

# Short Breaks Pathfinder Evaluation

Interim Report – End of Phase One

**Rob Greig, Philippa Chapman, Amanda Clayson,  
Chris Goodey, Dave Marsland**

**National Development Team for Inclusion**



**Short Breaks Pathfinder Evaluation  
Interim Report – End of Phase One**

**Rob Greig, Philippa Chapman, Amanda Clayson, Chris  
Goodey, Dave Marsland**

**National Development Team for Inclusion**

ISBN 978 1 84775 725-8

March 2010

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

# Contents

Contents.....	1
Introduction .....	3
The Evaluation Methodology .....	4
Emerging ideas and theories .....	10
Other Specific Issues .....	20
Outline of Phase Two.....	23
Appendix I: Logic Model Framework for Realistic Evaluation .....	24



## Introduction

1. This report for the Department of Children, Schools and Families is the interim report from the Pathfinder evaluation component of the short breaks evaluation. It is based on the work undertaken in Phase One of the evaluation – as described in the original tender proposal. The report is structured in the following way:
  - A description of the process and methodology used for the work
  - A summary of the initial ‘emerging theories of change’ that have arisen from the analysis of the data obtained to date
  - A short comment on other issues and themes arising from the initial fieldwork and analysis, in particular commentary on how the theories of change might inform specific questions asked by DCSF in the brief
  - An outline of the work to be undertaken in Phase Two of the evaluation.
2. We would like to place on record our appreciation of the efforts of and cooperation we received from the vast majority of Pathfinder sites. Our requests for meetings, information and contacts, often at very short notice given the timescale required for this first stage of work, were met with a willingness to help – a willingness that was significantly derived from people’s commitment to achieving better lives and outcomes for disabled children and their families.

### **A Health Warning!**

3. We wish to issue a clear caveat in relation to the content of this report. These initial conclusions are intentionally described as ‘emerging theories of change’. They are emerging theories that appear to apply based on the initial analysis. We are not at this stage stating that they are our definitive conclusions. Further investigation through Phase Two of the work is needed before we will be able to state with confidence that these (or variations on them) are our final conclusions. Equally, it is quite possible that the next stages of our work will bring to light other important issues and points that did

not emerge with sufficient force in this first stage for them to have been drawn them out as initial emerging themes.

4. Therefore, whilst understanding the desire for early conclusions from the evaluation to inform budgetary and policy decisions for 2010/11, we would urge that the content of this report be treated with due care and indeed caution.
5. Additionally, this report reads as quite a positive statement of the impact and success of the Pathfinder initiative. Whilst there is undoubtedly much progress to be reported on and praised, the nature of the evaluation process being used means that - at this stage of the work - we have been looking for evidence of achievement in order to understand how and why that happened. The positive progress we identify was not evident everywhere. What we have identified is that the learning described below was present, identifiable and influential in a sufficiently broad number of places for us to draw it out as an initial conclusion. Practice and progress between Pathfinder sites was highly variable. The Phase Two report will present a more balanced report of progress.
6. Similarly, as required by the brief, this report focuses primarily upon organisational and strategic issues and does not comment upon front line practice. In the course of Phase One a number of short breaks were observed and whilst many good things were seen, what we would describe as poor practice was also seen on several occasions. This begs the question, that is beyond our brief, of how Pathfinder sites are being supported to develop and ensure positive practice in service delivery.

### ***The Evaluation Methodology***

7. As noted in the tender proposal, the approach used has been designed around that known as 'Realistic Evaluation' as described by Pawson and Tilley. The aim has been not only to describe what has been happening in the Pathfinder sites, but also to understand and explain why and for whom those things might have been happening and as a result draw out conclusions as to

what that might mean for transferability of the learning to other situations and settings.

