

Evaluation Summary

Participants	FDAC Parents FDAC Parent Mentors FDAC Practitioners (FDAC Key workers, FDAC team members) FDAC judges FDAC Parent Mentor Coordinators FDAC Site Leadership
Estimated number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FDAC Parents Receiving Parent Mentor Servicesn=abc, (prior and current participants, from population of all FDAC parents) • Parent Mentors n=10 • FDAC Practitioners n=20 • FDAC Judges n=6 • Key Informants: Coordinators n=2; Leadership n=2
Number of pilot sites (e.g. local authorities)	Two FDAC sites
Date	July 2020
Version	1

This document outlines the proposed methods for understanding the factors and processes involved in implementing parent mentoring in Family Drug and Alcohol Courts and the perceived impact of this service on families, mentors and the FDAC system.

Summary

Project Background

Parent mentoring is increasingly recognised as an influential factor in the generation of positive outcomes for families in receipt of professional interventions.¹²³ The Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) is an alternative family court for care proceedings specifically designed to work with parents who struggle with drug and alcohol misuse and the provision of parent mentoring for families is an integral component of the FDAC service. As part of the first FDAC evaluation⁴ parent mentoring was recognised as having a positive potential, which required further evaluation. This pilot evaluation, funded by What Work for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) as part of the Department for Education's (DfE) wider Supporting Families: Investing in Practice programme, is intended to provide this.

¹ Berrick, J. D., Young, E. W., Cohen, E. and Anthony, E. (2011), 'I am the face of success': parent mentors in child welfare. *Child & Family Social Work*, 16: 179-191

² Huebner, R. A., Hall, M. T., Smead, E., Willauer, T., & Posze, L. (2018). Parent mentoring services, opportunities, and outcomes for child welfare families with substance use disorders. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 84, 239-246.

³ Chambers, J.M., Lint, S., Thompson, M.G., Carlson, M.W., Graef, M.I. (2019). Outcomes of the Iowa Parent Partner program evaluation: Stability of reunification and re-entry into foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 104.

⁴ Harwin J, Alrouh B, Ryan M & Tunnard J (2014) *Changing lifestyles, keeping children safe: an evaluation of the first Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) in care proceedings*. Brunel University, London.

This evaluation sits alongside three other related projects funded under this programme: a larger impact evaluation involving 14 sites, a pilot evaluation of post-proceedings support with one site, and a project aiming to trial new ways to engage parents with FDAC. Prior to our appointment, the two FDAC sites for this pilot study were selected via a process overseen by WWCS and the Centre for Justice Innovation (CJI). Initially three sites were identified from the pool of existing FDAC sites selected to participate in the Supporting Families: Investing in Practice programme; this selection was based on the understanding that these sites were operating mentoring services. Of these, one site declined to participate leaving two sites involved in the evaluation.

Pilot Evaluation

In the FDAC model, parent mentoring is set out in specific terms and the expectation of the model is that sites implementing mentoring will adhere to this approach. In practice the two FDAC sites engaged in this evaluation are both, for different reasons, in the early stages of introducing parent mentoring and have adopted different approaches.

Site One is a large, longstanding and well-established FDAC site which covers 9 local authorities in a metropolitan area. It has had a commitment to parent mentoring for some time but resourcing it has proved problematic. Consequently, there is a limited number of parent mentors and a relatively modest amount of parent mentoring data to evaluate.

Site two is a county-wide FDAC, which has been operating since February 2016 and has only recently (in the past few months) developed a parent mentoring programme, which they are about to launch. The programme has been developed as part of a wider practice initiative to provide parent mentoring to all families with whom the local authority has statutory involvement.

Given the early stage of development of the parent mentoring programmes and variations in the two research sites, the primary emphasis of this pilot evaluation will be on the *implementation and process* aspects of the programme. Attention will be paid to the short-medium term outcomes of each programme but unavoidably their significance and scale will be constrained by the developmental stage of each programme.

A realist evaluation model, which emphasises the importance of context for evaluating service impact, will be adopted to explore '*why, when and for whom something works, and whether there are any unintended side-effects that need to be taken into account*'⁵. At the outset, the research team will consult with key informants from each site on the theory of change developed from prior discussions with programme leadership from both sites as part of the initial launch of the evaluation⁶. Parent mentor coordinators and FDAC parent mentors will be invited to provide feedback on the theory of change to ensure the views of practitioners and parents inform the conceptualisation of change and contribute to the further refinement of associated study variables, operational definitions, and study measures. Further consultation will take place with programme leadership involved in the earlier development of the theory of change for final approval. This consultation will include an initial exploration of programme variations to the core FDAC parent mentoring model and how these local variations are addressed in the theory of change. Proposed data collection methods will also be discussed to inform further refinements including: the quality, quantity, availability, and access to

