

A close-up photograph of a young child with light brown hair, wearing a dark blue shirt, blowing a dandelion seed head. The child's eyes are closed, and their lips are pursed together. The background is a bright, sunlit field with green grass and trees, creating a bokeh effect of soft, glowing light spots. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

Helping Families Thrive

Lessons learned from the Child Poverty Pilot Programme

DWP Department for
Work and Pensions

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Glossary

Effective provision – provision that achieves its intended outcomes.

Employability – the ability to gain employment.

Families – used inclusively in this guide as a broad definition that refers to parents/carers and their children (under 18 years of age) whatever their household composition.

Inputs – the resources required to achieve the objectives of a programme, service or project. It includes money, such as funding, but also time, premises and other resources that are required.

Jobcentre Plus (JCP) – provides support for people of working age from welfare into work and helps employers fill their vacancies. It is part of the Department for Work and Pensions.

Logic Model – describes the relationship between an intervention's inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. A good logic model also captures the rationale for the activities taking place.

Outcomes – are the changes that the programme, service or project produces. Linked to outputs, they are the differences that participation in an activity brings about.

Outputs – the direct and tangible results of the programme, service or project. Outputs are the numbers of people who participate in and complete different activities. They are the things that are produced.

Pathways to successful outcomes – the routes that families and individuals can be supported through and that a logic model can help identify.

Stakeholders – the people, organisations and agencies that have an interest in or that participate in the programme, service or project. They are senior managers, frontline practitioners, families and wider communities.

Sustainable provision – provision that can be continued once initial funding has come to an end. It is sustainable because the resources it requires can be provided by partners as it meets their objectives. Sustainability means that provision becomes embedded as the usual way of working, because it is recognised as and proven to be effective.

Helping Families Thrive

Introduction

page 1

Steps for effective provision

page 4

Foundations for effective provision

page 13

Resources

page 18



Introduction

This guide looks at ways of supporting families away from the causes and consequences of disadvantage and poverty. It suggests how local authorities and their partners, including the voluntary and community sectors, can work together effectively to achieve better outcomes for families. It should inform existing provision, new initiatives and commissioning strategies.

The guide is based on evaluation evidence from the Child Poverty Pilots that the Government's Child Poverty Unit funded from 2009 to 2011. The pilot programme supported low-income families both working and not working, families with emerging needs and families with multiple problems.

This is a support tool for everyone involved in fulfilling local child poverty duties and in designing, delivering and commissioning services for families in poverty. It was developed with the aim of capturing key lessons learnt from across the pilot programme and supporting the local duties set out under the Child Poverty Act 2010.

The pilot evidence base provides valuable learning about:

- How to **target** families effectively
- How to **engage** families effectively
- How to **support** families effectively
- How to enable families to **thrive**



Part 2 of the Child Poverty Act 2010

Requires local authorities and their partners to work together to tackle child poverty in their area. A Child Poverty Needs Assessment must be published and a joint Child Poverty Strategy developed that sets out the measures that the local authority and each named partner propose to take to reduce, and mitigate the effects of child poverty.

Any provision for low-income and disadvantaged families must be aligned with these key local documents.

And the foundations that need to be in place to do this, including:

- Collecting evidence about what works and what is cost effective
- Focusing on ensuring sustainability from the outset
- Developing workforce and leadership skills and a culture of effective practice
- Developing effective governance and partnerships with the voluntary, community and independent sectors.

The Child Poverty Pilot Programme

Family Intervention Projects (FIPs)

Explored how the FIP model of intensive family intervention can support low income families with multiple problems

Local Authority Innovation Pilot

Explored diverse, locally developed and innovative ways of addressing child poverty and supporting families to achieve positive outcomes

School Gates Employment Initiative

Explored how employment advisers can work in partnership with schools to provide employment and employability support to low income families

Supporting Separating Parents

Explored ways in which separating or recently separated parents can be supported to minimise negative family outcomes

Teenage Parent Supported Housing

Explored how this potentially vulnerable group of parents and children can be supported to live independently and successfully

Work Focused Services in Children's Centres

Explored how Children's Centres can offer an effective means of providing employment related services

How to use this guide

This guide has been developed to support those who work in local settings, designing, delivering and commissioning support for disadvantaged and low-income families. It includes four steps to effectively supporting families and the cross-cutting foundations underpinning these steps.

