

Centre of
expertise
on child
sexual abuse

The CSA Centre's Evaluation Fund: A reflection

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About the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre) wants children to be able to live free from the threat and harm of sexual abuse. Our aim is to reduce the impact of child sexual abuse through improved prevention and better response.

We are a multi-disciplinary team, funded by the Home Office and hosted by Barnardo's, working closely with key partners from academic institutions, local authorities, health, education, police and the voluntary sector. However, we are independent and will challenge any barriers, assumptions, taboos and ways of working that prevent us from increasing our understanding and improving our approach to child sexual abuse.

To tackle child sexual abuse we must understand its causes, scope, scale and impact. We know a lot about child sexual abuse and have made progress in dealing with it, but there are still many gaps in our knowledge and understanding which limit how effectively the issue is tackled.

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Summary

Many of the services that exist to prevent, disrupt or respond to child sexual abuse (CSA) have been developed rapidly by practitioners in response to an immediate need, on limited and short-term budgets, and have been delivered by small teams or organisations, often in the voluntary sector. There has been limited capacity and scope to build in effective evaluation that can capture evidence of effectiveness.

Over six months between October 2017 and March 2018, the Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre) funded 17 providers of CSA services in England and Wales to improve their capacity to assess and evidence their services' effectiveness.

These service providers' experiences of the 'Evaluation Fund' are set out in this report, and may prove valuable in the planning of any similar funding projects in the future. This report does not contain information about the evaluation tools developed through the Fund; this will be the subject of separate guidance to be published in 2019.

The Fund grantees were able to complete a number of evaluation activities within the six-month period of funding. They were positive about their experience of being funded, and about the support provided by the CSA Centre and the independent consultants with whom they were paired under a condition of their funding. They also gained a new appreciation for evaluation of their services, a better understanding of the complexity of the support they provided, and increased awareness of the need for tools that measure outcomes accurately and are designed with the involvement of young people.

Many of the grantees found the short timescale of the funding to be a challenge, but the overwhelming majority said they were already or nearly 'evaluation-ready' by the end of the funding period. Another challenge for some was the recruitment of young people and staff to participate in the development or testing of evaluation tools, but engagement with these groups and with other stakeholders was widely felt to be one of the most successful aspects of the funding.

While the Evaluation Fund was an ambitious and challenging project for the CSA Centre, we consider it to have been a successful initiative. The number of applications received for the Fund, at a time when the CSA Centre was still establishing itself, indicates a demand for developing evaluation capacity in CSA services. We believe that similar initiatives would offer a great opportunity for service providers to work towards addressing a gap in knowledge about what is effective when responding to CSA.

In the meantime, through our guidance published in 2019 we will aim to encourage evaluation, or improved evaluation, of a wider range of services which did not receive grants through the Evaluation Fund.

While the Evaluation Fund was an ambitious and challenging project, we consider it to have been a successful initiative

1. Introduction

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA Centre) is committed to building the evidence base on the effectiveness of services that respond to child sexual abuse (CSA). Commissioning and providing effective services is essential to intervention and recovery for children at risk of or affected by abuse, yet there remains a knowledge gap relating to approaches that work for children.

Among the services that exist to prevent, disrupt or respond to CSA, many have been developed rapidly by practitioners in response to an immediate need, on limited and short-term budgets, and delivered by small teams or organisations, often in the voluntary sector. There has been limited capacity and scope to build in effective evaluation that can capture evidence of effectiveness.

In 2017, the CSA Centre established an Evaluation Fund to stimulate and support the providers of services, so they could improve their capacity to assess and evidence those services' effectiveness. Organisations with a track record of delivering CSA services to young people in England and Wales were invited to apply for funding, which they could use to improve existing evaluation mechanisms or move towards becoming evaluation-ready over a six-month period.

Seventeen grants were awarded to organisations across England and Wales, for a six-month period from October 2017 to March 2018. The Fund gave the grantees an opportunity to lay the groundwork for understanding what is effective practice to prevent and tackle CSA, by producing evidence of what works and what does not work.

