Evidence Group

24th January 2022

Attendees

Evidence Group members:

- Leon Feinstein, Evidence Group Chair
- Paul Bywaters, Evidence Group
- Lisa Harker, Evidence Group
- Geraldine Macdonald, Evidence Group
- John Simmonds, Evidence Group
- Oliver Southwick, Evidence Group
- Karen Broadhurst, Evidence Group
- Chris Wild, Experts by Experience Board & Evidence Group
- Dez Holmes, Evidence Group
- Donald Forrester, Evidence Group

Review Team:

- Josh MacAlister, Chair
- Duncan Dunlop, Independent Adviser to the Review
- Review Team Members
- Evidence Group Secretariat

Observing:

- Eleanor Briggs, What Works for Children's Social Care
- Aoife O'Higgins, What Works for Children's Social Care

Apologies:

- Janet Kay, Experts by Experience Board & Evidence Group

Agenda Item 1: Introduction and agreeing minutes of previous meetings

- Welcomed the group and agreed previous meeting minutes.

Agenda Item 2: Update on review activity and recommendations development

- Josh and the team updated the group on the review including review timing, engagement and evidence feeding into recommendations, call for ideas and a reminder of the problem analysis. The review shared early thinking for recommendations with the group and the group were invited to share any feedback following the meeting so time could be prioritised to discuss evidence.

Agenda Item 3: Next steps and timelines

- The team plan to share an early draft of the report (in confidence) towards the end of February and will ask the group for feedback.
- The review team updated the group on the internal evidence evaluation process for each recommendation area.

Discussion

- The group asked for clarity on conflicts of interest and the review team confirmed this applies for personal and organisational. The group suggested revisiting the conflicts of interests after the draft recommendations are confirmed.
- Encourage the review to take a rights-based approach whilst developing recommendations.
- 'Evidence led' should be defined for the internal evidence evaluation process to enable consistency. The team confirmed that policy teams will include evidence for the problem and evidence for the solution.
- Values led recommendations, those based on a theory of change, could be more complex as there could be little evidence for these.
- The group encourage the review to consider mechanisms for evidence to be included throughout the recommendation development phase.

Actions

- Analysis and research team lead to discuss 'what we mean by evidence' in each one-to-one with evidence group members. (6,1)
- The review team to determine the next group meeting and process for how the group can give considered feedback on the draft report. (6,2)

Agenda item 4: Data problems and solutions

- The chair led a discussion between the group on problems with data and how local authorities use children social care data. The group also discussed possible solutions to this.

Discussion

- The group discussed current problems with children social care data
  - Consider how data can be used to measure the success children's social care
  - Consistency of the intended outcomes for data
  - Quality of data and timeliness of data, how can technology support this to deliver
  - The role of data in helping to understand the cause of need and service management including factors outside of the service e.g. housing. A broader lens is needed to get a full picture of family life

- o Consider how to engage local authorities to understand the importance and value of data and the language around it
- o A need for a clear framework to define outcomes and allow diversity definition (children and families should be involved in defining this)
- o Data literacy challenge that overdetermines statistics and simple answers are not always fit for complex problems
- o Outcomes are usually related to interventions and relatively tightly defined logic models.
- o Challenge to government on what is measured and what is linked in data
- o A need for willingness to lead in LAs on data and take accountability, as well as DfE

- The group discussed some possible solutions which a couple of group members submitted in advance of the meeting. Some of the possible solutions covered were:
  - o Better statutory data
  - o Linked datasets
  - o Local analysis culture
  - o Local analysis skills
  - o Local analysis capacity
  - o Data infrastructure / tools
  - o Join up across other data projects
  - o Review how local authorities process data without adding extra burden

Actions

- Review team to consider holding a joint group session with some of the design group to discuss what would be helpful for any data recommendations. (6,3)

Agenda Item 5: AOB

- Thanked the group for joining and close.