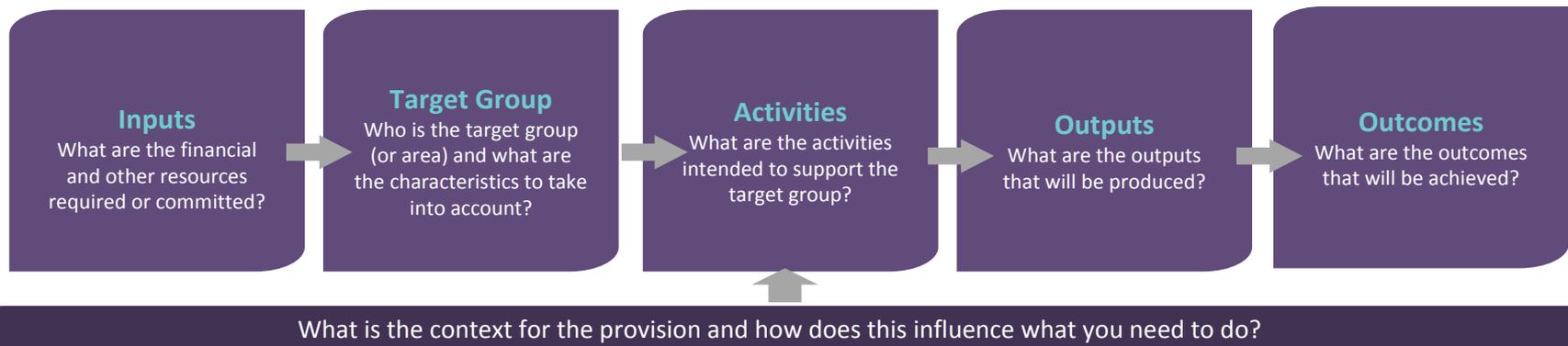
The diagram below illustrates how the guide is structured. Each section includes practical examples and tips for effective practice. There are links to supporting materials at the end of the guide.

Different sections of the guide may be of use to you, depending on your interest and expertise.



Pathways to successful outcomes – the framework

This guide suggests the use of a logic model or pathways to successful outcomes as a way to capture and support the steps and foundations set out above. A logic model is a tool for planning services, and helps to identify the relationships between the intended outcomes and the resources and activities needed to achieve them. It supports effective implementation and provides the basis for developing a sound evaluation framework. They are a useful tool for partners when undertaking joint planning as they promote discussion, leading to shared understandings. See resources section (page 19) for examples of a basic logic model. In addition, the final report of the [Child Poverty Local Authority Innovation Pilot evaluation](#) contains examples of logic models.





Four steps to take when
planning effective provision

Steps for effective provision

Step 1: Target

This section is about how to target the families you want to support for the outcomes you want to achieve. Effective provision begins with clear targeting: the outcomes you want to achieve, the groups you need to target and how you will organise services and resources for them. To achieve the intended outcomes, you might need to target a specific area, a narrowly or a more broadly defined group. Activities and services must be targeted effectively and monitoring needs to be in place to measure effectiveness and value for money.

What do you want to achieve?

This might be an outcome linked to a national policy priority – reducing children in poverty (Child Poverty), supporting families in the greatest need (Children's Centres), assisting troubled families (Troubled Families Initiative) – or an outcome linked to local priorities.

The Child Poverty Pilot Programme aimed to reduce child poverty either directly by raising family income, or indirectly by increasing life chances. Within each of the pilots, different approaches and target groups were chosen to support these aims, reflecting differences in local circumstances.

Who do you need to support?

Outcomes and target groups are often very broad. For any local activity to be effective, clarity and consensus among stakeholders about who will be targeted and how they will be identified is key. National and local data can be used to identify the characteristics of the area and the families living there. Complement data with the knowledge local service providers hold about your target group and the issues that they face, including any information gathered through consultation with families themselves. Local voluntary and community sector services are an invaluable source of expertise.

This will help you to identify the issues to address, what existing provision you can build on and help you establish what families would benefit from. Your local [Child Poverty Needs Assessment](#) and Strategy are important starting points for any work that aims to reduce poverty and improve children's life chances. The [Child Poverty Knowledge Hub](#), a virtual platform for sharing information, is also a very useful source of information.

What's in a name?

The brand you give a service is important, and worth testing out with your target group prior to use. Families will avoid services with a stigma – real or perceived. Avoid linking support to 'poverty'. Emphasise that 'help' is available – whether thinking about work, a new start, raising family income or supporting children. Examples of family friendly service brands used by the pilots included: Family Solutions in Hammersmith and Fulham, Promoting Parents in Sefton and More 4 U in Waltham Forest.

Raise awareness

The pilots found that the best way to reach families was through projects and services that were already working with them. Leaflets and marketing materials that are clearly written and have a family-friendly name and look are important. Any new provision or tailoring of existing provision might be viewed with suspicion, by professionals as well as families. Take time to engage professionals and explain what is on offer, how it can benefit families and how it complements rather than duplicates services already provided.

