

Coordinated Community Support Programme Year 1 Evaluation and Learning Report

Final report

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The Children's Society is proud to be working in partnership with the following organisations to deliver the Coordinated Community Support Programme

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Key Findings

The Coordinated Community Support (CCS) Programme works with four different local authority areas to set up pilot workstreams providing support, guidance and resources to local community organisations to better coordinate crisis provision within their local authority area. Taking a collaborative approach, the programme seeks to develop new approaches to supporting people facing financial crisis through the sharing of ideas, direct funding and supporting applications to welfare support. The programme also seeks to influence national systems by bringing policy makers and funders closer to the experiences of local people.

Our conclusions for Year 1 of the Coordinated Community Support Programme can be summarised as follows:

- **Significant progress made and strong relationships built:** the CCS Team have exceeded the number of people and organisations they have engaged through the Programme. The CCS Team have gained credibility and trust of a range of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations within 1 year. This achievement, especially during Covid-19 where face to face meetings have not been possible, is notable.
- **The Programme has been agile in response to Covid-19 with coordination remaining a key priority:** the Programme has allowed space for workstreams to be Covid-19 responsive (i.e. providing support in direct response to needs emerging because of the pandemic). Furthermore, the Programme team facilitated useful conversations at pilot site level to increase awareness of community needs arising due to Covid-19. While the focus of Year 1 at pilot site level has been somewhat adapted due to Covid-19, the core value of improved coordination remains visible and attainable. In some cases, Covid-19 has catalysed improved coordination.
- **Preconditions for systems change at local level:** Year 1 of the Programme has built some solid foundations for systems change in each of the four local areas. This includes improved coordination, improved recognition of the strengths of different organisations and some firm plans to develop coordinated systems for Years 2 and 3 of the Programme.
- **Learning how to improve pathways and experiences for people who access services:** through the funded workstreams, Year 1 of the CCS Programme has enabled some rich learning and reflection about how VCS organisations support their communities. For example, the unique and trusted relationships that are built, innovative ways to keep in touch with people during lockdown and how to mobilise resources at times of crisis.
- **Iterative and evolving Programme:** the Programme has learning at its heart. There is an acknowledgment amongst the CCS Team that the initial five Programme themes will need to be adapted – partly in response to Covid-19 and partly due to learning via the workstreams.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The Children's Society (TCS), in partnership with several organisations including Buttle UK, the Lloyds Bank Foundation, Children in Need, The Church of England, The Legal Education Foundation, The Local Government Association (LGA), Trust for London, Smallwood Trust, Stepchange and Trussell Trust are delivering the Coordinated Community Support (CCS) Programme.

The three-year programme has the following objectives, as described in the original proposal:

- To ensure that more people have access to the emergency support provision they need, at the point when they need it.
- To ensure that Local Welfare Assistance Schemes (LWAS) and the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) scheme are delivered effectively, and to reduce duplication of crisis support provision available locally.
- To reduce the recurrence of crises by improving local referral networks.
- To improve the provision of crisis support nationwide by sharing learning from those areas where projects are delivered, with other Local Authorities across the country.

The Programme was devised in response to the localisation of welfare assistance in 2013, and research conducted by The Children's Society with The Church of England (the 'Not Making Ends Meet' report).¹ Before 2013, there was a national scheme of crisis loans and community care grants. However, reform of the system led to the establishment of Local Welfare Assistance Schemes (LWAS), which are now administered by upper-tier local authorities in England. The funding for these schemes is not ring-fenced for that purpose, and the overall sum of money for crisis support has reduced over time. Funding in England fell in real terms from around £291 million in 2010/11 to £132 million in 2020/21, a reduction of 55%.²

In Wales, the Discretionary Assistance Fund (DAF) provides two types of grant – the Emergency Assistance Payment (EAP) and the Individual Assistance Payment (IAP). The DAF is administered centrally by the Welsh Government, in contrast to the decentralised local welfare assistance model in England.

1.2 Programme design

The CCS Programme works with organisations in four different local authority areas to setup and pilot projects providing the support, guidance and resources to better coordinate crisis provision within their locality. To identify the four areas, expressions of interest were sent to all Local Authorities with 20 submitting expressions of interest. As a pre-requisite for Local Authorities to be considered as a pilot site, they needed to have an LWAS

¹ The Children's Society and The Church of England (2018) *Not Making Ends Meet: The precarious nature of crisis support in England*

² The Children's Society (2020) *Leave No Family Behind: Strengthening Local Welfare Assistance during Covid-19*

in place and a commitment to continue funding it throughout the duration of the Programme. The TCS team shortlisted eight who were interviewed and asked:

- How they felt the Programme could support with the delivery and development of their LWAS provision?
- What areas did they feel their LWAS was lacking and why?
- How did they see this Programme sitting more broadly within their strategic vision for their support for vulnerable residents?
- What did they think was working well within their local authority area?
- How well developed did they think their networks with the VCS were?