⁵ Nutley, S., Powell, A. and Davies, H. (2013) *What Counts As Good Evidence. Provocation Paper for the Alliance for Useful Evidence.* <https://www.alliance4usefulevidence.org/assets/What-Counts-as-Good-Evidence-WEB.pdf>

⁶ Family Drug and Alcohol Courts Mentoring pilot evaluation kick-off meeting held on 3/2/20.

administrative data; the ethnographic observations taking into account local variations to FDAC mentor model; interview guide consultation. In addition to site-specific consultation, the study's Advisory Board, comprised of practitioners and parents with prior FDAC experience, will provide further input into the study methods.

The project will use an exploratory mixed methods design and the longitudinal analysis strategy will include an iterative approach to generating both *process* and, where possible, *outcome* data.

Research questions

1. How has parent mentoring been implemented locally?
 - a) How, if at all, does the approach differ from the core FDAC parent mentor model?⁷
 - b) What is the rationale for implementing this approach?
 - c) What are the challenges and benefits of this approach?
 - d) What are the core components and characteristics of the approach?
 - e) What are the anticipated outputs and outcomes?
 - f) To what extent is the approach detailed and documented to enable further expansion or scaling up?
 - g) Who is eligible for the service and what are the characteristics of those taking up the service offer?
2. How do the FDAC stakeholders (FDAC parents, parent mentors, FDAC team members, FDAC judges) understand and experience the role and process of parent mentoring?
 - a) What parent mentor characteristics and qualities are most and least useful when supporting parents to change?
 - b) What elements of the role are most helpful and most challenging in mentoring parents to support change?
 - c) What factors determine whether mentors and FDAC parents develop effective relationships to achieve positive change?
 - d) What is most helpful and most challenging in working with parent mentors as a member of the FDAC team?
 - e) How, if at all, does the parent mentor practice differ from the site-specific parent mentor model?
3. What is the perceived impact of FDAC parent mentoring on FDAC families, parent mentors, and the FDAC service?
 - a) What is the perceived contribution of parent mentoring to FDAC child and family outcomes?
 - b) What are the perceived unintended consequences (if any) of parent mentoring?
4. What do FDAC sites need in order to establish, develop and sustain parent mentoring nationally?
 - a) What is needed to develop an established group of skilled parent mentors across FDACs?
 - a) To what extent can/should parent mentoring be designed and delivered across FDAC sites nationally?

