Barnardo's Care Journey Strategic Partnerships evaluation

Scoping report

Prepared for Barnardo's By
Dr Sadie King
Dr Philip Corran
Matt Gieve
Rachel Hastings-Caplan

Tavistock Institute of Human Relations
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Background and Report Purpose

Background

In September 2019, The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations were commissioned to undertake an evaluation of one of Barnardo's Core Priority Programmes (CPP) 'Care Journeys' focussing on outcomes for care experienced young people. This in an area where there are high levels of need, persistent inequalities compared to the wider population of young people, and gaps in knowledge and service provision.

The strategic partnerships have been established in Plymouth and Brent and are at an early stage. The aspiration is that they will continue until April 2025. They aim to work with services to co-create transformational changes to care journeys using a 'service design approach' to improve outcomes for young people who have been looked after e.g. (employment, education, training, volunteering, and other 'positive destinations' meaningful to them) by the age of 19-21.

The purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to describe the learning from the first 6 months of the evaluation scoping phase and to set out a plan for taking the research forward by:

- Presenting the story of the partnerships' set up and progress
- Identifying early insights and making suggestions
- Discussing the data available and outlining gaps and barriers to accessing data required
- Proposing data collection tools and measures for the baseline of the outcome evaluation (a draft 'Evaluative Rubric')

Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The evaluation has been shaped around 3 Key principles:

- Outcome, Process and Developmental evaluation: (If it worked, and how it worked, how it can improve, respectively).

- Action learning: We will facilitate Action Learning Sets and produce working notes to ensure timely feedback. We hold our role as critical friend to the programme, surfacing implicit knowledge and emergent learning and supporting the recognition of blind spots.

- Evaluation framework: We will produce a draft 'Evaluative Rubric' of the outcomes identified in the scoping phase. We will work with you to refine this as the projects expand. This will be the living document of the story of the programme outcomes.

The core research methods employed are:

- Quasi-experimental with longitudinal (cohorts) and existing comparator data (e.g. statistical neighbours and/or historical data)

- Retrospective case studies of impact (interviews with care experienced young people affected by the partnerships)

- Longitudinal qualitative stakeholder interviews

- Observations of site and programme activities.

- Cost Benefit Analysis.

The data used in this scoping report was derived from a thematic content analysis of semi-structured interviews, site visit field notes, documents, and meeting observations and participation. Because this is part of the scoping phase, we report some findings that are more emergent than based on saturation. We have avoided naming sources as much as possible for confidentiality in a small sample.

The specific details of the data used to generate this report are listed in more detail in Appendix A. However, the overall

- 21 stakeholder interviews

- 5 meeting observations

- Analysis of 11 documents

The Local Contexts

Plymouth is a port city in Devon, South West England, with a population of 263,070. It has an employment rate of 76.8% and economic activity rate of 79.6%, both of which are slightly higher than the national average (75.1 and 78.5 respectively). However, there are 'pockets of deprivation' within the local area, due to a number of factors including the availability of lower wage jobs.

All the stakeholders in both the Council and Barnardo's agreed that the lack of appropriate and safe housing is a key issue in Plymouth (both for care leavers and other vulnerable groups). The Council has had to work with private providers to address this issue and in some cases young people have had to be placed far away from where they grew up. The impact of this is that young people are disconnected from their friends, family and school and their social worker may only be able to provide the minimum level of support due to the time needed to travel. It may also mean that these young people may find it hard to access support such as mentoring, coaching, family support or mental health services.

The care leavers service in Plymouth was acknowledged by both Barnardo's and Plymouth CC as an area for concentrated focus on improvement. The heavy staff caseloads were identified as a key issue both by stakeholders and in Plymouth's most recent Ofsted report[1]. This affected both their ability to provide support to their young people and ensure that pathway plans were up to date and being used to progress actions in their young peoples' lives.

Brent is an outer London Borough located in the North West of the city. With a population of roughly 330,000 residents it is a relatively young, diverse and densely populated local authority with areas of acute deprivation. With almost two thirds of its residents from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, 45% of its residents born outside of the UK, over 149 languages spoken, and around 55,000 EU citizens living there, Brent is one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse areas in the UK. Brent was recently successfully in its bid to become the London borough of culture 2020.

Brent faces particularly acute barriers to housing, especially its affordability, and has a higher rate of household overcrowding and homelessness than England as a whole. Conversely, it is comparatively less deprived in terms of education, skills, and training[2]. The unemployment rates among young people in Brent are below London averages, as is the amount of 16-18-year-olds currently not in education, employment, or training (NEET)[3]. Over recent years Brent has seen a swift increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. As early as 2015 14.7% of Brent looked after children were UASC, in contrast to the UK wide rate of 4%[4]. Recent discussions with Local Authority Staff have suggested that as of March 2020 the proportion of Brent looked after children who are UASC may be as high as 19%.

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[1] 19% of local authorities in South West England were judged good or outstanding by OFSTED, as of 31st March 2019, compared with 73% of local authorities in London. Brent scored outstanding in its most recent OFSTED inspection, whereas Plymouth was awarded a rating of requires improvement to be good following its inspection in October 2018.

[2] Brent JSNA, (2015) https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16412103/jsna-2015-brent-overview-report.pdf

[3] Brent Inclusive growth strategy 2019-2040, research base https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16415098/igs-research-base-2019-2040-new-regeneration.pdf)

[4] Brent JSNA, (2015) https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16412103/jsna-2015-brent-overview-report.pdf

Key Approaches in the Care Journeys (CPP)

There are two key approaches underpinning the programme that are important to hold in mind as the partnerships and evaluation develop. These are how systems change is understood and how partnership working is approached. This section discusses the implications of both.

Understanding of systems change

Barnardo's Care Journeys CPP is based on a combination of three tenets. Firstly, a Service Design model with 3 iterative processes or 'phases' that are non-linear: Discovery, Design (alpha and beta phases) and Delivery. Secondly, the CPP is based on aspirations of systems change (an objective that ultimately problems in the local care systems will be understood and resolved), and finally, 'Here and Now Activities' which are conceptualised as immediate, coproduced experiments intended to resolve immediate issues. This is a creative yet complex methodology that may become unwieldy and difficult to communicate the rationale for.

We feel there are different approaches to systems change in the programme landscape that could be more clearly articulated and communicated to partners and within Barnardo's. For example, we note the service design model and the Barnardo's workshop on systems change in Plymouth expressed different approaches to how change happens. This ranged from whole system transformation requiring high level political buy-in, to complexity theory whereby change is understood as starting anywhere in system and working through experiment and iteration.

It is important that Barnardo's have a clear orientation to change in this project and understand the differences they are working

with in the children's services. It would be valuable for influencing and sustainability to be able to show how Barnardo's approach has synergy with the local models. For example, Brent Children's Services have a whole systems approach to change embodied in their Brent Practice Framework[5]. *'The BPF captures the values, beliefs and principles that shape our work with children, families and each other in Brent'*. Plymouth is also currently orientated towards a whole systems approach and is concerned by the historic development of organically forming service areas, which did not benefit from the strategic oversight a whole systems approach can bring. The Children and Young People Commissioning Strategy identifies this responsive growth as a barrier to improvement in services, saying; 'At its worst, this can create a silo approach to delivering services each with their own access criteria or thresholds, outcomes and targets'[6]. These values, if widely held, may clash with Barnardo's approach if not discussed and worked through. These values, if widely held, may clash with Barnardo's approach if not discussed and worked through. The concern otherwise is that the projects become 'add ons' and, particularly in this time of global upheaval (when resources and resilience is low), become 'closed systems' carrying out the work without integrating into local systems. It is important they have an understanding of the bigger picture (the primary task) and hold this in mind as they are working.