1.1. Purpose of this report

This report provides insight into grantees' experiences of the Evaluation Fund, which may prove valuable in the planning of any future funding projects of this kind. The information is derived from the learning report submitted by each organisation, a separate report submitted by their 'evaluation consultant', and reflections from the CSA Centre.

In 2019, the CSA Centre will publish guidance on developing tools to evaluate CSA services, based on the tools designed by grantees through the Evaluation Fund. Such guidance is outside the scope of this report.

Funding could be used to improve existing evaluation mechanisms or move towards becoming evaluation-ready

2. Administration of the Evaluation Fund

2.1. Application process

In June 2017, the CSA Centre invited applications for the Evaluation Fund from organisations with a track record of delivering CSA services to young people in England and Wales.

The application form required organisations to specify which of the following activities they would undertake to lay the groundwork for evaluation:

1. Work to document the service model/ document a specific intervention.
2. Work to create a Theory of Change or logic model.
3. Work to create a monitoring and evaluation framework/plan.
4. Work to identify specific outcomes.
5. Work to identify appropriate outcome measurement tools/ approaches.
6. Work to learn from service users' perspectives on meaningful outcomes for them.
7. Work to help analyse and reflect upon existing service data.
8. Work to embed or update the collection of data, within IT and/or administrative systems.
9. Work to pilot an established evaluation model and put in place processes to analyse the evaluation data from service users.

Each bidding organisation was asked to partner with an 'evaluation consultant' in making its funding application and in designing and implementing its specified activities. Evaluation consultants could be independent, agency or university-based individuals; some had an existing relationship with the bidding organisation through previous work, while others were approached specifically for the project. Bidding organisations were asked when applying for the Fund to build in the cost of using this impartial expertise.

2.2. Selection of organisations and activities for funding

Sixty-one applications to the fund were received. Applicants were shortlisted according to criteria set out in the grant specification, and shortlisted applicants and their evaluation consultants were invited to interview. The interview panel consisted of staff from the CSA Centre and members of its Advisory Board.

Successful applicants at the interview stage were subject to due diligence checks on safeguarding, finance and governance. Following these checks, the CSA Centre awarded 17 grants to service providers across England and Wales, for a six-month period from October 2017 to March 2018. These organisations provided services and support for a range of children and young people, including children with learning difficulties, children in care, asylum seekers and trafficked children.

It is important to note that award of an Evaluation Fund grant did not signify endorsement of a service by the CSA Centre.

2.3. Research Ethics Committee

To ensure that work undertaken through the Fund met ethical standards, the CSA Centre established an interim Research Ethics Committee (REC) consisting of experts in ethics, researchers, and practitioners from the field. Grantees were required to submit an application to the interim REC if they planned to speak to vulnerable groups or to anyone under 18, or were conducting research on a sensitive topic.

2.4. Support provided by the CSA Centre

Each grantee was allocated a contact at the CSA Centre, who completed an initial visit to the organisation and the evaluation consultant to find out more about their service and hear about their plan for using the funding. The CSA Centre contact was also available to provide assistance if the grantee needed further support during the work under the Evaluation Fund; otherwise, the evaluation consultant and the organisation were expected to work together to complete the activities.

Additionally, all grantees were invited to a Welcome Event, a Mid-Point Learning Event and a Wrap-up Event:

- Aiming to introduce grantees to each other and discuss the main aims of the Fund, the Welcome Event was attended by 31 individuals.
- The Mid-Point Event brought grantees back to discuss their progress, and the CSA Centre ran workshops to help overcome any possible challenges the grantees had. It attracted 27 individuals.
- The Wrap-up Event had 34 attendees and was a celebration of the accomplishments, with each grantee presenting on its achievements through the Fund. A final session focused on how to deliver learning workshops, aimed at enabling organisations to respond to findings from evaluation data in the future and encouraging their staff to appreciate the need for evaluation.

The sessions at the first two events are listed in Appendix A.