⁷ The Handbook for FDAC Parent Mentors

Outcomes

Research question	Indicator	Method
<p>Evidence of feasibility</p>	<p>Evidence of feasibility will be preliminary given the size and scale of programme implementation. Findings will offer new knowledge to guide parent mentoring service development and delivery.</p>	
<p>How has parent mentoring been implemented locally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How, if at all, does the approach differ from the core FDAC parent mentor model? • What is the rationale for implementing this approach? • What are the challenges and benefits of this approach? • What are the core components and characteristics of the approach? • What are the anticipated outputs and outcomes? • Who is eligible for the service and what are the characteristics of those taking up the service offer? 	<p>Site-specific parent mentoring programme rationale, objectives, descriptions and protocols to understand how the parent mentoring programme has been designed, introduced and delivered and its effectiveness in achieving anticipated outcomes.</p> <p>FDAC staff perspectives on site-specific approach</p> <p>Programme development and implementation fidelity with national FDAC parent mentoring guidance (original programme protocols, rationale)</p> <p>Data (count; demographics) on eligible, referred, and actual service users (FDAC parents) to identify the number and profile of eligible/referred parents and accepted/declined service from program start date.</p>	<p>Program documentation review and analysis (Site-specific, National FDAC parent mentor guidance)</p> <p>Interviews (Key Informants – FDAC Leadership, Parent Mentor Coordinators; Judges)</p> <p>FDAC Professional focus group interviews</p> <p>Programme Delivery Documentation</p> <p>FDAC Case File Documentation (note: available data currently unknown, to be determined in consultation with the FDAC sites)</p>
<p>How do the FDAC stakeholders (FDAC parents, parent mentors, FDAC team members, FDAC judges) understand and experience the role and process of parent mentoring?</p>	<p>Stakeholder insights and perspectives re: their knowledge and experience of parent mentoring development, implementation, delivery and receipt to identify what works well/less well, why and according to who:</p>	<p>Range of qualitative data gathering methods to ascertain a cross-section of stakeholders' views on all aspects of the parent</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What parent mentor characteristics and qualities are most and least useful when supporting parents to change. • What elements of the role are most helpful and most challenging in mentoring parents to support change? • What factors determine whether mentors and FDAC parents develop effective relationships to achieve positive change? • What is most helpful and most challenging in working with parent mentors as a member of the FDAC team? • How, if at all, does the actual parent mentor role differ from the site-specific approach? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose, remit, activities, and tasks of the parent mentor (e.g. personal/emotional support, education/guidance, system navigation, advocacy) • The way in which these activities and tasks are carried out individually and with others, and as part of the wider FDAC process to achieve parent mentor and FDAC programme goals. • Parent mentor skills, knowledge, and aptitude relevant to personal/emotional support, education/guidance, system navigation, advocacy • Perceived value and efficacy of parent mentor purpose and tasks (a) in achieving change as identified in FDAC case plan (b) as part of the wider FDAC team • Personal (parent; mentor), interpersonal, and system factors that facilitate positive engagement and the development of an effective helping relationship, including parent's motivation to participate in parent mentoring services. • Variations in description of actual parent mentor service delivery and site-specific/national FDAC programme descriptions. 	<p>mentoring role & process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews (FDAC parents, parent mentors, parent mentor coordinator, FDAC judges) • Focus Group Interviews (FDAC practitioners – keyworkers, team members) • Ethnographic observation (virtual/in person) <p>Data collection (parent/mentor interviews, ethnographic observation) will take place across multiple time points.</p>
<p>What do FDAC sites need in order to establish, develop and sustain parent mentoring nationally?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is needed to develop an established group of skilled parent mentors across FDACs? • To what extent can/should parent mentoring be designed and delivered across FDAC sites nationally? 	<p>A nationwide feasibility survey will ascertain from all FDAC sites their perception of and readiness to implement parent mentoring and the required resources for this to take place. Indicative needs of FDAC sites could be tangible (e.g. funding) and/or intangible (e.g. culture change) assets and resources.</p> <p>Stakeholder insights and perspectives on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources, Inputs – Programme Development, sustainability, • Resources Inputs – Programme Staffing and HR Development • Feasibility and value of large-scale expansion 	<p>Feasibility Survey (administered to FDAC Leadership across all FDAC sites)</p> <p>Interviews (Mentor, Parent Mentor Coordinator, Key Informant, Judges)</p> <p>FDAC Professional Focus Group</p>

	to establish, develop, and sustain parent mentoring services, locally and nationally.	
<p>Evidence of promise</p> <p>What is the perceived impact of FDAC parent mentoring on FDAC families, parent mentors, and the FDAC service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the perceived contribution of parent mentoring to FDAC child and family outcomes? • What are the perceived unintended consequences (if any) of parent mentoring? 	<p>Evidence of promise will be of a preliminary and tentative nature given the stage and scale of programme implementation. Findings will offer new knowledge on the over-arching FDAC outcomes (as opposed to impact) of parent mentoring services on FDAC families, mentors, and practitioners.</p> <p>Perspectives on the effectiveness and perceived impact of parent mentoring on FDAC Parents, Parent Mentors, Children (FDAC Parents/Parent Mentors), and FDAC programme. (note: some proposed indicators subject to case/programme data availability and access)</p> <p>FDAC Parents: Motivation to change*, reduction in negative behaviours (substance, parenting), hopefulness, quality of life, empowerment, engagement, parenting efficacy**.</p> <p>Parent Mentors: Empowerment, sustained recovery, parenting efficacy, skill/knowledge development</p> <p>Child (FDAC Parents/Parent Mentors) Child health/wellbeing, child safety, family functioning, placement stability, reunification.</p> <p>FDAC Programme: Staff perceptions of parents and their life experiences; parent/family-friendly culture; FDAC case outcomes; parent mentor programme sustainability.</p> <p>* Readiness Ruler https://iprc.iu.edu/sbirtapp/mi/ruler.php</p> <p>**The Parent Empowerment and Efficacy Measure and Parenting Stress Index</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardised Measure (Pre-/Post-Test) • Researcher Developed Survey (Post Test) • Interviews (Parent, Mentor, Judges, Key Informants) • Case Record Documentation* • FDAC Programme Documentation* (case specific outcomes) • Ethnographic Observation <p>*subject to data availability and access</p>

<p>Readiness for trial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is the approach detailed and documented to enable further expansion or scaling up? 	<p>The initial indicators of the early stages of programme implementation in both sites means it is highly likely that further development is needed to establish a sufficiently codified model of service delivery appropriate for larger scale evaluation activity.</p> <p>The focus of this evaluation on the implementation process and perceived impact of parent mentoring will provide essential information for codification in a UK context (see Evidence of Feasibility).</p> <p>Presence and detail of programme approach documentation necessary for local or national expansion.</p>	<p>Interviews (FDAC Leadership, Parent Mentor Coordinators)</p> <p>Programme Description Documentation Review & Analysis</p>
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Recruitment