Following these interviews, the following local areas were chosen as pilot sites:

- Norfolk (County council, rural).
- Oldham (Unitary authority, urban).
- Swansea (Unitary authority, devolved nation, urban).
- Tower Hamlets (Unitary authority, urban).

The local pilot work is supported and facilitated by a national level CCS Team consisting of a Programme Manager supported by two Programme Officers. The Programme is also supported by a Learning Facilitator and an independent external evaluation.

The Programme is founded on five themes, or key components, within each pilot site:³

- **Improving access to crisis support schemes:** too often people 'bounce around' between different services trying, but failing, to access crisis support. The CCS Programme seeks to address this by better marketing of local crisis support provision to those who need it, and by supporting a wide range of local services to be able to support people to access crisis support – rather than simply signposting them on to another organisation.
- **A simpler, supported, application process:** when people do find out about the support available, making an application can be challenging. Making these requests can involve filling out lengthy and confusing forms, providing a substantial amount of evidence and waiting, often for an unspecified amount of time, to hear the outcome. The CCS Programme seeks to address this, both by improving application processes themselves, and by supporting staff to assist with making applications.
- **Addressing underlying needs to prevent the recurrence of crisis:** an important element of the project is that service users are not just supported to address the immediate crisis, but to address the causes of crisis and prevent recurrence. In order to do so, staff need training and time to enable work with service users to (1) understand why they reached crisis point, and what support would be needed to prevent recurrence, and (2) make a successful referral into other services within the local crisis support network which can help address these issues.

³ The Children's Society (2019) CCS Programme proposal

- **Providing aftercare:** The Children’s Society’s ‘Not Making Ends Meet’ research into crisis support provision in England found that, where it was available, families really valued good aftercare and seemed to make an important difference to long term outcomes, including the incidence of repeat financial crisis.
- **A commitment to ongoing learning:** each pilot local project will differ, depending on their local context and priorities. This both gives the opportunity to test different approaches, and to learn from the outcomes delivered in different parts of the country – making changes to schemes as they develop. Learning will be shared with other Local Authorities in the pilot, and other parts of the country.

When the Coordinated Community Support Programme was designed, there were conversations amongst the partners about the extent to which the Programme should be ‘interventionist’ (i.e. prescribe outcomes and suggested activities) vs. ‘coproduced’ (i.e. with outcomes agreed at local level) with delivery organisations in the local pilot sites. There have been challenges associated with this ‘ownership’ continuum as described later in the report.

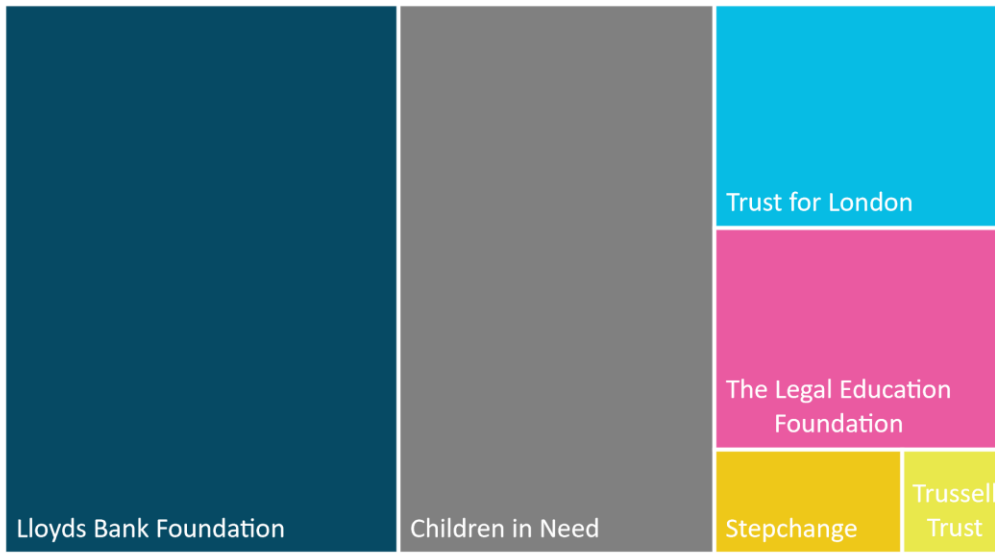
1.2.1 Programme funding and governance

The Coordinated Community Support Programme is governed by a Programme Board consisting of representatives from the Programme’s funding organisations and other national partners. The Board meets every quarter and is supplemented by a learning and evaluation group (in turn made up from representatives of organisations on the Programme Board).

The Programme originally envisaged that steering groups would be formed at a local level to contribute to the Programme being locally owned. While pilot-site Steering Groups have not materialised, the Programme has invited all involved pilot-based organisations to sign a charter to demonstrate their commitment to the values of the Programme. To move towards a group of organisations with a sense of investment in the Programme, it was decided that local charter signatories are consulted on any funding arrangements and that organisations in receipt of funds must also be a charter signatory.

