

PINE Suggested Evaluation Plan

BTP / Railway Children

The following document outlines the current evaluation plan for British Transport Police and Railway Children's multi-agency working intervention following the Readiness Event and first consultation.

Evaluation aspirations

There are two primary aims of the PINE self-evaluation of the BTP/RC partnership:

- to understand whether there are any indications of evidence for the effectiveness of the BTP/RC partnership for the young people who come through the programme on a range of outcomes. This is addressed in the **Evaluation Questions** section.
- to understand whether there are areas for improvement with regards to the process of engaging the young people who are referred. This is addressed in the **Implementation and Process Evaluation** section.

We will also aim to understand if anything can be learned about young people's likelihood to engage with, or have a positive outcome from, the programme based on their profile information and characteristics. This will be explored both through demographic information and qualitative interviews.

Evaluation Questions

Based on our understanding of what data will be possible to collect and your research priorities, we suggest the following evaluation questions.

- 1) What change is there in the number of police contacts for young people working with Railway Children in the 12 months after referral compared to the 12 months prior?
- 2) What change is there in the number of missing episodes for young people working with Railway Children in the 12 months after referral compared to the 12 months prior?
- 3) What proportion of the children or young people who work with Railway Children and who were already working with Children's Services had a reduction in the level of social care involvement 6 months after the end of the programme compared to before? What proportion had an increase?
- 4) To what extent do the young people who work with Railway Children report changes in their family relationships 6 months after beginning to receive the intervention compared to before receiving it?

- 5) What change do case workers report in the safety of young people who work with Railway Children 6 months after beginning to receive the intervention compared to the start of the programme?

Outcome measures

You noted that data for Evaluation Questions 1-3 could be gathered from the NPD, BTP and Children's Services records. Data for questions 4 and 5 could be gathered through short bespoke surveys issued to young people who are in contact with the service.

Before / After Comparisons

For each of the evaluation questions, we recommend that employing a before/after comparison of outcomes for your sample - taking a 'baseline' and then an 'endline' measure 6 or perhaps 12 months later. Changes in the same people over time such as these are useful indicative evidence that the intervention is having the desired effect, but this type of comparison has some limitations. It doesn't allow you to say that the programme *caused* the change - only that the change took place - as other things might have changed in the lives of the recipients over the course of the period the intervention was running that had an influence on the change.

Outcome measures

This section outlines, for each research question, how we recommend measuring the outcome.

EQ1-3: Social Care and Other Services Involvement

Police Contacts

You identified police contacts as an important indicator of whether the child / young person is still at risk in the community, and therefore a reduction in contacts would indicate that the work of the Railway Children team was having a positive impact. Therefore we include a measure for the frequency of these contacts in the 12 months before and after contact with the RC. You indicated that this information could be collected via the PNC/PND.

Missing Episodes

Equally, reporting the number of missing episodes in 12 months, compared to the 12 months prior to contact with the programme, this might also provide an indication of the child's stability and level of risk. You indicated that historical data is not stored on the PNC, only open cases, but that local authorities collate and report this data.

Social Care Involvement

While level of social care involvement may not be a suitable measure of progress for all recipients of the programme (you noted that in some cases you are advocating for *more* involvement from Children's Services), we propose including this as a measure for a subsection of the wider cohort - those who are already working with Children's Services.

As the level of social care involvement amongst the families of recipients of the programme is quite varied, we suggest recording a simple binary 'change of involvement' indicator for each family six and twelve months after the end of the programme. The 'level' of social care involvement might be defined as:

- Child is Looked After - either by LA, or separate arrangement such as SGO.
- Family has had / will have a Public Law Outline Meeting
- Child has a Child Protection Plan
- Child has a Child In Need Plan
- Family working with/open to Early Help team (if applicable)
- Child does not have an active case in either Children's Social Care or Early Help.

A case would be recorded as a 'reduction' if the child was moved from a CP to a CIN plan, or from having a CIN plan to Early Help for example. To provide a fuller picture of the outcomes of the families for this measure, we also recommend recording increases in Social Care involvement.

EQ4 Family Relationships Survey

We propose measuring family relationships using the [SCORE-15 survey](#) for family functioning and change (Annex A), which is a validated measure for family therapeutic change. We propose issuing it to the whole sample of children and young people in contact with the RC case workers (EQ4).

Each respondent will be given a score of family functioning between 1-5 where higher values indicate higher levels of family functioning. The survey, as well as resources for recording and scoring responses, are available for free online.

The survey should be implemented twice: once shortly after the child first comes into contact with the RC, and again after 6 months. The first survey will provide a 'baseline' for these two outcomes, and the second the 'endline' measure.