[5] https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16412771/7965-brent-practice-framework.pdf

[6] https://www.plymouthonlinedirectory.com/media/2097/IntegratedCommissioningChildrenYoungPeopleStrategy/pdf
IntegratedCommissioningChildrenYoungPeopleStrategy.pdf?m=637164912804400000

Although it is clear Barnardo's are working in both sites to develop relationships, we note a lack of appreciation of systems as emotional and 'sentient', which we believe might benefit the programme. By this we mean systems and services are also driven by unconscious human dynamics that are not predictable. This is particularly important in a context where vicarious trauma in the workforce and defences against the anxiety raised by the difficult emotional responses to childhood neglect are likely to exist. The programme would benefit from trauma awareness.

Figure 1 Approaches to change present in the programme landscape

APPROACHES TO CHANGE	WHAT IT IS	AREA OF PRESENCE IN PROGRAMME
Design Thinking	'A set of principles collectively known as design thinking—empathy with users, a discipline of prototyping, and tolerance for failure' (Kollo, 2015[7]) Overlaps with complexity and system psychodynamics E.g. Double Diamond Design Council[8]	Barnardos Design Team. Underpinning philosophy of the programme.
Mechanical Paradigm A to B	In this way of viewing the world the assumption is that, if you understand the parts you will understand the whole. Hence mechanical metaphors[8]: • step up a gear • run like clockwork • run like a well oiled machine • the machinery of government • policy instruments	Common and both implicit and explicit in many public sector services and present in all 3 organisations.
Complexity (New Science Paradigm)	e.g. Margaret Wheatley management consultant[9] Key ideas: Synergy - the whole is greater than the sum of the parts and is emergent Perturbance and energy "pokes" - A small action can release temporary change; repeated experiments create a tipping point No right or wrong – just hunches and intuition in relation to values and shared purpose Fractals - each part of the system has the same character as the whole therefore change can start anywhere without 'whole system approach'	Implicit in service design approach but not articulated. Implicit in narratives of delivery staff.
Whole systems change	Common in health systems /transformations e.g.[10]. Key idea is that all levels of organisation are engaged in new desired outcome.	Barnardo's Senior Management. Brent Practice Framework. Plymouth Children and Young People Commissioning Strategy.
Relational models: Systems Psychodynamic Bridges Transition (letting go, neutral, new era) Kubler Ross 5 stages of change.	These models focus on the human factors of change and recognise that change is difficult and not predictable. Group dynamics can prevent change and high levels of emotional intelligence are required in leaders to hold a safe space for change.	Implicit in service design approach but not articulated Implicit in delivery team Explicit in Brent Practice Framework.
Trauma informed	Particularly adapted to service design in CLA systems. So being trauma-informed means being sensitive to the reality of traumatic experience—children, their parents, staff, administrators, state officials, police, courts, schools, and everyone else. It means being sensitive to the ways in which trauma has affected individuals, families, and communities, and it means becoming sensitive to the ways in which trauma impacts organizations and entire systems.	In all 3 partners as an approach to supporting young people who are looked after. Not as understanding of impact on systems and organisations.

We suggest this is discussed in the first ALS and communicated in the programme to ensure learning is captured and the programme is resilient to staff changes and can be embedded in the systems.

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[7] Kolko, J (2015) Design Thinking comes of Age

[8] Design Council (no date) Design methods for developing services. Available at: https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/Design%20methods%20for%20developing%20services.pdf

[9] https://www.margaretwheatley.com/articles/largescalechange.html

[10] https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/files/180306618/Bagnall_et_al._2018_Systems_approaches_to_obesity_and_other_complex_PH_issues.pdf

Approaches to partnership working

This section outlines the process of the partnerships, suggesting an evidence-based model for conceptualising the elements of successful partnerships, and discussing how we will evaluate this.

In Plymouth, stakeholders felt that the benefits of a partnership were that both partners approached the work as equals, as opposed to a traditional commissioning relationship wherein one party 'holds the power'. The partnership was also seen as an opportunity for all partners to take ownership over the work, breaking down the barriers between the organisations and seeing themselves part of the same 'system'. It was hoped that this approach would ensure that all parties think about what can be done for care experienced young people in a broader way, rather than just from within their narrow role and remit. It was also hoped that the partnership may encourage a greater number of partners to become involved in corporate parenting. The terms of the partnership have been confirmed in a Collaboration Agreement between Barnardo's and Plymouth City Council. The Agreement sets out terms relating to how the parties will work together to help young people with care experience to achieve positive destinations.

For Barnardo's staff, the partnership offers an opportunity to ensure that care experienced young people's voices are being heard at a strategic level and to influence what services are being offered to young people. From Plymouth CC's perspective, it is hoped that Barnardo's' resourcing would help reach young people with care experience in several ways. They felt that as there are staff members dedicated to driving forward activities, the Programme was likely to stay on track; as there are so many competing priorities within the Council, it was seen as useful to have someone 'external' to encourage Council staff to stop and reflect on what is being done. Furthermore, they hope that as Barnardo's had time and resource to focus on reaching young people, they would be able to reach young people who were not already engaging in the Council's participation group. Finally, they felt that as Barnardo's has a strong name and legacy, it would be easier to gain buy in from Council staff who were not directly involved in the partnership.

In the scoping interviews stakeholders were not clear about why Plymouth had been chosen for this partnership, though some thought that it was likely due to Barnardo's' strong existing relationship with the Council, as they already provided commissioned services (such as the Advocacy and Independent Visitor Service). They felt that these existing relationships gave them opportunities for sustained change as Barnardo's is already embedded in the community. It was also noted that Plymouth's willingness and motivation to consider a systems change approach may have been a factor. This was felt to be linked to Plymouth CC's latest Ofsted rating report which indicated that Children's Services 'requires improvement'.

There is evidence of buy in from some key strategic figures within Children's Services, who have been championing the partnership within the Local Authority, and a partnership board has been established in keeping with the Collaboration Agreement. Moreoever, the Plymouth partnership was reported to have committed buy-in from the Chief Executive and lead member, both of whom were described as passionate advocates for the partnership and its ambitions.

In Plymouth, impressions on how the partnership was progressing was largely positive from both partner organisations. Stakeholders felt that Plymouth CC had been very open to Barnardo's' ideas and as a result Barnardo's were able to get a large number of activities in motion in a short space of time. The fact that Barnardo's had some key 'champions' in Children's Services was said to have been particularly helpful in raising awareness and buy-in within the Council. Ways in which these champions have been involved includes helping to promote Care Journeys at a strategic level (to the Corporate Parenting Group and Partnership boards); facilitating links with other organisations who may get involved in Care Journeys and by encouraging staff to participate in activities such as the participate in activities such as the workshop

delivered by Dartington Service Design Labs. These activities are in line with the principles of the Collaboration Agreement which states that parties act to support the achievement of the key aims of the partnership and ensure that appropriate resources are deployed.

The Barnardo's team has a Children's Services Manager role who serves as the Barnardo's representative for Care Journeys at strategic meetings such as at the Corporate Parenting Board. The work that has been done here has included challenging the Local Authority to create, develop, and share their statutorily mandated Care Leavers' Offer, and supporting the work on the 'Proud to be a Corporate Parent' campaign involving council staff in the Corporate Parent Pledge.

Up until late 2019 the partnership was still relatively unknown outside of Children's Services, e.g.:

"[Barnardo's] want to communicate that the activities are part of a movement that others can get involved with, it's not just happening within one part of the council."