The Programme has secured external funding of £1.4m from seven external funders. Bringing together this number of independent funders to contribute towards a single Programme is, in itself, a considerable achievement. An overview of funders supporting the core costs of the Programme by relative size of their contribution is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Funding mix of the Coordinated Community Support Programme by contribution



Source: CCS Programme team

Each funder has a different focus, and this illustrates the multifaceted nature of the problem and reflects the ambitious aims of the Programme. The Programme aims to contribute to a range of issues associated with crisis support but recognising the role that systems change (namely, coordinated systems) has to play in addressing challenges and ultimately resulting in better outcomes for service users.

In addition, Smallwood provided funding to support direct grant funding for individuals and almost £70,000 has been leveraged from other sources (namely Martin Lewis Fund, Paul Hamlyn Foundation and the East End Community Fund). Further information about this leveraged funding can be found in Chapter 3.

1.3 Evaluation approach

1.3.1 Programme Theory of Change

In Autumn 2019, when Cloud Chamber was appointed to evaluate the Coordinated Community Support Programme, it was still in the early stages of implementation. Four pilot sites had been identified and a draft Theory of Change had been compiled by the TCS Evidence and Impact team in collaboration with the CCS Programme team. Cloud Chamber worked with the Programme team to refine the Theory of Change and align it with the five Programme themes (access, application, underlying need, aftercare and learning) as well as conceptualising the Theory of Change within three impact tiers - impact on people, impact on local systems and impact on national systems. This is represented diagrammatically at the beginning of each relevant chapter in this report (p35, p40& p54).

What is a Theory of Change?

A Theory of Change (ToC) is a description of how change happens in the short, medium and long term to achieve the intended impact. It can be represented in a visual diagram, as a narrative, or both.

A ToC can be developed at the beginning of a piece of work or to describe an existing piece of work. In this case, the ToC was developed in the early stages of Programme implementation. The objectives of the Programme had already been set prior to the ToC development and some activity had already been delivered. The ToC sought to gain further clarity on the intended outcomes, how they relate to one another and to provide a basis for lines of enquiry for the evaluation.

It is important to note that the Theory of Change was developed before the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK. Many of the assumptions underpinning the Theory of Change have been challenged during Year 1 and a discussion of this can be found throughout this report. Furthermore, aligned with the learning spirit of the Programme, the Theory of Change is regarded by Cloud Chamber as an iterative theory and the outcomes articulated in Year 1 will not necessarily be relevant in Years 2 and 3. In addition, unexpected or unintended outcomes have emerged in Year 1 and are discussed in this report.

What do we mean by systems change?

There is no one accepted definition of systems change although most definitions are concerned with understanding how parts of a system interact, the relationships between people and processes and the behaviors that emerge as a result. Systems change is concerned with influencing, altering and/or changing the components and structures that cause a system to behave in a certain way.

Our definitions of systems change for the purposes of this evaluation are best articulated in our Theories of Change (see relevant chapter in this document) but can be summarised as:

- Systems in four local areas are more coordinated to improve client experience and prevent recurring crisis.
- Learning and good practice from the Programme is adopted beyond pilot sites at a national level.

1.3.2 Evaluation activities and data

The evaluation brief was primarily summative in nature; assess the impact of the Programme. There were also formative elements, where the evaluation team works with the Learning Facilitator to highlight barriers and enablers to impact. This report covers the first year of delivery of the Programme, from August 2019 to September 2020.

From the outset, we recognised that our evaluation methodology would need to be flexible and responsive to the activities designed in the four local pilot sites. In keeping with the spirit of the Programme, we wanted each local pilot site to have a bespoke set of outcomes that resonate with their aspirations. The following evaluation activities and data inform the Year 1 evaluation report as detailed in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Evaluation data sources

Activity / data	Details	Timeframe
Desk review of implementation plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme application Board papers 	November 2019– May 2020
Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Steering Group Attendance Pilot site delivery meetings (eight attended) Cross-site best practice call reach 	February to May 2020
Programme team consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly reflective sessions with the CCS Team and the Learning Facilitator National systems ‘downloads’ group consultations with CCS Team on a bimonthly basis (May 2020 and ongoing, three in total) Interviews with four members of the CCS Programme team (October 2020) 	Ongoing from March 2020
CCS partner survey: systems change	An online survey regarding ‘Local systems change’, n=56. All organisations invited to participate in the Programme were invited to complete this survey. Relevant data is provided in Appendix 2	June 2020
Workstream case studies	Documentary and monitoring data review plus 15 interviews with delivery leads and partners	August – October 2020
Monitoring data analysis	Analysis of monitoring data collated by the TCS Evidence and Impact team	September-October 2020
Outcome setting workshop	Qualitative data from the outcome-setting sessions facilitated by Cloud Chamber	September 2020
Perspectives of crisis provision research	Survey (n=41) carried out by the CCS Team and Amy Edwards as part of the ‘analysis of perspectives of crisis provision ⁴ ’ research project included some evaluation-specific questions designed by Cloud Chamber	October-November 2020