Phase one of the work has encompassed the following elements:

8. A review of relevant national documentation, and discussions with other key national stakeholders in particular Together for Disabled Children (TDC) to obtain a national perspective of the development and operation of the Pathfinder programme.
9. A series of interviews, meetings and interactions with stakeholders from the 21 Pathfinder sites. There were four NDTi field evaluators, each taking responsibility for five Pathfinder sites (one taking six). These were essentially grouped on a geographical basis for ease of access and management of travel time and costs. Prior to this, a semi-structured agenda was designed to ensure that the evaluation team covered what were felt to be core issues whilst also allowing the freedom and flexibility to explore other issues and areas felt to be important to the local stakeholders. We have intentionally differentiated the nature of the interactions as described above. i.e. with some people detailed interviews took place. With others a shorter meeting occurred, which did not cover the breadth of issues we were concerned with but which nonetheless elicited important data. In addition, some observations and interactions occurred (e.g. observation of short breaks taking place) which provided additional understanding and knowledge to the evaluation team about the nature of local change.

10. In this context, information was obtained from a total of approximately 575 people during Phase One from the Pathfinder sites.

	Interview	Discussion	Observation
<b>LA Commissioners</b>	43	9	5
<b>PCT Commissioners</b>	15	1	
<b>Providers</b>	46	58	
<b>Families</b>	51	53	Circa 100
<b>Young people</b>	3	33	Circa 130
<b>Other; (e.g. Family Support Officers)</b>	15	14	

11. A number of points should be made at this juncture of the report.
- Whilst the overwhelming majority of Pathfinder sites engaged willingly in the evaluation process (as required as a condition of receipt of Pathfinder status and funding) a small minority did not. In 3 cases this was to such an extent that whilst we were able to obtain some data and information, it was not of the depth and breadth we would have wished. We therefore treated it with due caution and the learning from those Pathfinder sites has only made a marginal contribution to the analysis at this stage.
  - Whilst there were a small number of notable exceptions, it proved difficult to engage with many Primary Care Trusts. In particular the identified PCT officer often had limited involvement in the work and/or had only recently been allocated to it with limited time provided for this activity. Although many PCT officers were forthcoming in wanting to help, their detailed knowledge about the work was often limited and they were unclear about the PCT's particular contribution to short breaks and the Pathfinder initiative. In five cases no interaction with the PCT was possible. In one other it was very limited. This, in itself, is important data. It does, however, mean that the NHS commissioner perspective has been under-represented at this stage – though it is probably represented in a proportionate way to the NHS's actual (rather than intended) engagement with the Pathfinder programme.



- The NDTi's focus in this evaluation has essentially been on how the Pathfinder sites went about delivering and achieving change – rather than the outcomes per se for young people and families. (The CeDR component of the evaluation is focusing on that aspect). Therefore, whilst placing high priority on how young people and families have been engaged in the Pathfinder process, and their experience of it, we have engaged those stakeholders to a lesser extent than we would have done had our brief also encompassed the wider issues being considered by CeDR. The final reports will naturally bring the two strands of the evaluation together.
12. The data from these sources was then analysed using the frameworks described in Realistic Evaluation. A logic model was created in relation to each site. (An outline of which is contained in Appendix I). This describes the process through which the stakeholders from each site understood how the Pathfinder Project was expected to operate and deliver change in their locality. From this, Context, Mechanism, Outcome models were developed (CMO models). These are at the heart of the analysis (see Appendix II) and describe what actions or interventions took place, the context in which they operated and the outcome they appeared to be resulting in. With pairs of the evaluators working together (essentially split north and south), emerging 'theories of change' were developed. These describe the major things we were starting to identify as actions or interventions that had either helped or hindered the delivery of the Short Breaks agenda, along with an explanation about why and their impact. It is important to note that whilst the two pairs of evaluators worked separately, there was a high degree of synergy between their emerging theories – which increases our confidence in their likely accuracy. The north and south analyses each identified seven theories. There was essentially a commonality between six of those i.e. resulting in a total of eight different emerging theories of change.
13. Representatives of all 21 Pathfinder sites were then invited to send representatives to one of two workshops (Manchester and London) where these emerging theories were shared. 46 people from 20 Pathfinders attended. (The absent Pathfinder being one of those noted in paragraph 11 above who registered two delegates but did not then attend). These people

covered the full range of stakeholders described above other than young disabled people themselves. Participants were essentially asked three questions in relation to each emerging theory of change:

- Does this reflect your experiences as a Pathfinder site?
- How would you like to 'tweak', amend or change it?
- What examples can you offer to either illustrate or contradict the emerging theory?