To address this, a lot of work has taken place around developing the Care Journeys 'brand' and communicating this to a wider audience. Barnardo's has worked in conjunction with Fotonow, a media enterprise, and care experienced young people to develop a logo and a short film showing the effect of societal views of young people in care. Both of these were premiered at a Care Journeys launch event in February 2020, which was attended by Barnardo's and Council staff, care experienced young people, and other partners in the local area. The launch event helped generate interest around Care Journeys, especially as they had the endorsement of the leader of the Council.

There was some concern expressed in the interviews that (outside of some key figures in the Council), Plymouth CC was not providing enough critical engagement with Barnardo's activities. However, it was also recognised that Barnardo's were addressing a local gap in the care pathway and there was a willingness to step back and try something new.

"I think that Plymouth have been accepting of everything so far because they're aware that there's a real need."

Another view from Barnardo's was that the Care Journeys work may be seen as a traditionally commissioned service *"which is coming in and doing the work for them"* and might not see that their role is to own, and coproduce these activities to ensure they meet local need and are sustainable.

Key barriers for the progress of the partnership were identified as the Brexit-related political purdah of late 2019, change of Barnardo's leadership of the programme, a gap in strategic influence (partially related to the change in leadership), and the time lags in negotiating sign off activities through the council structures.

Brent was approached by Barnardo's to partner on this programme on the basis of existing relationships between the two organisations. Barnardo's provides a range of commissioned services in the borough. This was thought to provide the basis for developing a strong partnership due to the existing familiarity between the two organisations and key professionals. From Brent's perspective, they were interested in bringing more resources to the borough, both financially and in terms of expertise and dedication, to help improve outcomes for their care leavers. The length of the commitment was also seen as attractive to them:

"For me it is about something to do with resources – Barnardo's are bringing resources in. It is about keeping the focus on care leavers for the next 6 or 7 years. This collaboration will help with that". (Senior Council Stakeholder)

In Brent, establishing the partnership and beginning the service design process has been slower than anticipated, with almost a year of discussions between the two organisations taking place through a steering group prior to work beginning on the ground. The change in Barnardo's leadership was compounded by delays in engagement in the project at senior levels within the LA. As a result, the signing and ratification of the collaborative

agreement between the two organisations was only recently finalised.

While Barnardo's wait for senior agreement, they have sought to progress the partnership from the 'ground-up', whereby they have reached a memorandum of understanding and terms of reference at the service level and have agreed the governance structure detailing roles and responsibilities at each tier of the partnership.

The two Barnardo's project workers have also sought to use their co-location within the council building to identify key collaborators and build relationships with them. While they described some challenges in doing so, at first relating to the logistics of having access to LA systems and resources, over time they have begun to involve managers and workers from the key LA teams. Links have been built through the regular operational meetings, inclusion of some staff in the discovery phase research, and informal approaches to members of LA staff.

"We have been making good connections and good links, doing the research we have spoken to other teams, but it is still hard. We have to keep spreading the word about what we're doing"
(Barnardo's Project Worker)

Key stakeholders in the partnership have been the Children's Social Care leadership (along with the managers and workers in the: leaving care team: LAC team, Placement team, the Accelerated Support Team (AST), Brent Virtual school for LAC, Youth Offending Service (YOS), Early Help services, and the LAC health team. Depending on the priorities for delivery, established through the discovery phase, other external partners may include the local CCG, who already have strong relationships with the local authority, and prisons, as well as housing and the Localities service who, as internal parts of the Local Authority, already have a strong commitment to Brent's Corporate Parenting Principles.

Whilst the partnerships are in different stages of maturity, each is working both relationally and politically. Both appear to be making progress by working where they are able to in the local authorities, while being aware of where there are

systemic barriers and trying to address them. Whilst we note the absence of a clearly articulated view of partnership working in the Programme, the programme delivery team have an approach to partnership working that suggests embodied knowledge of what success would look like.

We would like to support this understanding by bringing it into discourse with an evidence-based model (see below) and track the partnerships' progress with agreed indicators in the baseline report (Sept 2020). This can then be used to influence the channels of communication and methods of influence between the local authorities and the Programme.

Research on partnerships identifies that exchange, the combination or sharing of resources, and relational characteristics are factors in partnerships for maximising opportunities (e.g. Andersson, Holm and Johanson, 2005) and achieving success (e.g. Baker, El Ansari and Crone, 2017). Both intra-and inter-organisational behaviour is 'closely embedded in networks of inter-personal relations' (Granovetter, 1985). Likewise, successful change programmes (as noted in the section on approaches to change), require '...an appreciation of the human as well as economic and technical factors that intermingle to produce successful outcomes' (Krantz, 2001). Figure 2 provides a graphic representation of these structural and relational influences of partnerships.

We will propose both structural and relational indicators for successful partnership working as outcomes to be measured in the evaluative rubric to evaluate going forward

Figure 2 Potential (hypothetical) Structural and Relational factors important in partnerships (not specific to Barnardo's dynamics)
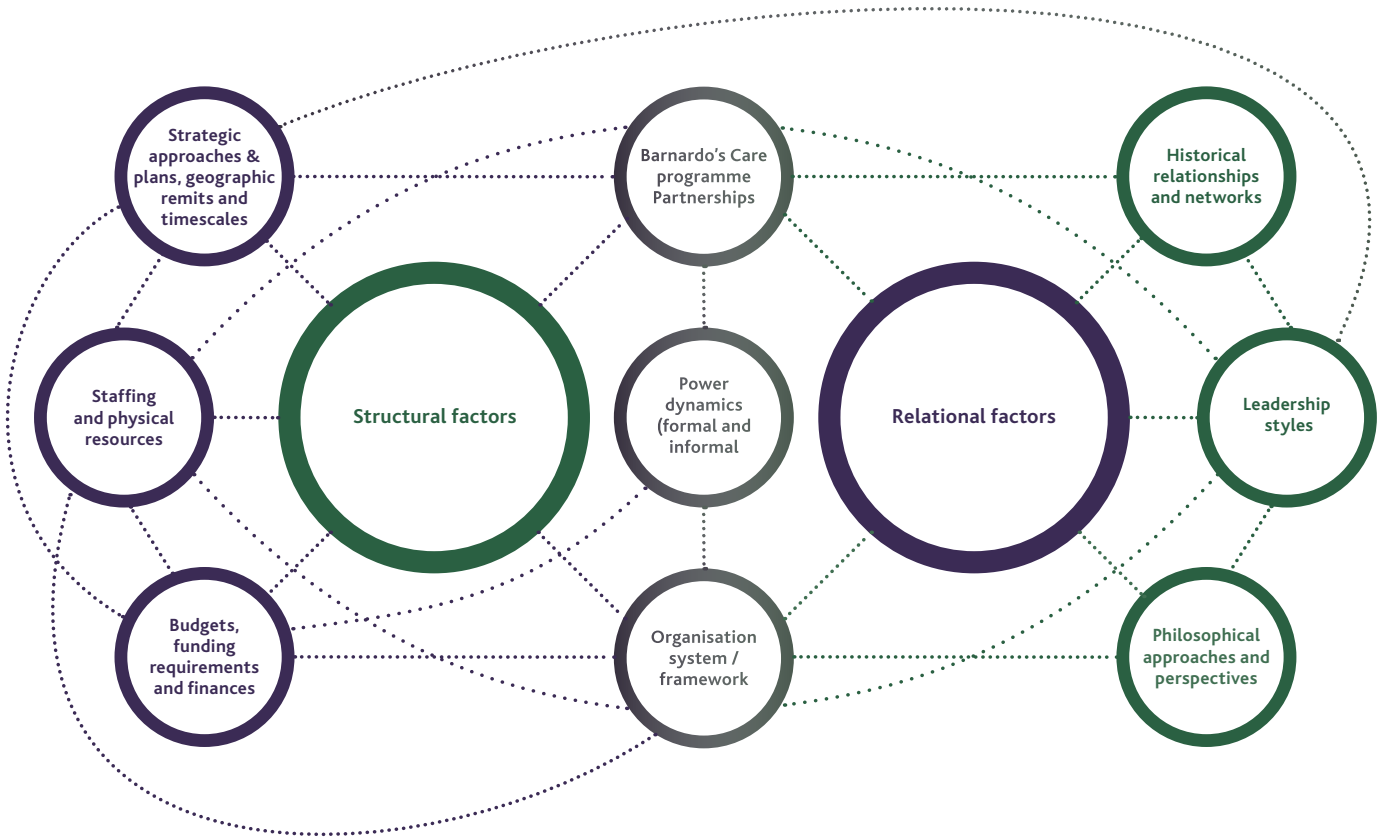
Progress of project activities