The methodology set out in the initial evaluation framework has been modified in response to Covid-19 and in alignment with the flexible nature of the Programme. During the lockdown period, the Cloud Chamber evaluation team observed partnership calls in order to get a ‘real time’ feel for how the Programme was responding and supporting organisations to respond to Covid-19. It also allowed the evaluation team to be a sounding board for the CCS Programme team throughout the first lockdown to share reflections, observations and support in decision making for the team. In this sense our evaluation shifted from a summative exercise to a developmental approach.

⁴ Focus groups have been undertaken with local authority representatives and VCS representatives as well as 1-2-1 interviews with beneficiaries of crisis provision locally. The research aims to get a better understanding of is the different understandings of what constitutes a ‘crisis’ and ‘crisis provision’ as well as awareness and perceptions of provision. This Year 1 report incorporates survey data from this research project.

Five Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were set for the Programme at proposal stage. These are shown in Appendix 1 with some narrative around Year 1 progress. The KPIs focus on receiving, and referral to crisis support, as well as engagement of organisations.

1.3.3 Workstream case studies

Given the significant disruption caused by Covid-19, it was agreed that a useful lens for the Year 1 evaluation would be to conduct workstream case studies in each pilot site. Seventeen workstreams were funded through the Coordinated Community Support Programme with an additional five funded through leveraged funds. It was agreed that four case studies would be selected out of this total. The aim was to have a good balance of workstream type, beneficiary group and thematic focus. The following case studies were therefore identified:

- Mulberry School Food and Advice Service (Tower Hamlets).
- Norwich Integration Partnership (Norfolk).
- Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST) Centralised Hardship Fund (Swansea).
- Support & Action Women's Network (SAWN) extended support service (Oldham).

Fifteen (15) interviews were carried out in total to inform these case studies. The findings in this report are heavily influenced by learning from across the four case studies and have been triangulated with other data sources, as noted above.

1.3.4 Learning Programme

Accompanying the evaluation is a learning programme, led by the Learning Facilitator. The purpose of the learning programme is:

- To support pilot areas in real time learning from experience and from each other.
- To support partner sites in understanding what it would take to improve coordination of crisis response in their area.
- To enable learning from the Programme to be communicated to other stakeholders.
- To contribute (alongside evaluation) to learning in relation to policy and legislation at national level.

During the first year the learning programme included the following activities:

- February/March 2020: Four reflective calls with three or four key people from each of the pilot sites to review the set up and implementation planning process.
- April–June 2020: Developing and hosting a range of 'practice sharing' Zoom calls for people from across the pilot sites. These included:
 - An 'open call' to discuss the implications of lockdown (April 2020).
 - A themed call on the issue of 'reaching those most likely to slip through the cracks' (May 2020).
 - A practice sharing call for the four Local Authorities (May 2020).
 - A 'Looking Ahead' workshop for those from the pilot sites and the national Programme looking ahead to key issues for the recovery phase of the pandemic (June 2020).
 - An open meeting for the ten partner sites to update on the Programme and share emerging themes (July 2020).

- Two rounds of 1-1 reflective calls with members of the CCS Programme team to review issues arising (January & August 2020).

Reflections and questions from these activities were summarised into reports and discussion items for the quarterly meetings of the learning and evaluation group (held in November 2019, February, May, September 2020).

1.3.5 Method adaptations and limitations

As a result of Covid-19, a number of additional adaptations have been made to our evaluation methodology:

- **Service user evaluation engagement:** core to our initial approach was a method based on observational and qualitative evidence gathering. Our initial planned methodology included some ethnography and in-depth interviews at the delivery sites, helping our evaluation teams to build relationships with workstream providers and some service users. Due to Covid-19 this has not been possible. Furthermore, late in 2020 an additional piece of research was commissioned by the Programme, known internally as the 'analysis of perspectives of crisis provision' research project. The research has service user interviews as part of its methodology and includes approaching CCS workstreams to identify service users. We recognised the burden that inviting interviews with service users for two pieces of work (the research project and the evaluation) would have on delivery organisations and agreed that the 'analysis of perspectives of crisis provision' research project would carry out interviews (with some evaluation-specific questions included) and share the data with Cloud Chamber. Interviews were ongoing with service users as part of the research at the time of drafting this Year 1 report.
- **Focus on local systems change:** much of the observational work carried out by the evaluation team in the first half of 2020 highlighted the fact that the CCS Team were working hard to lay some foundations for systems change amongst local delivery organisations. This is reflected in the Year 1 evaluation resource and report. The aspiration is for Years 2 and 3 to have a balanced and proportionate methodology between Tiers (1, 2 and 3) of the Programme Theory of Change.
- **Baselining:** it was agreed that baselining the Programme in Year 1 would be inappropriate for two reasons. Firstly, the start of the Programme was August 2019, although for many delivery providers they envisage the start of the Programme to be when workstream funding was received (which did not happen until March 2020 in many cases). Secondly, it became apparent that a meaningful retrospective baseline would be challenging to capture given the Covid-19 pandemic. For many delivery partners, the Programme became visible and useful at the point of the first national lockdown in March 2020. While we do not have a robust baseline for the Programme Theory of Change, we have two data sources which we consider to be a proxy or quasi-baseline which may serve as useful points of comparison in Years 2 and 3. Firstly, our local systems change survey in April 2020 (n=56) and secondly the 'analysis of perspectives of crisis provision' evaluation questions.