14. Whilst a number of refinements to the emerging theories were made through this process, it is important to note that all the emerging theories described by the NDTi evaluators were endorsed by all Pathfinder representatives as being accurate and valid. Additional information was provided to help describe and elaborate upon them as well as further evidence the theories and illustrate their importance. In addition, the Northern workshop identified one further important element which, when shared with the southern workshop, was endorsed by them. (Theory 9 - Paragraph 31).

15. It is also worth noting that the clear view from participants in these workshops was that the workshop process in itself was a positive experience for them, in terms of:

- Providing an opportunity to network and discuss issues with people from other Pathfinder sites – something they wished to have had greater opportunity to do (the earlier TDC facilitated networks having been valued but no longer being operative).
- Contributing at an early stage to the analysis and conclusions from the evaluation – increasing their sense of ownership of the outcomes
- Stimulating their own thinking through debate around the 'emerging theories' and, whilst recognising their early stage of development and the caveat noted in paragraphs 3-4 of this report, providing ideas to take back for implementation in their Pathfinder work.

16. The final element of Phase One involved the evaluation team amending the emerging theories of change in the light of comments from the workshops. The team then met as a whole to review the initial conclusions and the range of data, in order to bring out any further issues that became clear when the

data was considered on a national basis and which merited additional investigation during Phase Two.

## Emerging ideas and theories

17. The emerging theories that follow have been derived from the evidence obtained during Phase One of the work. They describe what we have identified as consistent themes across the sites, themes that illustrate how the Pathfinder initiative has affected practice and delivery, and crucially why that appears to be the case and/or what it was that was done that resulted in this happening. From these emerging theories, it will over the course of this evaluation be possible to draw conclusions about what needs to happen elsewhere in the country in order to maximize the impact and effectiveness of the development and delivery of short breaks. **However**, we have not drawn such conclusions out at this stage as it is important to explore the emerging theories in more detail in Phase Two, in order to verify their accuracy. Similarly, these theories will help to inform answers to some of the specific questions asked in the brief for this work – but at this stage these detailed connections have not been drawn beyond some initial comments in paragraphs 34-37. Finally, the evidence to support these theories is not presented in this interim report but will be contained in the final report once it has been further checked and verified through the Phase Two work.

Emerging Theory 1. Parent Participation **The participation of parents in decision making arenas reflects a developing, but significant sense of co-production. This co-production has led to some innovative short breaks which address specific local needs and utilise local community groups and resources.**

18. We have found evidence of four general outcomes reflecting the degree of participation:
- Parent forums and networks are beginning to give some parents a ‘voice’ (where they didn’t exist before) and greater consultation is taking place.
  - Where active parent groups and networks already existed, there are now more informed and aware parents who are helping to guide the short break strategy perhaps by involvement in Aiming High boards.

- Where Pathfinders are **explicitly involving parents in local decision making arenas**, there is a significant level of trust and democratic partnership and a developing sense of co-production (culture change). This appears to have led to some innovative short breaks and short breaks which address localised difficulties and utilise local community groups.
  - Initiatives to reach seldom heard parents (e.g. ?) are pursued with difficulty and progress has been limited
19. This incremental development appears to be influenced by the following factors:
- The Pathfinder team actively listening and genuinely valuing parents - beyond consultation
  - When there is openness, two way trust and multi-layered communication
  - When the Pathfinder directly and significantly invests in support for parent participation, independent or otherwise
  - The level of parent participation at the start of Pathfinder. (For example, some areas had established groups and established consultation mechanisms, where others areas were less developed)
20. We would, however, express a reservation about the breadth of parental involvement in the participative development described above. There are, perhaps, three broad groups of parents; (i) those who have chosen to be involved in consultation and representation (ii) those who have additionally decided to become engaged in innovative forms of service provision, and (iii) the vast majority of parents who have neither the time nor desire to engage in these activities and focus primarily on their caring responsibilities and the rest of their lives. At this stage, we believe that the progress noted is limited to the first two of these groups, and we are not clear about how the benefits are being experienced by the third (and largest) group of parents. This issue will be explored in more detail in Phase Two.