On-site recruitment of parents and parent mentors will be undertaken in collaboration with the FDAC key informants designated as research leads (in both sites these are individuals with management responsibility for the FDAC teams) and FDAC practitioners. Participant recruitment materials and processes, including how informed consent will be gathered, will be approved by the University of Sussex's Ethics Review Committee. Initial contact will be made by onsite FDAC colleagues, and followed by the research team's Letter of Introduction and Information Sheet. At the point of direct contact with prospective parent mentors and parent participants, the project expectations and informed consent processes will be outlined verbally and presented in writing as consent sheets. All materials will be provided in formats that maximise the opportunity for participation e.g. language, disability etc.

Given the small scale of the current parent mentoring programmes, recruitment of parent mentors is likely to involve inviting all current parent mentors in both sites to participate in the project (n= c.10). Similarly, given the numbers of parents actively involved in parent mentoring relationships, recruitment of parents is likely to include all the current working relationships. Where the number of parent mentors and/or parents exceeds the designated sample size we will seek to recruit according to the following criteria to achieve a diverse sample:

Parent Mentors:

- age, ethnicity, gender representation
- experienced and newly appointed parent mentors (where possible)
- with experience of the FDAC process and those with experience of conventional family court processes

FDAC Parents:

- age, ethnicity, gender representation, disability

- those with prior parent mentoring experience and those without

It is anticipated that the total population of FDAC parents in both sites will be used for measures related to perceived impact of parent mentoring services using case and programme documentation. Should limitations exist with data quality or access, all FDAC parents referred to the Parent Mentor service will be used (referrals engaged/not engaged with service). Standardised measures will be administered to all FDAC parents receiving parent mentor services.

Recruitment of FDAC practitioners will be facilitated by the designated onsite FDAC research leads. Participants will include a cross-section of all the professional groups represented in FDAC teams – social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health/substance misuse/domestic violence professionals, support workers. In the smaller site, this is likely to be all the FDAC team members. In the larger site, selection of the practitioners will ensure that the sample is representative in terms of the teams' professional profiles and according to age, experience, gender, ethnicity and disability.

The engagement of judges will be overseen by the Centre for Justice Innovation. We will attempt to interview all judges in the two sites.

The Centre for Justice Innovation will facilitate the engagement of all FDAC sites in the feasibility survey.

Data Collection

Data collection methods will be sensitive to issues of race, ethnicity, and culture to both ensure adequate attention to issues of diversity and elicit data to understand how these factors are likely to contribute to the parent mentoring service experience.

Interviews (individual, focus groups) will be conducted by telephone or tele-conferencing using Skype for Business. Ethnographic observation will be determined based on FDAC court service delivery methods and, if necessary, conducted virtually. In-person interviews, focus groups, and other related fieldwork will be conducted in-person where possible, subject to comprehensive health and safety considerations.

Anticipated sample size reflect the small size of the programmes operating in both sites and present some limitations to the collection and analysis of quantitative data.

Data	Sample	Timeline
Programme & Case Documentation Review & Analysis		
<p><i>FDAC Parent Mentoring Programme Documentation:</i></p> <p>FDAC programme and parent mentoring service documentation will be used to collect service-related evaluation data since parent mentoring service inception related to FDAC parents/case and parent mentors/service. Data requirements will be finalised upon further consultation with sites and the project's advisory board.</p> <p>Programme Documentation – programme descriptions (including evaluation, review; staff/volunteer training and recruitment, strategic planning documentation), and protocols; eligibility criteria; service activity (referrals, acceptance, demographic data, reunification rate, successful cases plan completion rate, recovery rate; satisfaction/feedback survey results); Parent Mentor data (no. of volunteers, no. of days at exit interview)</p> <p>FDAC National Programme Documentation – programme descriptions, guidance, protocols</p>	<p>N= 2 sites</p>	<p>Month 1 - Month 35</p>

