapter. The rationale for this approach is to ensure that we do not present artificially high costs that could be taken out of context.

national demonstration programme and to ensure that learning was shared. To move towards the estimation of a menu of unit costs, the national activities carried out by the SPC were organised according to the COINS categories outlined in Box 29 above. The amount of time spent on each of these activities by the SPC, during each of the programme years was extracted from programme expenditure spreadsheets provided by The Fostering Network management team. The amount of activity and the categorisation of the different components are summarised in Appendix I.

As Appendix I shows and as previously discussed in the implementation report (Ghate and McDermid, 2016), throughout the duration of the Head, Heart, Hands programme there was a substantial proportion of time spent on activities related to the demonstration programme. Of the total 388 days spent on national level activities by the SPC, more than three-quarters (79%:n=305) were attributable to programme related activities as opposed to tasks specifically focused on implementing or supporting practice. As we discuss in the following section this proportion is reversed when we focus on site level activities, both in terms of the involvement of the SPC and the Social Pedagogues. Translating these activities into costs associated with national support, the proportion of expenditure on demonstration programme activities was 80%. The total expenditure over the course of the four year programme for national support was in the region of £250,000[27].

It might be expected in a programme of this size and ambition that a sizeable proportion of time and expenditure would need to be allocated to programme wide activities and that these activities are essential to ensure that the overall vision is realised. Furthermore, many of the activities that have been categorised as demonstration programme activities subsequently influenced the programme and activities at a site level and vice versa. However, the high proportion of costs presented here reflect the findings of the implementation evaluation which suggested that "*There seemed at times to be far too many 'balls in the air' and too many different structures and strands of activity for the central programme delivery team to juggle*" (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:135).

Inputs at a site level

The inputs at the site level comprised both the ongoing support provided by the SPC and the appointment of the Social Pedagogues in the sites. As highlighted earlier in this report and previously by Ghate and McDermid (2016) both the Learning and Development courses and the Social Pedagogues were considered to be *the* core components of the Head, Heart, Hands programme (explored further in Chapter 11).

SPC input at the local level

Different members of the SPC provided support to the sites throughout the four year programme. The type of support they offered differed to meet the evolving needs of the programme and the local site context. During the initial stages of the programme the SPC had the sole responsibility of the delivery of the initial Learning and Development courses. The SPC also offered support to the Social Pedagogues and to the Site Project Leads. The particular form these functions took varied across the sites. The support to the Social Pedagogues was part of the original programme design. The nature of the support provided by the SPC was described as being routine practice in other countries, and was in response to the assumption that the Social Pedagogue role would otherwise

[27] This overall cost includes the time spent, all travel and subsistence, as well as the cost of producing Learning and Development materials.

be isolated, based partially on the learning from the earlier pilot project to introduce Social Pedagogues into residential children's homes (Berridge et al., 2011). As noted in Ghate and McDermid (2016) whilst this assumption was correct in some sites and the SPC support was described as vital, in other sites this was not reported to be the case. Likewise, the support provided to the Site Project Lead varied considerably across the programme. In some sites the SPC site lead took a visibly active role, for example chairing the local steering groups. In others the SPC intentionally took a back seat role, advising behind the scenes.

Although the function and form of their support differed between sites, the total number of days support provided to the individual sites was similar, ranging from 124-129, except in the Yellow site where it was slightly less, with a total of 114 days. The number of days support provided by the SPC to each site is broken down by programme year in Table 13. The data presented further separates out the activity specifically related to the delivery of the Learning and Development courses in the second year of the programme.

Table 13 Amount of SPC site support (input) during the Head, Heart, Hands programme, by year [E]

Programme year	Site (number of days support)					
	Blue	Green and Red [F]	Orange	Pink	Purple	Yellow
Year 1	19	19	17	17	16	12
Year 2 (Learning and Development courses)	47	41	54	50	49	56
Year 2	25	25	18	19	20	13
Year 3	18	19	16	19	23	18
Year 4	17	25	23	19	19	15
Total	126	129	128	124	127	114

[E] The expenditure data for the Head, Heart, Hands programme combined the input at the site level for the Green and Red sites.

The site level support provided by the SPC, over the lifetime of the programme constituted expenditure in the region of £650,000. Exploration and analysis of the site level support provided by the SPC resulted in all aspects of this work being classified as either 1 or 2 (ongoing or implementing new practice) using the COINS methods of categorisation outlined above, in contrast with the categorisation of the national level activities detailed in Appendix I.

Social Pedagogue input

As noted in Box 30 the range of work to be undertaken by the Social Pedagogues was written into the job descriptions used at the time of their recruitment. It was stated that their role would include work with carers, young people and fostering households; with other staff at the sites; and with wider system partners and stakeholders. The costs associated with recruiting the Social Pedagogues were borne at a programme level, whereas the employment costs were shared between the programme budget and the sites (with each contributing 50% of the total employment costs for the two Social Pedagogue posts in each site). The sites were given a degree of flexibility to decide how

the Social Pedagogues' time was spent and this evolved over time, although there were clear guidelines that a maximum of 50% of their time was to be spent on case work. In five of the sites the Social Pedagogue held cases (in the role of supervising social workers), but in most of these, the Social Pedagogues had a reduced case load. In two sites the Social Pedagogues case load constituted (almost) a full case load for a 0.5 full time equivalent worker (in recognition of the 50% funds contributed by the sites). As noted by Ghate and McDermid (2016) Social Pedagogue roles that combined the development of social pedagogy with routine operational social work were found to be the most optimal, particularly when managers assisted with the delicate balancing of time that was required for the two roles to be achieved. In two sites the Social Pedagogues did not hold cases but carried out some direct work with families, although as noted in Chapter 11 the amount of direct work with families was less than anticipated at programme inception. The employment costs (including on-costs) varied between sites and ranged from between £36,000 and £44,000, per Social Pedagogue, per annum, much of this variation was attributable to differences in pension contribution policies.

Inputs in kind

The level of commitment to the Head, Heart, Hands programme, in particular by the Site Project Leads has been highlighted in our previous evaluation reports. Of particular relevance, as we explore the cost inputs to the programme and consider how the learning can be taken forward to future iterations of similar programmes, is the omission of an allocated budget at the site level to support the implementation of the Head, Heart, Hands programme. As such, the Site Project Leads and other key personnel (such as the Strategic Site Lead) within the sites committed time to the programme without a formal allocation of time or budget. This time commitment was required for local site activities and also representation at national programme meetings, for example, Review and Reflection Groups. Further details about the number of national meetings that were held throughout the programme and who were required to attend these are detailed in Appendix J. The sites were also required to fund a range of local programme specific events, again these were unfunded by the programme.

Time as a resource

As reported in earlier interim evaluation reports focused on the costs and sustainability of the Head, Heart, Hands programme (Holmes, McDermid and Trivedi, 2014; McDermid, Holmes and Trivedi, 2015) we have highlighted the need to understand "time use" as a resource and a cost. Previous research to explore time use within children's social care services has identified comparable levels of activity for legislative led processes to support children and their families, both within and between local authorities (Selwyn et al., 2006; Beecham and Sinclair, 2007; Ward, Holmes and Soper, 2008; Holmes and McDermid, 2012) Examples include the ongoing process of supporting a foster care placement by both the child's social worker and the supervising social worker. This previous work has led to the categorisation of practitioner time use according to the needs and circumstances of the children and their families, the services received and variations by local authority policy and practice. Being able to categorise time use in this way, from the *bottom up*, facilitates a comparison of the time required (and therefore costs to support different types of cases).

Over the course of the evaluation the Head, Heart, Hands sites provided examples where some processes were streamlined, for example lower levels of activity and time spent by the child's social

worker and the supervising social worker as a result of foster carers increased confidence. By contrast, examples were also provided of the additional time taken to support placements that required extra input. In the quote below, a practitioner explained their perception of the time required to embed some social pedagogic practices in direct working with children to support their placement:

> *"It is time consuming…it is not something that can be done in a three hour session…it could even take a month or two but it is something that has to be done over time so that you build and establish and create an environment to share and experience and then re-evaluate it again."* (Children's social care staff focus group attendee).

As highlighted in the earlier sections of this report the need for flexibility and variability across Head, Heart, Hands at both a programme and site level was emphasised throughout the duration of the programme. This reflects the wider literature which argues for the need for social pedagogic practitioners to respond to the particular needs of those they support (Lorenz, 2008; Cameron and Moss, 2011). In this way, where direct work was carried out, the level of input into each fostering household varied considerably. As such, it was not possible to determine or categorise an 'average' level of time use from the *bottom up* to support Head, Heart, Hands fostering households. Given the range of variability we have instead incorporated the cost of direct work by the Social Pedagogues from the *top down* within the overall costs of their roles, detailed above.

Unit cost estimation

In the sections above we have explained and categorised the various inputs of the Head, Heart, Hands programme. This information was then used to estimate a unit cost per site, per year, for each Head, Heart, Hands fostering household. The estimation and use of unit costs in children's social care services has grown over the past decade and the rationale for their use is clearly articulated by Beecham and Sinclair (2007). The complexity of estimating unit costs and difficulties attributing them to outcomes is also summarised by Beecham and Sinclair (ibid). Despite these complexities and difficulties, it is widely regarded that the estimation and use of unit costs in children's social care introduces transparency into the relative value of services and interventions (economic and societal) and can assist with strategic planning and commissioning of services (Beecham, 2000; Beecham and Sinclair, 2007; Ward, Holmes and Soper, 2008; Holmes and McDermid,2012). To assist readers that are unfamiliar with unit costs, a definition is provided in Box 31.

Box 31 Definition of a unit cost

Unit costs 'summarise' the amount of resources (for example, staff) absorbed to produce a unit of output for that service. These 'output units' often make use of time periods of service: from the annual cost of a specific intervention, to the cost per hour of a social worker.

Adapted from Beecham and Sinclair (2007)

The unit costs (per site, per year, for each Head, Heart, Hands fostering household) are shown in Table 14 and provide a distinction between the unit costs with and without the costs categorised as COINS Category 3 (the costs associated with being part of a demonstration programme).

Table 14 Head, Heart, Hands unit costs per year, per site, for a Head, Heart, Hands fostering household [F]

Unit cost	Site					
	Blue	Green and Red [G]	Orange	Pink	Purple	Yellow
Unit cost PER YEAR including the national costs categorised as COINS 3	£3,066	£3,264	£2,218	£2,426	£2,441	£2,074
Unit cost PER YEAR minus the national costs categorised as COINS 3	**£2,831**	**£3,012**	**£2,066**	**£2,244**	**£2,254**	**£1,919**

[F] The expenditure data for the Head, Heart, Hands programme was combined for the Green and Red sites so it was not possible to accurately disaggregate the unit costs for these sites.

The variability in the unit costs between sites is as a result of a range of factors, including the different level of support provided to the sites by the SPC (as detailed earlier in this chapter in Box 30); the salary paid to the Social Pedagogues and the number of foster carers that participated in the Head, Heart, Hands programme, which ranged from 29 to 48 (the number of carers per site is provided in Appendix E). The costs have been averaged across the four financial years of the programme, although the actual costs were highest in year two when the Learning and Development courses were being delivered.

Value of the programme: Outcomes and impact

At the heart of value for money arguments is the extent to which the costs incurred through implementing a new practice can be directly attributable to a programme and may lead to financial benefits, along with improved outcomes for children and young people (societal benefits). The potential impact and outcomes can be organised into two broad types:

1. *Child level outcomes* which relate to the impact of the new practice on individual children. For example, improved placement stability resulting in a reduction in placement changes and the associated costs of these moves or an improved placement experience which results in improved outcomes and potentially longer term costs avoided to the public purse.
2. *Organisational outcomes* which relate to changes in wider organisational functions as a result of the new practice. One such example is the reduction in the costs associated with the recruitment and retention of foster carers.

Attribution of outcomes to the programme

The complexity and heterogeneity of the programme have already been discussed at length in the previous chapter, along with the consequential difficulties of attributing these to the programme which have been exacerbated by the short episodes with Head, Heart, Hands carers for a cohort of the children. Furthermore, as we have previously reported, sites stated that the potential impact of Head, Heart, Hands on subsequent placement trajectories had been lessened as a result of wider systemic and market pressures and changes. This was a particularly pertinent issue for the

independent provider sites where elements of placement decision making sat outside of the organisation (i.e. decisions were being made by the placing local authorities).

These are key factors when exploring value for money debates and the attribution of costs avoided. The difficulties associated with the attribution of costs avoided and the use of cost effectiveness analyses for children's social care programmes has previously been highlighted by Beecham and Sinclair (2007). Value for money analyses at an aggregate level mask the heterogeneity of the programme and as such are open to misinterpretation. Nevertheless, we have used individual care trajectories to illustrate the costs associated with different pathways of children in the sample, these are detailed in Tables 15 to 17 below. These costs have been calculated using the Cost Calculator for Children's Services (see Appendix G for more details) and include the ongoing support costs for children's social care processes as well as the fees and allowances paid to carers[28].

Child level outcomes and costs avoided

Existing evidence in relation to looked after children suggests that those children with higher levels of need are more likely to incur higher costs. These higher costs are the result of the need for more specialised placements and additional support (such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and therapeutic interventions) along with the costs incurred through events such as placement breakdowns (Ward, Holmes and Soper, 2008; Holmes and McDermid, 2012). As a result, aggregated local authority budgets can be skewed by a small number of children with higher needs, and less positive care experiences. To this end, it is reasonable to expect that improving the *experience of care* for both children and young people and foster carers is likely (but not exclusively) to lead to lower costs, not only to children's social care departments, but also to their partner agencies, as a result of improved outcomes related to education and emotional wellbeing.

The process of placement change and managed moves

The previous chapters of this report provide a detailed exploration and analysis of relationships within the fostering households and the importance of focusing on the process of placement change. If we revisit our earlier analysis of planned placement changes (managed moves), we can consider the findings from the case file analysis that a higher proportion of the placement changes experienced by the children placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers were carried out in a positive, planned way. We return to the case study for Ryan (see Chapter 8) and his experience of a planned move from a Head, Heart, Hands placement. Detailed in Box 26 are the social care costs incurred for Ryan's care journey, for the eleven months he was placed with his Head, Heart, Hands carers.

[28] Further information about the conceptual framework, the estimation of unit costs for looked after children and the reasons for variation in unit costs are detailed in Ward, Holmes and Soper (2008).