Emerging Theory 2. Participation by Children and Young People

**Involving individual children and groups of young people in service design, development and evaluation is leading to more accessible and child focused short breaks.**

21. We have found:

- Most areas clearly now believe in an approach based upon children's rights, often significantly arising from the work linked to EDCM and this Pathfinder initiative, though in many places moving from this theoretical intent to delivery in practice is at a very embryonic stage – certainly less advanced than parental empowerment.
- Most areas have developed systems for finding out what young people want and subsequently what young people thought about their short breaks – including those who may need much support to communicate their views. Concerns remain, however, that a lack of collaboration between PCTs and LAs could result in 'over consultation' and an unnecessary burden on children and young people.
- Positive progress where Pathfinders have invested significantly in providing support to enable young people to come together in groups or networks and developed infrastructure and methodologies to support such groups. Such groups have placed great emphasis on promoting self esteem and developing peer support / role modeling within the wider community.
- There is some evidence to suggest that the development and participation of such groups is beginning to influence the nature of services being developed, such as the opportunity to participate in a diverse range of opportunities and a growing emphasis on shared short breaks (i.e. parent and young person together) rather than what might be called separated time breaks. However, there is much evidence to suggest that meaningful participation takes time to develop and there are some young people who are often not engaged yet, as methods of successfully working with them are still being pursued.
- There is also some evidence that young people have been participating in recruitment and making decisions about services, such as a 'Dragons Den' panel of young people with providers presenting ideas for short break services.
- The widening of choice and increase in take up of Direct Payments is reported to have given young people more choice, in terms of service options, and therefore there is a real individual decision making process for them to be part of.

Emerging Theory 3. Inclusion and Ordinarity. **The increased use of ordinary community facilities and investment of resource in ‘opening up’ local community settings to make them more welcoming is contributing to people’s feelings of inclusion and belonging.**

22. We have found:

- An early and concise definition of what a ‘mainstream, inclusive option’ is, or is not, leads to better outcomes for children and young people and their families. This appears to be a bigger issue in relation to support and services for teenagers than it is for younger children.
- Pathfinders actively listening to children and young people and their families, about what feeling included means to them, has resulted in the development of some short break provision that could be interpreted as ‘segregated’
- When investment in physical resources (such as equipment and facilities) is combined with ongoing support to raise awareness and understanding of the needs and wishes of disabled children and their families, there is a greater chance of being able to do ordinary things in ordinary places.
- Individuals and agencies involved with the Pathfinders have operated and developed services and strategies in the context of a broad and flexible understanding of the concept of inclusion. The most successful strategies, even when they appear to be essentially separate or “stepping stone” in nature, are those that focus on friendship and shared experience rather than dogmatically seeking integration, and are associated with action to help open up wider, mainstream opportunities.
- Participants consistently reported raised expectations, with regard to increased choice and being able to access ordinary services and facilities.
- Investment in staff to facilitate access to community services (either in their own right or as advisors and support to locality/cluster teams) has increased the numbers of young people participating, reduced some types of specialist provision and achieved positive feedback from parents and children.
- Some issues exist that appear to be continuing obstacles to inclusion and ‘ordinarity’, in the form of: (i) Parents not having sufficient information about the range of services available/ the experience and qualifications of

staff/ the equipment, etc to generate trust and confidence in accessing mainstream community services; (ii) 'Traditional views' amongst specialist staff; (iii) Ways of identifying and measuring success - 'the better it is working the more invisible the families will become'