<p>FDAC Case File Records:</p> <p>FDAC case file records will be used to collect case-related data for all current FDAC parents, as well as prior and current FDAC case-related data for parents in receipt of parent mentoring services. Prior records will be used from the launch date of the Parent Mentoring service.</p> <p>Data requirements will be finalised upon further consultation with sites and the project's advisory board. Collection of the following data is dependent on ease of access.</p> <p>Case File Documentation (all current FDAC parents) – demographics, child placement status, CPS concern, FDAC evaluation standardised measures on parent behaviour change (e.g. substance/alcohol misuse/parenting difficulties), case outcome data (reunification, FDAC case plan completion, substance misuse recovery rate).</p> <p>Case File Documentation (prior and current FDAC parents receiving parent mentoring services) – including Contact record, support menu, matched care plan, feedback form/notes. Engagement (FDAC, Parent Mentor, Services), case plan progression, goal achievement (FDAC & Parent Mentor Support), family change data (child health/wellbeing, safeguarding, family functioning, placement, reunification)</p>	<p>Sample size (current and prior FDAC parents and parents receiving parent mentoring services) subject to data availability and access.</p> <p>Estimate based on limited data with easy access:</p> <p>Current FDAC cases from evaluation start to evaluation end (2yrs): n=180 approx. (FDAC A 60pa x 2yrs; FDAC B 30pa x 2yrs)</p> <p>Prior and current parent mentoring cases since programme inception to evaluation start): n=120 (FDAC A 60pa x 2yrs; FDAC B 0 x 2yrs)</p>	<p>Month 1 - Month 35</p>
<p>Stakeholder Interviews (Individual & Focus Groups)</p>		

<p>FDAC Parents (Service Recipients):</p> <p>Semi-structured telephone or video-conferencing interviews using Skype for Business will be conducted with a subsample of parents at three time points and will focus on: (1) parent perspectives on and experiences of mentoring processes and outcomes; (2) the implementation conditions required for <i>effective</i> mentoring.</p> <p>Interview schedules will be devised and piloted in collaboration with the research project's advisory group.</p>	<p>N= 15 parents (FDAC A n=10; FDAC B n=5)</p> <p>Original sample estimates based on the following calculations, which may be subject to revision due to current service level activity.</p> <p>FDAC A: Total FDAC parents n=60 (est.) FDAC parents referred to parent mentoring service n=30 (est.) Subsample for interview (1/3 of all receiving parent mentor service) n=10 (est)</p> <p>FDAC B: Total FDAC parents n=30 (est) FDAC parents referred to parent mentoring service n= 15 Subsample for interview (1/3 of all receiving parent mentor service) n= 5 (est).</p>	<p>Across project timeline and specific to individual case progression:</p> <p>T1 at service start (mentor allocation) mentor allocation; T2 at 12 weeks post-service start T3 at 26 weeks (FDAC court end), or parent mentor service conclusion if concludes post-court involvement</p>
<p>FDAC Parent Mentors:</p> <p>Semi-structured telephone or video-conferencing interviews using Skype for Business will be conducted with mentors over three-time points to capture case-specific progression and the evolution of their work over time. Interviews will be conducted with mentors individually and in groups, focusing on: (1) mentor perspectives on and experiences of mentoring processes and outcomes; (2) the implementation conditions required for <i>effective</i> mentoring, both case specific and collectively.</p> <p>Interview schedules will be devised and piloted in collaboration with the research project's advisory group.</p>	<p>N= 10 parent mentors (approx.)</p> <p>One individual interview; 12 bi-monthly group interviews with all parent mentors in site</p>	<p>Across project timeline:</p> <p>T1 initial, individual interview with parent mentor at evaluation start, or at 6 months following employment start date</p> <p>T2-T3 bi-monthly group interviews focused on case progression</p>

<p>FDAC Judges:</p> <p>All FDAC judges in each site (approx. six in total) will be interviewed by phone in 8-9 months of study.</p> <p>The interviews will be conducted by telephone or video-conferencing using Skype for Business and will focus on judges' perspectives on the significance and impact of parent mentoring and the feasibility of, and value attached to, its potential expansion.</p>	<p>N= 6-10 (approx.)</p>	<p>During first 8-9 months</p>
<p>FDAC Practitioners:</p> <p>Two focus groups per site (FG1, FG2) will be conducted with FDAC practitioners: social workers, psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health/substance misuse/domestic violence practitioners, support workers. FG1 will explore the experience of implementing parent mentoring (e.g. local contexts, barriers and facilitators) and FG2 will gather responses to key findings.</p> <p>Focus groups interviews will be conducted by telephone or video-conferencing using Skype for Business.</p>	<p>Focus Groups = 4 (2 groups per site x 2 sites) Aim will be to sustain continuity of practitioners attending the focus groups</p> <p>N=12-20 practitioners (6-10 per site)</p>	<p>Months 3 and 30</p>
<p>Ethnographic observation</p>		
<p>Mentor-parent interaction will be observed at three time points and will supplement the interview/focus group data and provide <i>direct</i> evidence of the qualities and characteristics of mentoring practices and relationships.</p> <p>Where in-person ethnographic observation is not possible due to health and safety concerns, virtual ethnography will be used.</p>	<p>N=15 mentor/parent dyads</p>	<p>Months 3, 9 and 18 (approx.)</p>
<p>Standardised measures</p>		