This section sets out what the projects have delivered through the early 'Discovery' and 'Here and Now' phases and how in recent weeks they have responded to the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Plymouth

The inception phase activities

The purpose of the inception phase was to create a shared understanding of the programme and its aims; start building key relationships; map the local landscape of services and create a shared, high-level understanding of the current situation for care leavers.

This phase began with a phase of research to gather evidence on a local and national level. This workshops with frontline and managerial staff from Plymouth CC and interviews with care experienced young people with whom Barnardo's had existing relationships in order to identify what the priorities were for local stakeholders. The Barnardo's team also analysed national datasets to understand the wider picture around outcomes for care experienced young people. The evidence from the inception phase informed the team that the transition from being a young person in care to being a care leaver was a particularly challenging time for young people with care experience as young people are entitled to different support and they must cope with their change in status. It was collectively decided that the next phase of research would look at how young people respond to and cope with this change and where they can go to find out information about it.

The discovery phase activities

Building on the work done in the inception phase, in the discovery phase stakeholders had been developing a range of aspirations for longer term more strategic systems change including: reducing the stigma of being in care and being a care leaver; improving the influence of the voice of care experienced young people; ensuring care leavers are aware of support earlier; broadening the guidelines on staying put so that some young people can remain in care for longer even without being in education, employment or training and improving transitions between Children's and Adult's Services (being a care leaver). In total, 29 young people with care experience were consulted during this service design work, however we currently do not have detailed data on how representative this sample is.

Barnardo's staff revisited the young people they had spoken to in the inception phase to confirm that the young people agreed that 'transitions' was the most important area to focus on and establish the key priorities to be addressed in the discovery phase. This involved talking through the young peoples' experiences of transitioning from being in care to being a care leaver to understand what areas needed to be addressed during this transition period. A shortlist of the following issues was identified:

- Isolation and loneliness
- Removing uncertainty for 16-18-year olds
- Growing networks
- Refocusing the role of the PA
- Learning independence skills
- Avoiding debt
- Putting in place safety nets
- Reimagining home

Of these, 'isolation and loneliness' was named as the top priority to address and this became the focus of a Discovery activity. 'Alpha Labs' was developed to provide a space for young people to test ideas on loneliness and isolation and those that did well were developed further in the Beta stage. Barnardo's staff facilitated weekly sessions in which the young people were encouraged to develop services to address isolation and loneliness by breaking down what the key issues are, what the impacts are and what solutions might help. At the point of interviewing in early March there were five care experienced young people involved in developing and testing ideas for Alpha Labs. Three ideas for support were developed, these were called:

• **Social Spatula:** trying different cuisines every week, building social and cooking skills, they can take a meal home.

• **Wild Plym:** starting at local coffee shops, going for a walk every other week, expanding their networks

• **Day by Day:** getting adult volunteers (both with and without care experience) to have one to one time with the young people. This is good for those with social anxiety who might not be comfortable in a group setting.

Before the pandemic, the plan had been to continue the testing phase until the end of April and then reflect on what had been learned. These activities are continuing in a virtual capacity (covered in more detail later).

There has been a lot of learning around the design process so far; several stakeholders both from Barnardo's and Plymouth CC said that they were surprised that housing was not the top priority due to the shortage of accommodation in Plymouth. This demonstrates the importance of involving young people with care experience in the early stages of the design process to ensure that the key issues are being addressed.

There was also learning about how to facilitate coproduction. The design team learned that the young people needed space to engage in their own way, and just because they may have looked as

though they were not engaging with the sessions (e.g. they may have been looking at their phones), this was not necessarily the case. There was learning around the amount of maintenance that is needed to keep these sessions going in terms of encouragement and motivation, as the young people were not necessarily used to working in this way, and at times could find the scale of the project overwhelming. However, the approach appears to have been successful as the young people have remained engaged over the course of the testing and have formed a community that has made the transition from face to face to online. More detailed data collection is required to elaborate on the numbers of care experienced young people engaged in coproduction and the extent of their involvement.

At this stage it is not clear what the specific plan for the other priority areas is, although many of the activities that are currently being done intersect with these areas. For example, Life Labs addresses learning independence skills, avoiding debt and reimagining home through providing a VR scenario in which the young person has moved into a new home and has to address new responsibilities such as paying bills and buying items for the flat.

The Here-and-now activities

The Here and Now aspect of the Programme has grown quickly and now encompasses a wide range of activities, both in conjunction with partner organisations and in-house. As of early February – early March 2020, all activities were in their pilot stage.

• **Find Your Future:** A service for 19-21-year olds to help them to access support and advice around topics included housing, employment and education. This service was referred to as the 'Front Door' to Care Journeys, as a young person may use the service to fulfil a specific purpose, but then learn about what other services are on offer that they may be interested in. From figures received in early 2020, 11 young people were

using this service with four additional requests for service.

- **AA: Learn to Drive Pilot:** An initiative delivered with the AA, offering a minimum of 30 hours of driving lessons to 19-21-year olds. The motivation for offering this service is to ensure that young people have access to transport to order to attend education, training and/or employment and for parenting duties. Ten young people were engaged in this at the time of research.

- **Department for Work & Pensions pilot:** An initiative offering 4-6 weeks of work experience at a Barnardo's charity shop. The initiative is open to care leavers aged 16+ and aims to help young people to grow their confidence, networks, and skills. One young person was involved in this, with a further one referral.

- **Wellbeing Wednesdays:** These are sessions offering activities such as Decider Skills (basic CBT), independent living and cooking skills for young people aged 14+. These were developed in conjunction with the Virtual Schools team at Plymouth CC with the aim of introducing young people to the Barnardo's team at an earlier age so that they're more aware of the support on offer from both the Council and Barnardo's by the time they are care leavers.

- **Life Labs:** This was an initiative delivered with LEAP, a sustainable design agency, which aimed to find creative ways to develop independent living skills. Following research, workshops and coproduction sessions with care experienced young people, Life Labs was developed. This is a VR platform in which young people can experience a simulation of what it would be like to move into a new flat; this scenario was chosen as it brought together a number of independent living skills such as managing finances and cooking meals. VR was felt to be an effective way of delivering these skills as it gives users a 'safe place to fail'. 11 young people took part in this activity.

- **Developing the Journey App:** The Journey App is being developed in-house by Barnardo's to be used by care leavers. The current work they are

doing aims to bridge the gap between pathway planner meetings so that young people have an easy way to communicate with their Personal Advisors in-between sessions. They have been rethinking the way in which pathway plans are recorded in the App so that they take the form of a letter to the young person. They anticipate that this will help build relationships between young people and their Personal Advisors as the plan will be more transparent and young people will be able to more clearly see what actions they can take before their next meeting.