**Emerging Theory 4. Commissioning for Innovation and Change. The development of an assertive, values-led, but less mechanistic and prescriptive approach to commissioning, has prompted a change in behaviour (from commissioners and potential providers) and is slowly leading to a wider range of short break provision that is having a positive impact on whole families.**

24. We have found:

- The development of value led (outcomes based) commissioning processes appears to be leading to innovative and creative thinking and inclusion of a more mixed economy of providers (some of whom may not have participated in this area before).
- Commissioning processes that invite and value the particular contributions of potential local community providers, and engage with them as partners, are helping to stimulate innovation and greater flexibility in the development of short break provision
- Evidence that emerging strategies to engage potential (non specialist) providers in the tendering process, accompanied by ongoing support to develop capacity and infrastructure within organisations, is beginning to stimulate the market. These approaches can be counter to standardised requirements for commissioning local services, creating tensions between proactive commissioning and restrictive procurement processes which can act as barriers to change.
- Some potential innovative providers may be deterred by: (i) the demands of resourcing greater flexibility and responsiveness; (ii) the challenges of the procurement requirements of some local authorities; and (iii) uncertainty around ongoing longer term funding.
- Almost all Pathfinder sites are struggling to find effective ways of measuring and reporting on the more innovative services and supports – some of the best being almost 'invisible' in conventional terms and thus are not easily identified and measured by existing performance systems.



Emerging Theory 5. Access and Equity. **A ‘softening’ of the process for accessing short break provision, along with the development of systematic approaches to ‘finding’ potential beneficiaries, is beginning to lead to a more open service that is available to more people**

25. We have found:
- Early progress in improvements in data capture and analysis are supporting targeted intervention and feeding into ongoing planning and review of specific needs.
  - A growing understanding (across specialist and mainstream services) of the various factors which promote and support parents’ and children’s’ decisions to utilise services (or not), especially those that are new, is proving effective in shaping service development.
  - A range of communication strategies are needed to ‘reach’ the range of audiences involved in the process. Access to constantly changing information was regarded as a significant challenge for many parents.
  - Pathfinders themselves consistently reported a level of unease with regard to equity and felt that flexibility in eligibility criteria (by itself) may not have the desired outcome.
26. Almost all Pathfinder sites stated that they are waiting for and expecting some further national guidance and/or clarity on this issue and so local innovation and initiative has perhaps been suppressed because of this expectation.

Emerging theory 6: Partnership Working. **Where there is a history of joint working within and across the local authority, PCT and voluntary sector, along with current evidence of a common vision, this can lead to significant improvements in (a) the delivery of services and (b) the lives of individual children and young people.**

27. We have found:
- Where local authority departments such as leisure, youth and extended schools services are involved as partners in both planning and delivery of the Pathfinder programme, this has resulted in creative approaches to increasing the accessibility of services, the numbers of children and

young people participating, and generated positive feedback from children, young people and their families.

- Where strong partnership working exists between the local authority and the PCT there is a greater understanding within health about the role of short breaks for children with complex health needs (not just palliative care which it is sometimes understood as), which in some cases has resulted in additional funding/posts being created.
- Strong partnership working across all services increases the likelihood that creative approaches to the nature of activities (i.e. not just accessibility and number) will spread.
- Partnership with the local voluntary sector appears to be particularly important to the development of a range of innovative provision.

**Emerging Theory 7. Sustainability and a Lasting Legacy. Having a range of mechanisms to engage, challenge and support mainstream services is important for generating energy and enthusiasm, raising the profile of the needs of disabled young people and their families, and creating a culture of 'everybody's business'**

28. We have found:

- A clear and strategic vision for the development of short breaks provision that is communicated effectively, championed at a senior level by someone with 'clout' and credibility, is beginning to influence the development of mainstream children's services.
- The partnership working with mainstream services (as described in emerging theory 6) appears to be particularly important in creating a future culture that will help to ensure the inclusion of young disabled people in community life and opportunity.
- Investments of Pathfinder monies in the 'upskilling' and support of practitioners has proved particularly valuable when this has been part of a coherent workforce development strategy, with clear evidence of an evolving confidence and capability that is retained within the service.
- Supporting the development of a strong parent 'voice' and explicitly facilitating the links between parents and political decision makers plays a key role in ensuring sustainability.