Include voluntary and community sector and local authority provision and include the widest possible range of partners. They can disseminate promotional materials and help to spread the word to other professionals, services, agencies and to target families. Think about how you can provide a 'no wrong door' approach: wherever families go they can find out and be signposted to the help and support that they need. The pilots found that it is important that organisations and professionals don't limit their offer to what they can do, but link effectively with others.

Raising awareness also means creating a presence. Attending meetings, forums for professionals, community events and visiting existing provision to meet families and parents provides opportunities to promote services. The pilot evaluations highlighted the role of 'word-of-mouth' in promoting services, particularly with 'hidden' or 'hard to reach' groups and that a wide range of referral routes is important.

Be accessible & reach out

Existing services can provide ideal places for the delivery of new provision. For example, Innovation Pilot services were often based within or worked closely with Children's Centres. The School Gates initiative found schools can be a great place to meet parents "on their own turf". The 'right' place needs to have good relationships with users, available space, appropriate management and front line staff who can support the service.

Working in venues where families are comfortable is essential and services don't have to be permanently located there. Consider formal outreach approaches, taking and delivering information and services out to a range of places, working from a range of sites and building awareness in community settings. In Waltham Forest's Innovation Pilot, family workers from a multi-agency team visited all families in their own home. This built trust and the approach has been mainstreamed into a new early intervention service.

In North Warwickshire, a rural and former mining area, with isolated pockets of high deprivation where residents often live far away from support and information services on offer, a mobile outreach support service was developed. The 'Branching Out Bus' – BOB – provides information, advice and guidance (IAG) from a range of locations.

Families that you are likely to be targeting may face a range of barriers and can lack confidence and motivation. Language support may need to be provided for families who don't have English as their first language.

The benefits of working in places where families already go

The Work-Focused Services pilot took Jobcentre Plus (JCP) staff into Children's Centres. The pilot found that they're "ideal" venues for reaching low-income families with young children as they're well used and trusted by families.

This meant that staff could establish and build a presence, join existing activities and be available on an on-going, flexible basis. Around 60 per cent of pilot participants were lone parents in receipt of benefit and around 30 per cent were non-traditional Jobcentre Plus customers.

It took time for Children's Centre and JCP staff to get to know each other and adapt to working together. But once the relationship was established, there was high demand for employment services.

Review

Be flexible and keep targeting criteria under review. It is important not to create new barriers to inclusion or participation. Pilots with income criteria found it difficult to be precise and moved to linking eligibility to the household being in receipt of out of work benefits instead. Learning from the Teenage Parent pilot led to changed age criteria as initially teenage-age criteria excluded older fathers from taking part. The Support for Separating Parents pilots initially focused on helping recently separated parents, but then also supported parents who had lived apart for some time finding that over time, with changing circumstances and attitudes, new problems frequently arise in relation to the separation.

Step 2: Engage

This section is about how to engage the families that you target. Effective engagement requires active and meaningful participation.

Staff who engage are friendly, approachable and helpful

It is clear from the pilot evaluations that engaging families, particularly from the most disadvantaged groups, requires a combination of skills. Professional expertise and good people skills are essential. Staff need to have the right attributes, not just the right professional knowledge. A partnership way of working that is “done with, not done to” families was often perceived as key to effective, engaging relationships by professionals and families alike. In certain areas and among specific groups there can be high levels of mistrust in public services, particularly towards new services and staff. The pilots found that it was important to families that:

- An informal and friendly approach was taken;
- There was positive initial and early contact providing the basis for longer-term engagement;
- There was a non-judgemental approach as vulnerable parents in particular may expect staff to judge them and their circumstances; and,
- Services were delivered in a familiar environment.

Local voluntary and community sector services can provide valuable expertise in working with families directly, by providing services or by informing any broader family engagement approach.

Knowledge of local provision is important. Being able to signpost to existing sources of help and, if necessary, supporting access to this can provide an early positive outcome and a quick win that can help to build trust. The pilots found that providing practical help with an immediate and pressing need built confidence and trust so that other issues could be identified and addressed. Staff should be honest about what they do and don't know and promising to follow-up can demonstrate commitment and build trusting relationships.

The importance of trust

It is important to develop trust between staff and the families. Trust takes time to develop and begins with an open and informal approach that provides early, small scale impact. Quick wins can be helpful as they demonstrate that staff and services can really make a difference to families.

As trust builds over time, more information may be disclosed by families and more effective and intensive support can be provided.