The evidence presented in this report also has some limitations, which include:

- **Monitoring data:** the variable nature of workstreams, their local context, differing delivery periods, and the bespoke nature of monitoring data for each has meant that there are consistency issues when comparing or aggregating data.
- **Reliance on case studies:** while there is good spread across each of the pilot sites, we have a reliance on a small number of case studies which means we are unable to fully generalise our findings across the whole Programme.

1.4 About this report

This report has been drafted by the Cloud Chamber evaluation team with contributions from the Learning Facilitator, Janet Grauberg. Learning Facilitator contributions are labelled as such and marked in a pink text box.

2 Responding to Covid-19

2.1 Introduction

The CCS Programme, like many other programmes, had to significantly alter its approach in response to Covid-19. At the point that the national lockdown started, in March 2020, the Programme had:

- Engaged with a wide range of local organisations in each of the pilot areas.
- Conducted scoping meetings to shape the Programme.
- Produced draft implementation plans, focusing on core workstreams based on the needs identified in earlier stages. These were drafted by the CCS Team in consultation with organisations in the pilot sites.

This chapter includes some context to Local Welfare Assistance Schemes (LWAS), how the Programme workstreams responded to Covid-19, and how the applicability of the Programme Theory of Change changed.

2.2 Local Welfare Assistance Scheme context

Local responses to the crisis were observed within LWAS including:

- Relaxing limits on the frequency of applications.
- Reducing the amount of evidence required.
- Cash handouts.
- Reducing the length of application processes.
- Changing assessment practices.
- Increased funding and personnel to deliver the scheme.

This can be seen in data from the LWAS for each of the pilot areas, collated by the Programme team. We have aggregated data from three local areas in the below figure. The average number of applications per month doubled from 2019/20 to 2020/21, with the number of awards in 2020/21 exceeding those for 2019/20, despite not having data for the full year (only five months of data was available for 2020/21). The average award rate increased from 48% in 2018/19 to 61% in 2020/21; reflecting local responses to the crisis noted above.

Figure 3: LWAS application and award statistics in three pilot sites

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21*
Applications**	14,422	16,812	13,977
Average applications per month	1,202	1,401	2,795
Awards**	6,979	8,510	8,539
Awards per month	582	709	1,708
Award rate	48%	51%	61%

Source: CCS, from LWAS schemes in each pilot area. *Data is for five months only, April to August. **Excludes data for Norfolk, where statistics were only available for 2018/19

While increases in LWAS support were welcomed, there remained three key issues commonly unmitigated within LWAS as reported at the Programme Board in June 2020:

- Support for those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF).
- Working with schools to provide support for families not currently able to attend.
- Supporting with issues around access to essential items.

This shaped the response to Covid-19 by the Programme, directing efforts towards these issues at a local pilot site level.

2.3 Workstream response

The figure below provides an overview of the workstreams planned in each of the pilot sites before Covid-19 and the UK lockdown.

Figure 4: Planned Coordinated Community Support Programme workstreams as of February 2020

Common themes	Swansea	Oldham	Norfolk	Tower Hamlets
Referral systems	Single point of referral	Common referral form across Agencies	Referral system & Awareness Raising	School engagement/referrals
Grant awareness	Grant awareness raising	Grant Awareness raising		Grant awareness
Translation / interpretation	Translation, Interpretation & NRPF Support	Translation & Interpretation	Translation & Interpretation	
Repairs and/or provision of goods			Repairs and Services Fund	Furniture deliveries & installation Repairs and services
Other	Legal outreach Peripatetic Advice Services and Out of Hours Support Co-produced fuel poverty fund Financial literacy and credit union engagement	Universal Pass (for the Homeless) Travel/Emergency Fund Co-production with clients Legal provision	Peripatetic Services	Food pantry (food and support services)

Source: CCS Report to Programme Board, February 2020

The national lockdown and response to Covid-19 meant that many of these workstreams needed to be adapted, postponed, reprioritised or halted altogether. Networking and engagement meetings (facilitated by the CCS Team) in each locality continued during lockdown to share practice across Programme sites. The Programme also diverted funding from Year 1 to supporting Covid-19 responses, and additional funding was levered-in from other funders and distributed to organisations across the Programme.