Table 15 Care journey costs for Ryan

During Head, Heart, Hands placement	Unit cost	Occurrences	Subtotal
Process 1 Decide child needs to be looked after	£972	1	£972
Process 2 Care plan	£240	3	£720
Process 3 Ongoing support [G]	£51[H]	336 (days)	£17,123
Process 4 Exit care	£415	1	£415
Process 5 Move to a subsequent placement			N/A
Process 6 Review	£618	1	£618
Process 7 Legal			N/A
Process 8 Transition to leaving care			N/A
Total			**£19,848**
Cost per month			***£1,804***

[G] Process 3 is calculated as a unit cost per day and is then multiplied by the number of days in placement. Process 3 includes both the ongoing support to the placement and the placement fees and allowances.
[H] The daily unit cost for the Head, Heart, Hands placement includes the programme unit cost, per foster carer, per year detailed in Table 14.

As detailed in Chapter 8, Ryan moved from his Head, Heart, Hands placement to live with his aunt when she was granted a Special Guardianship Order. Moving on to live with his aunt in a planned and purposeful way is likely to have reduced the costs to the site, when compared with a longer time period of being looked after. At present there are not any published unit costs of Special Guardianship Orders and the financial arrangements for granting them are variable between local authorities (Wade et al., 2014). However, the costs associated with adequately supported returns to birth family members have been estimated along with the potential costs avoided of preventing children from oscillating in and out of care (Holmes, 2014).

We can use the same approach to break down the costs of the care trajectories for Ruby and Ashley (as detailed in Chapter 8). The costs for Ruby are separated for prior to and during her Head, Heart, Hands placement.

Table 16 Care journey costs for Ruby

Before Head, Heart, Hands placement	Unit cost	Occurrences	Subtotal	During Head, Heart, Hands placement	Unit cost	Occurrences	Subtotal
Process 1 Decide child needs to be looked after	£972	1	£972	Process 1 Decide child needs to be looked after			N/A
Process 2 Care plan	£240	3	£720	Process 2 Care plan	£240	5	£1,201
Process 3 Ongoing support [I]	£44	251	£11,149	Process 3 Ongoing support	£51[J]	982	£50,044
Process 4 Exit care			N/A	Process 4 Exit care			N/A
Process 5 Move to a subsequent placement			N/A	Process 5 Move to a subsequent placement	£310	1	£310
Process 6 Review	£618	3	£1,855	Process 6 Review	£618	5	£3,092
Process 7 Legal (obtain care order)	£4,185	1	£4,185	Process 7 Legal (ongoing)	£10	982	£9,810
Process 8 Transition to leaving care			N/A	Process 8 Transition to leaving care			N/A
Total			**£18,881**	**Total**			**£64,457**
Cost per month			***£2,360***	***Cost per month***			***£2,014***

[I] Process 3 is calculated as a unit cost per day and is then multiplied by the number of days in placement. Process 3 includes both the ongoing support to the placement and the placement fees and allowances.
[J] The daily unit cost for the Head, Heart, Hands placement includes the programme unit cost, per foster carer, per year detailed in Table 14.

Ruby's care trajectory costs have been included to illustrate potentially attributable value for money, at a case level, rather than system wide. As detailed in Chapter 8, Ruby experienced a positive episode of care with her Head, Heart, Hands carers and her outcomes were positive on a positive trajectory. So soon after the completion of the Head, Heart, Hands programme it is not possible to ascertain the longer term impact of Head, Heart, Hands on the outcomes for the children and young people as they move onto subsequent placements and into their adult lives. However, we can draw on the existing evidence base in terms of improved life chances and better longer term outcomes for looked after children as a consequence of a positive care experience (Demos, 2010).

The costs for Ashley are broken down to show the three parts of her care journey: pre Head, Heart, Hands, her Head, Heart, Hands placement and then her subsequent placement with other foster carers.

Table 17 Care journey costs for Ashley

Before Head, Heart, Hands placement	Unit cost	Occurrences	Subtotal	During Head, Heart, Hands placement	Unit cost	Occurrences	Subtotal	After Head, Heart, Hands placement	Unit cost	Occurrences	Subtotal
Process 1 Decide child needs to be looked after			£972	Process 1 Decide child needs to be looked after			£0	Process 1 Decide child needs to be looked after			£0
Process 2 Care plan	£240	8	£1,921	Process 2 Care plan	£240	1	£240	Process 2 Care plan	£240	3	£720
Process 3 Ongoing support [K]	£44	1520	£67,518	Process 3 Ongoing support	£51[L]	45	£2,293	Process 3 Ongoing support	£44	627	£27,851
Process 4 Exit care			£0	Process 4 Exit care			£0	Process 4 Exit care			£0
Process 5 Move to a subsequent placement	£310-£650[M]	5	£2,030	Process 5 Move to a subsequent placement	£650	1	£650	Process 5 Move to a subsequent placement	£310	1	£310
Process 6 Review	£618	8	£4,947	Process 6 Review	£618	1	£618	Process 6 Review	£618	3	£1,855
Process 7 Legal (obtain care order)	£4,185	1	£4,185	Process 7 Legal (ongoing)	£10	45	£450	Process 7 Legal (ongoing)	£10	627	£6,264
Process 7 Legal (ongoing)	£10	1520	£15,185								
Process 8 Transition to leaving care			£0	Process 8 Transition to leaving care			£0	Process 8 Transition to leaving care	£2,478	1	£2,478
Total			**£96,758**	**Total**			**£4,251**	**Total**			**£39,479**
Cost per month			***£1,975***	***Cost per month***			***£2,834***	***Cost per month***			***£1,974***

[K] Process 3 is calculated as a unit cost per day and is then multiplied by the number of days in placement. Process 3 includes both the ongoing support to the placement and the placement fees and allowances.

[L] The daily unit cost for the Head, Heart, Hands placement includes the programme unit cost, per foster carer, per year detailed in Table 14.

[M] The unit costs of placement change (Process 5) range from £310-£650 to account for variations according to the frequency and time frame of previous moves.

The costs associated with placement change have been estimated to range from £250 to £1,500 per move (Ward, Holmes and Soper, 2008). This range takes into account the needs of the child, the placement type that they are moving into, and their prior placements (with the costs of placement change becoming incrementally higher for children if they continue to experience placement instability). These costs are illustrated for Ashley with a range of increasing placement change costs for the five placement changes prior to her Head, Heart, Hands placement and subsequent moves into and then out of Head, Heart, Hands. The placement change costs at the top end of this range (£1,500) would be attributable for children who move into residential provision following a period of instability, a breakdown of these much higher costs, both in terms of placement change costs and escalating placement costs have not been shown at an individual child level because the number of children moving into residential provision following Head, Heart, Hands constituted a small proportion of the sample, nevertheless a proportion that is comparable to the national looked after population.

Organisational outcomes

We have discussed in some detail, both in this report and in Ghate and McDermid (2016) that variations in the way in which different organisations implement the same model or approach are to be expected in any new programme or approach (Pawson and Tilley, 1997; Munro et al., 2011; 2012; Saldana et al., 2014) and these variations have impacted on the outcomes achieved, the costs incurred and the attribution of these to the Head, Heart, Hands programme. Furthermore, some sites have embarked on activities and innovations that are not part of Head, Heart, Hands, but include a focus on social pedagogy. For example, at least two sites have subsequently employed additional Social Pedagogues in other service areas.

The Head, Heart, Hands demonstration sites represent a diverse range of fostering services, varying in size and type (including independent, voluntary and local authority provision), along with the heterogeneity of the characteristics of foster carers and children and young people who were engaged in the programme. As such, we are faced with a mixed picture of the potential organisational outcomes and costs avoided as a direct and attributable consequence of the Head, Heart, Hands programme.

Systematic analysis of organisational outcomes at a site level cannot be directly attributable to the programme given the limited scope and reach of the Head, Heart, Hands programme. For example, site level figures about the recruitment and retention of foster carers (Ofsted, 2015) can only be appropriately used where whole cohorts of foster carers have been involved in a programme of this nature. However, the sites did provide data about positive organisational outcomes that were directly attributable to the Head, Heart, Hands programme, and as such provide some evidence of costs avoided, at an individual case or carer level, rather than across whole site budgets. Specifically examples have been included in detail in our previous evaluation reports (Holmes, McDermid and Trivedi, 2014) and include the following: potential foster carers approaching sites having heard about the programme and then being recruited as new carers (Pink site) and close working with birth families which directly led to a reduction in complaints (Red site). Nevertheless, the sites also provided examples of Head, Heart, Hands foster carers being suspended following allegations,

circumstances which have substantial time and resource implications[29]. This finding was corroborated by our case files analysis (see Chapter 8). However, from the data it was not possible, and the sites indicated that it would not be appropriate, to determine whether these allegations were directly attributable to the Head, Heart, Hands programme.

Referring back to our interim report (McDermid, Holmes and Trivedi, 2015) and the earlier section of this chapter focused on 'time as a resource' the sites provided examples of changes in practice that had impacted on the time spent supporting Head, Heart, Hands placements. Although the picture is mixed, with examples of both increases and reductions in activities to meet the needs of specific placements, the interviews and case file analysis provide a more nuanced picture in terms of improvements in the quality of relationships. In a small number of cases foster carers reported that their relationships with their supervising social worker had improved. It might be expected that where these relationships were working well, issues such as allegations *may* be dealt with more satisfactorily and that this consequently impacts on the retention of foster carers, a finding that is evidenced elsewhere (McDermid et al., 2012). However, foster carers also reported that there was insufficient diffusion of the approach across the wider service. Some foster carers reported that circumstances, such as allegations, had been addressed in a manner which is at odds with social pedagogy. As such, it is possible to argue that the economic impact of Head, Heart, Hands on organisational outcomes will be limited until the approach is dispersed across more parts of the organisation.

Sustainability

As the programme reached its conclusion in December 2015, four of the seven sites had developed clear plans to continue with social pedagogy beyond the life time of the programme, and the remaining three reported that while no plans are in place, it is their intention that social pedagogy will still feature as part of their organisational practice. In this way it is possible to argue that at a local level, sites feel that there has been sufficient evidence of the impact of social pedagogy, for their local context, to continue with the approach to differing degrees.

However, despite plans within sites to continue, we return to our wider evaluation findings about the reach of the Head, Heart, Hands programme and communication across organisations. A small number of foster carers and frontline children's social care staff who participated in the evaluation at Wave 3 raised concerns about the extent to which senior managers and decision makers across the wider site were committed to social pedagogy beyond the lifetime of the programme (n=6:11%). This was particularly prominent in sites that had taken the decision to not continue with the Social Pedagogue posts. In these sites a small number of foster carers in the interview sample raised concerns regarding the extent to which social pedagogic practice could embed and develop without the support of a Social Pedagogue (n=9). The lack of investment of resources to fund the posts beyond the lifetime of the programme was also interpreted by the foster carers as an indicator that the senior managers at the site were no longer committed to the approach. Conversely, foster carers in sites where Social Pedagogues were more integrated into the fostering teams appeared to be more hopeful about the potential for social pedagogy to continue within their site. Furthermore, echoing the findings of Ghate and McDermid (2016) a small number of foster carers (n=11: 19%) noted that there was a lack of planning for sustainability within their site. This view was

[29] Further details have not been included here to ensure the anonymity of specific cases.

compounded by concerns over limited resources across the sector, and some foster carers noted that commitment to and engagement with social pedagogy may be replaced by alternative programmes, as capacity to invest in more than one approach may be limited. These concerns are certainly not unique to the Head, Heart, Hands programme, but resonate with value for money debates across children social care services nationally and recent references to a "system under pressure" whereby difficult decisions have to be made at a local level about which services to invest in (Spring Consortium, 2016).

The findings throughout all Waves of the evaluation indicated the importance of sites communicating their commitment to social pedagogy to foster carers to maintain enthusiasm for the programme. All of the foster carers in the interview sample that moved from being Engaged Adopters to Cautious Optimists, or indeed Cautious Optimists to Defended Sceptics, reported that their loss of enthusiasm was due to concerns that the site was no longer as committed to social pedagogy as they were at the commencement of the programme. One foster carer commented:

> *"I really enjoyed the course and I was very enthusiastic when we did it, it was great and it opened my eyes to a lot of new things. And then after the course it was a bit of, yes a disappointment. I feel it has been faded away a bit."* (Foster carer interviewee).

Conversely, the Orange site had gone to considerable effort to involve foster carers in continuation activities beyond the formal end of the programme. This included foster carers co-facilitating training for other foster carers and children's social care staff. Nine foster carers who participated in the evaluation from the Orange site reported being confident in the site's commitment to the approach. Only one foster carer in the interview sample from the other sites held this view. The findings from our evaluation suggest that, where sites intend to continue investing in social pedagogic practice, it is essential to find a range of methods to ensure that foster carers are aware of this commitment and that plans are in place to consider the implications of foster carers moving on and maintaining a critical mass of learning:

> *"If there's no additional money for training and sustaining then you've got your core group of committed foster carers and social workers but once they leave, then, well, where's the next generation coming from?"* (Children's social care staff focus group attendee).

Value for money for future programmes

Our rationale for not calculating a single cost of the Head, Heart, Hands programme and for separating out the costs associated with being a demonstration programme have been detailed at the start of this chapter. Given the growing national interest in social pedagogy and its potential application within children's social care services, we have sought to summarise a "menu" of key cost inputs to inform future value for money debates and to facilitate local level evaluation of practice.

Returning to the findings presented earlier in this report, the two key inputs, as determined by evaluation participants, were the Social Pedagogues and the Learning and Development courses. Allowing for the higher costs that are evident during the early stages of a new intervention and taking forward the learning from both the Head, Heart, Hands programme and other smaller scale social pedagogy projects we have summarised the inputs and associated approximate costs in Table 18 below. To build on the findings reported in this chapter and to inform future value for money debates about social pedagogic practice it will also be necessary to identify clear (quantifiable) outcome indicators and to control for some of the heterogeneity detailed throughout this report. For example, a focus on long term foster care placements, or for a cohort of children with specific needs.