Further support provided included a theory of change webinar, which was recorded and uploaded to the CSA Centre's website (see www.csacentre.org.uk/research-publications/evaluation-fund/).

2.5. Learning reports

At the end of the funding period, grantees and their evaluation consultants were both required to complete learning reports. These form the basis of Chapters 4 to 7 of this report.



Each bidder was asked to partner with an 'evaluation consultant' in applying for the Fund and designing its evaluation activities



3. Funded organisations and activities

Table 1 lists the 17 Fund grantees, with a short introduction to the work they do, their location, and the evaluation consultant(s) they partnered with.

Table 1: Grantee details

Organisation	Location	Evaluation consultant(s)
Ariel Trust A creative, interactive CSE prevention programme delivered in schools across Merseyside.	Liverpool	Daniel Ellis, Dartington Service Design Lab
Basis Yorkshire A partnership providing specialist support to young women across Yorkshire who are or have been sexually exploited, or are at significant risk. Support includes early intervention, therapy, group work and specialist counselling.	Yorkshire	Amy Woolger, York Consulting
Brighton & Hove City Council Delivers children's social work services across Brighton and Hove.	Brighton	Kristine Hickle, University of Sussex
ECPAT UK Delivers group work to trafficked boys and girls across London and Manchester, many of whom have experienced sexual abuse or sexual exploitation.	London and Manchester	Lucie Shuker, Institute of Applied Social Research, University of Bedfordshire
The Green House Bristol Delivers therapy services for people who have experienced sexual abuse at any point in their lives, with the aim of increasing their mental health, wellbeing and resilience.	Bristol	Janine Edwards, Foundation for Social Improvement
Magdalene Group Provides one-to-one support to children and young people who have experienced or are at risk of CSE across Norfolk.	Norfolk	Centre of Health and Justice, University of Nottingham; Emma Bond, University of Suffolk; Lorraine Khan, Centre for Mental Health
New Pathways, Wales Provides one-to-one support for children and young people who have experienced CSA, including CSE.	Wales	OB3 Research
The Rape and Sexual Violence Project (RSVP) Provides support for children and young people in Birmingham and Solihull who have experienced sexual abuse. Services include crisis counselling, longer-term counselling, advocacy and prevention/educational tools.	Birmingham	Karen Garry, consultant
Rape Crisis South London, Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre Supports young female survivors of rape and sexual abuse in the 12 South London boroughs towards recovery through long-term counselling, ISVA support, body therapy, training and prevention, and outreach.	London	Dr Fiona Vera-Gray, consultant
Respond Provides one-to-one psychotherapy to children with learning difficulties that have experienced sexual abuse or are at-risk of sexual exploitation. Support is mainly delivered in special schools.	London	Lindsay Hodgson and Fiona Meeks, Catch Impact

Organisation	Location	Evaluation consultant(s)
Safe and Sound Group Works to keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and violence. Reaches out to those affected by CSE by providing one-to-one/group support to help young people move to a place of physical/mental/emotional safety, and provides training/resources nationally.	Derby	Sara Scott, DMSS
Safer London Works to prevent and address gang violence, vulnerability and sexual exploitation, providing needs-led intensive support, early intervention and mentoring through extensive, pan-London services.	London	Kristine Hickie, University of Sussex
Sheffield Futures Provides support to children and young people who have experienced CSA, including CSE.	Sheffield	Sarah Lloyd, consultant
Survivors' Network Provides a range of services for children and young people affected by sexual abuse, including counselling, advocacy, befriending, information and advice, a helpline and peer support.	Brighton	Dr Ceri Davies, consultant
Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust Preventative education for young asylum seekers (boys and girls) across the South East.	Sussex	Roland Marden, RM Insight
Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust Provides the sexual assault referral centre services across Sussex for children under the age of 14 years.	Sussex	Dr Claire Rosten, University of Brighton
Women and Girls Network Provides a range of holistic services for any women who have experienced gender-based violence. Support includes medium/long-term advocacy, advice, counselling and therapeutic and psycho-educational group work.	London	Shannon Harvey, consultant