The Here and Now element was felt to have been successful so far in terms of engaging young people with care experience. Some young people who have participated in activities have spread the word about the opportunities on offer and have allowed Barnardo's to reach some young people they may have struggled to otherwise. Stakeholders also felt that another key success of this aspect of the work was that it allowed project workers to work closely in an informal environment with a small caseload of young people with care experience. They found that this way of working meant that conversations with young people happened more organically, helping to build relationships but also capture information that could inform other aspects of the partnership work. For example, through the Find Your Future project, workers learned that external funding for education and training activities ends at 19 years old, which relates both to the service

design work around transitions and the systems change work.

Brent

The discovery phase activities

Brent are in the early discovery phase of the project and at this stage the priority from Barnardo's side was to build trust and confidence from both Brent and from the young people. This was understood to be a prerequisite for any further progress.

"We want trust from Brent and we want trust from the YP – but other than that we've not got indicators at this stage" (Project Worker) and *"A first step is to see how well the profile of the team is recognised in Brent without having to explain ourselves all the time"* (Barnardo's Senior Stakeholder)

There was a clear aspiration that care experienced young people were active participants in the development and delivery of the project:

"It's about having a young person led project. Them going out and talking about their experience, how they can reach positive destinations, maybe doing talks in the community [...] offering training to run their own groups. This is testing ground – we won't know until we've tested things" (Project workers)

"That we get that open and honest co-design with young people rather than just consulting on things, young people involved in the governance and management- rather than the usual suspects" (Barnardo's Senior Stakeholder).

From a local authority perspective, the hope for the project was to continue to build on the work already undertaken in Brent and to maintain care leavers as a priority locally.

"I hope that this project could be one of the ways to keep care leavers on the agenda – and a critical friend to challenge us". (Senior Council Stakeholder)

As part of the initial negotiations around the nature and direction of the partnership Barnardo's and Brent agreed on four main priorities for the project. These were predominantly based on preceding work that that Brent had undertaken to identify gaps in their service, which were then refined and framed in discussion between senior members of each organisations during their regular meetings in the months running up to the start of the project. However, it was noted that these are not 'set in stone' and could be subject to revision in the light learning emerging from the project. These are as follows:

• Late entrants to care

• Young people leaving custody

• Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)

• Loneliness and isolation

In agreement between Brent and Barnardo's – Late entrants to care was selected as the first of the four priorities to focus on as part of the service design approach.[11] The rationale for this selection was in part as this target group contains within it members of each of the other groups as young people in custody and UASC make up a substantial portion of late entrants to care.

Activities to date have entailed secondary analysis of LA datasets relating to the target group which helped the design team identify a number of factors that appear to contribute to late entries to care.

• Acute family problems

• Substance misuse issues

• Gang involvement

• Educational disadvantage (NEET/ exclusions)

In order to build a richer picture of the circumstances of this group the Barnardo's project team alongside the design team have undertaken many qualitative interviews with staff and care experienced young

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[11] The list will be reviewed after the first round of service design work in order to ascertain what the feasibility is for the other priority areas, taking into consideration where areas overlap with Plymouth e.g. social isolation and loneliness.

people. This has involved promoting to and recruiting staff to research through face-to-face introductions and posters and leaflets.

The aspiration is to engage people with care experience who have not traditionally engaged in council activities. This has partly been achieved through approaching Personal Advisor in order to contact their clients.

The discovery phase remains ongoing as the design team seek to find respondents from under-represented groups. Emerging areas of focus are: Independent life skills for late entrants to care and workplace focus on the relationships between different teams within Children's social care.

A brand and newsletters to council staff have been developed as a way of raising the profile of the project and managing relationships with local authority staff and showing sensitivity to the time pressures (instead of adding meetings).

Two early challenges for the Brent project have been young people's Engagement and access to data. The project team have described some possible challenges around managing the expectation of and their relationship with an existing group of care experienced young people in Brent and balancing this with their desire to engage new, less engaged care experienced young people. For example, the awarding of the two paid apprenticeship roles being funded by Barnardo's as part of the partnership agreement. We recognise

these challenges as very typical of working in the care system. These should all be explored in the first Action Learning Set.

The project response to Covid-19

The coronavirus pandemic and associated government measures has had a profound impact on the project.

• Co-location: As the majority of LA staff have started to work from home this has led to end to co-location of Brent and Barnardo's staff reducing opportunities for the project workers to advertise the project's presence and make informal links with key professionals.

• Delay to completion of discovery phase: planned interviews with young people in custody have had to be placed on hiatus as prisons are no longer permitting visitors. Extension of the Discovery phase has been agreed in order to leave time for further interviews with under-represented demographics, particularly UAS young women who entered care late.

• Here and now activities have also been seriously affected: plans for a range of leisure activities to take place over the spring and summer have had to be paused and replaced with virtual activities and practical support for care experienced young people adversely affected by the virus.

Quantitative data

Quantitative data is crucial for measuring the outcomes of the Strategic Partnerships in Brent and Plymouth, especially for conducting a longitudinal cohort study.

To measure the Strategic Partnerships' intended outcomes, the evaluation team must be able to access more detailed quantitative data about the young people involved in Barnardo's activities in Brent and Plymouth. The two avenues for achieving this are a/ negotiating access to the data held by Brent and Plymouth local authorities and b/ collecting primary data with the assistance of Barnardo's service designers and project staff. There are two obstacles which must be overcome to achieve an adequate level of data.

The first obstacle is that the nature of the partnership model and the service design process differ significantly from typical projects aimed at improving outcomes in children's social care, which generally have more prescriptive and fixed notions of how to achieve their intended aims. The design lab's focus on exploration, discovery, and rooting their approach in the issues which emerge through attentive engagement with care experienced young people means that the evaluation must adopt a different, more responsive and ongoing approach to identifying and accessing relevant quantitative data.

Rather than producing a fixed evaluative rubric which will guide the evaluation and its activities for the remainder of the project, the evaluation team must work closely with service design and project staff to ensure that evaluation tools and measures can be developed in tandem with the services and interventions implemented by the design labs. This approach is outlined in more detail below in the section titled *Coordination and synergy with design team data collection*.

The second major obstacle stems from local authority data practices and protection. Local authorities are understandably reluctant to share detailed data on children looked after and care leavers with third parties unless there is strong justification. Given the complexity of the systems in local authorities and children's social care, providing this justification can be time consuming; this issue is dealt with in the section below titled *Access to local authority level data.* Moreover, even if access to local authority data is achieved, there is no guarantee it will be of the requisite integrity (that is, consistency and completeness) or that it will provide indicators which correspond to specific strategic partnership activities. This final obstacle will be discussed in the *Access to local authority level data* section, under the heading Gaps in data.

In practice, evaluating the Care Journey Strategic Partnerships may require a mixture of statutory local authority data (from both Brent and Plymouth, and their statistical neighbours) and bespoke primary data, collected in coordination with the service design team and project staff in each local area. This will especially be the case for delivering the cohort study outlined in the proposal since statutory datasets may, data integrity withstanding, provide some useful historic data. The final part of this section of the report provides an overview of each local authority using publicly available statutory data.

Access to local authority level data

Previous experience has told us that accessing detailed data about children-looked-after or care leavers can be a challenge. This is especially the case for accessing the types of data that would be best suited to evaluating the outcomes of the strategic partnerships in Brent and Plymouth, which would be at the level of the individual child or young person. Discussions we have held with Barnardo's staff suggest that the situation in Brent and Plymouth is no different, and they have encountered difficulties in getting detailed data on care leavers and children looked after in the two areas.