Table 18 Potential cost inputs for future programmes

Input	Unit cost (approximate)	Considerations for future application of comparable programmes
Learning and Development courses[N]	£30,000 per site for a cohort of approximately 40 attendees	The appropriate number of people to attend the courses to ensure a "critical mass". The reach and potential impact of the courses need to be contemplated from a "team around the child" perspective.
Social Pedagogues	£39,000 (per Social Pedagogue, per year) [O]	Whether the Social Pedagogues are case holding, and if so, the appropriate unit cost would be the proportion of their salary directly attributable to their Social Pedagogic Role, as such it is likely that the cost input would be a proportion of the cost of employing a Social Pedagogue. The number of Social Pedagogues, where they are positioned and their roles and responsibilities. Allowing time for externally facing activities to ensure the Social Pedagogues are not isolated in their roles.
SPC support	£20,000 (per annum)	The level of activity required to support both the Social Pedagogues and the Learning and Development courses. The need for momentum activities, using the form and function table (Table 12) as the basis for understanding the different types of activities.
Site leadership and support	20-40% of a senior manager's salary costs	It will be essential to include sufficient resource to lead and support the programme at a site level. The level of input will be dependent on the size and nature of the site. However, suggested allocation would be 20-40% of a senior manager's time.

[N] The costs of the Learning and development courses include the time for both preparation and delivery.
[O] This is inclusive of salary on-costs.

Box 32: Summary of key findings: Costs and value for money

- The core programme inputs for Head, Heart, Hands were identified to be: the Learning and Development courses; the embedding of trained Social Pedagogues and the provision of external support to sites.
- A unit cost for the Head, Heart, Hands programme has been estimated and ranged from £1,919 to £3,012 per annum for a fostering household.
- Variations in unit costs were attributable to a range of factors. These include the different level of support provided to the sites by the SPC; the salary paid to the Social Pedagogues and the number of foster carers that participated in the Head, heart, Hands programme.
- To explore the value of the programme, organisational and child level outcomes were examined to determine whether they could be directly attributed to the Head, Heart, Hands programme.
- It was evident that value for money analyses at an aggregate level mask the heterogeneity of the programme and as such are open to misinterpretation.
- Individual cost case studies provide some illustrative examples of potential costs avoided at a case level. However, there were also some cases where there was no evidence of costs avoided.
- Head, Heart, Hands no longer exists in the form described in this report, although four of the seven sites had developed clear plans to continue with social pedagogy beyond the lifetime of the programme.
- To inform future debates about social pedagogic practice and whether it provides value for money, we include in this chapter a table (Table 13) of potential cost inputs for future programmes, along with key considerations for how the information can and should be interpreted.

10. Evaluation participants' views of the programme design

As noted above, our previous evaluation reports (Ghate, McDermid and Trivedi, 2013; McDermid, Holmes and Trivedi, 2015) have highlighted the need to distinguish *between social pedagogy per se*, the approach, philosophy, framework, or set of values underpinning practice, and the *Head, Heart, Hands programme*, the particular set of activities undertaken by the Central Programme Team and the Central Delivery Partners, designed to introduce that approach to seven fostering services in the UK. A full and extensive analysis of the implementation of Head, Heart, Hands is available elsewhere (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). This section of the report will explore the views of the foster carers and frontline children's social care staff who participated in the evaluation of elements of the programme design.

Learning and Development

The Initial Head, Heart, Hands courses

The initial Head, Heart, Hands Core courses were identified by previous evaluation reports as a core component of the programme and for some it was the high point of the entire venture (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). Overall the foster carers who took part in the evaluation were positive about the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses. We have explored the advantages of delivering these to foster carers and children's social care staff above. The general consensus among the interview sample was that the experiential and participatory approach to learning was positive (n=13:23%) enabling foster carers to engage with the material and to get to know each other as a group. The sessions themselves were characterised as engaging and fun. Only two foster carers reported they did not enjoy this style of learning. One reported that they found the participatory methods *"uncomfortable*", while the other reported that the reflective elements took up too much time which could have been dedicated to the material.

The foster carers in the interview sample had differing views about the content of the courses. A small number (n=4) reported that the courses were not long enough and they had an appetite to learn more following the core course. All of these foster carers were Engaged Adopters, therefore, their desire for more learning may be as much a reflection on their enthusiasm for the approach, than of the courses themselves. Other foster carers and children's social care staff from two sites reported that training went into too much depth, was repetitive at times and relied too much on the theoretical aspects of social pedagogy (n=14:25%).

Continuous development and learning

As noted in Ghate and McDermid (2016), the sites provided a range of continuous learning opportunities to cement the learning for the cohort who attended the core courses, and as way to spread some of the learning to other carers and other staff who had not been able to participate. The particular way these activities were undertaken across the sites varied considerably. However, the majority of foster carers in the interview sample acknowledged that continuous learning of some kind was vital to ensure that they continued with the approach and were able to expand their understanding of social pedagogy (n=37:65%). Almost half of the foster carers in the evaluation interview sample attended one of the continuous learning groups at least once, and the majority found these helpful. Exploration of the implementation of Head, Heart, Hands, however found that small group work tended to start well but attendance weakened over time (Ghate and McDermid,

2016). The high proportion of foster carers in the evaluation interview sample who engaged in these activities, may suggest that the evaluation interview sample consisted of particularly engaged foster carers, who may not be typical of the wider foster carer population in the sites.

Three carers in the interview sample found the groups to be repetitive and not helpful and a small proportion of foster carers who participated in the evaluation reported that they found it difficult to attend the groups because of other commitments or practical reasons, such as the sessions being at inconvenient times or competing demands such as childcare needs (n=7:12%). Other foster carers who participated in the evaluation reported that they had found self-directed learning helpful (13=23%), through doing their own reading or utilising the course materials or social pedagogy booklets developed at the sites.

It was evident from the data that the Learning and Development courses were central to the experience of Head, Heart, Hands for the foster carers in the sample. When asked about the programme (as distinct from social pedagogy) all of the foster carers made reference to either the initial Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses or the continuous learning activities. Given the importance placed on the social pedagogues themselves in other evaluation reports (Ghate and McDermid, 2016) it is perhaps surprising that only 21 foster carers and six children and young people mentioned them in the interview. Fewer still (n=3) made reference to the variety of activity days and systemic work undertaken by the sites.

The Social Pedagogues

Elsewhere in this evaluation the Social Pedagogues were identified to be an active ingredient of the programme (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). It is perhaps surprising then that only a third of the foster carers (n=21:36) and six children and young people who were interviewed at Wave 3 mentioned the Social Pedagogues in their interviews. On the whole, those foster carers and children and young people who mentioned the Social Pedagogues in their interviews were complementary. The Social Pedagogues were described by evaluation participants as kind and friendly, as having expert

Box 33: Social Pedagogues in Heart, Heart, Hands

"Social Pedagogues were in many ways the most important and distinctive - and certainly were the most innovative - aspect of the implementation model of Head, Heart, Hands. Embedded within fostering teams (except in one site where they were employed within the virtual school), Social Pedagogues were expected to be a key 'active ingredient' of the programme, bringing with them specialised degree-level training and skills. The job descriptions used at the time of their recruitment emphasised that they would work in a variety of ways, including with carers, young people and fostering families; with other staff at the sites; and with wider system partners and stakeholders. They were expected to work both independently, but also, importantly, alongside other staff to 'model' how social pedagogy could be used in practice. Most did some direct work although sometimes this was limited. Critically, not all pedagogues in the programme were registered with the English/Scottish social work accreditation bodies (HCPC/SSSC), and so it was known in advance that some would not be able to practice as 'supervising social workers' or hold statutory responsibilities for fostering cases."

From: Ghate and McDermid, 2016

knowledge of social pedagogic practices and a non-judgemental approach to working. A number of foster carers in the interview sample reported that the contact that they had with the Social Pedagogues had increased their understanding of the approach. Those foster carers and frontline children's social care staff who participated in the evaluation from the sites that had ceased employing Social Pedagogues at the end of the programme expressed disappointment that their posts were not continuing. These foster carers raised concerns about the sustainability of the approach without the presence of the Social Pedagogues (n=9:16%)

Box 34: Summary of key findings: Evaluation participants' views of the programme design

- The initial Head, Heart, Hands core courses were identified by previous evaluation reports as a core component of the programme and for some it was the high point of the entire venture (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). The general consensus among the interview sample was that the experiential and participatory approach to learning was positive (n=13:23%) enabling foster carers to engage with the material and to get to know each other as a group. The sessions themselves were characterised as engaging and fun.
- Only two foster carers reported they did not enjoy this style of learning. One reported that they found the participatory methods *"uncomfortable"*, while the other reported that the reflective elements took up too much time which could have been dedicated to the material.
- Other foster carers in the interview sample were of the view that training went into too much depth, was repetitive at times and relied too much on the theoretical aspects of social pedagogy (n=14:25%). Three of these foster carers expressed frustrations that the courses did not sufficiently explore how to implement the approaches in practice, or take into account the complexities of their children's needs.
- The majority of foster carers in the interview sample acknowledged that continuous learning of *some kind* was vital to ensure that they continued with the approach and were able to expand their understanding of social pedagogy (n=37:65%). Almost half of the foster carers in the evaluation interview sample attended one of the continuous learning groups at least once, and the majority found these helpful. Exploration of the implementation of Head, Heart, Hands, however found that small group work tended to start well but attendance weakened over time (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). The high proportion of foster carers in the evaluation interview sample who engaged in these activities, may suggest that the evaluation interview sample consisted of particularly engaged foster carers, who may not be typical of the wider foster carer population in the sites.
- It is perhaps surprising that only a third of the foster carers (n=21:36) and six children and young people who were interviewed at Wave 3 mentioned the Social Pedagogues in their interviews. On the whole, those foster carers and children and young people who mentioned the Social Pedagogues in their interviews were complementary.

PART 3: Implementation insights

11. Implementation insights and their influence on the impact of the Head, Heart, Hands Programme

Introduction

Alongside the modules of research designed to assess the final results of Head, Heart, Hands on carers and on young people (in other words, the impact of the programme), the evaluation of Head, Heart, Hands included a substantial module of longitudinal research on the implementation of the programme, (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). This work was designed to describe how the programme was put into practice at site level, identify the core features of the programme as implemented, and evaluate the weaknesses and strengths that emerged over time in the implementation model and the implementation process. A full description is contained in the final report on implementation: (http://www.cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Main_Report.pdf); and a summary of key findings is also available at http://cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Summary.pdf.

The implementation final report contained substantial detail and analysis about the design of the programme and about how an "implementation lens", and theory, frameworks and methods from the emerging science of effective implementation (Fixsen et al., 2005; Ghate, 2015) were used to illuminate aspects of the programme's design and delivery. That detail is not rehearsed here, and readers are directed to the implementation report for the full picture. Rather, this part of the report on impact provides some selected implementation insights that may assist in the interpretation of some of the most striking impact findings.

The implementation research in brief

The implementation research involved all seven sites in three waves of data collection between 2013 and 2016, with over 230 individuals contributing data at the different time points. It focused on the professional and organisational stakeholders in sites rather than on carers and children and young people, and focused on implementation outcomes for sites and for the system rather than on outcomes for the intended ultimate beneficiaries, which were fostering households. The implementation research included: Site Project Leads, the social pedagogy consortium site support leads, the programme Social Pedagogues, supervising social workers based in fostering, children's social workers and children's social care managers, strategic decision makers in local authorities and also staff at The Fostering Network and from the funders' consortium. Full details of the methods used, the sample from which data were collected, and the detailed findings can be found in the full report and the summary.

The implementation study was completed and reported some months before the final impact data were available. The implementation report was thus written in advance of having a full picture of the final outcomes for carers. Notwithstanding, it concluded that the implementation of the programme had been achieved with mixed results. Positive findings included that:

- The "Learning and Development" Core training courses for carers and staff were generally well received.
- Professional Social Pedagogues were successfully integrated into the work of several sites and were viewed by sites as "core components" (i.e. essential active ingredients; Ghate and McDermid, 2016:18) of a pedagogic approach in foster care.
- In four sites, definite plans for sustaining and scaling up the approach in locally-appropriate ways had been made by the end of the period.
- Organisational commitment was strengthened where there was seen to be alignment and potential for blending social pedagogy with other promising approaches to working in children's services.

But the implementation study also showed that implementing this kind of fluid and intangible approach was challenging at all levels (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:42-43; 66-67; 139-140). Whilst all stakeholders firmly endorsed the principles and aspirations of social pedagogy as far as they understood them, not all were equally persuaded of the difference from "good practice as usual". Key areas of implementation challenge included:

- A lack of clarity and agreement about how to define and implement a specifically "social pedagogic approach" to fostering.
- Planning and agreeing key parameters at early stages to ensure that roles, responsibilities and methods were as clear as possible.
- Strong leadership to prevent fluidity and flexibility in the design leading to unnecessary over-complexity.
- Social Pedagogues needing ongoing and time-consuming support in the difficult role of "change agent".
- Finding effective ways to keep up the momentum and interest amongst carers and staff once initial core courses were over.
- Reaching and influencing the wider system of care around fostered children also remained more of an aspiration than a reality, and the degree of positive "disturbance" to the local system (i.e. perturbation to business as usual, required for change; (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:17) was generally felt to be lower than was required to achieve change on a substantial scale.

Below we explore two sets of factors that bear on the success of the programme for the intended ultimate beneficiaries; the *design* of the Head, Heart, Hands programme, and the social pedagogic *content* that was delivered as part of the programme.

Impact findings and implementation insights

***Impact finding**: The **qualitative data**, collected from carers participating in the programme by means of in-depth interviews and group discussions, tended to find stronger positive results than the quantitative data, which included data on the costs of the programme, analysis of the case files and management information data. This is not uncommon in the social care field, where qualitative results often give a much more positive picture than structured measurement; see Moran and Ghate,*

(2013:14), for a discussion of this phenomenon. It may also, in this study, reflect the particular nature of the qualitative interview sub-sample, as noted in Chapter 3.

This said, an overarching message from the qualitative research was that Head, Heart, Hands was a definite enhancement to good practice, especially for a particularly enthusiastic group of "Engaged Adopters". This group constituted between half and just less than three quarters of the sample of 76 foster carer interviewees, depending on the wave of data collection under consideration. These carers responded particularly positively to the Learning and Development courses, about which they spoke enthusiastically, and to the ideas and principles of social pedagogy that were communicated through these courses and through other social pedagogic activities over time. In their interviews, even relatively "small" changes were described as making a considerable impact on how these carers articulated and conceptualised good practice in fostering. Many of the models and frameworks offered in the training (the Common Third, the Three Ps etc.) were mentioned as having been memorable and useful.