Be flexible

The pilots found that provision that is flexible and responsive is more likely to engage new target groups. The Supporting Separating Parents pilot found that weekend and evening provision increased engagement. JCP advisors working in Children's Centres as part of the Work-Focused Services and School Gates pilots learnt that a less target driven environment, which allows for the provision of support outside standard hours, in conjunction with a more holistic and informal approach can increase engagement of parents who wouldn't necessarily go to JCP directly.

Flexibility will be required from staff in established services where new programmes of, or pathways through, provision are developed.

Be persistent

Persistence can be required to ensure that an issue is addressed but it also helps to overcome mistrust. Persistence may be required in contacting or maintaining contact with a family, or with other professionals to secure the support they can provide. The pilots found that when this is done in the right way and leads to a positive early outcome, it demonstrates commitment to supporting the family. Being persistent complements being accessible, helpful, knowledgeable and flexible.

Assessment and progress measures

Strength based assessments, identifying needs and the barriers are key to effective engagement, providing a basis for joint discussion and agreeing an action plan. A number of assessment and measurement tools were developed across the Child Poverty Pilots. With new or adapted provision, existing tools may work well and provide a useful basis that can be adapted or developed. The pilot evaluations suggested that careful consideration should be given to the tools used and they should be piloted first. Despite the recognition of the importance of whole-family approaches, there are not yet widely agreed, tested whole-family tools. The resources section (page 19) sets out some examples of assessment tools.

Flexible resources for responsive support

The Innovation Pilot evaluation highlighted how professionals' ability to access flexible funds supported family outcomes. Funds can provide resources that have an immediate impact on poverty and hardship. They can also support initial engagement and progression towards sustained, long-term outcomes. Mainstream funds were consistently identified as being complex to access and limited in their availability. The evaluations show how small amounts, for example for a bus pass, an item of school clothing, a piece of equipment necessary for a particular job, can make a big difference.



Step 3: Support

This section is about how to provide effective support. Following an assessment of the issues or barriers that families or parents face, effective support can be provided. Effective family-based approaches don't necessarily have to be 'whole-family' approaches and work with everyone. But they should take into account whether or not an adult is a parent or whether they have any other caring responsibilities and should consider any child or young person's family unit. This ensures that family-based barriers and issues can be addressed.

A tailored approach is an effective approach

A key finding from the Child Poverty Pilots is that there should be a tailored approach to supporting assessed needs. Common barriers and issues can be identified, but what they mean for an individual parent or family is particular to them. Different issues impact upon parents and families in different combinations and at different times. A holistic approach means that a range of different resources are drawn on to address individual and family circumstance.

Multi-agency working is required

Tailored approaches require different services and provision to work together. This could be through the deployment of new multi-agency teams and/or co-location of services. Both the Support for Teenage Parents and Supporting Separating Parents (as well as some Innovation Pilot models) found these to work well. Governance structures and partnerships are required to support this (see Foundation 1) and key working approaches (see the box) are important to co-ordinate it.

The Supporting Separating Parents pilot found that the more holistic, co-ordinated models of provision were more likely to improve outcomes than those with a limited set of service involved. The Support for Teenage Parents pilot trialled different approaches to multi-agency provision.

Whether it was delivered by different agencies from one site, or co-ordinated by key workers, the ability to provide a range of responsive, tailored interventions was central to success. The Innovation Pilot provides a wealth of examples highlighting approaches to multi-agency working. A core feature of most of the models was close working between adult employment services and children and family services, which also drew on wider links with specialist provision from the voluntary, community and independent sectors.

Key working is an approach, it is not just creating key worker posts

Key working is an approach where a single professional works with the parent or family to ensure that the families' needs are met and barriers are addressed. Key working means that the parent or family has a single point of contact, supporting the development of a trusting, engaging relationship. The services that are required for a tailored, holistic approach are co-ordinated by the single point of contact.

Across the Child Poverty Pilots, key working and key worker roles were central to effective practice. Each had their own approach – FIPs (key workers), Work-Focused Services and School Gates Initiative (JCP staff), Support for Teenage Parents (floating support), Separating Parents (co-ordinating support), the Innovation Pilot (key working across different models) – but all had the same core features of key working.

Key workers can be dedicated posts, such as Family Support Workers, or a way of working for staff across different agencies. However it is provided, key working is essential for effective provision and builds trust.

In the Islington Innovation Pilot, 'process mapping' was undertaken to explore parent and family pathways through the authority's services and external provision such as that from the voluntary and community sector, to provide a joined-up approach. As a result, services or roles within them were redesigned so they were more responsive to families' needs.