- Evidencing outcomes for both individuals and services is a major challenge but is essential in demonstrating the effectiveness of the Pathfinder programme and securing the future shift in services. Work in this area is only just getting underway.
  - Identifying qualitative changes that have taken place (as distinct from quantitative increases in provision) and embedding them in the mind-set is believed to increase the potential for sustainability of outcomes beyond the present programme.
29. This emerging theory has a particular dimension, in that it is projecting forward i.e. asserting that things will be different in the future. It is therefore more difficult to evidence. However, almost without exception, every Pathfinder site was adamant that this would be a consequence of the work they are currently doing. During Phase Two of this work, we will particularly push for evidence to support this claim.

Emerging Theory 8. The imprecise nature of Short Breaks; when is an activity or experience not a short break? **A lack of national specificity and clarity, combined with evolving guidance on priorities has resulted in a huge variety of service responses, and a significant diversity of understanding amongst parents, young people and professionals in respect of short breaks.**

30. We have found:
- A huge variety of support services and responses to the Short Breaks initiative - almost any activity or experience can be seen to provide a short break from ordinary or everyday responsibilities and difficulties. The flexibility of the concept (initiative) has been exploited by most Pathfinder areas and led to innovative and creative responses.
  - The lack of specificity around definitions has allowed the more innovative Pathfinders to introduce great variety into the kinds of support offered and encouraged creativity and flexibility. However, those Pathfinders who appear less developed have found the lack of definition an obstacle as they have not known how to interpret national expectations.
  - This lack of specificity has perhaps not been helpful to many PCTs, who have found it more problematic to make sense of being a Pathfinder and

deliver change and innovation other than in the area of palliative care. PCT officers reported an underlying difficulty with regard to their efforts to conceptualise the role of the NHS in relation to short breaks.

- Often parents, young people and practitioners are uncertain about the developing range of options that may or may not be available - and this uncertainty has created some confusion and impacted on the take up of short breaks. For example, some families do not recognise the innovative supports they were receiving as being short breaks and emerging from the Pathfinder work. This confusion may reflect a communication gap that is gradually narrowing; but it is nevertheless difficult to convey a concept or idea which is very broadly defined or described.

Emerging Theory 9. The Importance of Accountability and Resource Protection

**The clear identification of the Pathfinder Funds provided through the local authority, along with the requirement to report nationally on their usage, was a positive factor in empowering Pathfinder leads to protect resources and engage key stakeholders**

31. We found that:

- The clear identification of the funds channeled through the local authority for the Pathfinder initiative enabled Pathfinder leads to argue for their explicit use on this initiative, whereas otherwise there was a strong belief that a large proportion of them would have been lost to other local authority purposes.
- The availability of this funding was also an important 'carrot' in encouraging elements of mainstream services (such as the Youth Service) to become actively involved in the Pathfinder work.
- Conversely, the failure to earmark or ring-fence the NHS funding for the Pathfinder initiative at best meant that it was not seen as a significant priority for the PCT and obtaining the resources proved difficult, and at worst it provided an excuse for the PCT's disengagement from the Pathfinder programme.
- The requirement to account for how funds had been used through the TDC processes, associated with the profile of being part of a national

initiative, was a positive factor in maintaining senior level interest and engagement within local authorities.

## Other Specific Issues

32. The DCSF brief for this research also asked that information be obtained in relation to a number of specific questions that, at this stage, are not specifically addressed by the above theories of change. The Phase Two report will comment/address these in detail, in particular by applying the implications of the 'emerging theories of change' to the question of why the progress we identify on those questions has or has not occurred. At this stage, we merely wish to make some initial observations in relation to the various questions asked.