<p>A set of standardised measures will be administered online to all FDAC parents receiving parent mentor services. Pre- and post-test measures will be administered at two time points, the commencement and cessation of the mentoring service. Where possible, post-test data will be collected on parents prematurely ending their involvement with the service.</p> <p>Measures will capture early data on potential impact related to readiness to change and parent efficacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness Ruler • The Parent Empowerment and Efficacy Measure • Parenting Stress Index <p>The measures selected may be subject to change based on further consultation site and advisory board discussions.</p> <p>In addition to the standardised measures noted, an online survey developed by the research team will be administered to capture post-test feedback from FDAC parents on their perceived impact of the parent mentor service.</p>	<p>N=40 (approx.) (FDAC A 15pa x 2 yrs.; FDAC B 5pa x 2yrs)</p>	<p>Across project Timeline according to individual case start/end dates</p> <p>Standardised Measure: T1– Pre-test @ matched parent mentoring commencement T2– Post-test @ matched parent mentoring conclusion</p> <p>Researcher Developed Survey Instrument: T2– Post-test @ matched parent mentoring conclusion</p>
Feasibility Survey		
<p>An online survey will elicit the views of senior managers in all FDAC sites on the feasibility of implementing the mentoring service locally and nationally and the resources/inputs required.</p>	<p>N = 14 (All active FDAC Sites)</p>	<p>Month 24</p>

Analysis

Analysis will take place concurrently throughout the project alongside data gathering. Given the early stage of parent mentoring development in each site and the exploratory nature of this research, primarily qualitative analysis will be used, supplemented with quantitative methods.

The qualitative data (interviews, focus groups, ethnographic observations, feasibility survey) will be subjected to a thematic analysis. While the study will use a predominantly inductive approach, a deductive approach will be used initially to identify emergent codes based on current conceptualisations of parent mentoring. NVivo 11 software will be used for data coding and analysis and to identify codes, categories, and sub-categories in the data using constant comparison.

The quantitative data analysis methods will be finalised following further discussions with sites about the availability and access of relevant case level data. Given the parent mentor services'

small scale resulting in a small sample size, it is likely that opportunities for statistical analysis will be limited. Descriptive analysis will be used and, where possible, bivariate statistical methods will be used to produce early and tentative findings in respect to differences in case, child, and family outcomes between parents receiving parent mentor services (successful completion of mentor service) and parents not receiving the service (parents not referred to mentor service). The case plan outcomes include: parent behavioural change (substance misuse, negative parenting behaviour), FDAC case plan completion, family functioning, and child health/wellbeing, and child safety, placement stability, reunification. Descriptive analysis will be conducted on all remaining quantitative data collected noted previously (case files, researcher-developed survey, and feasibility survey) to supplement qualitative findings.

Ethics

Ethics approval has been obtained from the University of Sussex Cross-School Research Ethics Committee in June 2020. This has ensured that any ethical issues were addressed prior to project commencement. Site-specific research governance approval will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

Recruitment and Informed Consent

Initial overtures to parents and parent mentors will be undertaken via the FDAC practitioners working with them. FDAC practitioners will be contacted via the designated FDAC research site lead. Judges will be recruited via the Centre for Justice Innovation and FDAC research sites. All prospective participants will receive an information sheet about the research prior to agreeing to be recruited. A consent form will be provided in advance of recruitment and once recruited a signed version from all participants will be filed.

Participation of vulnerable individuals receiving professional and statutory interventions in longitudinal research, such as this project entails, can constrain the extent to which individuals experience consent as being freely given. Every effort will be taken in written documentation and face-to-face contracting conversations to underline the voluntary nature of participants' involvement and that refusal to participate or withdrawal from the project will not adversely affect their engagement with FDAC. Given the longitudinal research design, informed consent will be revisited at each point of contact in the research and will be re-negotiated with participants.

Participant Wellbeing

The parent mentoring process, by definition, involves discussion of sensitive topics with parents as it concerns the wellbeing of children and ability of parents to provide adequate care for them. Parents will be informed, via the information sheet, of the purpose of the interviews, observations and standardised measures. It will be made clear to parents participating in the evaluation that they can voluntarily withdraw at any point and there will be no repercussions for receipt of the FDAC service. Voluntary withdrawal also applies to all other participants in the project.

Clearly stated procedures will be activated if parents become distressed in the course of the research and the FDAC practitioners involved with the family will be alerted. Should the research cause distress to a parent mentor, with their consent, the relevant FDAC practitioners supporting the mentor will be alerted. It is not anticipated that other stakeholders will be adversely affected by the research.

Professional Safeguarding

All research staff involved in the project hold enhanced DBS clearance. If a participant discloses concerns regarding the conduct of a professional the FDAC site's whistleblowing reporting protocols will be followed.