Figure 5: Workstreams funded in Year 1 of the CCS Programme

Swansea	Oldham	Norfolk	Tower Hamlets
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Citizen's Advice Swansea Food Parcel Leaflet (£110)	Ancora KeyRing food parcel leaflet (£55)	Leeway: Smallwood funding for 'home start' packs (£4,500)	Island Advice / Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network (THCAN): School referral project (£5,000)
Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST) Centralised Hardship fund (£9,000)*	Ancora KeyRing Emergency hardship fund (£3,125)	Norfolk Citizen's Advice: Grant Awareness project (£7,600)	Mulberry School food and advice service (£20,000)*
Housing Justice Cymru, Citadel (£12,883)	REEL clothing bank (£3,200)	Norfolk Citizen's Advice: Digital Inclusion project (£1,200)	RSS Training session with Northgate and Tower Hamlets local authority (no cost)
The Wallich Home Starter packs (£2,625)	SAWN Furniture and Extended services (£9,650)*	Norfolk Community Law Service: Family Solicitor Expansion (£5,000)	
		Norwich Integration Partnership: joint project (£16,298)*	
		Norfolk Community Advice Network: Development and staffing resource for NCAN system (£6,552)	
		Additional workstreams funded through funding leveraged ⁵	

Source: Cloud Chamber informed by Half Year Programme Report, October 2020 and consultation with the CCS Team. Workstreams in **bold** font are case studies in this evaluation. Those marked with an * have additional resource funding from leveraged sources explained in more detail in section 3.3.2 of this report.

2.4 Programme learning in response to Covid-19

2.4.1 Access to services

The Programme actively brought organisations responding to the Covid-19 crisis together and offered a chance to exchange experiences and understanding of the emerging needs resulting from lockdown. Cloud Chamber observed these sessions, and the key ways Covid-19 changed how organisations were able to help service users in crisis:

- **Structural changes in how services are delivered:** the physical lockdown, and subsequent social distancing meant there was a significant shift in interactions with clients.
- **Digital exclusion:** in shifting to remote delivery, digital exclusion was a key barrier to inclusiveness and access to crisis support, there was an impact on educational outcomes and it was a particular issue for asylum seekers and those with NRPF.
- **Complexity:** Covid-19 has highlighted the complexity of issues facing people and the sometimes limited nature of delivery providers to respond.

⁵ Leeway: Funding for client transport costs (£3,200); Norfolk Citizen's Advice: Covid-19 hardship fund (£9,000); Norwich Integration Partnership: Covid-19 hardship fund (£7,880)

- *“I had an enquiry from an elderly couple who had [sensitive issue explained]. I was unable to help as much as I wanted because there were so many issues. Social isolation, DV, furlough, so much going on.” (VCS partner)*

2.4.2 Impact of Covid-19 on local systems

Since Covid-19, there is evidence of organisations working hard together to understand need, share information and collaborate. This suggests that organisations have the ability to collaborate closely when required and in response to critical circumstances. This is corroborated by our systems change survey (albeit a small sample). This suggests that both the awareness of services, support and advice for people in crisis had marginally improved since the Covid-19 crisis (+5% on a 5-point Likert scale), as well as communication between organisations in the local area (+4%).

Again, the systems change survey suggests that organisations had a slightly better understanding of barriers to crisis support facing clients following Covid-19, compared with the situation before the pandemic. Conversely however, the ability to address barriers to crisis support was negatively affected by Covid-19 (albeit marginally).
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Our observations and case studies have highlighted several key factors that might affect approaches to systems change. These relate to referrals, speed of decision making, collaboration, and understanding and addressing barriers. Covid-19 appears to have increased recognition of the importance of robust referrals between agencies.

- *“I think we as groups need to help with brokering [signposting and referring] rather than try to meet the needs all the time. Are we armed with the information? Can we broker to help people access it?” (VCS partner)*

Due to ‘firefighting’ in response to Covid-19 working relationships have been catalysed with pragmatic decisions taking precedent over strategic considerations.

- *“When I called the homeless team [in local authority] I wasn’t supported. There comes a time where we have to break the mould. My message to the local authority is we need to break the mould.” (VCS Partner)*

The appetite for VCS organisations to collaborate with one another appears to have been catalysed due to Covid-19. In Tower Hamlets, one advice provider is able to take referrals from another having previously never collaborated; specifically, this is a school running a foodbank referring into an advice provider. In Oldham, there was appetite for organisations working with victims of domestic violence (DV) to share information and cross-refer.