We anticipate that publicly available statutory data may eventually provide some limited indication of the partnership's impact on care experienced young people's outcomes in Brent and Plymouth. However, due to the nature of the statutory data this is not guaranteed. Furthermore, it is dependent upon the development of the strategic partnerships; if the implemented activities remain as targeted as those currently implemented in Plymouth, it is unlikely their impact will be reflected in publicly available data. The Strategic Partnerships' focus on a broader set of positive outcomes means that neither statutory data nor, in all likelihood, additional data collected by the local authority, will provide coverage of many intended outcomes. Broader life skills, wellbeing, and loneliness/social isolation are good examples of this. Therefore, primary quantitative data collection will be required.

The profile of children looked after and care leavers presented in this report uses SSDA903 data, which local authorities have a statutory duty to collect and submit to the Department for Education. It therefore follows a strict format, is only released once a year at population level (so no individual CYP can be traced across different outcomes or variables), and focuses on things like the rates of children being brought into care, the types of accommodation they are housed in, and the 'harder'

outcomes they achieve (e.g. educational attainment, participation in education, employment or training, etc.). This profile provides an overview of what can be gleaned from publicly available datasets. However, from our experience many local authorities collect additional data which is not submitted to the Department for Education. This will almost certainly not include data on wellbeing (beyond SDQs), social isolation, or life skills. However, it may include more detailed information on children looked after and care leavers' housing situations, propensity to have missing episodes, educational achievement, or involvement in criminal offenses, for example. The data Plymouth provided to the design team is testament to this; although there was no information on the reasons care leavers were not in education, employment or training in the SSDA903 dataset, Plymouth were able to provide some further detail[12].

One additional form of data which will be useful is the Bright Spots survey. Bright Spots[13] asks looked after young people and care leavers about the quality of the care they are receiving and their emotional wellbeing on a yearly basis. This provides an additional level of insight into a variety of important factors, although limited information about the survey's findings in Brent is publicly available. Once the relationship between Barnardo's, the evaluation team, and the London Borough of Brent develops to the point where more specific discussions about data can be conducted, Bright Spots will feature in the discussions.

We have tried to establish a relationship with data officers in Brent and Plymouth for the purposes of identifying useful data and establishing sharing agreements. However, the nature of the strategic partnerships, and local authority data practices, mean that this has been a challenge (which Barnardo's service design and project staff have also had to negotiate). Our contact with the relevant Plymouth City Council staff member ended with them requiring us to provide a more detailed

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[12] This data will be available in case notes; however, it is unlikely that this will be accessible to the evaluation and it will be in more of a qualitative format

[13] http://democracy.brent.gov.uk/documents/s78312/2018%20Bright%20Spots%20Survey%20Summary.pdf

explanation of the data we required and draw up a data sharing agreement. This is possible to some degree; however, we cannot give a detailed picture of data we require since we are unsure what outcomes will be relevant to future Barnardo's activities and what data Plymouth holds. The Plymouth City Council staff member understandably also expressed reservations about providing detailed data to third parties, beyond broad aggregated statistics which do not permit any level of detailed analysis.

The situation in Brent was less clear, since the partnership was less developed, and further discussions are required to identify a staff member with the requisite knowledge of the data held by the local authority, and the authority to facilitate data sharing. The evaluation team have had preliminary discussions with Barnardo's staff and senior Brent council staff, but more work is required to build relationships with the local authority and identify relevant and available data sources. Support from senior Barnardo's staff will be essential in establishing trust and a process for data sharing with each local authority.

In previous evaluations, we have had trouble accessing SDQ scores, matching different data sources on the same cohort of young people, or having data shared with us in a timely manner (despite establishing data sharing agreements). These examples are not a reflection of the individual competencies of staff but the broader social care and local government systems which the strategic partnerships must grapple with. To mitigate these risks, it is crucial that senior Barnardo's, local authority, and TIHR staff build trust, and establish data sharing agreements and processes. These discussions must take place at the director or head of service level.

Gaps in data

There are two kinds of gap in the data which the evaluation must contend with. The first is the limitations on what data Brent and Plymouth collect (i.e. the lack of data on social isolation and loneliness or life skills). The second is the integrity (completeness) of the data they do collect. The patchiness of children's social care data is well known; one study found that only 30% of children looked after had an SDQ score available from the previous year[14]. Another example can be seen in the profile below; there is no publicly available data on the reasons care leavers in Plymouth and Brent were not in education, employment or training[15]. Relying on statutory SDQ scores can often limit the degree of statistical significance (generalisability) which can be achieved because of the small number of young people who have consistent yearly SDQ scores recorded (which reduces the sample size of any analysis).

Although the profile of statutory data presented below gives a broad overview of the types of young people engaged and brought into care by local authorities, some of the challenges they face, and provides a means of comparison between local authorities and England's different regions, it does not allow specific enough data on individual young people. Ideally, we would be able to match bespoke primary data collection conducted in coordination with service designers and project staff with statutory data (both contemporary data on care leavers and the data from their time in care), which can be analysed on a year-by-year basis to link changes in softer outcomes (e.g. wellbeing, isolation or loneliness) and harder outcomes (e.g. employment status).

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[14] https://adc.bmj.com/content/99/Suppl_1/A69.1

[15] Although, as mentioned previously, this data was made available to the service design lab. Presumably, Plymouth's data collection format does not match up with the categories required by DfE.

Coordination and synergy with design team data collection

To manage the disparity between the broader outcomes and understanding of positive destinations held by the Barnardo's team and the data we anticipate Brent and Plymouth to hold on outcomes for children and young people, the evaluation team are in correspondence with service design staff to build evaluation tools into the services they will implement. Some of this is work the service design team were already planning to implement; for example, using measures of loneliness and social isolation to assess the impact of the mentoring and befriending services being introduced in Plymouth. If we are to evaluate the Strategic Partnerships based on the broader definition of positive destinations identified at the outset, it is crucial that we continue to develop a synergy between the evaluators, project staff, and the design team so that bespoke evaluation tools can be embedded in services as they are implemented.

The process tracking that evaluation team members are conducting on Barnardo's activities in Brent and Plymouth already gives the evaluation team a means of keeping pace with developments in either area, which are fed back to the wider team in regular meetings. Following discussions with service design team members, we have agreed that evaluation staff will join the debrief calls held after each lab on a regular basis (no set routine has been established, so that we can iteratively gauge how frequently evaluators need to attend). These debrief calls will help to prevent duplication between service design research activities and the evaluation, ensuring that our shared expertise can be pooled, and evaluation tools can be embedded within the services Barnardo's implement with the minimum amount of demands placed on young people.

This coordination and synergy with the service design labs is the primary mechanism by which the scoping phase will be ongoing throughout the evaluation, keeping in step with the service design cycles and responding to developments as they arise. Once evaluators learn about the services being implemented and their intended benefits, we will use our knowledge of relevant validated scales, previous evaluations with vulnerable young people, and evaluation in general, to draw up a list of potential measures which can be used to assess the impact of the proposed services. We will then discuss this list with the service designers and Barnardo's research and evaluation lead to identify the most appropriate measures and ways of collecting data. We hope that the services will engage with the same young people over the course of the partnerships, allowing a cohort study to be conducted with care leavers. We will establish the feasibility of a cohort study through coordination with the service design labs, as we need to understand the characteristics of the small cohorts they currently work with better.

Profile of Care leavers/ CLA in areas

This section provides an overview of the number of children looked after and care leavers in Brent and Plymouth, with the figures for the region the two local authorities are in, as well as the national figures, included to provide context. The profile uses publicly available SSDA903 data. Similar analyses will have been undertaken by the service design team in their preparatory work. However, this is an important background to the evaluation and may also provide an embryonic baseline which can be revisited depending on the outcome of the conversations about quantitative data access to come.