Data Management and Confidentiality

Each individual respondent and FDAC site will be given a unique identifier number to safeguard their identity and to allow respondents to engage in frank and honest conversations about their experiences. Participants will be given interview transcripts where there is a risk of identifiability, to check through until they are satisfied.

All hard copy data will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet on the University premises, with access restricted to the research team. All digital data will be stored on a password protected University computer, connected to the University server and to the secure encrypted and password protected external hard drive. The list of numerical identifiers will be stored in separate hard copy and digital files.

Researcher Safety

Any in-person fieldwork will be conducted during the day and at the FDAC site or court. Where parent interviews are held in person, these will be conducted at a venue of the parents' choice i.e. home or FDAC site. Where parent mentor interviews and FDAC practitioners' interviews are held in person, these will be conducted at the FDAC site. Judges' interviews will be by phone unless, and where possible, a face-to-face interview is requested in which case the venue will be at the judges' discretion. Where ethnographic observations can be conducted in-person, these will take place wherever the mentoring happens, primarily in the court setting but possibly in parent's home/public spaces. Where any in-person fieldwork is conducted alone in private/public spaces, the researcher will notify the project PI of their whereabouts and the timings of the interaction and will report back to the PI when the contact is concluded. If the PI is lone-working the reverse procedures will operate.

Data Handling

All of the data practices will adhere to the University of Sussex code of practice for research⁸. All data will be captured and stored in formats recommended by the UK Data Service: Microsoft Word for text data; MP3 recording for audio data. Data will be recorded on standardised, bespoke Microsoft Word templates and Excel Spreadsheets. Interview data will be transcribed as Microsoft Word documents by a reputable transcription service compliant with data protection legislation. Confidentiality agreements will be in place, all data will be stored and transferred with services offering 256-bit encryption and any individuals with access to the data will have undergone DBS checks. Fieldnotes will either be handwritten and subsequently digitised as scanned PDFs or produced in Microsoft Word

At any one point in time, data will be securely held in three places: the University's network drive, the University's BOX.com, a GDPR-compliant secure file-sharing platform that will enable the research team members to store and share data⁹ and a 3TB secure encrypted and password protected external hard drive. The external hard drive and any hard copies of data will be stored in a lockable filing cabinet located with access for research team members only. Password protected/encrypted USB sticks and laptops will be used for data collection and short term data retention in the field. At the earliest opportunity, all data gathered in the field and from other digital sources will be transferred to a password protected University computer, connected to the University's server and to the external hard drive.

⁸ For more information, see the University's Research Data Management Policy at <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=rdm-policy-oct-2014.pdf&site=269> and Data Protection Policy at <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=data-protection-policy.pdf&site=76>

⁹ Same as above

Personnel

Professor Gillian Ruch (Social Work) researches in the field of relationship-based and reflective practice in child care social work. She specialises in qualitative psychosocial methods and has recently overseen one of the largest research studies of contemporary childcare practice conducted across the four UK nations (talkingandlisteningchildren.co.uk). Gillian is currently PI on a Department of Work and Pensions funded realist evaluation of a practice intervention programme for *Reducing Parental Conflict* and on a Department of Education funded review of the impact of the Innovation Programme Partners in Practice initiative <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/profiles/165646>.

Dr Jeri Damman (Lecturer, Social Work) is trained in quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods research. Her doctoral thesis was on birth parent mentoring programs in US Children's Services agencies and explored how parent mentors represent the parent voice at a system level to inform service improvement. She has substantial experience of research engagement with vulnerable populations, similar to FDAC families. Jeri is currently working with Gillian on the DWP evaluation of the *Parents as Partners Programme for Reducing Parental Conflict* <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/profiles/444222>.

Advisory group comprising academics with expertise on working with families with alcohol and substance misuse difficulties, local authority social work representatives, professionals with parent mentoring expertise and an FDAC experienced parent from another FDAC site will offer advice and guidance for the duration of the project.

Risks

This section outlines the anticipated risks that may arise and steps that will be taken to mitigate against these.