- *“We forged a relationship with [another VCS org] and I’m hoping it will continue. There is lot of opportunity for this joint working. We can understand more about what each other can do. This is beneficial for us as workers and the people we are trying to support as well.” (VCS partner)*

2.5 Responding to Covid 19: Reflections from Learning Facilitator

2.5.1 Changing Mode of Delivery

The key feature of the pilot sites' response to Covid-19 lockdown was a rapid change in the mode of delivery, from a primarily face to face model to almost totally online or telephone-based. There were also examples of new services being mobilised (particularly food support) and new partnerships being forged:

- The school-based food bank in Tower Hamlets and their partnership with an advice worker.
- The development of a single hardship fund for migrants and refugees held by one VCS organisation in Swansea, and the emergence of a network of advice organisations in Tower Hamlets.

In many cases, the organisations achieved in days and weeks changes that had been under discussion for years. In reflecting on these rapid changes in mid-April, we used the 'COM-B' behaviour change model.⁶ It suggests behaviour changes when there is:

- Capability to change (e.g. skills to work in a new way).
- Motivation for change (personal and organisational).
- Opportunity to change (the time is right).

We concluded that the Covid-19 lockdown had led to surge in motivation for change, as organisations realised otherwise clients would not get food, support or advice. This was accompanied by an increase in opportunity as people worked longer hours and new organisations (such as the Tower Hamlets school, or mutual aid groups) took on crisis support roles. Some of the opportunity came from organisations not doing their 'day-jobs' – the school wasn't teaching, and one of the Swansea asylum seeker support charities was no longer cooking a weekly community lunch.

The issue of capability was the limiting factor, with staff having to learn how to work digitally being the key challenge. Organisational capability also featured in discussions as the immediate crisis subsided, for example, which of the Swansea organisations was best placed to hold a fund on behalf of other organisations.

2.5.2 What the Covid-19 pandemic revealed about the nature of crisis

The calls with the pilot sites during lockdown revealed a wide range of concerns, but most frequent included:

- **The scale of the demand:** the Citizens' Advice team in Norfolk said that the GP Social Prescribing team had sent them 2,500 contacts who they felt would need support.
- **Supporting welfare benefits applications:** the challenge of supporting people to complete Universal Credit & Personal Independence Payment (PIP) forms when advisers couldn't see the paperwork or the online form.
- **Loss of face to --face engagement:** reaching those who might be in need, but who did not know where to turn now that face to face services were closed. At the practice sharing call on 11 May the pilot sites shared ideas for this, including greater use of partner organisations to promote your services (e.g. advice leaflets in food bags) and proactively contacting previous service users.

- **Supporting those digitally excluded:** the 11 May call also shared good practice such as using WhatsApp to attach photos or files of key advice, or videos in other languages.

Over the Summer, as the immediate crisis subsided, there was a greater focus on the issue of ‘aftercare’ – i.e. follow up support so that crisis did not recur. This was felt to be a challenge for a number of reasons:

- Organisations said they were funded for throughput, not ongoing support.
- It was felt that families in crisis were just glad to have their crisis resolved and did not want to engage in addressing further issues.
- Support often was delivered by specialists, for example, financial advisers – who were not equipped to offer other types of support, such as mental health advice.

Summary of key learning: responding to Covid-19

The overall objective of ‘access to crisis support’ has remained constant for the Programme both before and during the pandemic. However, priorities around ‘access’ have changed and workstreams have adapted accordingly:

- Pre-pandemic workstreams had a focus on **improving access** to support and appointments through funding translation, transport and some co-designed services. These workstreams were paused or reconfigured.
- Covid-19 workstreams had a focus on **timely access** through provision of food, furniture and advice in a timely and Covid-safe setting via trusted agencies.

While coordination remains the primary objective of the Programme, there has been acknowledgement that Covid-19 has had a double-edged impact on this objective:

- Firstly, Covid-19 has catalysed rapid adaptation and relationship building between VCS organisations to identify and implement solutions quickly. This was largely motivated by the urgency of the need, supported by the opportunities offered by the forced closure of some services.
- Secondly, Covid-19 has left some organisations with little time, space or resource to co-design long term sustainable coordinated projects. Coordination does not just happen; it requires capacity. It is possible, however, that the relationships forged between organisations during the Covid-19 pandemic will be sustained.

⁶ Michie, S., van Stralen, M.M. and West, R., 2011. The behaviour change wheel: a new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation science*, 6(1), p.42.

3 Activities delivered in Year 1

3.1 Activity summary

In this chapter, we summarise the activities delivered as part of the Coordinated Community Support Programme. Overall, the Programme has distributed just over £100,000 of workstream funding. Further detail on the workstreams funded is included later in this chapter. The following complementary activities have also been delivered by the Programme team:

- Promotion, engagement and partnership development.
- Pilot site partnership meetings (26 meetings).
- Online grant awareness training (31 attendees).
- Development of the CCS Charter (26 organisations have signed up to the charter).
- Cross-pilot site partnership learning meetings (three meetings).
- Research project entitled ‘analysis of perspectives of crisis provision’ (ongoing).
- Support to develop 17 workstreams funded directly by CCS funding (see Appendix 3).
- Leveraged £68,000 from additional sources to complement and add value to the workstreams.