Plymouth has a population of 263,070[16], 17.9% of whom are under 16, compared with Brent's population of 332,100[17], of which 20.9% are under 16. Perhaps the greatest difference between the two local authorities is that 93% of Plymouth residents are White British; Brent by comparison is 64.9% BAME, with 45% of its population being born abroad[18]. Not only does Brent's ethnic diversity, and concentration of migrants to the UK, far exceed Plymouth's, it is also substantially higher than the averages for London, and Outer London, respectively.

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[16] http://www.dataplymouth.co.uk/city-life1

[17] https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/london-borough-profiles

[18] https://www.brent.gov.uk/media/16415098/igs-research-base-2019-2040-new-regeneration.pdf

Many of the measures covered here focus on children looked after under 16, which is not currently a main focus of the Care Journey Strategic Partnerships. However, as has been recognised in meetings and informal conversations, many of the adverse outcomes and inequalities which confront care experienced young people have roots in their experiences in care and beforehand. Moreover, some of these measures (most notably those related to educational attainment) are important context to the work of the strategic partnerships; a local authority with greater rates of school exclusions will be facing different challenges in two years' time to one which has lower rates of school exclusions, for example.

The profile also draws comparisons between Brent, Plymouth, the regions they lie within and the national rates of children looked after outcomes. We recognise that the ambitions of the Care Journey Strategic Partnerships are to address the inequality in outcomes between care experienced young people and non-care experienced young people. However, until data access is negotiated with local authorities, publicly available statutory data is the only viable, although limited, means of achieving a counterfactual to help us attribute changes in each area to the Care Journey Strategic Partnerships.

Table 1 Overall populations of CYP looked after or with care experience

	ENGLAND		LONDON		BRENT		SW ENGLAND		PLYMOUTH	
Measure	N	Rate per 10,000 CYP	N	Rate per 10,000 CYP	N	Rate per 10,000 CYP	N	Rate per 10,000 CYP	N	Rate per 10,000 CYP
Children who became looked after 2018/19	31,680	27	5480	27	164	21	2460	22	160	30
Children looked after	78,150	65	10030	50	299	38	6140	56	412	78
Care leavers aged 17&18	11,270		2480		81		920		59	
Care leavers aged 19-21	29,930		6660		236		2510		190	
UASC looked after 2018/19	5,070		1740		56		250		9	

Table 1 shows the number of children looked after in Brent, Plymouth, the regions they are in (London and SW England), and England as a whole. In 2018-2019 Brent and Plymouth took a similar number of children into care, although this amounted to a smaller proportion of Brent's children and young people, which is reflected in Brent's lower rate per 10,000 CYP. Nevertheless, Plymouth has a larger population of children looked after despite its comparatively smaller population. Brent has a much larger population of looked after Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

Table 2 Care leavers aged 17-18: Destinations and accommodation

		ENGLAND		LONDON		BRENT		SW ENGLAND		PLYMOUTH	
	Measure	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Care leavers aged 17 & 18 destinations	In higher education	330	3	90	4	0	0	40	4	21	36
	In other education	4840	43	1220	49	46	57	350	38	6	10
	In training or employment	1980	18	300	12	11	14	200	22	10	17
	Total in EET[19]	7160	64	1610	65	57	70	600	65	37	63
Care leavers aged 17 & 18 destinations	Not in EET due to illness / disability	370	3	50	2			50	5		
	Not in EET due to pregnancy / parenting	2640	3	570	23			210	22		
	Not in EET due to other reasons	360	23	70	3			20	2		
	Total not in EET	3370	30	690	29			280	30		
Care leavers aged 17 & 18 accommodation	Suitable	9890	88	2160	88	75	93	830	90	52	88
	Unsuitable	590	5	140	6			40	4		

Table 2 shows that Plymouth's 17 and 18-year-old care leavers participate in education, employment and training at a similar rate to the national and regional averages; Brent's young people do so at a slightly higher rate. No data was available to indicate the circumstances by which 17 and 18-year-old care leavers do not participate in education, employment or training in Brent and Plymouth. 88% of Plymouth's care leavers were in suitable accommodation, which is in line with the national rate. Brent scores more highly, with 93% of its 17 and 18-year-old care leavers being in suitable accommodation. It is worth noting that whether accommodation is suitable or not is calculated on the accommodation type rather than the young person's specific needs; a young person in supported lodgings is considered to be in suitable accommodation regardless of whether the lodging provides the level of support they need. The picture is likely more complicated in practice. The percentages shown in these tables do not necessarily add up to 100% because young people for whom the local authorities have no data are not included.

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[19] Education, employment or training

Table 3 Care leavers aged 19-21: Destinations & accommodation

		ENGLAND		LONDON		BRENT		SW ENGLAND		PLYMOUTH	
	Measure	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Care leavers aged 19-21 destinations	In higher education	1860	6	560	8	20	8	140	6		
	In other education	6180	21	1670	25	47	20	400	16		
	In training or employment	7610	25	1390	21	64	27	820	32	49	26
	Total in EET	15640	52	3620	54	131	56	1360	54	96	51
Care leavers aged 19-21 destinations	Not in EET due to illness / disability	2820	9	270	4			370	15		
	Not in EET due to pregnancy / parenting	6850	23	1670	25	60	25	450	18	60	25
	Not in EET due to other reasons	1890	6	330	5			190	7		
	Total not in EET	11560	39	2260	34	77	33	1000	40	77	33
Care leavers aged 19-21 accommodation	Suitable	25050	85	5390	83	190	81	2190	88	172	91
	Unsuitable	1880	6	400	6	18	8	160	6		

Table 3 shows that the proportion of care leavers aged 19-21 in education, employment or training in Brent and Plymouth are in line with national and regional rates for care leavers, although Plymouth scores slightly lower in the proportion of its care leavers in education, employment or training. 91% of care leavers aged 19-21 in Plymouth were in suitable accommodation, which is slightly higher than the regional rate. 81% of care leavers aged 19-21 in Brent were in suitable accommodation, which is lower than the national rate. As mentioned in the discussion of 17-18-year-old care leavers' accommodation, the reality behind this definition of suitability is complex.

Table 4 Children looked after: Educational attainment at Key stage 4

Measure	ENGLAND		OUTER LONDON		BRENT		SW ENGLAND		PLYMOUTH	
	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.
Key Stage 4 attainment 8 points	97021.3	18.9	8150.8	18.5	358.5	13.3	8010	16.3	373.5	17
Key Stage 4 progress 8 points	-4769.3	-1.2	-315.2	-1.17	-28.3	-1.49	-496.8	-1.32	-24.1	-1.27

Table 4 represents the educational attainment of children looked after. Key Stage 4 attainment 8 points is a measure of attainment which adds up the grades children achieve in their eight English Baccalaureate subjects taken at GCSE; English and maths are weighted double. Children looked after in both Brent and Plymouth score lower than the national average for Key Stage 4 attainment 8 points for children looked after (18.9), although Brent scores substantially lower than Plymouth (13.3 vs 17). The Key Stage 4 progress 8 points measure is a means of capturing the progress a child makes over the course of secondary school. The average here refers to the average difference in progress between a child looked after and a young person who has historically achieved a similar level of attainment to them. Although, on the face of it, children looked after seem to experience a greater than average decline in educational attainment over the course of secondary school, without information on the age that they entered care nor the variance in this statistic, we cannot be sure of the precise relationship between their educational achievement and their relationship to children's social care.