Time is an important factor

All the pilot evaluations highlight how new or adapted provision can take longer than anticipated to both develop and embed. It requires new roles (and perhaps new recruitment), careful planning and learning from early implementation. The Work-Focused Services and School Gates pilots took existing staff from Jobcentres and placed them in established locations – Children’s Centres and schools. Developing effective working relationships between staff from different institutions with their own cultures was challenging in the early stages of the pilots. Obstacles were overcome by: flexibility on both sides to make the pilot work; regular communications between the JCP Personal Adviser and the Children’s Centre manager; referrals between Children’s Centre staff and partner organisations and the JCP Personal Adviser; and, joining up partner networks and contacts. Attending staff meetings, wearing any uniform or staff badge and logo, and taking time to learn about each others’ ways of working all helped joint working. All of these achieved positive attitudinal changes among Children’s Centre staff towards JCP services and a better understanding among many JCP Personal Advisers of the culture and priorities of Children’s Centres.

Stepping stones are important

Once provision is in place, time is required for parents and families to achieve outcomes. Whether they were targeting those with multiple problems (FIPs) or those deemed closer to the labour market (other pilots), pathways of progression could be lengthy as barriers were identified and addressed. Support that recognises small achievements as important is part of an approach that builds longer term outcomes from a solid base. The pilots found that flexible support that includes ‘taster sessions’ can facilitate access and provide early, small steps of progression.

Consider peer-led approaches

Two Innovation Pilot programmes developed peer-led approaches to reducing child poverty. Local people engaged others in their communities to achieve change. Knowsley developed a team of Parent Mentors – local parents providing practical and emotional support to other parents. They had a similar background to those they supported, offering an alternative to mainstream approaches to engage parents, identify areas for their family to address and help with accessing and negotiating services. They helped shape the pilot, reflecting Knowsley’s interest in co-production – public services working with communities to develop provision. The use of volunteer mentors has been adapted and now forms an integral part of Knowsley’s early intervention services.

Tyne Gateway (North & South Tyneside in partnership) trained and employed Community Entrepreneurs who established new service delivery models and social enterprises based on community need that was identified and delivered through their engagement with local parents and families. In this way the pilot also involved parents in co-production. The project has now been developed to become an independent organisation, enabling it to receive local authority funding through a commissioning relationship as well as other funding and has won several awards.

The Teenage Parents pilot found that peer-led approaches helped build confidence and self-esteem, but were only appropriate for those with low levels of need.

[Peer-led and co-production](#) approaches require resources, careful planning and consultation.

Step 4: Thriving Families

This section is about how to support families to thrive. Families are unique and face different issues and barriers in different combinations. Evidence from the evaluations of the diverse Child Poverty Pilots suggested a common core of issues.

Debt is a barrier to parent and family progression

The Child Poverty Pilots found that debt was a significant issue for low-income families. A third of all FIP families and half of families referred to the 'Child Poverty FIP' had problems with debt. One in five in the Supporting Teenage Parents pilot had a debt problem. One of the main activities of JCP advisors in the Work-Focused Services pilot was referring parents to debt advice. The Separating Parents pilot found separation made parents vulnerable to poverty due to debt associated with their low income.

All the evaluations highlight the importance of providing specialist debt and money advice, either within a multi-agency team or for key workers or other staff to access. The Innovation Pilot evaluation highlighted how income maximisation and debt support can make a significant difference to family income and wellbeing. Debt was found to sometimes dominate day-to-day life and impact on confidence. It can be a barrier to employment as higher incomes trigger higher debt repayments. Specialist support will help to manage these transitions. Support with managing existing debt should also include money management and budgeting advice to ensure that the benefits of addressing debt and raising income are sustained.

There is demand for employment support

Many of the Child Poverty Pilots had a strong focus on improving employability and achieving employment outcomes. The School Gates, Work-Focused Services, Teenage Parents and Innovation Pilot programmes all engaged parents who were not in touch with or accessing existing JCP and other provision. A key finding was that parents who are out of work, including those with very young children, welcome flexible support that addresses employability – by providing access to training and other provision that prepares people for work – and provides pathways to employment – by providing practical and other resources that support access and address barriers to work.

Access to childcare is a barrier for many parents in moving towards employment

The Innovation Pilot found a range of issues that impact upon parental access to and take-up of childcare for employment and employability support.

Affordability – childcare can be expensive.

Awareness – parents can be unclear about what is available and where to go for information.

Confidence – parents can be unsure or concerned about the quality of available childcare.

Availability – concerns about a lack of flexible childcare. For example outside of standard working hours or available from late morning to early afternoon.

Funding – funding for childcare can be linked to training (rather than provided to the parent). This means that parents can be concerned about changes to the provision that is accessed.