EQ 5: Safety - Practitioner / young person survey

We propose conducting an additional survey with case workers to measure change in their perceptions of young people's safety over the course of the intervention. BTP provided four questions to include which can together provide an indication of the young person's safety.

- *To what extent do you agree the young person has an adult in their life who they trust and can talk to?*
- *To what extent do you agree the young person regularly engages in positive activities and/or education?*
- *To what extent do you agree the young person has an awareness of risky situations (i.e. peers, places, relationships) which may potentially expose them to harm?*
- *To what extent do you agree the young person has a proportionate attitude to risky situations (i.e. peers, places, relationships) which may potentially expose them to harm?*
- *To what extent do you agree that self-harm or substance misuse are a risk to the young person?*
 - Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree

The survey should be completed by the practitioner twice: once shortly after the child first comes into contact with the RC after the practitioner has completed an initial assessment, and again after 6 months, to give an indication of the intervention's impact over this time. Responses can be scored and added together to provide a measure of safety, with 'Strongly agree' giving a score of 7 and 'Strongly disagree' of 1. Score for the final item, on self-harm and substance abuse, should be reversed so that 'Strongly agree' gives a score of 1.

We also suggest adding one question to the young person survey to get a sense of their perception of their own safety and how this changes over the course of the programme. This would not relate specifically to the a research question, but can help inform your thinking about how young people respond to the intervention:

- I often find myself in situations which I consider to be risky or unsafe
 - Describes me: Very well
 - Describes me: Well
 - Describes me: Partly
 - Describes me: Not well
 - Describes me: Not at all

Sample

You indicated that you would like to include three localities in the evaluation, each of which work with around 25 young people at one time with an average programme duration of around one year. For the Evaluation Questions, ideally you would include all young people who are in contact with the programme over the evaluation period. Although these are

relatively small numbers, data collected on their outcomes might still help to provide indicative evidence of the effectiveness of the programme. It may also be helpful to include all young people who are currently working with Railway Children as part of the sample for the research questions (other than the surveys in EQs 4-7), which require a baseline measure which cannot be extracted from pre-existing data) to increase sample size and mitigate the risk of low numbers starting the intervention during the evaluation period.

Implementation and Process Evaluation

As well as the quantitative outcomes listed above, it is also important to gather qualitative information to help you get a richer picture of how different elements of the intervention, including the engagement and end-of-programme processes are working. Below we have included question guides for recipients, practitioners, BTP staff and parents / caregivers as part of this part of the evaluation.

Recipients

We would recommend this is done via 8 semi-structured interviews with recipients, conducted with recipients in the weeks after they finish the programme, focusing on the topics below:

- **First contact;** What led to you becoming involved with RC? Were you receiving any support from other services previously? Who was the first person you spoke to, and what did they say? Did you have any contact with BTP? How did you find BTP staff?
- **Engagement;** how did they find the experience of first speaking to Railway Children about the programme? What was it that made them want to continue working with them? Was there anything that could have been done differently to make signing up to the programme more appealing? Have they previously been offered support by RC? How clear was the support being offered? Did you have any worries about working with RC? Did they receive a letter or leaflet to tell them about the programme beforehand? Did they find this useful?
- **Effectiveness of different parts of the programme;** was there any content that was particularly helpful or less helpful, such as particular issues covered or ways the case worker engaged with them? Are there any ways they could think of that the programme or individual elements could be improved? Did your conversations with RC address what was important to you? How helpful did you find completing the Teen Star?
- **Support;** do the recipients feel they have been well-supported by services in the borough? What support have you received from RC, and how often? How have you found the level of support offered? How did you find working with your support worker? Has working with RC led you to working with other people or services? Did RC meet with your family? Did you experience any challenges working with RC? Did you feel engaged in your work with RC? How does this compare to your previous experiences of working with professionals such as social workers?

- **Post-programme;** do the recipients feel like they have enough support or guidance after the end of the programme? When did they finish the programme, and has there been any follow-up support? Would you change anything about the way that people who work on trains/in stations work? Have you had any further contact with BTP staff?
- **Perceived change;** what has changed in their lives since they started the programme? How do they feel about these changes? What is their perception of what the future holds for them now, and how does this compare to how they felt when they started on the programme?