### *Use of Needs Data to Plan Services*

33. The brief requested us to *(i) Identify different approaches used in identifying population need for short breaks, and associated strengths and weaknesses, and (ii) Identify the extent to which Pathfinders are extending their short break provision to a greater number of children and how judgments regarding eligibility are altering with additional resources.* Colleagues from CeDR have, as described in the tender proposal, used the DCSF Autumn 2008 and Autumn 2009 School Census data to estimate the number of disabled children in each of the 21 Pathfinder areas by gender, age, ethnicity, type of impairment (SEN category) and area deprivation. From this, estimates have been derived of the proportion of children in each SEN category and broad age group who would be likely to be deemed eligible for receipt of short breaks – from which have been derived estimates of local need (the number of 'eligible' disabled children in each of the Pathfinder areas). This information is contained in a separate interim report being submitted from the research team. One key point to comment upon is that (as noted in the other report) most Pathfinder sites found it extremely difficult to provide estimates of local population by differing categories or definitions. However, many of the local Pathfinder leads we have been dealing with insisted they had undertaken significant local population analysis and were using this to help plan developments. There appears to be a contradiction between these two pieces of information which we will explore further in Phase Two.

### *Local Area Models*

34. The brief requested that we comment upon *'What pattern of provision (local area models) are Pathfinders using to extend short break services and (a) How the models differ in terms of the likely volume of provision, and (b) Whether and how these approaches are increasing access to short breaks for the 5 target groups set out in the Full Service Offer.* The concept of a local model for provision appears to be, in many ways, contradictory to the approaches being taken by the Pathfinder sites, i.e. there is an emerging *commissioning* model as outlined earlier in this report which effectively takes many of the principles of personalisation and social inclusion – out of which a potential plethora of provision models might emerge.
35. In relation to (a) we have found limited evidence to answer this question to date, which will be further explored in Phase Two. In relation to (b) there is clearly an awareness about the expectation to focus upon these five groups (which almost all sites now conceptualise as two groups: (i) autism and challenging behaviour and (ii) complex needs). However, it is difficult to discern concerted strategies to increase levels of provision in most sites (though there are exceptions, primarily in relation to new services for people on the autistic spectrum – significantly in response to pressure from articulate parents). Worryingly, there is some indication of a trend in a minority of sites towards reviewing and re-defining people who use services so that they meet these definitions; and thus there is a perception of increased numbers in the target groups without an actual increase in overall provision. Again, this will be explored further in Phase Two.

### *Use of Assessment Procedures.*

36. The brief requested that we comment upon *'How assessment procedures are used and if this relates to actual patterns of provision'*. In part this is commented upon under Emerging Theory 5. Additionally, we would note that the emerging 'proportionate response assessments' are reported to be resulting in quicker access to services – though we currently have some difficulty in understanding how (in practice) these are needs related rather than disability defined. Similarly where self-assessment is emerging, there is

some tentative evidence that this enables quicker access to a range of community supports. The Phase Two report will comment further.

#### *Direct Payments*

37. The brief requested that we comment upon '*How Pathfinders have promoted direct payments and supported families who have taken this route*'. There appears to be clear evidence of an expansion of direct payments as a tool for change and empowerment. Phase Two will explore this in more detail – in particular around three inter-related areas of concern emerging from the Phase One work:
- A reported divergence between senior officers' enthusiasm for direct payments, and caution - if not obstruction - from many front line staff.
  - A significant proportion of the parents we met being unaware of direct payments, despite local authority descriptions of promotion campaigns.
  - A lack of clarity about effective support structures for families to access.

#### *Infrastructure Support*

38. One other issue to emerge has been that of whether there is any correlation between the amount and nature of infrastructure support created in the Pathfinder sites, and their progress with the agenda. The approach taken has clearly varied between Pathfinder sites; whether this has had a resultant effect on the work done could be useful learning for wider roll-out, and so will be explored during Phase Two.