In their final reports, consultants and organisations were asked which of the activities originally set out in their applications had been completed. The aggregate figures are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Activities completed through the Fund

Activity	No. of grantees who completed the activity	No. who did not complete the activity
Documenting the service model/a specific intervention	6	0
Creating a Theory of Change	6	0
Creating a monitoring and evaluation framework/plan	6	0
Identifying specific outcomes	6	0
Identifying appropriate outcomes measurement tools/approaches	8	2
Learning from current/past service users' perspectives on meaningful outcomes for them	6	1
Analysing and reflecting on existing service data	7	0
Embedding or updating the collection of data/other evidence within IT and/or administration systems	2	2
Piloting an established evaluation model and putting in place processes to analyse the evaluation data from service users	4	0

Work undertaken to complete these activities included:

- ▶ development of a theory of change and an initial set of tools through consultation with women and girls who had used or were using a service
- ▶ a scoping exercise for a client database
- ▶ development of an outcomes tool in consultation with staff and young people
- ▶ consultation on evaluation tools with management, frontline staff, children and young people, and parents and carers.

Some grantees, including the Safe and Sound Group and Basis Yorkshire, are now piloting the new outcomes tools which they developed.

Seven grantees used existing data to understand more about their services and the children and young people they helped. This included a social return on investment; an assessment of how children in local authority care face potential barriers to accessing health assessments at sexual assault referral centres; and understanding the experiences of young people who are placed in secure residential accommodation because they are at risk of sexual exploitation. Through these activities, organisations gained insights (discussed in section 4.6) which have been shared at external events.

As Table 2 shows, a few activities set out on the application forms were not completed by grantees. Reasons given for this included the relatively short project timescale of six months, delays starting the project owing to staff capacity, and difficulty recruiting young people to talk to; see section 5.2 for more about the challenges experienced by grantees.

However, 11 of the 17 funded organisations were able to complete activities additional to those set out in their original applications. These activities included:

- ▶ creating electronic versions of outcomes tools
- ▶ exploring the possibility of implementing follow-up measures
- ▶ exploring the possibility of investing in an administrator responsible for data entry
- ▶ undertaking a 'call for evidence' to make other local organisations aware of the project and collate learning.

Learning from the activities undertaken through the Fund will be presented in guidance to be published in 2019.



Eleven of the 17 funded organisations completed activities additional to those set out in their funding applications



4. Grantees' learning from the Fund

In their reports at the end of the funding period, grantees were asked what their biggest piece of learning was through the Evaluation Fund. Common themes in their answers are set out below.

4.1. A new appreciation for evaluation

A number of organisations said they learnt the importance of evaluation work through the Evaluation Fund, including the need to capture outcomes information from both young people and staff. The appreciation for evaluation was believed to have spread across organisations, in some of which evaluation had previously been “under-developed”.

“Perhaps the best result of the project has been the focus on impact that has been embedded as part of the service.”

“The case study interviews were the highlight of this evaluation, eliciting the intricacies of the work being done with young people has been fascinating and being able to feed back to staff what they have achieved and were actually not aware of (because no evaluation [has previously been] done) has been very rewarding.”

This was an area that the CSA Centre had wanted to develop, as we understand that organisations wish to focus on direct support for young people and often have little time or resources for evaluation.

4.2. Capturing the complexity of support

The CSA Centre believes it is important for organisations to have a ‘theory of change’, which describes the support provided to young people and the change that is expected through this support. Clarifying what it is that services are expected to achieve makes it easier to develop tools for evaluating those services’ effectiveness. We therefore

encouraged organisations to consider developing a theory of change when applying for the Evaluation Fund.

Six organisations developed a theory of change through the Fund, through which they were able to appreciate the complexity of the support they provided. In some cases, the support model had not previously been fully described and articulated to staff, but emerging theories of change enabled this to be done.

“This work has already given the team a newly found confidence in articulating the service.”

“Spending the time to outline an evaluation framework has helped to clearly define the work we are doing and the long-term aim of this work.”