The others in the sample who expressed more qualified enthusiasm or even some scepticism (the "Cautious Optimists" and the "Defended Sceptics") even so, rarely expressed disagreement with the core values or principles of social pedagogy. There was a broad consensus that social pedagogy was consistent with widely accepted principles of good foster care, even where practice in the real world departed from these ideals. Notably, however, Engaged Adopters also tended to report the highest confidence in the standard of their foster care, and in the quality of relationships with fostered young people prior to the programme's inception. This was confirmed both by qualitative interview data and by ***case file analysis*** *for these fostering households.*

Several implementation insights support this finding, related both to the design of the programme and to its social pedagogic content:

- The Learning and Development Core courses - a key element of the design of the Head, Heart, Hands programme (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:38) - were reported by sites in the implementation research to have been largely well received (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:90-94). In respect of content, the implementation analysis also found no stakeholders who were unsupportive of the principles and central tenets of social pedagogy as they understood them from the programme trainers and Social Pedagogues. Indeed, most professional stakeholders believed that social pedagogy was co-terminous with what was generally regarded as good practice (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:76; 130). The training seems to have been a very positive element of the design, well-executed and well-received, and for at least some carers, resulted in a committed group of supporters of social pedagogy who expressed the intention to take the approach forward in their own practice. Furthermore, a small number of foster carers were invited to co-facilitate additional social pedagogy training developed by the individual sites and this was reported as highly positive for sustainment of the approach; (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:118-120). These foster carers also reported in the impact research that co-facilitation of training served the dual purpose of consolidating their own learning, and reassuring them that the site was committed to social pedagogy beyond the life of the programme. However, despite this positive picture, a number of foster carers who were interviewed for the impact study raised concerns that a lack of diffusion of

social pedagogic thinking among the wider children's social care staff with whom they came into contact had led to incongruences in the approach of different members of the team around the child in relation to specific issues arising during the course of the programme. These findings resonate with and appear to confirm the findings of the implementation study, which suggested that the reach of the programme was deep for a minority, but not wide, in the sense of reaching a majority of stakeholders across demonstration sites. Caution was expressed by all site leads and many children's social care staff that the programme may have been most effective for carers where it was already building on strong practice, and many noted that the numbers of carers who continued to take part over the lifetime of the programme after the training finished, was small and confined to a distinct group of self-selected participants (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:103). In terms of implementation 'stages' therefore (see Ghate and McDermid, 2016:19-25 for a description of the concept of stages and how they were defined in the implementation research), not all sites considered they had managed to complete the stage of 'full implementation', which was defined as full engagement in the new thinking and practices of all those who had been trained as part of the programme. Head, Heart, Hands may therefore have been a highly-praised improvement or enhancement to practice for some, rather than a transformative experience for the many, and may perhaps not have reached those who were finding fostering more challenging with quite the same force.

Impact finding: Case file analysis *showed that just less than half of the cases included in the research (which covered 70% of all children placed with carers who were officially participating in the Head, Heart, Hands programme), made mention of social pedagogy being implemented in some shape or form by or with the fostering household (47%) and the rest (53%) contained no reference to social pedagogy. There were relatively few direct mentions of the term "Head, Heart, Hands" or of the Social Pedagogues themselves in the case files (n=46: 30%).* ***Qualitative impact data*** *also indicated, surprisingly, that many of the carers and children and young people interviewed for the impact study also failed spontaneously to mention the Social Pedagogues or any activities led by them. Only a third of the foster carers (n=21: 36%) and six children and young people who took part in the evaluation at Wave 3 mentioned the Social Pedagogues in their interviews.*

We have already discussed the limitations of relying on case file and within-interview mentions of the Programme as an indication of its significance. Given that all these cases involved carers who were officially trained on the programme, this finding may indicate the level of uptake or adoption by carers and staff of the learning and activities of the programme, or it may reflect awareness or salience of the learning and activities in the minds of those preparing the case file notes, or some combination of these two factors, as noted earlier in Chapter 7. It may also reflect a tendency (not unique to Head, Heart, Hands) for generally low uptake of innovation in practice settings, which we have noted previously (Pithouse et al., 2002). Whatever the explanation, that only half the files make mention of social pedagogy at all is perhaps disappointing, taking into account the original objectives and aspirations of the Head, Heart, Hands programme. It may have been the case that social pedagogic activities were taking place in the fostering households but not being noticed and recorded by children's social care staff; but the fact that staff responsible for contributing to case files were not recording any innovative activity related to the programme suggests that the Head, Heart,

Hands programme was relatively low-profile within the context of business as usual in the demonstration sites.

Impact finding: relatedly, in the cost data analysis, the team were unable to disaggregate for costs purposes different types of programme activity with precision due to the difficulty in ascertaining what activities had taken place in individual cases. This was not recorded at individual case level, and indeed, was never specified at group level but left open to local development. This was an outfall of the considerable fluidity in the programme design and the impossibility of isolating core components and core inputs at the level of specificity required for this kind of analysis. However, analysis of cost inputs indicates a very substantial amount of time and therefore money spent on central programme activities (see Chapter 9).

Several implementation insights may help to make sense of these findings:

- The implementation analysis highlighted the fluid and "emergent" shape of the programme (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:6; 65-67; 132). Although this allowed great scope for local development and experimentation, it also created a number of difficulties. Isolating the core components that were considered to be essential to the proper and effective delivery of social pedagogy in fostering practice was a challenge, with a clear picture of what might have been the active ingredients of the programme (as opposed to locally variable approaches) only emerging as the four year programme drew to a close (see Ghate and McDermid, 2016:29-31). This fluidity was associated, inevitably, with difficulties for all stakeholders (at times) in defining the shape of the programme or identifying what the programme "*was*" and hence in what respects it was making a distinct and value-added contribution to the routine business of "fostering as usual" in the participating sites. Social work staff in sites who were not themselves closely involved in the small project delivery teams often reported during the implementation study that they struggled to articulate the key elements of the programme, or to describe what social pedagogy in action would look like. As a result, they may have struggled to recognise or notice anything done differently with the Head, Heart, Hands demonstration sample families as a result of the programme, or to attribute any novelty to the Head, Heart, Hands programme in particular. It was noted in the implementation analysis that the overly fluid design of the programme probably constrained its effectiveness; unfortunately, we are not able to determine whether the failure to mention social pedagogy in half the case files indicates poor penetration of the approach in the sample, or poor recognition of Head, Heart, Hands inputs that were being made, or both.

- The implementation analysis, based on a substantial data set collected from sites, personnel and other stakeholders in Head, Heart, Hands, attempted to isolate likely core components of the design of Head, Heart, Hands. It concluded that Social Pedagogues, in particular, were a core component (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:33-38; 136) and certainly sites themselves generally believed the programme could not have functioned without the professional input of the Social Pedagogues. Social Pedagogues themselves also believed their inputs had been critical (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:136-138). The lack of mention of the social pedagogues in case file notes and critically, lack of spontaneous mention by some foster carers

interviewed for the qualitative research, seems however to indicate that the Social Pedagogues themselves (not just the programme's design) were also not especially prominent or visible to professional colleagues, even within the demonstration programme sample. This raises important questions about the extent to which the Social Pedagogues were in fact able to 'reach' the whole sample of families effectively. If Social Pedagogues had been actively helpful in the lives of Head, Heart, Hands foster carers and the children and young people placed with them, arguably, one would expect to find them mentioned and acknowledged by carers and young people more often than was in fact found.

- The implementation analysis however had already picked up many comments, especially from Site Project Leads and from children's social care staff, but also from some Social Pedagogues, regarding a degree of dissatisfaction about the extent to which the Social Pedagogues had been directly engaged in work with families (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:108-111) during the lifetime of the Head, Heart, Hands programme. It was felt that while they had done some outstanding work with a small number of families, they had not been able to do as much hands-on work with families and with specific young people as had been hoped. Various explanations were offered (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:77; 80-88) including that much time had been consumed for pedagogues servicing the activities associated with the central programme (for example, writing reports, attending meetings); their role was not clear and not always well-accepted at first; that not all Social Pedagogues liked direct work as much as other activities; and that those Social Pedagogues who were registered to hold cases in the UK also had a significant workload associated with this, albeit that sites went to great efforts to minimise the effects. Social Pedagogues themselves also noted that in some sites, they had found it difficult to gain direct access to fostering households, especially when they were not 'dual role' case-holding. Whatever the explanation, the impact findings appear to provide further confirmation that Social Pedagogues in the programme were not able to be as widely and noticeably 'present' and involved in fostering cases within the sample of families as might have been desirable. It may be that our original identification of Social Pedagogues as core components of the programme design was, to some degree and in some places, more an aspiration than a reality at the level of individual families and individual cases in the sample. It may also indicate that Social Pedagogues were more active and visible at the site level (and especially to the Head, Heart, Hands project teams and those close to them) than they were to families and to supervising social workers in general.

Impact finding: qualitative impact data *indicated that many foster carers, even when enthusiastic about social pedagogy and its promise, continued to be frustrated that the wider system of care on fostering services was not supportive of the changes in thinking and practice that were implied by taking a social pedagogic approach. Some foster carers felt alone and somewhat unsupported in their attempts to use social pedagogy on an ongoing basis in their practice. They cited instances where staff who were part of the team around the child (including supervising and children's social workers) took a view that was contrary to that implied by a social pedagogic approach, for example as described in earlier chapters of this report, in matters of risk management (Chapter 7); situations where allegations against carers had been made where social pedagogic principles had been side-lined; and a general lack of child-centeredness and over-reliance on formulaic and bureaucratic*

procedures that did not sit well with the more reflective and creative child-centred and person-centred approach implied by social pedagogy (Chapter 7).

Several implementation insights may help to make sense of this finding:

- Implementation science learning is increasingly revealing the importance of a good "fit" or appropriate degree of alignment between an innovation and the existing system (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:18; Ghate, 2015) so that the chances of new practices being accepted and supported are optimised. Activities to promote mutual understanding so that fit is optimised between different sorts of personnel in a system are generally essential. Findings from the implementation research on Head, Heart, Hands affirm this principle: they indicated a weakness in the execution of an otherwise good design intention of the programme. It had been intended as part of the design that foster carers participating in the Head, Heart, Hands programme should be accompanied at the Learning and Development course by the supervising social worker for their case. In the event, relatively few foster carers were matched in co-learning situations in joint Head, Heart, Hands training with the supervising social workers responsible for supporting their care (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:92-94). This was noted by many as a missed opportunity, because where it had happened, staff and carers alike describe the powerful and positive effects in improving mutual understanding and building better relationships between these key adults in fostered children's lives. Practical issues included limited places on the course, limited time availability and difficulties in scheduling all contributed to the problem, but it may also have been that some supervising social workers in some sites simply felt unable to prioritise the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses.

- The implementation study noted that despite the initial aspirations of the programme, and early attempts to build systems outreach into the programme's design, Head, Heart, Hands had in the final event not to any substantial degree gained any traction or influence that could properly be described as "systemic" (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:113-127) and that this objective had perhaps been over ambitious for a new and relatively small scale programme. For example, other members of the wider team around children, such as children's social workers, children's social care managers and so on, were even less likely to attend the in-depth Head, Heart, Hands training than supervising social workers working in the fostering service. Reasons for this included, inevitably, practical constraints of time and availability, limited numbers who could attend the course (with the majority of places reserved for carers) but it also reflected a lack of strategic planning and outreach in some sites, whereby there was not always a clear vision of what "system" outreach might look like, and not a clear plan for who ought to be invited (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:68).

- Many sites had begun to review policies and procedures, and had made promising moves in this direction (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:122-126) resulting in meeting protocols and recording materials such as key forms that were social pedagogically influenced, and (according to the reports of stakeholders) promoted more reflection and analysis and less mechanistic and "tick-box" approaches. However, implementation science evidence shows that changes to policies and procedures, whilst necessary for system change, are not on

their own sufficient to achieve it. The impact findings confirm the implementation insight that whilst sites had begun to engage in innovation on paper and in processes, the active stage of 'performance implementation' of innovation (i.e. the stage involving actual behaviour change based on changed processes) had largely not been reached, and would be likely to take some while longer and more planned and focused effort to reach and influence the wider systems that surround foster carers and young people. As Fixsen et al., (2005:6) note: "*Employee behaviour is (not) changed by simply altering a (service's) formal structure and systems*".

Conclusions

The research on the impact of the Head, Heart, Hands programme, like the implementation research, has revealed mixed results. The overriding picture is of an innovation that has enhanced good practice for some, but not transformed it widely, in spite of the stated objectives of the programme, as described in the implementation research, to be 'transformational' (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:74). The content was well-received: no-one argued with the principles and general ideas of social pedagogy. Aspects of the design were also well received in the impact research, with the Core Learning and Development courses in particular much praised and felt to have been well-delivered. But it is clear from the impact research, and is further illuminated by the implementation research, that the magnitude of disturbance of this programme, both at the level of foster carers, and at the level of sites and the wider system of care, was not as great as was originally hoped (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:138-139). Social Pedagogues, though core components when viewed through an organisational lens, for example appeared to be less prominent as change agents when viewed through the lens of individual carers, and of individual case files. Perhaps they were simply spread too thin to make a substantial impact at this level. There also remained a small but distinct group of foster carers who could not isolate how social pedagogic fostering was different to general good practice, and who were sceptical about its likely impact in their own practice even whilst endorsing the general values and principles. Staff in the implementation study made similar points and had similar reservations. It was also striking that over half the fostering case files made no mention of the programme or the fact that the family was taking part in it; and critically, most carers – even those who were definitely enthused by social pedagogy – still felt by the end of the programme that the wider system within which they offered care to young people was not well-informed about social pedagogy and not always supportive to attempts to provide care that was social pedagogically informed. Of course, these types of effects take time to filter through a system; nevertheless, there was a sense in some sites that more had been hoped for in this regard.