Table 5 Children looked after: Exclusions & unauthorised absences from school

Measure	ENGLAND		OUTER LONDON		BRENT		SW ENGLAND		PLYMOUTH	
	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.
Sessions missed through unauthorised absence	143710	1.3	10410	1.60	1389	3.8	9580	1.1	309	0.60
Children looked after with at least one fixed period exclusion	3610	11.86	211	10.85	16	14.41	350	14.26	23	13.22
Looked after children who are persistent absentees	3330	10.6	220	11.20	22	20.60	290	11.80	15	9.70

Table 5 seems to suggest that children looked after in Brent tend to miss more school sessions through unauthorised absence than their contemporaries in Plymouth and the country as a whole. Table 5 also suggests that children looked after in Brent are persistently absent at almost twice the rate of the national average, with 20% of them being persistent absentees. However, this data is based on a relatively small number of children looked after who are older and more likely to be late entrants into care, so we should be cautious in drawing any firm conclusions since these characteristics may make issues with attainment, attendance, and exclusion seem more pronounced. We should be cautious in drawing any firm conclusions.

Table 6 Later entrance into care, youth offending, substance misuse and missing episodes

Measure	ENGLAND		OUTER LONDON		BRENT		SW ENGLAND		PLYMOUTH	
	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.
Children brought into care aged 10-16	8540	27	1600	29	48	29	680	28	36	23
Children brought into care aged 16+	6370	20	2040	37	56	34	380	15	21	13
CYP left care because taken into custody	430	1	140	2	8	4	10	1	0	0
CLA receiving conviction or youth caution in 2018/19	1290	3	190	4	14	8	120	4	0	0
CLA identified to have a substance misuse problem	2010	4	370	6	17	9	210	5	6	2
Children who had a missing incident during the year	106550	11	2170	14	80	17	970	11	64	11
Average no. of missing incidents per child who had a missing incident	6.2		7		6.4		5.4		5.6	

Table 6 shows that, in line with the Brent leaving care team and Barnardo's service design team's concerns, Brent has a particularly large number of late entrants to care (young people who are brought into care aged 16+). No young people from Plymouth left care because of a custodial sentence or received a conviction or youth caution in 2018/19, and very few in either local authority are identified as having a substance misuse problem. Brent's children looked after were slightly more likely to have missing incidents during the last year, although the average number of missing incidents per child was in line with national trends. When analysing this data, it is also important to distinguish the late entrants to care who grew up in Brent, and UASC who may be late entrants to care but do not have the biographical and family ties to the area. The latter group of young people are represented in Table 6 but will have very different life experiences to the former group.

Table 7 SDQ scores

Measure	ENGLAND		OUTER LONDON		BRENT		SW ENGLAND		PLYMOUTH	
	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.	N	Av.
CLA aged 5-16 with normal SDQ score	15600	49	2180	55	74	60	1060	42	56	33
CLA aged 5-16 with borderline SDQ score	4140	13	520	13	19	20	340	13	20	12
CLA aged 5-16 with concerning SDQ score	12390	39	1260	32	56	20	1140	45	94	55

Table 7 shows that nationally, 49% of children looked after have a normal SDQ score; 13% score at borderline and 39% have a concerning score. Brent scores higher than the national and regional averages, with 60% of children looked after achieving a normal score. Although Brent's children looked after are more likely to have a borderline SDQ score than the national population of children looked after, they are also far less likely to have a concerning SDQ score. Children looked after in Plymouth score substantially lower in their SDQ's than children looked after at both a regional and national level; only a third of children looked after in Plymouth achieve a normal SDQ score and 55% of them achieve a concerning score.

Evaluative Rubric of Outcomes

To triangulate data from the different research methods used, the evaluation employs a practical evaluative framework known as a 'Rubric'. This was chosen to facilitate the generation of evaluative statements about the effectiveness of the programme, its processes, its short and medium-term impacts, and potential long-term impacts.

Using an evaluative Rubric involves drawing up a list of criteria against each intended outcome (ranked relatively for importance), then ranked for the strength/appropriateness of the data, and then finally allocating a scale of performance, e.g. poor, adequate, good, and excellent. The first rubric has been created and will be refined over the course of the evaluation through engagement with the emergent data, programme activities, and key stakeholders (i.e. Barnardo's and the local authorities). It provides a sense making framework and an evidence base for the 'story' of the intervention on its own terms, capturing the progress on the prioritised outcomes for children and young people, local systems, and the Strategic Partnerships both as a unified model of work and separate organisational (or, rather, inter-organisational) entities. The first rubric created from the scoping phase is just for care leavers. It will be reviewed, shared, and updated as a baseline is established for each target group or area of influence, and data on progression towards outcomes is collated. The evaluation team will present the rubric to Barnardo's in the next scheduled meeting to initiate the dialogue and engagement it requires as a co-produced tool.

Next Steps

PRIORITY ISSUE	ACTIONS
Several gaps in indicators for outcomes in the evaluative rubric have been identified and suggestions made.	Present and discuss the rubric, establishing engagement with it as the core tool of learning in the partnerships.
	Barnardo's, LA leads and TIHR to sign a general data sharing agreement and establish a named point of contact for us.
Establish the phased cohort study.	Decided a process for recruiting to a cohort study measuring impact on young people
	Agree measures of wellbeing, loneliness and isolation, positive destinations, life skills, and other broader positive destinations.
	BREC application for next stage of research.
Revising the evaluation timeline to reflect the delayed establishment of the strategic partnerships, the ebbs and flows of the service design cycle, and the impact of Covid-19.	Conduct feasibility interviews and agree if necessary, a new timeline for a baseline.
Establish processes of reflection and learning, drawing together the insights and knowledge gained from the first year.	Design and Implement first ALS online

Appendix A: Data used to produce the report

The number of interviews listed here does not correspond with the number of people interviewed, some staff members were interviewed more than once over the course of the scoping phase.

Barnardo's CPP

- 2 x Barnardo's senior stakeholders
- 1 x Dartington staff member

Plymouth

Interviews:

- 2 x Barnardo's senior stakeholders
- 2 x Barnardo's senior project workers
- 2 x Barnardo's service design team members
- 3 x Plymouth CC senior stakeholders

Meetings and events:

- 1 x CPP learning event in October 2019
- 1 x Plymouth CPP team meeting in November 2019
- 1 x Plymouth CPP learning event in January 2020

Documentation:

- Plymouth City Council's 2019 care leavers offer
- Various documents relating to Barnardo's' Here and Now work (handouts, flyers, posters)
- Barnardo's' 2019: A Year in Care Journeys report
- Barnardo's' 'Our vision for Care Journeys' document
- Dartington Design Lab's Plymouth service map
- DATA Plymouth's Report for 2019
- Plymouth CC's 2019 Ofsted Report for Children's Services
- Barnardo's and Plymouth CC Partnership Agreement

- Plymouth Care Journeys infographic: 2019 Plymouth Care Journeys in numbers

Brent

Interviews:

- 4 x Barnardo's senior stakeholders
- 3 x 2 Barnardo's senior project workers
- 1 x Brent Head of Service
- 1 x interview Design Team regarding the Discovery Phase in Brent

Meetings and events:

- 1 x presentation and observation at operational meeting attended by 25 Barnardo's and Brent staff
- 1 x attendance at Dartington systems change workshop attended by 10 Barnardo's, Brent and Dartington staff

Documentation:

- Regular new letters produced by Barnardo's project workers
- Terms of reference and governance structure documents shared at operation meeting
- Brent LA data shared by the Design Team

The Tavistock Institute
30 Tabernacle Street
London EC2A 4UE
+44 (0)20 7417 0407
tavinstitute.org

THE TAVISTOCK INSTITUTE®