Practitioners

In addition to the above, it may be helpful to also gather qualitative information from practitioners and staff to get further detail and input around their experiences of the above. We would similarly recommend 4 semi-structured interviews with practitioners focusing on the following topics:

- **First contact;** How do you find the referral process? Are there any changes that you would make to the referral form and process?
- **Engagement;** How do you engage with a young person when making first contact? What helps or hinders a young person engaging with the service? Do you find it easier to engage some young people than others? Has anything helped to improve engagement? Do demographic factors, such as gender, ethnicity, age or sexuality affect how likely a young person is to engage with you?
- **Effectiveness of different parts of the programme;** What do you think is the most important/helpful part of the service you offer? Have young people identified any gaps in the support that you are able to provide? What is your experience of working with other agencies? Are there any parts of the work you do that young people don't find helpful? What is the most challenging part of your role?
- **Support;** Do you feel that you are able to offer the most appropriate level of support? Are you able to tailor the support you offer to each individual young person? How do you do this? Are there issues that you aren't able to help young people with? What support do you receive from your team/managers? Do you feel supported in your role?
- **Post-programme;** What support is offered to young people in the longer-term? How do you manage working towards ending your work with a young person? Could this be improved? If you could make one change to the work you do, what would this be?

We might also consider including BTP staff and Children's Services staff, as well as parents and carers, in the Implementation and Process evaluation, as outlined below:

BTP Officers

Participants: Staff in the vulnerability unit, including manager, frontline officers, station commanders (x6). This would largely be similar to the section for RC staff outlined above. It may also help to think about:

How do you find the RC referral process? How do you engage the young people you work with? What are the most significant challenges working with this cohort of young people as BTP staff? Has working with RC made any changes to your knowledge, understanding, or work with young people? Is there anything else that you think RC could offer?

Parents / care-givers of recipients

As above, this would mirror many of the questions asked to young people, from the perspective of parents/carers (x4), particularly around inclusion in work, support offered, and engagement. It may also be helpful to get a more detailed narrative around what changes, if any, they have seen in the young person since they started working with RC, and also, if there are any gaps in the support offered to parents/carers specifically, how they are kept informed.

Data Collection and Reporting Schedule

For survey data, we recommend collecting 'baseline' responses during the initial engagement / on-boarding process, and then again at the end of their time on the programme. Administrative data, such as police contacts, missing episodes and CSC involvement, should be collated for the 12 months prior to referral (baseline) and then again 12 months afterwards. Reporting takes place once all cases are closed, or to a maximum of one year after the end of the period.

While this means that the proposed quantitative data collection will not be completed until the end of 2022, we suggest undertaking the IPE next year and reporting first, in July or August 2021. The quantitative data can continue to be collected to supplement this and then be added to the final reporting.

Activity	Deadline
Start of data collection window	April 2021
Data collection for IPE (recipients' exit interviews)	April 2021-March 2022
Data collection for IPE (non-recipient)	July-August 2021
Data analysis for IPE (non-recipient)	September-October 2021

Final young person to be included in sample starts working with RC	End March 2022
Interim analysis for quantitative data and final analysis for IPE	April 2022
IPE and Interim quantitative reporting	May 2022
End of data collection window	End September 2022
Quantitative data analysis	October-November 2022
Final reporting	December 2022

Other data you may want to consider collecting

Additional data monitoring

In addition to the additional data collection we recommend in the sections above, it could also be good to capture other data systematically, to help you monitor your intervention over time and be able to communicate key information to internal stakeholders. For example:

- Number of young people referred and worked with
- Proportion of young people who drop out of the programme before reaching threshold for reduction in risk
- Proportion of referrals relating to each of the the YP Categories on the CYP1 form
- Demographic information of each young person - age, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, UASC, where they live etc.

We would be happy to advise on methods that could be employed to help you do this.

Annex A: SCORE-15 Survey

Describing your family Date.....

We would like you to tell us about how you see your family at the moment. So we are asking for YOUR view of your family.

When people say 'your family' they often mean the people who live in your house. **But we want you to choose who you want to count as the family you are going to describe.**

For each item, make your choice by putting in just one of the boxes numbered 1 to 5. If a statement was "We are always fighting each other" and you felt this was not especially true of your family, you would put a tick in box 4 for "Describes us: not well".

Do not think for too long about any question, but do try to tick one of the boxes for each question.

For each line, would you say <u>this describes our family:</u>	1. Describes us: Very well	2. Describes us: Well	3. Describes us: Partly	4. Describes us: Not well	5. Describes us: Not at all
1) In my family we talk to each other about things which matter to us					
2) People often don't tell each other the truth in my family					
3) Each of us gets listened to in our family					
4) It feels risky to disagree in our family					
5) We find it hard to deal with everyday problems					
6) We trust each other					
7) It feels miserable in our family					
8) When people in my family get angry they ignore each other on purpose					
9) We seem to go from one crisis to another in my family					
10) When one of us is upset they get looked after within the family					
11) Things always seem to go wrong for my family					
12) People in the family are nasty to each other					
13) People in my family interfere too much in each other's lives					
14) In my family we blame each other when things go wrong					
15) We are good at finding new ways to deal with things that are difficult					
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.