It may be that the costs analysis, in its finding of the high spend on programme administration and process structures and activities, gives some deeper insight into the reasons for the limited reach and limited level of positive disturbance created by the programme as a whole. Combined with the insights from the implementation research, which noted that Site Project Leads and pedagogues all spent substantial time on servicing the requirements of the central programme, there is a strong suggestion here that perhaps not enough of the substantial programme effort was deployed on "front-line" development of social pedagogy; that is, in direct work and face to face contact with foster carers and with staff in the teams around foster children. It may also be, as we noted in the implementation research, that the decision to limit training to just 40 carers and around eight staff in each site was simply too small a number to have substantially and positively disturbed business as

usual in the larger sites. Combined with the low level of matching achieved on the Head, Heart, Hands courses between carers and supervising social workers so that they could engage in co-learning (though very powerful, where it happened), the low levels of reach to other personnel in teams around the child (for example, children's social workers) meant that the three "points of the triangle" (the foster carers, supervising social worker and child's social worker) were not reached with equal effect, and the level of diffusion to the wider systems of care was low.

PART 4: Conclusions and recommendations

In this part we bring together some of the key themes and prominent findings detailed in the proceeding chapters to provide a summative analysis of the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on foster carers and the children and young people placed with them. We highlight key learning for future similar endeavours. We also focus on findings that may be relevant to other programmes or initiatives that may not focus on social pedagogy, but seek to further improve the lives of children and young people placed in foster care. We also provide some recommendations from the research on impact and costs for the participating sites who intend to continue with development of social pedagogic practices, and those sites that may seek to introduce social pedagogy in the future. Conclusions based on the detailed research into the implementation of the programme can be found elsewhere (http://www.cevi.org.uk/docs2/Implementing_Head_Heart_Hands_Main_Report.pdf; Ghate and McDermid, 2016).

12. Conclusion: The impact of Head, Heart, Hands

As has been highlighted throughout this evaluation, Head, Heart, Hands was a highly ambitious and complex endeavour. The programme set its sights high in aiming to develop a cohort of foster carers able to demonstrate social pedagogic practices (and achieve impact through those practices) *and* achieve systems change and cultural shift (as outlined in Box 1). The considerable flexibility and latitude given to the local sites added further complexity to the task set for the participating fostering services, as well as to the evaluation. Those involved in delivering the programme at national and local levels were resolute and passionate in involvement and should be congratulated for their efforts over the course of the programme. Moreover, as we noted in relation to the implementation the fact that all seven sites were still participating in the programme at its end was an achievement in itself.

The aim of the impact element of the evaluation was to ascertain how far the Head, Heart, Hands programme achieved the aims and objectives outlined in Box 1. In this conclusion we provide our assessment of the extent to which those objectives were met, based on the evidence of impact provided in the preceding chapters[30].

Objective 1

To develop a professional, confident group of foster carers who will be able to demonstrate that by using a social pedagogic approach they will develop the capacity to significantly improve the day to day lives of children in their care

Impact of Head, Heart, Hands on fostering practice

Previous research has highlighted the risks of insufficient knowledge theories and practices aimed to support vulnerable children among some foster carers and the detrimental effects this may have the on children they care for. Uncertainty about why particular children respond in particular ways may lead to inappropriate responses, and ultimately in children not receiving the support and care they

[30] Some findings are relevant to two or more objectives. In the interests of clarity, we have used our own judgement to asses to which objective some findings are more pertinent.

need. For instance, some studies have noted that an inadequate understanding of the principles of attachment among some foster carers has resulted in less than optimal care. Moreover, foster carers in these studies have reported that a lack of knowledge leads to a sense of anxiety about their own skills as carers (Allen and Vostanis, 2005; Osman, Scott and Clark, 2008). It is clear that foster carers are a vital resource and play a substantive role in the lives of looked after children, and must be adequately equipped to carry out this role. As, Boddy notes supportive relationships that ensure that children in care meet their full potential "*depends on investing in a workforce – of residential or foster care workers – that is adequately equipped to meet the relationship needs of children and young people within the care system*" (Boddy, 2011:110). Elsewhere, authors have noted that it is essential that training is not merely delivered, but results in changes in practice, and ultimately on outcomes for vulnerable children and young people (MacRea and Skinner, 2011).

The findings outlined in the preceding chapters are encouraging regarding the contribution that social pedagogy made to increasing the participating foster carers' knowledge of fostering practice and confidence. Almost a quarter of the interview participants reported that they had learnt **new approaches or tools** that had been used within their household. Commonly cited tools were the Common Third, Lifeworld Orientation and the Diamond model (Chapters 5 and 6).

More commonly cited among the evaluation participants, however, was the view that the theoretical approaches explored through Head, Heart, Hands **provided a theoretical and practical framework through which they could think about their existing knowledge about good practice**. In Wave 1 of the evaluation we noted that, according to Shove and Pantzar (2012) social practice is formulated of three core dimensions:

a. Material: physical entities, objects and activities.
b. Competency: skills, knowledge and techniques.
c. Meaning: symbols, values, ideas and aspirations.

It was argued that programmes and interventions that seek to instigate or inform a change in practice commonly focus on the material, sometimes focus on competencies, and are less likely to focus on the meaning dimension of practice. In contrast, while Head, Heart, Hands explored all three dimensions of practice, it focused on the meaning dimension *to a greater degree* than other training the foster carers may have attended. This theme continued throughout the evaluation, whereby the participants in Wave 3 reported that they may not have dramatically changed *what they were doing* with the children and young people on a day to day basis, they were more **reflective, thoughtful and intentional** in their actions. In this way, Head, Heart, Hands was described by some foster carers in the interview sample as **enhancing to their practice**, enabling them to apply professional knowledge and skills as different circumstances arose. These foster carers were of the view that **putting labels on things they were already doing** was in itself helpful in making them more mindful of their existing behaviours (Chapter 6).

A third of the foster carers interviewed reported that the provision of a theoretical framework through Head, Heart, Hands validated their existing approach to care, giving them more **confidence that their current practice** was along the right tracks. It was also reported that the **common language** prompted through Head, Heart, Hands enabled some of the participating foster carers to

articulate their practice in their own minds through reflection, and to other members of the team around the child. The result was a proportion of foster carers in the interview sample who felt **more assured in their own skills**, and therefore more confident liaising with children's social care staff and advocating for the child (Chapter 7). In essence, the development of a conceptual framework and being more able to describe the *how and why* of things they were already doing, created a more professional and confident perception of their role as a carer among these foster carers. Aspects of the programme *design* had also contributed to improving a small number of participants' confidence. For example, those participating foster carers who were invited to contribute to Head, Heart, Hands events such as presentations and meetings, reported that this had also increased their confidence.

The findings of this evaluation regarding the linkages between foster carers' self-perception of knowledge and their levels of confidence, raises important implications for the training of foster carers more generally. A number of studies have noted that feelings of inadequacy, especially following placement breakdowns, is a notable factor among foster carers that choose to cease fostering (McDermid et al., 2012). A cohort of foster carers who are more assured of their own skills, and, as found in this evaluation, who are able to critically reflect on difficult circumstances, may be more likely to continue fostering. The findings of this evaluation suggest that high quality training which provides both theoretical and practical frameworks for foster carers is essential for high quality foster care. The overarching message from the interviews with members of fostering households was that Head, Heart, Hands was **an *enhancement* to good practice**.

As detailed in Chapter 8, our quantitative analysis highlighted the heterogeneity of the sample of children placed with Head, Heart, Hands carers and the variability in which the Head, Heart, Hands placements were being used. The variable length of the placement, with many of them being short term, resulted in complexities in attributing subsequent care placements, trajectories and outcomes to Head, Heart, Hands.

However, as noted in Chapter 6, a small group of foster carers expressed frustrations that the courses **did not sufficiently explore how to implement the approaches in practice**, or take into account the complexities of their children's needs. While these foster carers were in the minority of those who participated in the evaluation, their experiences suggest that sites introducing social pedagogy may benefit from supporting carers in not only *understanding* the principles of the approach, but also in *using* them in a range of contexts for a range of children as well.

Receptiveness to social pedagogy

The evaluation participants were generally receptive to social pedagogy especially a particularly enthusiastic group of "Engaged Adopters". This group constituted between half and just less than three quarters of the sample of 76 foster carers interviewed over the course of the evaluation, dependent on the wave of data collection. There were others in the sample who expressed more subdued enthusiasm or even some scepticism about the approach (the "Cautious Optimists" and the "Defended Sceptics"). As noted in the previous chapter, the qualitative elements of the evaluation were highly positive and almost all of the foster carers who participated in an interview at Wave 3 reported that the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses had positively influenced them in some way. Only three foster carers who were interviewed reported that the programme had

no impact on them at all (Chapter 6). However, as highlighted in Chapters 3 and 11, the highly positive perspective of those we interviewed may reflect the particular nature of the sample. However, the findings presented in the previous chapters suggest that the majority of the foster carers who participated in the evaluation were able to demonstrate social pedagogic practices had been assimilated into their own fostering approaches, albeit to differing degrees. This is a positive finding.

The extent of impact among foster carers

On the other hand, the case file analysis found that around half of the case file records identified at least one way that social pedagogic practices were in used in the fostering household. As explored in Chapter 3, it is likely that the nature and detail of recording about Head, Heart, Hands and references to social pedagogy was affected by a number of factors, and references in case files may be an imperfect guide to what was actually taking place in individual households and in individual cases. Nevertheless, the data show that three years into the programme, there was evidence that around half of the cases had used, or were still using social pedagogic practices. A number of studies have highlighted that there is a lack of evidence that foster carer training has a measurable impact on foster carer practice or children's outcomes (Sellick, Thoburn and Philpot, 2004; Sinclair et al., 2005, MacRea and Skinner, 2011; Everson-Hock et al., 2012; Schofield, no date). Other studies have noted that even where foster carers report enjoying the training, the extent to which learning is transferred into practice is generally low (Pithouse et al., 2002, Schofield, no date). Therefore, while the estimation that only half of the foster carers who attended the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses were likely to continue to use social pedagogic approaches might on the one hand be considered disappointing for the Head, Heart, Hands programme, when compared with other similar endeavours this finding compares favourably.

In judging whether the glass is half full or half empty, and, in view of the findings outlined in Chapter 9, some questions are inevitably raised regarding the level of investment required to achieve impact for what, in some sites, was a relatively small proportion of their total pool of foster carers. Our previous evaluation reports have highlighted the variability of the reach of the programme across the total pool of foster carers within the service(s); (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:102-103). We estimated that training up to 40 foster carers in each site (as set out in the original programme design) amounted to a reach of between 11% and 82% of all foster carers across the seven sites. In smaller sites where it was possible to train a higher proportion of the overall pool, a reach of around 50% could be seen as substantial. However, in larger sites where only a small proportion of foster carers could be engaged in the Learning and Development courses, and where only around half of those were known to have used social pedagogic approaches over the course of the evaluation period, the overall proportion of foster carers practising in a social pedagogic way could be construed as relatively minor.

While it was never the aim of the programme to train *all* foster carers in social pedagogic practices, it is vital to question the extent to which satisfactory levels of impact can be achieved through reaching a relatively small proportion of foster carers. Moreover as noted in Chapter 8, for some children, Head, Heart, Hands accounted for a relatively small part of their overall care experience. In these cases, the impact that we might realistically expect the programme to have on children's overall care experience (including placement stability) within the timeframe of the evaluation is

limited. On the other hand, this evaluation was carried out up to three months after the completion of the programme, which may be too short a timeframe to be conclusive about the impact of the programme on children and young people. The overall impact on social pedagogic practices, and the value for money arguments, may therefore look different if the approach becomes further embedded, and if more children are exposed to social pedagogic foster care. This is an area that warrants further investigation (Berridge et al., forthcoming).

Objective 2

To develop social pedagogic characteristics in foster carers. Foster carers will have an integration of "Head, Heart, Hands" to develop strong relationships with the children they look after.

The impact of Head, Heart, Hands on relationships within the fostering household

The section above has already outlined a number of ways in which Head, Heart, Hands enriched foster carers professional knowledge (Head) and practical actions and activities (Hands). The evaluation has also noted that the programme had had a positive impact on the way that foster carers think about relationships within the fostering household (Heart). Almost a third of the foster carers interviewed reported that Head, Heart, Hands had empowered and encouraged them to express **warmth, respect and genuine affection** for the young person. It was noted that the foster carers interviewed expressed affection for the children and young people they cared for *prior to* Head, Heart, Hands, and much of what was discussed as part of the Learning and Development courses was not entirely new. Rather, the Learning and Development courses aimed to enable the attendees to critically reflect on their relationships and to draw on social pedagogic theories to further enhance relational work. As such, foster carers interviewed in Wave 3 reported that while they had not necessarily changed their behaviours towards the children and young people they cared for, they had been reminded, and therefore become more ***conscious*** of the significance of the carer-child relationship, since Head, Heart, Hands.

Other foster carers reported that Head, Heart, Hands had encouraged them further to invest time and effort into nurturing their relationship with the young person and had given them theoretical and practical tools to do so. In this way, the programme had provided **a language and a framework in which to think about that relationship**. In Chapter 5 we noted that a small number of the foster carers who participated in the interviews reported that they **had developed the ability to reflect on their relationship with the child and on incidents and exchanges in their shared day to day lives.** These findings are positive in the light of recent concerns regarding the quality of support provided to looked after children and the need to return to relationship based approaches (*c.f.* Ruch, Turney, and Ward, 2010; Munro, 2011; Murphy, Duggan and Joseph, 2012).

Two key areas that were highlighted as benefitting from a more reflective approach were **communication** and **dealing with difficult situations and conflict**. A number of foster carers, who participated in interviews, reported that Head, Heart, Hands had assisted them to be more reflective about how they communicated with the child or young person they cared for. This notion was enhanced through the **Lifeworld Orientation** model, whereby foster carers acknowledged the individual children's own experiences create a filter through which they interpret any interpersonal communication. Seventy percent of the survey respondents and nearly half of the foster carers interviewed reported that since attending the Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development

courses, they had become much less quick to react to circumstances as they arose (Chapter 6). The **Lifeworld Orientation** was cited by a third of the participating foster carers as a useful reminder to understand precisely **what emotions a particular child might be expressing through "*difficult*" behaviours** and **to ensure that the correct response was given**, rather than simply acting on instinct.

The evaluation has also provided examples from a number of children and young people, who describe the positive impact that a calmer, more reflective approach had on their relationships with their foster carer. A less reactive approach to dealing with conflict was also highlighted by some children as helping them talk about their difficulties and think about their own behaviour (Chapter 6). The positive impact that the Common Third had on the ability of some children to open up to their foster carers and further develop their relationships was explored in Chapter 5.