Perception – even if affordable childcare is available, parents can require support and encouragement to access it.

Parents are motivated to work by the improved prospects it brings for their family and themselves. Barriers that parents face include: childcare – with concerns, not always borne out, about availability and cost; affordable transport; resources for clothing, registrations or equipment specific jobs require; and low confidence and self-esteem. The pilots found that even those people identified as being quite close to the labour market can face a number of barriers to progression.

Raising parent wellbeing raises family wellbeing. Happier families engage and thrive

- Money management and debt advice – was essential for many families, with benefits for parental and family wellbeing and offering a starting point for engagement towards longer term outcomes;
- Support with housing and housing conditions – independent living and accessing suitable housing was a central element of Supporting Teenage Parents, but housing was an issue for parents in all the pilots. Stable, suitable housing is important for progression in other areas;
- Support with health and accessing health services – was a feature of holistic approaches to assessment and support. This included ensuring families were registered with GPs and dentists and more specialist advice and support (such as counselling) where parents or family members required it;
- Parenting support, training and advice – often a core aim of pilot provision. Courses to support parenting, if carefully introduced, were welcomed and so was more informal ad hoc support;
- Positive activities for parents, children and young people and the family as a unit – were all welcomed by low income families that can struggle to access them. They can support engagement towards broader and longer term outcomes; and,

Parenting classes are popular, if carefully introduced and delivered

The pilots found there can be a stigma attached to parenting classes, as parents don't like to be seen as bad parents even when they're struggling to cope with a child or young person's behaviour. Tried and tested parenting programmes provide expertise in introducing and promoting their provision.

Take-up is improved when the purpose and content of the course is carefully introduced by a trusted professional or through word-of-mouth. Delivery should be in an accessible venue with childcare provision and participation costs, such as transport, met.

The government is committed to providing high quality parenting support for every parent and is exploring the best way of doing this through a [national trial until 2014](#).

- Healthy eating – group classes, for instance in Children's Centres, on how to cook inexpensive, healthy meals and access fresh and affordable fruit and vegetables were popular where provided.

The pilots found that support that builds trust and recognises the achievement of small steps towards longer term goals brought early impacts on self-esteem. The Supporting Teenage Parents Pilot included individual life-coaching sessions, facilitated by qualified counsellors, encouraging young parents to explore their aspirations and redress factors preventing them from engaging with support.

Increased self-confidence promotes a sense of control and choice over the future and raises aspirations. Parents reported that when they felt happier in themselves, they were happier at home. This had positive impacts for their children. These 'soft outcomes' are important. Parental confidence builds over time and supports further engagement and progression so that families can thrive.

2

Foundations for
effective provision

The foundations for effective provision underpin the steps discussed in the previous section. They are cross-cutting, and relevant to whatever services or provision is developed or commissioned

Foundation: Measuring Success

Provision that is able to demonstrate effectiveness clearly and credibly is more likely to be successful when competing for resources. Programmes and services routinely collect a range of information – including assessments, records of progress, outcomes and costs.

An [effective evaluation](#) draws on management and other sources of information and should provide the evidence base that allows you to find out whether the services you are providing are achieving the desired outcomes in the most effective and efficient way. A logic model can be an excellent starting point for building understanding and consensus across stakeholders on the aims of the evaluation, its design and ensuring commitment to collecting high quality and timely data (see page 3).

Key lessons from across the Child Poverty Pilots Evaluations

- Different stakeholders have different evidence needs. Clarity about the data that will be collected as part of the evaluation and agreement across stakeholders that is sufficient to judge the effectiveness and value for money of the service is key.
- Data collection can be seen as a burden that detracts from delivery, so emphasise its importance.
- Embed data collection from the start. The pilots that didn't manage to set up data collection protocols early on had difficulties providing data and other evidence retrospectively.
- Data collection tools should be piloted and reviewed so that they can be tailored as required. Tools and systems may need to be adapted or created. Data collection tools that are difficult to use are likely to collect incorrect information unless well supported.
- Understand all the costs involved in delivering a service and collect cost data. This includes staff costs and the costs of other resources such as premises and equipment. Collecting comprehensive data on costs proved difficult across the pilots. Often this was due to the complex and intertwined nature of local service delivery and the way funding is allocated. When the ways in which resources have been allocated is not known, it is impossible to make judgements about cost effectiveness.