Risk	Issue	Mitigating actions
Mentoring service disparities	Differences in adoption and implementation of mentoring provision	Early engagement with sites and development of close working relationship to capture a nuanced perspective of potential disparities. Modification of project design timelines to accommodate requirements of site-specific implementation.
Sample recruitment: parents	A limited number of families choosing to access the service.	Ongoing recruitment over duration of project, up to last quarter (March 2021). Voluntary participation emphasised, with no repercussions for receipt of FDAC service. The research project will be promoted across the two FDAC sites to encourage full participation. Small remuneration for mentor and family participation in acknowledgment of time provided (gift voucher on commencement of each interview)

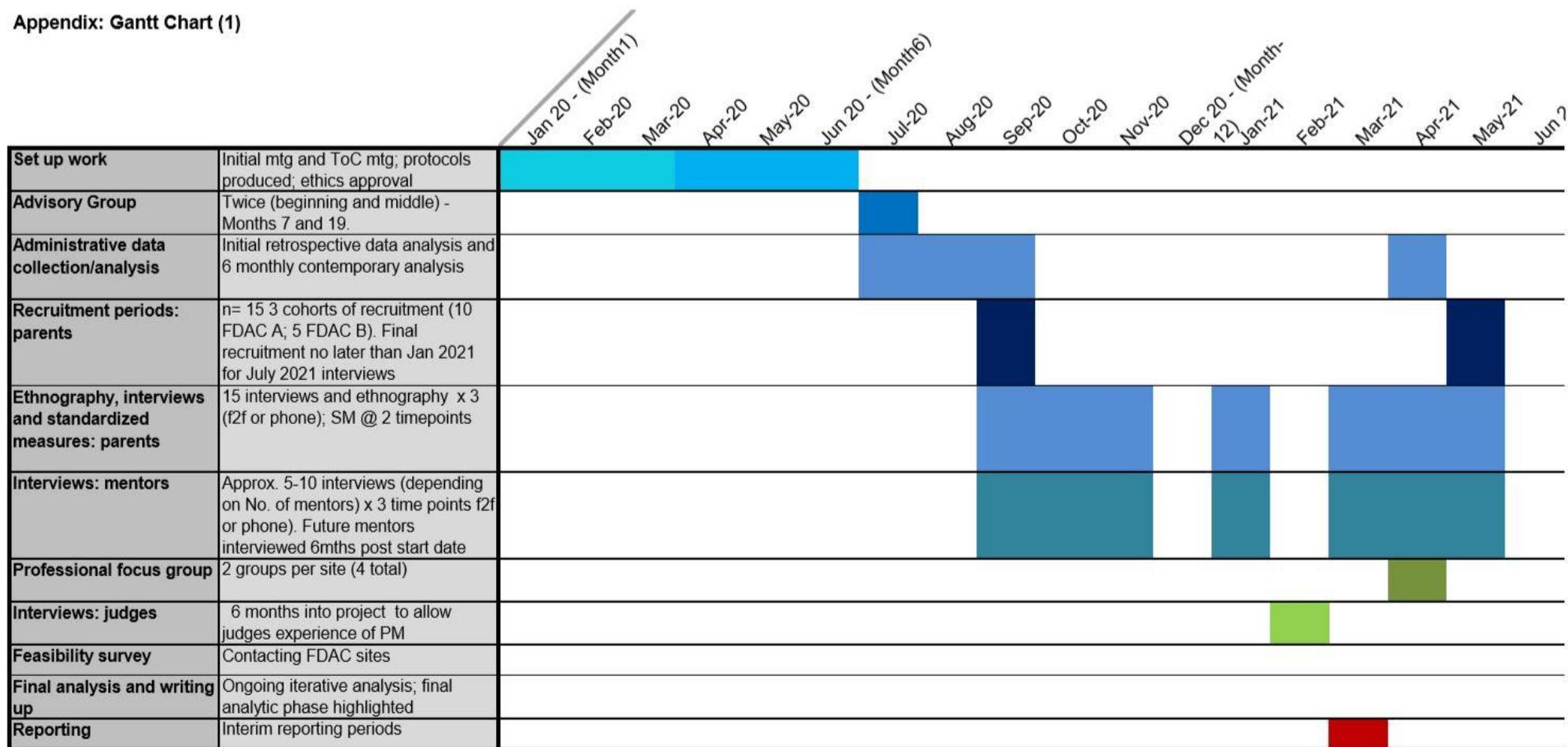
Sample recruitment: mentors	An overreliance on a small number of current mentors	Current mentors' perspectives complemented with other sources of data, e.g. historical overview and analysis of administrative data, to shed light on the mentoring process.
Sample retention	The fragility and instability of the FDAC families circumstances making longitudinal continuity challenging	Interviewer consistency and continuity to support research relationship. Experienced and skilled interviewer with professional social work experience. Varied interview methods available (e.g. in-person, telephone subject to health and safety considerations). Flexibility in final sample size to accommodate attrition levels.
Professional engagement	Busy practitioners may be hard to recruit and/or may feel obliged to participate, undermining the principle of freely given consent.	Flexible interview timings, venues and formats. Clarity re: voluntary participation/no repercussions

Timeline

See Gantt chart in Appendix below

Appendix 1: Gantt Chart

Appendix: Gantt Chart (1)



Appendix: Gantt Chart (2)