In the introduction, we highlighted the distinctive circumstances in which foster carers practice. Foster carers operate in a unique space between the professional and the personal: they have a "professional" role in caring for some of the most vulnerable children within a regulated and structured organisational context of children's social care, whilst offering a highly "personal" de facto family environment in which those children and young people can be nurtured. A small number of foster carers who took part in the interviews reported that they had been encouraged to share more personal information with their fostered children as a result of Head, Heart, Hands and **to use their personal relationship with the child to help them to grow and develop**. Models such as the Three Ps were reported to have assisted foster carers in establishing where the boundaries between the professional, personal and private might be for each individual child, and for each individual foster carer. The findings of this evaluation suggest that **social pedagogy may make a particular contribution to assist foster carers to navigate their way through this unique space of the professional and the personal**. In addition to the enhancement of foster carer practice outlined above, the emphasis placed on the use of self or "Haltung" within social pedagogy appeared to speak to those particular circumstances that foster carers find themselves in. Sites looking to introduce social pedagogy may wish to emphasise how this particular aspect of social pedagogy may make a unique contribution to the field of foster care.

Social pedagogy and existing approaches to fostering

Throughout the evaluation it was evident that participants identified resonances between their existing approaches to fostering and the principles and values that underpin social pedagogy. Indeed, only two foster carers who participated in the evaluation reported that the social pedagogic approach that Head, Heart, Hands provided was entirely new. The participants across the evaluation rarely expressed disagreement with the core values or principles of social pedagogy. As noted in previous chapters, all were agreed that social pedagogy was consistent with widely accepted principles of good foster care, even where practice in the real world departed from these ideals. As noted in Chapter 4, given the reported pre-existing resonances with social pedagogy found among a number of foster carers in the sample (and the means through which the sample were identified), it is possible to question the extent to which Head, Heart, Hands built on already strong foundations or especially (although not exclusively) appealed to foster carers with a particular caring and learning style.

For example, Kegan and Lahey (2009) note that individuals tend to adopt one of two approaches when problem solving[31]. The first group look for "technical" solutions, in which the completion of a particular task involves following a particular routine or set of processes. The second group tend to look for "adaptive solutions" whereby they draw on a series of theories and ideas and incorporate these into their current mind-set to solve the problem at hand. Unlike other forms of foster carer training, social pedagogy focusses on theoretical and moral underpinnings that *inform* behaviours (as preferred by those with an adaptive mind-set), rather than seeking to (solely) *change* those behaviours through a predetermined set of actions or activities (as preferred by those with a technical mind-set). Therefore, training in social pedagogy is not as simple as "*walking people through the key steps*" and requires highly skilled facilitators to engage attendees that are comfortable with this style of learning. It was clear that the Learning and Development courses were a highlight of the programme, and many of the foster carers who participated in the evaluation, reported that in particular, the experiential and participatory style of the sessions enabled them to be introduced to social pedagogy in an interesting and engaging way. However, it should be noted that this style of learning was not suitable for all. Some participants reported that this particular method either frustrated them at the amount of time taken, or made them feel uncomfortable (Chapter 10; and see also Ghate and McDermid, 2016:90-91). It might be inferred from the evaluation that the particular practice and learning approaches advocated by social pedagogy may not be suitable for all foster carers such as those who may be predisposed to more technical approaches. Moreover, any social pedagogic learning and development may benefit from considering how those attendees with a more technical mind-set may benefit from the approach.

To this end, it is perhaps unsurprising that words such as "*reinforced"* and "*reminded"* appeared throughout the data collected and, therefore, throughout this report. The evidence in this evaluation suggests that Head, Heart, Hands built on already strong foundations and was most positive for those foster carers who not only identified with the core values of social pedagogy, who had an adaptive learning style, and experienced relatively positive relationships within their household. Those foster carers who might be described as "Engaged Adopters" were emphatic about the positive impact that the programme had had on their own self-perception as foster carers (as noted above). The impact of Head, Heart, Hands on those households who (arguably) could most benefit from additional support was however not fully tested within the demonstration programme and this remains an area that requires further exploration.

Objective 3

To implement system change and cultural shift which will support social pedagogic practice and recognise the central role of foster carers in shaping the lives of children within their care

This report and in particular, the implementation evaluation found that, Head, Heart, Hands had not gained traction or influence that could properly be described as "systemic" (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). Many sites had made promising moves in this direction by reviewing some policies and procedures to align with social pedagogic practices (Ghate and McDermid, 2016). However, implementation science evidence shows that changes to policies and procedures, whilst necessary for system change, are not on their own sufficient to achieve it. These findings are in line with other

[31] In this context, "problem solving" is used in its broadest sense and can refer to everyday decision making and implementing any new practice, in addition to addressing specific challenges and difficulties.

similar evaluations, which have suggested that there is a lack of evidence on the impact of social pedagogy on wider organisational contexts (Cameron, 2016).

As has been highlighted throughout this report, the systematic diffusion of the approach among children's social care staff (and others in the team around the child) was reported to be weak (Chapter 7), but this is perhaps unsurprising given the programme design. The core programme activities were primarily undertaken with foster carers. While work was carried out with social care staff, priority was given to foster carers on the Learning and Development Courses. Social care staff themselves noted that they would have liked to have more opportunity to engage with the programme, but workload and other pressures made that difficult at times. In this way, foster carers were the primary "unit of influence" for the programme. Foster carers and supervising social workers alike agreed that much would be gained from ensuring as wide a diffusion of social pedagogic practices as possible, particularly among all those looking to support the fostering household, including supervising and children's social workers.

Given the positive findings regarding the impact of Head, Heart, Hands on a proportion foster carers, the findings of regarding the impact of the programme on the wider system are disappointing. Previous research on the effectiveness of foster carer training has highlighted that it is not sufficient simply to train foster carers. The system as a whole has to support their approach. If foster carers are to apply principles gained through learning and development the evidence suggests that, social workers need to be trained in the same approach (Wilson et al., 2004). Indeed, some carers reported that a lack of congruence in the approaches taken by social care staff and other members of the team around the child undermined their own efforts to introduce social pedagogy into their own practice, and resulted in them feeling frustrated that others were not taking a similar view.

The impact of the programme will inevitably be limited unless the wider system supports the changes made by foster carers. Indeed, in Chapter 8 we suggest that any promising signs on the impact of social pedagogic practices on changes in placements will, for some children, not be realised across a larger group of children, unless those making the decisions about where a child is to live are also taking a similar approach. Evidence published elsewhere suggests that the most effective approach to improving children's outcomes is to ensure that all agencies are working together and in an integrated way (Lushey et al., forthcoming). It is possible to suggest that unless a holistic approach to social pedagogic training is undertaken, whereby all agencies are familiar with the approach, the impact on children and young people may not be fully realised. Should a similar programme to introduce social pedagogic practices be undertaken, greater attention must be paid to ensuring that greater diffusion of the approach is achieved. In the implementation evaluation of this programme, we concluded that social pedagogy may be less suited to implementation by modular or "bolt-on" means, and more suited to a blended implementation model that is incorporated into basic education and training for staff and for foster carers; (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:141)

It is our view that the objective of system change was over ambitious for a programme of this scale and length. As noted in the implementation evaluation, evaluation participants reported that during the early stages of the programme a narrative of transformation was often used at introductory events. With the benefit of hindsight, some of the excitement surrounding the introduction of the

programme may have perhaps been unhelpful in the longer term, setting the expectation of systemic change too high and even alienating some who felt wholesale criticism of existing practice was implied (Ghate and McDermid, 2016:74). As noted in the previous chapter the qualitative impact data indicated that many foster carers, even when enthusiastic about social pedagogy and its promise, continued to be frustrated that the wider system of care was not supportive of the changes in thinking and practice that were implied by taking a social pedagogic approach. Some foster carers also expressed doubts about the extent to which their service would continue to invest in the approach, even in the four sites that had committed to do so beyond the timeframe of the programme. These sites may benefit from ensuring that foster carers are aware of continuation plans, to avoid unnecessary disappointment or frustration. System change and cultural shift takes time. Indeed, this is one of the key challenges to introducing social pedagogic practices into the UK. Since social pedagogy is well established in other countries, it will inevitably take time for familiarity and understanding of the approach to build up. As noted in Chapter 5 in sites where a range of approaches and training models are being used, it is unlikely and unrealistic to expect frontline staff to preference one approach over another. The development of the Social Pedagogy Professional Association is one response to this challenge. Should a similar programme be attempted again, much may be gained from ensuring that realistic expectations about what might be achieved within a given timeframe, may prevent stakeholders (including foster carers, social workers and others) from becoming disappointed and disengaged in the programme.

Objective 4
To provide a platform for transformation of the role that foster carers play as part of the child's network

The evaluation findings are mixed regarding the extent to which this objective was achieved. In a small number of cases, there was some evidence that relationships between foster carers and their supervising social workers had improved. The general view across evaluation participants was that the co-learning approach that was a unique feature of the programme design, was a key factor in enhancing the relationships between participating foster carers and supervising social workers. The benefits of the programme were most dramatically articulated where this had been the case. Where this was working well, the result was that foster carers and supervising social workers understood the other more clearly, and created a more equitable and effective working relationships. A number of foster carers and supervising social workers who participated in the evaluation reported that Head, Heart, Hands facilitated a shared approach and a shared language between foster carers and the social worker who supports them. A small number of foster carers who participated in an interview, and supervising social workers from four of the sites reported that they had started to use some Head, Heart, Hands models, such as the **Three Ps** and the **Four Fs** in their supervision. In particular, children's social care staff who participated in the evaluation from four of the sites commented that, in their view, the use of a shared language not only raised the status of foster carers, but allowed supervising social workers and the foster carers they support to work more effectively as a team. These findings are highly encouraging regarding the application of co-learning approaches *per se*. This learning may be relevant to a range of programmes or innovations that seek to inform fostering practice (*c.f* Sebba et al., 2016).

Moreover, attendance of more senior social care staff at Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development activities in a small number of sites, provided foster carers an opportunity to break down (perceived) barriers between themselves and social care decision makers. In those sites that involved foster carers in the reviews of policies and procedures, foster carers reported that this process of co-production not only assured them of the sites' commitment to social pedagogy, but also reassured them that their contribution as foster carers was valued by the sites. In one site additional training was co-facilitated by foster carers, who reported that, not only did this approach enhance their own confidence and understanding of social pedagogy, but created a more equal relationship between foster carers and children's social care staff. This approach was viewed extremely positively by the foster carers from this site, reassuring them that the fostering service was committed to the approach beyond the life of the Head, Heart, Hands programme.

However, in light of the findings noted above, the number of foster carers (and social care staff) who were able to benefit from these positive findings was limited. Where few staff were able to access learning and development opportunities, the number of fostering households able to benefit from congruence in approach was limited. While those foster carers who attended Learning and Development with supervising social workers were able to benefit greatly, the converse was also evident from the data. Four foster carers who took part in the evaluation at Wave 3 reported that their relationship with their supervising social worker remained unchanged, and for others, frustrations arose where supervising social workers continued to be unengaged in the programme. As noted throughout this report, foster carers do not operate in a vacuum and fostering households are part of a wider network of relationships which include children's social care professionals, teachers, health professionals and other adults working to support them. These networks operate within wider local organisational contexts and national legislative and regulatory structures. As noted above the wider systemic changes achieved by the programme were embryonic at best, and despite some examples of good practice regarding the role that foster carers play a "transformation" may not be possible until wider systems change is achieved.

Other aspects of the design of the Learning and Development programme were highlighted as being particularly valuable. The length of the courses and the emphasis on the group as a resource enabled some foster carers to develop supportive peer relationships. These relationships were highlighted as being important for the foster carers to not only provide mutual exploration and encouragement in the use of social pedagogy, but also facilitative support regarding fostering per se. As noted elsewhere in this and other research, the development of peer support between foster carers has been found to be highly beneficial for both the carers themselves and the children and young people they support (Luke and Sebba, 2013; McDermid et al., forthcoming). While fostering can be highly rewarding, the challenges of caring for some children and young people can extend beyond normative experiences of parenting (Murray, Tarren-Sweeny and France, 2011). As such recognition of the unique role of foster carers, and the provision of support for that role is essential (McDermid et al., 2012). The development of peer supportive networks may provide opportunities for this role to be recognised and maintained.

Concluding remarks

The analysis of the impact data suggests that Head, Heart, Hands enabled a small and particularly committed group of foster carers to make small changes which had a big impact on individual

fostering households. These impacts may be further realised once more time has elapsed. In the light of the discussion above about the reach of the programme, the analysis suggests that the overall impact of the programme was *deep* rather than *wide*. A relatively small proportion of fostering households reported that the programme had reaped substantial benefits, but from the wider perspective these benefits are less evident from the quantitative or cost analyses.

The significance of *enhancing* foster carers' practice should not be underplayed. Foster carers are a vital resource supporting countless vulnerable children and young people. The findings also suggest that aspects of social pedagogy may offer a unique contribution to assist foster carers in identifying and developing their distinctive role in the team around a child in foster care. However it was also clear that sites wishing to introduce social pedagogy may benefit from exploring how the maximum number of foster carers might benefit from the most positive learning from the programme (including learning related to both its content and its design). They would also need to pay closer attention to ensuring that the systems are in place to support them, to ensure that children and young people placed in foster care are able to thrive and flourish.

Recommendations

Sites continuing with, or exploring the introduction of social pedagogy may wish to consider:

- How to reach the optimum proportion of team around the child personnel including foster carers and those who make decisions about the child's placement and pathways.
- Ways to ensure that all children's social care staff working with fostering households are aware and supportive of social pedagogic principles.
- A clear articulation of the unique contribution that social pedagogy could make to foster care and wider practice. It may be of benefit to explore the synergies between social pedagogy and existing practice, as well as emphasising the areas which may be enhanced through an adoption of the approach.
- Ways to reassure foster carers and others of the service's commitment to social pedagogy. It may also be of benefit to ensure that all parties have a realistic view of what might be achieved within a given timeframe.
- Sites who have participated in the programme may also benefit from ensuring that foster carers are aware of continuation and sustainability plans, to avoid unnecessary disengagement.
- That foster carers, and social care staff are proficient in not only understanding the principles of the approach, but in implementing them as well. An exploration of how different principles may translate into different circumstances may also be of benefit.
- To inform the value for money debates, it would be necessary to control for some of the heterogeneity highlighted in this report in future similar programmes.