Other grantees took alternative methods to document their model. The Women and Girls Network developed visual tools to capture the ethos and approach of its service provision based on the testimonies of service users in focus groups and interviews; this has developed the organisation’s thinking around outcomes and service delivery including the importance of creating welcoming and comfortable spaces.¹

4.3. The importance of involving young people

The CSA Centre encouraged grantees to consult young people when developing evaluation tools. While organisations spoke about the challenge of recruiting young people to consult, they typically overcame this challenge by consulting established youth participation groups within the organisation or young people who were near the end of their service intervention. The benefits they derived from doing so included learning about what young people believed the service achieved for them (with some outcomes such as ‘improved behaviour and performance at school’

¹ Women and Girls Network (2018) *Seeing The Inner Me: What Young Women Want from Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Services*. London: WGN.

previously not measured) and suggestions for outcomes tools. Some services had not previously consulted young people:

“Our consultation with service users went very well. This was the first time we had invited service users back into the centre to participate in research and it went very well. The service users were really happy being able to feed back on their experiences and told us they really enjoyed the group. In particular they mentioned that the way it was held made them feel happy to take part, i.e. everything was sent out in advance including the questions they would be asked, food and drink was provided, it was held at the centre where they were most familiar, consent made clear etc.”

4.4. The need for relevant tools to measure outcomes

For organisations to be able to measure the effectiveness of the support they provide, they need outcomes tools that are specific to what they deliver. Through the Evaluation Fund, grantees said, they gained a new appreciation of the importance of accurate, relevant tools. One organisation had previously tried to make existing tools fit its service; another's funders had asked it to use an outcomes tool that was not specific to its service. Both organisations now have service-specific tools developed through the Fund.

4.5. The importance of language in outcomes tools

Through consultation with young people, organisations learned about the importance of language in the outcomes tools they used. When one organisation consulted young people on existing outcomes tools,

for example, the young people said they considered the phrase ‘improved understanding of choices made by self and others’ to be victim-blaming. In response, the organisation amended this to ‘improved ability to reflect on past experiences’. Young people told the same organisation that an outcomes tool could best capture feedback on their support workers by describing them as ‘friends’; the support workers were concerned about the boundaries of a supporting relationship, however, so the wording of the outcomes tool was changed to ‘service users perceive key workers to be on their side’.

4.6. Learning from analysing and reflecting on existing data

The deep dives of data produced a number of insights. In the analysis of data on health assessments undertaken by Sussex NHS Trust, for example, it was found that children in local authority care were more likely than other children to be offered a health assessment (90% and 55% respectively) – but were less likely to attend the assessment (47% and 64% respectively). The work undertaken for the social return on investment for the Green House Bristol showed that the service under evaluation may be able to help family talk more about the abuse, and that family relationships can be improved post therapy.² Rape Crisis South London's review of case files, supported by additional interviews and focus groups, resulted in a thorough description of the support provided to survivors, as well as insights into the importance of the explicit use of the words ‘rape’ and ‘sexual violence’ for survivors and the appreciation of the specialism of the organisation's rape and sexual abuse support centre.³

2 Edwards, J. (2018) *“A Light in the Dark”: Impact Evaluation and Social Return on Investment Analysis of The Green House Therapeutic Service for Children and Young People Who Have Experienced Sexual Abuse*. Bristol: The Green House.

3 Vera-Gray, F. and Joanknecht, L. (2018) *Space for Self: The Therapeutic Model of the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC)*. Croydon: RASASC.

5. Grantees' successes and challenges

5.1. Successes

Organisations were asked to describe what went well through the Fund. The example most frequently listed was the level of engagement – among delivery staff, young people and wider stakeholders – within the project.

“The experience of having young people give their views has been really valuable... [It] has enabled us to really understand young people's experiences on a much deeper level than we previously understood, and provided us with preliminary evidence that the changes we made within the service several years ago were positive, resulting in outcomes that are better for young people.”