Data can be shared

Although many stakeholders have concerns, there is a range of legislation that allows partners to share data:

- Section 17 of the Children Act 1989
 - Provisions within the Welfare Reform Act 2012
 - Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
 - Section 251 of the NHS Act 2006
 - Section 2 (1) of the Local Government Act 2000
- Capture distance travelled. Progression pathways for some parents and families can be long. Capturing the 'distance travelled' towards final outcomes is an important element of a comprehensive approach to data collection. Existing tools should be used or adapted so that good quality data is collected. See resources section (page 19) for examples.
- Case studies are powerful for some stakeholders and for some forums. They illustrate the impact of provision in a quick and accessible way. They should detail the journey that service users have taken (consent will be required). Videos can demonstrate impact, although they require additional resources. Examples of pilot videos can be found in the resources section (page 19). Case studies can provide powerful illustrations but they can't be a substitute for clear, reliable, comprehensive data about inputs, outputs and outcomes. Examples of case studies from the pilots can be found [here](#).

Foundation: Sustainability

The Child Poverty Pilot evaluations demonstrate how it is important to plan for sustainability from the start of any new provision. If the provision that is developed is effective and there is evidence of this from monitoring and other data, how will it be continued once initial resources come to an end? A logic model can help identify short, medium and long term outcomes and support decisions about sustainability. It can be used to link outcomes to the local child poverty needs assessment and strategy and to other local priorities.

Build upon existing good or promising practice

The Innovation Pilot and the Supporting Teenage Parent pilot both highlight the importance of tailoring provision to local context – complementing and maximising the use of existing provision, partnerships, data and target groups. Models tailored to local issues, strengths and gaps were able to ensure they were appropriate, relevant and helped secure partners' commitment.

Working in partnership with existing provision increases the likelihood of sustainability in the longer-term. It also requires fewer resources, as not everything developed is new or delivered in isolation from other support and it becomes part of the local way of working.

Strong leadership supports sustainability

Senior leaders need to provide a clear message that the provision being developed is important to meeting local strategic outcomes and priorities. Strong leadership is required throughout all levels of management and practice. Senior support raises awareness and encourages 'buy-in' and 'ownership' amongst key decision makers. It helps to lever in resources from partners, which ensures that there is widespread support and participation. Governance arrangements that are inclusive of all stakeholders should be in place, to support effective practice, monitor and review progress and to promote sustainability in the longer term. Elected members are a source of political support and leadership. [The Local Government Association](#) is developing a guide to promoting the importance of tackling child poverty for elected members, which can be used to raise local political support for the services you deliver.

'Buy-in' supports sustainability

To help embed the messages about child poverty from strategic to operational level, Islington incorporated corporate objectives around child poverty in service delivery agreements and staff objectives.

In Tyneside's pilot, a 'mentor' system was set up between the newly trained community entrepreneurs and senior staff in the local authority. This helped to break down barriers and create consistency of messages about child poverty at all levels.

Build community capacity

Local voluntary and community sector organisations provide a source of capacity, as they involve local people working together, but also access to it, as they work closely with their communities. Provision that is developed with local people is more likely to meet their needs. Community capacity-building, including peer-led and co-production approaches, requires resources. They can be 'low cost, but are not free'.



Foundation: Workforce Development

Effective provision requires skilled staff and workforce development is another important theme to consider from the outset when planning new provision.

Skilled and knowledgeable staff are necessary for effective provision

Whether new roles are created or existing staff are asked to work in new ways or new settings, training and support is required to ensure that the right staff are in place and that they have the right skills and knowledge. In Cornwall, the Innovation Pilot worked with all of the children and families workforce to: increase understandings of the role of different practitioners in identifying and reducing child poverty; increase confidence in working with families experiencing poverty; and promoting access to a wide range of resources and networks across the county.

Cultural change may be required

In addition to formal, structured training, time and resources are likely to be required to support cultural change. This may include supporting new ways of working in new settings and with new partners (including volunteers or those involved in peer-led approaches), developing a new and shared understanding of target groups and how best to support them, as well as developing a culture of evidence gathering and review. Leadership and governance should recognise and support cultural change – see the section on page 6 on learning from the Work-Focused Services pilot.

Workforce development should be well resourced and well planned

Across the pilots, staff and stakeholders learned from each other about what was effective when working with families. The evaluations highlight how important it is that workforce development is carefully planned – so that it is appropriate for different groups and involves the right people at the right time. It needs to be well resourced so that it is not an add-on that carries little weight. A range of approaches are likely to be required – training on specific issues or to raise awareness of available resources, as well as using existing meetings to introduce new agendas, staff and provision. Good workforce development promotes buy-in, ownership and supports effective practice and sustainability. Joint training around new approaches can support joint working.

Child Poverty Workforce Resources

There is a range of high quality resources to support workforce development available from the Department for Education.

[Child Poverty Checklist](#) – consider areas related to workforce development (leadership, qualifications, practitioner support) as well as resources to support and inform them.