Sites exploring programmes to enhance practice for looked after children may benefit from:

- A clearly developed Theory of Change at the outset of the implementation of any new practice, or innovation with defined and measurable outcomes and associated indicators.
- The involvement of foster carers (and other recipients) with key aspects of programmes, including a contribution to training and giving presentations at awareness raising events. This

may increase foster carers and others confidence in themselves, help to develop further skills, and reassure them of their value to the service.

- The development of programmes that include an element of co-learning between members of the team around the child.
- Opportunities for training and other programmes to facilitate peer support between foster carers.
- Explore how experiential and participatory methods might be introduced to training, while ensuring those with a more technical mind-set are offered practical and implementable strategies and solutions.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The research questions

1. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer children and young people in foster care?
    a. What impact do the children and young people in foster care believe that the Head, Heart, Hands programme has on their daily lives?
    b. What impact does the Head, Heart, Hands programme have on outcomes for children and young people, including their emotional wellbeing, behaviour, school attendance, friendships, self-confidence and ambitions?
    c. What impact does the Head, Heart, Hands programme have on the extent to which children and young people in foster placements feel loved?
    d. What impact does the Head, Heart, Hands programme have on placement stability, and disruptions in placements?

2. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer foster carers' and their practice?
    a. What impact does the Head, Heart, Hands programme have on foster carers' knowledge, skills and practice?
    b. What impact does the Head, Heart, Hands programme have on foster carers' self-confidence?
    c. To what extent is the Head, Heart, Hands programme implemented by foster carers including the demonstration of the attributes identified by the programme?
    d. To what extent do social care professionals and those from other agencies understand foster carers to be professionals within a team supporting a child or young person, in both theory and practice?
    e. To what extent (if any) does the quality of care provided change with the implementation of the Head, Heart, Hands programme from the perspective of the foster carers, the children and young people themselves, supervising social workers and other professionals?

3. What changes does the Head, Heart, Hands programme offer the system of supporting children and young people in foster care and their carers?
    a. To what extent are children's social workers aware of social pedagogic principles and implementing them within their own practice?

b. To what extent has social pedagogy impacted the way in which children's social workers work with foster carers?
c. What impact does the introduction of social pedagogic principles have on the selection, assessment and approval process?
d. What impact does the introduction of social pedagogic principles have on the retention of foster carers?
e. What impact does the introduction of social pedagogic principles have on the perceptions of other professionals about the foster care provided in the demonstration areas?
f. What impact does the introduction of social pedagogic principles have on the engagement of other services with these principles?
g. How effective are the systems and processes implemented to introduce and support social pedagogic principles?
h. To what extent do social pedagogic principles impact on the review of care plans and achievement of improvements, and the care pathways of children and young people in the demonstration areas?

Appendix B: The attributes of a Head, Heart, Hands foster carer

HEAD

1. An understanding of child development theories such as attachment and of children's behaviour. Knowing why children and young people behave the way they do. If their behaviour is difficult, understanding why and what emotions they might be expressing through such difficult behaviours.

2. Knowledge about what responses might bring out the best in children and young people they care for. Understanding the impact of their own response on the child.

3. An ability to reflect on their relationship with the child and on incidents and exchanges in their shared day to day lives.

4. An ability to describe the relationship and communication between themselves and the child. Something that is more than an instinctive reaction to a child which may work or not work – understanding why it does work and being able to describe it and repeat it.

HANDS

5. Practical sharing of activities both in and outside the home.

6. Confidence in working with art/craft based activities and understanding about how activities can be used to build a relationship (as in the Common Third).

7. Allowing and encouraging children to learn by making mistakes. Knowing how to enable risk taking behaviour that will not harm the child.

HEART

8. Showing warmth, respect and high regard for the child.

9. A non-judgemental approach to the child's behaviour alongside an ability to be authoritative when necessary and be firm about boundaries.

10. Showing genuine care for the child through appreciation of both strengths and difficulties, showing affection, pride in their achievements and concern when things are not going well for the child.

11. Showing persistence when things go wrong, not giving up.

12. Being reliable and 'there' for the child – providing a safe and nurturing place for children.

13. Using their personal relationship with the child to help them grow and develop.

Source: The Fostering Network, 2011.

Appendix C: The Social Pedagogy Professional Association

"The *Centre for the Understanding of Social Pedagogy* at UCL Institute of Education has been awarded a major grant to set up a Social Pedagogy Professional Association (SPPA). The intention is to scale up the already positive development of social pedagogy in the UK by means of a membership organisation which will be self-sustaining and self-governing.

Over the next three years, and through wide consultation, we will develop national occupational standards and professional qualifications. Our partners ThemPra and Jacaranda will join us in taking this work forward, particularly in developing and disseminating high quality social pedagogy training across the UK. We intend to build a framework for a social pedagogy career in the UK.
This work has grown out of sustained consultations over some years, through the Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy (CUSP), within higher education institutions and through the Social Pedagogy Development Network. SPPA aims to provide sustainability and scale up major achievements in projects such as the *Head, Heart, Hands* programme in foster care, but recognises that social pedagogy is a broadly based profession with applicability across a wide range of settings and across the lifecourse.

The first task is to create Standards for Social Pedagogy, which are called SOPs (Standards of Proficiency) for those who are practising in the field and SETs (Standards of Education and Training) for those who lead on educating practitioners, managers and others. We will advertise opportunities to help define social pedagogy for the UK via the Social Pedagogy Development Network (SPDN) database and the SPDN meeting in 2016.

Next we will create SPPA itself and will encourage everyone to become members. SPPA will be launched towards the end of 2016. SPPA will be the UK reference point for all those interested in promoting social pedagogy in the UK. SPPA will have a quality assurance role as it will 'hold' and periodically revisit the standards for practice developed. It will provide an umbrella association for different communities of practice, and those with theoretical or policy concerns, to come together, in interest groups and more generally. SPPA will be sustained through membership fees. Look out for the SPPA website through social pedagogy websites and Facebook page once it becomes live.
Finally, through our work with the Crossfields Institute, we will develop Ofqual approved accredited qualifications for practice in social pedagogy. These will initially be delivered by Thempra and Jacaranda. This is a UK wide project and we aim to make qualifications applicable across the four nations, taking into account different thresholds and Levels in each country. In time, SPPA will support the development of social pedagogy qualifications at BA level and beyond."

SPAA info taken from: http://www.thempra.org.uk/news/scaling-up-social-pedagogy/

Appendix D Characteristics of the seven sites in Head, Heart, Hands

Site	Type (private, voluntary, public)	Scale: Geography and demographics (large, medium, small)	Scale: Number of approved foster carers (in 2013)	Structure (simple, mixed, complex)	Prior familiarity with social pedagogy (minimal, moderate, extensive)	Locus of Head, Heart, Hands within site structure (embedded, mixed, external)	Ofsted/Care Inspectorate rating (outstanding, v good, good, satisfactory, inadequate): Upon programme commencement	Ofsted/Care Inspectorate rating (outstanding, v good, good, satisfactory, inadequate): At the end pf the programme
Yellow	Public Local Authority, England	Medium Urban. Inner city population <500,000 Many with low-income, high needs communities, and a growing affluent population.	110	Complex Children's services department based on the 'Unit model'. Two fostering units headed by consultant social workers	Extensive Previously employed Social Pedagogues in the Looked After Children service. One of the two Site Project Leads was a Social Pedagogue.	External Virtual School	Ofsted rated 'Good' (October 2012)	No further inspections
Pink	Public Local Authority, Scotland	Large Urban City with a population <1m Mixed affluent/less affluent.	350	Mixed Family Based Care service divided into five teams	Minimal- Moderate Employed Social Pedagogues in residential service.	Mixed Specialist fostering team where both Social Pedagogues based, but most carers in Head, Heart, Hands in general fostering.	Care Inspectorate rated ' Very Good' (July 2014)	Care Inspectorate rated 'Good' (November 2014)
Blue	Private Independent Fostering Provider, England	Medium (spread out) Rural/sub-urban in four geographically distant locations Mixed rural and urban population; wide geographic spread.	135	Simple 3 (of 4) offices participating in programme	Minimal Employed a qualified Social Pedagogue as a fostering social worker in one office.	Embedded Three of the four fostering team offices.	Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' (May 2012)	Ofsted rated 'Good' (October 2014)

Purple	Public Local Authority, England	Large Rural/ Sub-urban. Population, c.1m. across a large geographical area clustered around core towns.	300 'fostering households'	Mixed The fostering service is divided into six teams covering two areas.	Minimal Participated in the Department for Education's pilot to introduce social pedagogy into residential homes.	Embedded General fostering service, which consists of two teams.	Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' (2008)	Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' (January 2013)
Red	Public Local Authority, Scotland	Small Islands; pop <25,000. Isolated, mainly rural community.	13	Simple One small fostering team w/in Health, Social Care and Justice merged functions authority.	Minimal-Moderate Prior experience with social pedagogy following one-off training initiative in residential service in 2010.	Embedded Fostering team.	Care Inspectorate rated 'Very Good' (March 2012)	Care Inspectorate rated 'Very Good' (November 2015)
Green	Voluntary Independent Fostering Provider, part of a large child care trust, Scotland	Small Taking placements from local authorities across the country (rural & urban).	27	Simple One small fostering team with seven staff members, w/in agency with wide remit.	Moderate Prior experience of social pedagogy, SPC previously involved with the site.	Embedded Fostering team.	Care Inspectorate rated 'Good/Very Good' (December 2012)	Care Inspectorate rated 'Very Good' (January 2016)
Orange	Public Local Authority, England	Large Suburban. Population <1m. Affluent as well as less affluent areas.	300	Mixed The fostering service divided into two area teams.	None No prior experience of social pedagogy.	Embedded (in one team only) General fostering service, which consists of two teams.	Ofsted rated 'Inadequate' (February 2011)	Ofsted rated 'Inadequate' (July 2015)

Appendix E Attendance at Head, Heart, Hands Learning and Development courses

Table G.1 Attendance and reach at Core Learning and Development courses

Core Learning and Development courses							
Site	**Blue**	**Pink**	**Yellow**	**Purple**	**Orange**	**Green**	**Red**
Number of courses	3	3	3	3	6	2	1
Dates	May 2013 (1) Jun 2013 (1) Jul 2013 (1)	May 2013 (1) Jun 2013 (1) Oct 2013 (1)	Sept 2013 (3)	Mar 2013 (1) Oct 2013 (1) Jan 2014 (1)	Jul 2013 (3) Oct 2013 (3)	Mar 2013 (1) Sept 2013 (1)	Oct 2013 (1)
Total attendance	**49**	**47**	**60**	**48**	**63**	**20**	**16**
Reach to carers as % of total pool	***23%***	***11%***	***43%***	***13%***	***16%***	***75%***	***82%***
Attendance breakdown							
All Foster carers	31	40	47	39	48	20	9
All staff	18	7	13	9	15	0	7
Supervising social workers	*11*	*5*	*7*	*2*	*7*	-	*3*
Managers	*5*	*1*	*1*	-	*1*	-	-
Other internal	*2*	*1*	*5*	*7*	*7*	-	*4*
Other external	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Note: Figures provided by sites in December 2014. Head, Heart, Hands site project team (Social Pedagogues and Site Project Leads) are excluded from the attendance numbers shown here.

Table G.2 Attendance figures at Taster events, to end 2014

	Red	Pink	Yellow	Purple*	Orange	Green	Blue
Taster Days							
Number of events	1	3	2	4	4	2	3
Total attendance	**31**	**245**	**111**	**170**	**195**	**40**	**87**
Foster carers	-	20	60	45	58	2	59
Supervising social workers	2	35	6	39	34	2	20
Managers	4	5	3	5	9	6	5
Other internal	-	120 (all Council employees)	42	75	44	14	3
Other external	25	65	-		32	16	-
Orientation Courses (2 days)							
Number of events	1	4	4	7	4	2	3
Total attendance	**26**	**74**	**66**	**150**	**86**	**36**	**59**
Foster carers	9	62	50	91	69	18	41
Supervising social workers	5	11	2	21	8	5	11
Managers	-	-	1	5	1	-	5
Other internal	11	1	15	33	11	7	2
Other external	1	-	-	-	-	6	-
Children and young people	-	-	1	-	-	-	-

*This site continued to run course through 2014.

Appendix F Information about the evaluation sample

The following tables provider further information about the evaluation sample

Table F.1 The number of participating households across the whole evaluation by site

Site	Number of households	Response rate (%)
Blue	17	61
Pink	12	30
Yellow	7	17
Purple	12	31
Orange	17	40
Green	6	29
Red	5	56
Total	**76**	34

Table F.2 Number of interviews with Head, Heart, Hands carers and children and young people at each time point

Evaluation time point	Number of foster carers interviewed	Number of children and young people interviewed
Wave 1	26	10
Wave 2	43**	17***
Wave 3	57	37
Total	126	64

** Three foster carer interviews were completed outside of the timeframe for inclusion in the Wave 2 report.

*** Six interviews with children and young people were completed outside of the timeframe for inclusion in the Wave 2.

Table F.3 Number of Wave 3 interview participants by site

Site	Number of foster carers interviewed	Number of children and young people interviewed
Blue	9	5
Pink	10	6
Yellow	4	0
Purple	9	9
Orange	16	12
Green	5	4
Red	4	1
Total	**57**	**37**

Table F.4 Type of placement offered by the foster carers who took part in an interview at Wave 3

Type of placement offered	Number of foster carers interviewed
Long term	36
Permanence	5
Kinship or friends and family care	4
Respite	4
Short term	4
Supported lodgings	2
Other ****	7
Unknown	14
Total	76

**** "Other" placements include Mother and baby placement, emergency, babies waiting to be placed for adoption and placements for children with disabilities.