“We have never conducted interviews with external stakeholders before as we have not had the time or motivation to do so, but the responses from the interviews were interesting and perhaps indicate that this external feedback mechanism could prove valuable on an ongoing basis.”

As predicted by the CSA Centre, organisations valued working with evaluation consultants and the expertise they brought into the projects: the vast majority of organisations rated their support as very good (n=15) or good (n=1), with one organisation not answering the question. The consultants' expertise had enabled them to update evaluation tools to capture small, positive steps that young people achieve; implement tools to use staff as a knowledge source; and raise the profile of the support within the organisation. Organisations described the consultants as going above and beyond, offering “timely and insightful reflections”, bringing a “fresh perspective”, and providing guidance and support, including offering this on an ongoing basis. Two of the organisations emphasised that their consultants were instrumental to the activities and success of the funded projects.

“The experienced consultant we partnered with did an excellent job and was able to guide and support us through the process... [She] was very clear about expectations and was very skilled in eliciting what was important to service users in the 121 interviews she conducted as well as the focus groups she ran.”

Evaluation consultants were asked to what extent they believed that the findings or evaluation tools would be applied at the organisation. All 16 respondents said that it would be either fully applied (n=13) or partially applied (n=3). Reasons given for their confidence were that:

- ▶ new tools had already been piloted and/or rolled out across organisations
- ▶ learning would be used to inform decisions
- ▶ staff had been ‘brought on board’ through the activities undertaken through the Fund, so were committed to utilising these new tools.

In cases where the tools were not yet piloted, organisations had committed to piloting them and responding to feedback.

The grantees valued working with the evaluation consultants and the expertise they brought to the projects

5.2. Challenges

When asked whether they had experienced any challenges throughout the Fund, organisations and evaluation consultants most commonly cited the short timescale of the funding: one suggested that it would have been better spread over nine months. The six-month timeframe was unavoidable for the CSA Centre, which was required to spend its budget within the 2017/18 financial year, and we believed that meaningful work could be done within six months. If a similar fund is run in the future, we would suggest a slightly longer timeframe.

Other challenges included:

- an initial lack of evaluation processes within organisations, requiring some to start from scratch
- the difficulty of recruiting young people and staff to participate in the development or testing of evaluation tools.

While it is too soon to see whether the new evaluation tools have been implemented, the CSA Centre asked organisations to list any potential barriers to their uptake. Five organisations listed no such barriers, but others listed staff capacity and staff retention. The CSA Centre aimed to address these barriers at the final event for the grantees (see section 2.4), with a workshop covering the delivery of learning workshops which encourage staff to appreciate the importance of evaluation tools by reflecting on the learning they provide.

If a similar fund is run in the future, we would suggest a slightly longer timeframe than six months for the projects

6. Experiences of funding

Asked to rate their experience of the funding, all the organisations described it as positive (n=12) or somewhat positive (n=5).

“We are so grateful to the CSA Centre for this funding opportunity that has had a huge impact on what we do and how we will evaluate our work now and into the future.”

“Thank you for funding us to complete this work. It is difficult to find the time to think through how to best evidence the work we do and this has given us a rare opportunity to do just that.”

Among the 16 organisations that rated the welcome event, 10 considered it good and six very good, with respondents valuing the opportunity to network and understand the CSA Centre's expectations. The mid-point event was rated by 12 organisations: four rated it as very good and seven as good, saying that they valued the outcomes and database workshops and the chance to compare progress and challenges with other grantees, while one rated the event as average because they felt it was aimed more at researchers.

The overall support from the CSA Centre was considered very good (n=7) or good (n=7) by most organisations; two rated it as average. Organisations described the support as ‘positive’ and ‘responsive’, and particularly valued the initial visits.

“The CSA Centre has been very supportive of the work that we do and worked alongside us to get the best results with the funding provided.”

“Knowing that they were there, providing excellent resources and back-up, has been fantastic and it has been a privilege to be part of their work.”

“We have benefited greatly from the wealth of knowledge at the CSA Centre.”