[Child Poverty Training Module](#) – brings together materials and resources for practitioners working with families to help them understand, recognise and tackle child poverty.

[Child Poverty Learner Resource](#) – tools and exercises to support the training module.

[Working with parents and communities](#) – a range of information including links to a wide range of resources.

[Family Outreach Training](#) – online resources to support effective outreach to families.



Foundation: Partnerships

All the pilot evaluations highlight the importance of partnerships for effective provision. Specifically to:

- Identify the parents and families to support and to understand the issues that they face;
- Enable access to target groups through local and existing (trusted) provision; and,
- Ensure a coordinated approach with other service providers to effectively address barriers to progression and for a multi-agency approach that supports families to thrive.

They also highlight that the time required for effective partnerships to develop was often underestimated in the design of the pilots. As well as having the right potential partners involved, a partnership between them needs to be underpinned by shared understandings of priorities and benefits.

Partnerships take time to develop

New ways of working, for commissioning as well as delivery, may require new partnerships. They can include those between local authority services, voluntary and community sector services, health bodies and schools, Jobcentre Plus staff, regeneration, employment and family and other services.

Co-location helps, but it isn't a necessity

Placing practitioners and professionals with different skills and expertise and from different organisations together promotes effective partnerships. It provides joint space for joint working and for necessary time to learn about each other and develop shared understandings. But co-location isn't always possible – there may not be the physical space – or desirable – there may be large geographical areas to cover or large numbers of staff involved in new approaches. What is important is that time, space and resources are found for effective partnerships to be supported.

Features of effective partnerships

Recognising the importance of partnerships is not new. But across the pilots, effective partnerships were identified as an outcome of the local programmes. The pilot evaluations highlight features of effective partnerships that stakeholders may already be well aware of. They remind us that partnerships should not be taken for granted. Effective partnerships require:

Consider employers as partners

Sefton created an 'Employer Award' to promote and reward family-friendly employment, linked to additional capacity in the authority's employment broker service. Working with employers to identify vacancies and place suitable candidates is a specialist skill.

In Westminster, employers were actively engaged in providing information days and tasters as part of corporate social responsibility. They also created additional job brokerage capacity. Employers were encouraged to provide information and taster sessions and to create opportunities in line with corporate social responsibility.

In Islington, family-focused support was similarly linked directly to the authority's employment service.

Employers are important partners to include and regeneration departments and Jobcentre Plus can provide links.

- Shared understandings of the aims and features of provision;
- Clear roles and responsibilities so that everyone knows their contribution and their place within any new structure or system;
- Clear leadership, management and governance to ensure partnerships are supported, reviewed and promoted at all levels; and,
- Resources and time to support partnership working that overcomes organisational and professional boundaries.

Resources

More information about the issues explored and identified in this Guide can be found in the additional resources below.

The Child Poverty Pilot Evaluation Reports

The reports that have informed this guide provide more information about the features and learning from each child poverty pilot.

- [Family Intervention Projects](#)
- [Local Authority Innovation Pilot](#)
- [School Gates Employment Support Initiative](#)
- [Support for Separating Parents](#)
- [Work-Focused Services in Children's Centres Pilot](#)
- [Teenage Parent Supported Housing Pilot](#)

For further information on the pilot programme please email the Child Poverty Unit at contacts.cpu@childpovertyunit.gsi.gov.uk

The Child Poverty Unit (CPU) Resources

- [Services and support to help end child poverty](#)
- [Developing local ways of working](#)
- [The Child Poverty Act 2010 and local duties](#)
- [The DWP information and resources on child poverty](#)

Sector-led Support

[The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes](#) in Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) provides a range of sector-led support, including practical resources, to improve outcomes across a range of areas including families, parents and carers and child poverty.

Commissioning Support

The Commissioning Support Programme provides flexible support to local authorities and their partners in commissioning services that improve outcomes for families. See <http://www.commissioningsupport.org.uk/>

The Child Poverty Knowledge Hub

This Local Government Association '[Knowledge Hub](#)' is an online community of practice providing resources, peer-support and information sharing.

Child Poverty Innovation Pilot Videos

- [Waltham Forest](#)
- [Islington](#)
- [Cornwall](#)

Soft outcome tools - examples

- [Workstar tool](#) & [User guide](#) published by DFE
- Guide to [soft outcome tools](#) published by DWP

Logic Model Guidance

- [The US W.G. Kellogg Foundation](#)
- [The Department for Transport](#)

Assessment and measurement tools - examples

- [From the Family and Young Carer Pathfinders](#)
- [From review of 'Team Around the Family'](#)
- [The Think Family toolkit](#)



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