## Outline of Phase Two

39. As described in the tender proposal, the NDTi team will now further explore these issues with a view to (i) refining them (ii) identifying any important missing elements, and (iii) obtaining further data to evidence and illustrate the conclusions. This will primarily be done through focusing on ten Pathfinder sites that have offered a variety of approaches and progress based on our Phase One analysis, and will involve:

- Three short case studies in each site, involving inter-actions with families, young people, care managers/social workers and providers.
- Further meetings and discussions with key managers, strategic stakeholders and families to examine and evidence the Emerging Theories.

Our further conclusions will then again be tested out with representatives from all 21 Pathfinder sites – on this occasion we propose doing this through one national gathering. The final report will then be delivered in April/May as stated.

40. The original proposal envisaged a short report analysing partnership working being produced at the end of Phase One of the work. This report has highlighted some of the important components of effective partnership working that are influencing local developments in some areas. Whilst we have much information to inform the analysis of partnership working, our view is that the additional work in Phase Two outlined above will add a detailed level of understanding than is possible at present – and thus propose producing this full report as part of Phase Two reporting.

Rob Greig – Chief Executive  
Philippa Chapman – Research Associate  
Amanda Clayson – Research Associate  
Chris Goodey – Research Associate  
Dave Marsland – Research Associate

## Appendix I: Logic Model Framework for Realistic Evaluation

<b>Context(s):</b>	<b>Rationale:</b>	<b>Inputs:</b>	<b>Mechanisms:</b>	<b>Activities:</b>	<b>Outputs:</b>	<b>Short/ medium Term Outcomes:</b>	<b>Impact:</b>
<p>What problems is the programme trying to address?</p> <p>What other contextual factors might impact on the programme, or its target beneficiaries?</p>	<p>What are the assumptions/ theories underpinning the choice of programme, projects &amp; activities within (&amp; across) Pathfinders?</p>	<p>What strategies/ plans drive the programme?</p> <p>What resources are at partners/Pathfinders' disposal?</p>	<p>What is it that will generate the change(s)?</p> <p>How is it that people interact or engage with the programme?</p>	<p>Activities or strategies that are necessary for the implementation of the programme</p>	<p>Products, process indicators, attendance figures, change in pattern of use of different resources (this could also be an outcome)</p>	<p>Changed practice, changed experience, observable changed behaviour in individuals and organisations</p> <p>Outcomes are clearly linked to / resulting from this programme's activities</p>	<p>Changed circumstances, culture change, sustained change, longer term outcomes</p> <p>This programme will have contributed towards impacts, but other programmes / wider factors are also likely to have had an influence. (i.e. impacts are unlikely to be attributable to one project alone)</p>

## Outline of CMO Framework from Realistic Evaluation

### DATA & ANALYSIS

ELEMENT	INFORMATION	POSSIBLE DATA
<b>CONTEXTS</b>	National-Regional-Local-Individual: demographic; socio-economic; policy & system; partnerships; history of work/experience	Census; various indices; local policy docs; project related materials; governance arrgts; identified aims & outcomes; local evaluations; previous studies
<b>MECHANISMS</b>		
Inputs	Resources available; how allocated; new & existing roles; new & existing services/support; ways of working; structures & systems	Data as above. Interviews with project leads/teams & focus groups with key stakeholders (find out WHY); etc
Outputs	Evidence of how resources used to achieve the above; whether the above happened or not; project & stakeholder journeys to achieve this	As above; workshops to explore theories and “results” data; mapping exercises to capture journeys; etc
<b>OUTCOMES</b>	Identified/agreed indicators of change (what does success look like; how have partners agreed what to measure & use to indicate change has happened?)	As above; survey data; interviews; tracked sample using interviews & small group discussions; Most Significant Change stories; case studies etc
<b>IMPACT</b>	Ditto but over longer time frame. Evidence of local, shared vision & broad aims?	Longitudinal studies covering the above.

**Ref: DCSF-RR223**

**ISBN: 978-1-84775-725-8**

**© 2010 NDTi**

**[www.dcsf.gov.uk/research](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research)**

**Published by the Department for  
Children, Schools and Families**

**Registered Charity no. 313392**