“Support of the CSA Centre to engage and stay in touch over the course of the project. Opportunities to link in through workshops and regular communication helped the project stay on course and be reminded that support was available.”

One organisation felt that the CSA Centre contact had liaised with the evaluation consultant more than with the service. The evaluation consultants themselves particularly valued the resources provided and felt that the CSA Centre was responsive to requests. One organisation said it valued the help it had received from the CSA Centre to run a theory of change workshop.

Organisations found working with an evaluation consultant beneficial, and considered that funding to allow for this partnership was novel.

“It has been hugely beneficial to have brought an academic lead into the project.”

“The joined-up approach that the Centre has offered through partnering with evaluation consultants has been excellent.”

“Partnership of an external consultant was something we had not done previously and this has been highly beneficial.”

The funding allowed organisations the time to reflect on and improve services, which they had previously not had the resources to do.

“The rare opportunity to dedicate staff time and resources to outcomes work.”

“It is rare to receive funding to reflect on and improve internal processes... this funding increased our internal capacity to step back and put new systems in place that will make us stronger as an organisation.”



Asked to rate their experience of the funding, all the organisations described it as positive or somewhat positive



Asked to suggest improvements to the funding, three organisations said it would have been useful to have had a longer timeframe, and one considered that the expectation to attend events hosted by the CSA Centre had been too great.

The feedback on the CSA Centre's interim Research Ethics Committee (REC) was, overall, positive. Organisations considered it 'straightforward', 'quick' and 'easy to navigate', with one commenting that the feedback from the REC was useful and made them think about ethics across their organisation. Others said that they wanted the Centre to produce a consent template; that they felt the feedback went back and forth; and that the REC did not fully understand their youth-worker-centred approach. The CSA Centre has used the feedback on the interim REC when implementing its established REC, details of which are available at www.csacentre.org.uk/about-us/research-ethics-committee/

6.1. Responses from staff, young people and funders/commissioners

Organisations were asked how staff, young people and commissioners of services had responded to the Evaluation Fund.

The response from staff had been unanimously positive. Staff had described the evaluation tools developed by the organisations through the Fund as "useful" and "easy to complete". Organisations spoke about a shift in attitudes towards evaluation, which had been "previously seen as something required by funders" but was now "embraced" – with a shift away from measuring only activity and outputs to more outcomes-focused work. The Evaluation Fund was also seen as encouraging an appreciation of the work that staff do. The CSA Centre hopes that involving staff through the work of the Evaluation Fund will also result in more buy-in for the tools that have been developed through it.

Six grantees had spoken to service users through the Evaluation Fund. Young people had enjoyed participating in the activities undertaken, which consisted of designing and feeding back on evaluation tools, talking about their experiences of the service, and helping the service provider to document the support they received. Organisations and evaluation consultants had responded to the feedback when designing the evaluation tools, and this had been appreciated by the young people.

The majority of organisations said they had not yet had the opportunity to feed back to funders at the time of completing the report, but were planning to do so in the near future. Two organisations had already fed back the findings of and changes through the Evaluation Fund to commissioners, and both said the commissioners had reacted positively:

"Our local authority commissioners have responded relatively positively to the tools, as they see them as a positive step forward from the tools we were using."

"The Police and Crime Commissioner has been very pleased that we are now using the tools."

Grantees said evaluation had been 'previously seen as something required by funders' but was now 'embraced' by staff

7. Grantees' future plans

Organisations were asked about the next steps they planned to undertake following the end of the Fund. They spoke about looking to secure further funding, either for services or for research/evaluation, using the findings and evaluation tools developed to make a case for funding.

“[The evaluation consultant’s] guidance on longitudinal evaluation, as well as feedback on this from young people, has left [a] model in place we will use to apply for future longitudinal evaluation funding.”

One objective of the Evaluation Fund was to enable services to become evaluation-ready, and organisations were asked about their readiness for this. Two organisations did not answer this question as they had undertaken a deep-dive of existing data to enable them to learn more from their support. Of the remaining 15 organisations:

- ▶ five said they were ready to evaluate, explaining that the tools and/or systems were in place
- ▶ eight were nearly ready to evaluate, as they were piloting tools and/or making minor changes to evaluation frameworks
- ▶ two said that they were not ready to evaluate, but were finalising and implementing tools.