Table F.5 Ages of the children and young people who participated in an interview at Wave 3

Age in years	Number of children and young people in the sample
5 - 10	5
11 - 13	14
14 - 16	3
17 or older	5
Not recorded	10

Table F.6 Type of placement of the children and young people interviewed at Wave 3

Type of placement at the time of the interview	Number of children and young people
Long term	12
Kinship or friends and family	4
Short term	3
Independence	2
Permanence	2
Respite	1
Not recorded	13

Table F.7 foster carer survey respondents by site

Site	Frequency	Percent	Response rate (%)
Purple site	4	8.5	10.3
Yellow site	0	0	0
Pink site	13	27.7	32.5
Orange site	24	51.1	50.0
Blue site	4	8.5	12.9
Green site	1	2.1	5.0
Red site	1	2.1	11.1
Total	47	100.0	20.1

Table F.8 Number of people the social carer staff survey was distributed to by job role

Site	Supervising social worker	Children's social worker	Family support worker	Independent reviewing officer	Managers	Total
Blue		24		13	17	54
Pink						12
Yellow						0
Purple						160
Orange						73
Green						unknown
Red	4	7	5		2	18
Total	**4**	**31**	**5**	**13**	**19**	**317**

Table F.9 Social care staff survey responses by job role, site and total responses

Site	Supervising social worker	Children's social worker	Family support worker	Independent reviewing officer	Team managers	Head of services or department	Other	Not stated	Total
Blue	1	1						1	3
Pink	2		1	1	1	1		2	8
Yellow									0
Purple	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	7	16
Orange	3		3	1	1		1	2	11
Green		1				2	1	2	6
Red					1		3		4
Total	**7**	**3**	**5**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**7**	**14**	**48**

Appendix G Overview of the Cost Calculator for Children's Services and underpinning conceptual framework

The CCfCS utilises a "bottom up" approach to estimating unit costs (Beecham, 2000). The "bottom up" approach identifies the constituent parts that form the delivery of a service and assigns a value to each of these parts. The sum of these values is linked with appropriate units of activity to provide the unit cost of a service (ibid). The approach facilitates the development of a detailed and transparent picture of unit costs and is particularly well suited to children's social care services as it can accommodate variations in costs incurred by an extensive range of interventions offered to children with very different levels of need (see Ward, Holmes and Soper, 2008).

The conceptual framework that underpins the CCfCS makes a distinction between the ongoing case management functions carried out by social workers, family support workers and other social care personnel and the services (such as placements) that are provided to meet specific needs. The overall unit costs that are estimated include both of these elements. Separation in this way allows for exploration of the costs of services and also assessment, case management and decision making costs. One of the advantages of breaking down and then building up the costs in this way is that it is possible to explore how changes to one area of the system impact on another. It is also possible to focus on one element of the system and carry out 'what if' analyses, for example, to explore the cost implications of introducing new practices/protocols, or the introduction of a new service for a specific group of children and/or families.

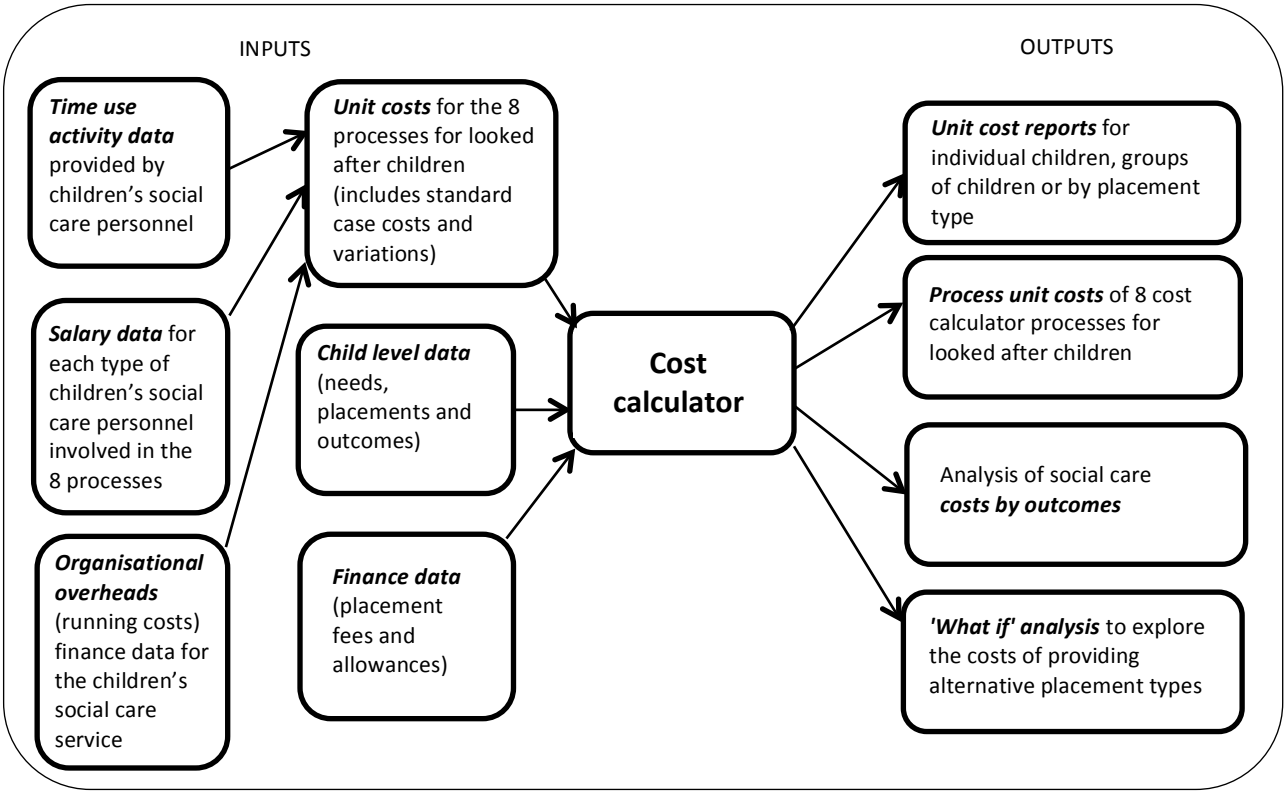
The personnel associated with each support activity or service are identified and the time spent on the activity is estimated. Time use activity data are gathered using mixed methods: focus groups; verification questionnaires; online surveys and event records (diary recording for specific cases). These amounts of time are costed using appropriate hourly rates. The method therefore links amounts of time spent to data concerning salaries, administrative and management overheads and other expenditure.

This approach introduces greater than usual transparency into cost estimations and facilitates comparisons between the relative values of different types of care, making it easier to estimate the potential benefits of introducing a range of alternative packages of care. It is also possible for local authorities to undertake analyses of costs with respect to the outcomes and explore 'hidden' costs, such as the costs of administrative procedures.

The CCfCS tool

The unit costs of the processes for looked after children are brought together with data concerning placement fees and allowances, management and capital expenditure along with routinely collected data on children's needs, characteristics and placements (using the SSDA 903 and CLAS statistical returns) to estimate the costs of placing looked after children for a given time period. Figure G.1 shows the data that go into the cost calculator tool (inputs) and the outputs.

Figure G.1: CCfCS inputs and outputs



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The estimations take into account diversity in children's needs, placement type and local authority procedures. This approach allows children to be grouped by type of placement and also according to their needs and outcomes. Different care pathways can be observed and the way in which costs accrue over time can be examined. It is possible to compare these cost patterns for children with particular characteristics, in specific placement types or who achieve specified outcomes.

Appendix H: Tables from case file analysis

Table H.1 Explicit or implicit evidence of the use of social pedagogy in the fostering households by site

Site	Evidence of fostering household using social pedagogic approach found in case file
Blue	17 (68%)
Green	9 (60%)
Orange	8 (21%)
Purple	17 (44%)
Yellow	23 (58%)
Total	74 (of 157) fostering households (47%)

Table H.2 Positive themes identified in case file data

	Positive description: themes	Notes
1	Stable or settled	Use of the term "stable or settled" did not necessarily mean the young person remained in placement rather the case file description contained this description.
2	Young person view: positive	Young people's views included reference to being: "happy", loving living with carer or on occasion whilst still positive they were less enthused such as describing things as "fine".
3	Young person made progress	Case files referred to young people's progress in social or emotional development; improvement in building relationships with peers; school etc.
4	Part of family	On occasion records in case files expressed that young people having a sense of belonging.
5	Relationship between foster carer and child described in positive terms	Variously described relationship with terms such as: good; strong, close, warm, positive etc.
6	Child described as having attachment to carer	Variously described as "good attachment"; "strong attachment"; "close bond".
7	Carer meets young persons' needs	Described in various ways e.g. "meets needs to exceptionally high standard"; "carer been able to identify, cater and meet all of young person's varying and often complex needs" etc.
8	Familial terms used by young person	Majority of these referred to use of "mum" or "dad"; one case of grandparent term; one case of "aunty" used. On 7 of these occasions child was said to use carer's surname.
9	Contact with child after left	Cases where child had left placement but foster carer and child were in contact.
10	Placement environment described in positive terms	For example: "loving family environment"; "supportive and nurturing environment".
11	Managed move	For example: "foster carer supporting transition back to parent as part of team with parent and social work team"; "supported young person in smooth transition to university, will continue to be carer for young person under Staying Put until then".
12	Positive fostering style/approach	Variously described as: warm, sensitive, value child; respect each child; nurturing; sensitive.
13	Commitment to young person	For example: "Supervising social worker emphasises the commitment of the foster carer"; "young person continues to feel secure in placement and well supported by foster carer who is committed to him" etc.
14	Carer express satisfaction	For example: "Enjoy caring for young person"; "a delight to care

		for" etc.
15	Young person can share and talk with carer	Variously described; "confide in carer"; "trust carer" etc.
16	Foster carer pride	For example: "Foster carer 'over moon' with young person progress"; "Carer spoke with pride about young person" etc.
17	Use of word "love"	For example: "Foster carer have to be commended for the love, care and support they offer young person"; "was positive family experience for young person, where she felt claimed and loved".
18	Carer supports birth family relationship	For example: "foster carer formed positive relationship with young person's mother too"; "birth parent and foster carer have a good working relationship with young person expressing how thankful she is for way foster carer looks after birth parent".
19	Other	For example: Young person clear about care plan; carer progress in how manage young person behaviour.

Table H. 3 Destinations of children after leaving Head, Heart, Hands foster carer and whether left in planned or unplanned way

Destination	Planned or unplanned	Number
Left to another foster carer (29%)	33% planned 27% unplanned 40% unknown	16 13 19
Left to birth family (24%)	48% planned 8% unplanned 45% unknown	19 3 18
Left to independence (13%)	33% planned 24% unplanned 43% unknown	7 5 9
Left to residential care (8%)	38% planned 23% unplanned 38% unknown	5 3 5
Left to adoption (6%)	100% planned	10
Left to Special guardianship order (3%)	100% planned	5
Left but destination unknown (17%)	n/a	28
Total		165

Appendix I SPC National level activity and support for the Head, Heart, Hands programme

Activity	Programme year	Year 1 activity (days)	Year 2 activity (days)	Year 3 activity (days)	Year 4 activity (days)	Total activity (days)	COINS category allocation
Advisory group	All years	1	2	2	1	6	3. demonstration programme
Programme Board	All years	1	5	3	1	10	3. demonstration programme
Practice groups	Years 2, 3 and 4	0	14	27	20	61	3. demonstration programme
Group Social Pedagogue supervision	Years 2, 3 and 4	0	3	4	4	11	1. ongoing new practice
Programme integration events	Years 1 and 2	17	15	0	0	32	3. demonstration programme
Site assessment	Year 1	12	0	0	0	12	3. demonstration programme
Social pedagogue recruitment events	Year 1	24	0	0	0	24	2. implementing new practice
Social pedagogue group inductions	Year 1	7	0	0	0	7	3. demonstration programme
Learning & development course design	Years 1 and 2	27	3	0	0	30	2. implementing new practice
Co-ordination and regular programme meetings	All years	32	46	40	24	142	3. demonstration programme
Link roles (sharing learning)	All years	10	1	2	1	14	3. demonstration programme
Seminars and workshops	Years 2, 3 and 4	0	9	5	2	16	3. demonstration programme

Social pedagogue re-recruitment	Year 3	0	0	2	0	2	2. implementing new practice
Champions programme	Year 3	0	0	16	0	16	2. implementing new practice
Input to programme outputs	Years 3 and 4	0	0	5	0	5	3. demonstration programme

Appendix J Head, Heart Hands national meetings

Name of meeting	Length of meeting	Number of sites attended	Who attended from sites	Locations	How often	Over what period	How many meetings
Academic Review Group	2.5 hours	1	Senior manager	England	Twice a year	June 2013 - July 2015	4
Advisory Group	3.5 hours	2	Senior managers	England (5 times), Scotland (once)	Twice a year	March 2013 - July 2015	6
Review & Reflection Group	1 day	All	All Site Project Leads	Scotland (twice), England (twice)	3 times a year	July 2013 - March 2014	4
Practice Group	1 day	All	All Social Pedagogues	England (twice) Scotland,	Twice a year	June 2013 - March 2014	3
Programme Board	3 hours	None	N/A	England (9 times), Scotland (twice)	4 times a year	March 2013 – February 2016	11
Joint Development Group trio (Review & Reflection Group, Practice Group, Joint Development Group)	1.5 days	All	All Ste Project Leads, all Social Pedagogues	England (twice), Scotland (twice)	3 times a year	July 2014 - November 2015	4
Working Group on Training	3-6 hours	5	1 Site Project Lead, 1 Social Pedagogue	England	Every 2 months	October 2013 - May 2014	4
Scotland Practice Forum	4 hours	3	1 Site Project Lead, 1 Social Pedagogue	Scotland	Twice a year	May 2014 - January 2016	4

England Practice Forum	4 hours	4	3 Site Project Leads, 6 Social Pedagogues, 1 social worker	England	Twice a year	February 2016	1
Parliamentary Launch - Scotland	2 hours	3	All Site Project Leads, all Social Pedagogues	Scotland	Single event	June 2013	1
Parliamentary Launch - England	2 hours	4	All Site Project Leads, all Social Pedagogues	England	Single event	March 2013	1
Conference	4 hours	4	All Site Project Leads, all Social Pedagogues	England	Single event	March 2015	1
Programme Management Site Visits	4 hours	All	Site Project Lead(s), Social Pedagogues	At the site's own offices	2 or 3 times a year	Dec 2012 to Nov 2015	8
Summer visits by The Fostering Network Chief Exec and a funder rep	2 hours	All	Site strategic lead, + usually the Site Project Lead(s)	At the site's own offices	1 x pa	Summer 2013 and Summer 2014	2