“Implementation of the new tools began on 1 April 2018. We do not yet have enough completed forms to enable an effective evaluation, but work has started. By 31 March 2019, we will be in a stronger position to judge the effectiveness of our interventions with young people.” (Organisation that is nearly ready to evaluate)

“The evaluation fund project has allowed us to review the systems we have in place and given us opportunities to come up with ways we can top this up. As part of this work we have also started considering applying for longitudinal studies to further evidence the impact of our work and we will now be hoping to apply for such a study.” (Organisation that is ready to evaluate)

Organisations spoke about using their findings and the tools developed through the Fund to make a case for further funding


8. Reflections from the CSA Centre

There is clearly a demand for developing evaluation capacity for services that respond to CSA. This is evident in the number of applications received for the Evaluation Fund, when the CSA Centre was still a new organisation and had not given services a long time to apply.


We, and the Evaluation Fund grantees, consider this type of funding to be unique as it enables services to partner with expertise which they may never have been able to access. It is too soon to know what impact the Fund has on organisations, but we are optimistic that grantees are reflecting on a new appreciation for evaluation across their organisations.

While the Fund was an ambitious and challenging project, we consider it to have been a success – and we believe that similar initiatives would offer a great opportunity for service providers to work towards addressing a gap in knowledge about what is effective when responding to CSA.

The next steps for the CSA Centre will include encouraging the uptake of findings from the Evaluation Fund by a wider range of services that did not receive funding. We will aim to achieve this through publishing guidance for CSA services in 2019 on how to evaluate, so that such services can implement or improve evaluation processes.



Next steps will include encouraging the uptake of findings from the Evaluation Fund by a wider range of services



Appendix A: Evaluation Fund events

Agenda for the Welcome Event

The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

A re-introduction to the CSA Centre, its aims and work to date

Aims of today and introduction to the Evaluation Fund

Re-introduction to the Fund and its key aims with an introduction to the team, overview of successful applicants and outline of learning outcomes.

Where are you now?

Table discussion – What do your monitoring and evaluation processes currently look like? What are the difficulties you hope to address?

Hopes for the Fund

Table discussion – Why did you apply to the Fund? What do you hope to achieve? What support would you like from the Centre?

Outcomes and outcome measures

Introduction on outcomes and outcome measures

Table discussion – what do you already know about key outcomes for this service/group of children and young people? How will you learn more? What outcome measures do you use? What are their strengths and weaknesses?

Ethics

Introduction to the Research Ethics process and the CSA Centre's Research Ethics Committee

Next steps

Round-up of the day and next steps for the Fund.

Mid-Point Learning Event workshops

Attendees at this event could choose between four workshops:

► **Option 1: Databases**

'So you want a database' explored how to choose an appropriate database, along with ideas on finding a fit-for-purpose database on a budget. Attendees learnt how to design a brief and how to best approach implementing a new system within an organisation.

► **Option 2: Outcomes**

Starting from a service's theory of change, this session focused on the outcomes for young people that services are aiming to achieve, and considered how these can be effectively evidenced. It emphasised the need for a good fit between the work undertaken and the changes that services hope to see for their young people; the crucial role of practitioner assessments; and the importance of obtaining feedback on services from young people and their parents/carers. Strengths and weaknesses of tools developed for a range of CSA (including CSE) services were discussed.

► **Option 3: Theory of Change**

This workshop answered questions, explored ideas and facilitated discussion arising from grantees' work completed on their theory of change so far.

► **Option 4: Responsive**

This workshop focused on the challenges faced through Fund activities so far, and facilitated a discussion between attendees to share and jointly explore solutions.

The logo features a colorful geometric pattern of triangles in shades of blue, purple, and green. Overlaid on this pattern is the text 'Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse' in a white, sans-serif font.

Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse

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