3.2 Engagement of organisations in pilot sites

The CCS Team have engaged 368 professionals during Year 1 of the Programme; representing approximately 139 organisations across the four pilot sites. Not all of these professionals have engaged consistently throughout the Programme. There has been a fluid engagement process where organisations have engaged or disengaged with the Programme as it suits them.

Most of the organisations who have engaged in the Programme have been voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. While it seems a lower number of local government organisations have engaged, often more than one person from any given local authority has engaged with the Programme and there are, by definition, limited numbers of local authorities in any given area. It is also reflective of the structure of local government in any given area (for example, whether there are County and District councils, or a single Unitary authority)

Figure 6: Number of people and organisations engaged in Year 1

	Norfolk	Oldham	Swansea	Tower Hamlets	Total
Individuals	142	78	76	72	368
VCS organisations	24	35	31	31	121
Local authority, or other statutory	8	3	3	1	15
Schools	0	1	0	2	3

Source: Cloud Chamber based on data provided by CCS Team

Twenty six (26) organisations have signed the CCS Programme charter in 2020 and this is regarded as the core group of organisations who are committed to delivering the Programme; and have consistently engaged throughout Year 1 according to the Programme team (from August 2019 to September 2020). Appendix 2 summarises data from our survey of invited organisations indicating that the objectives and rationale for the programme are well understood. On the whole, local authority and VCS organisations in the pilot sites understand and value the objectives of the Programme. Over four fifths were fully aware or somewhat aware of the objectives of the programme (84%, n=33). Responses indicate that getting support to people (Tier 1 of our Theory of Change) has been of significant value to partner organisations in local pilot sites for Year 1 of the Programme. Respondents have valued the ability provided by the Programme to discuss and identify solutions for people in crisis (47%, n=38), and discuss and understand needs of people in crisis (47%, n=38).

3.3 About the workstreams

3.3.1 Workstream development

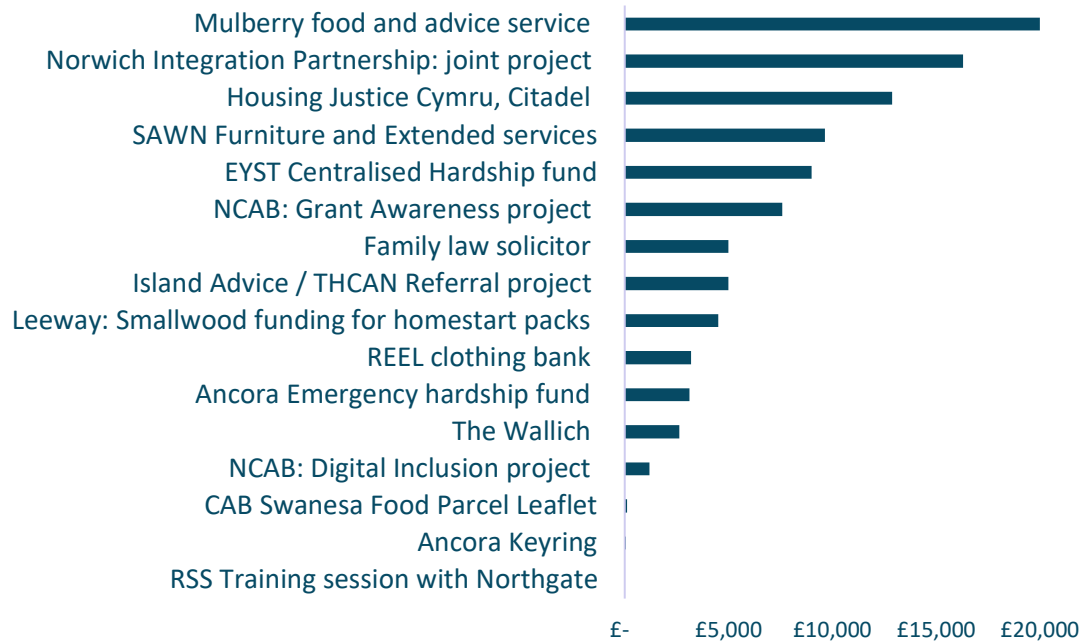
The approach to workstream development was intended to be organic and driven by needs and priorities in pilot sites. Information and guidance sessions were held in each of the pilot areas. This allowed a number of issues to be identified to form the basis of implementation plans. The resulting workstreams were then to be piloted for approximately 6 months, after which monitoring and review process would determine whether individual pieces of work should be continued, expanded or ceased.

The Programme chose to undertake smaller (in monetary terms) scale workstreams during Year 1. The Programme team reported however that the formulation process was not generating significant interest from local partners, despite the open offer of funding. The degree to which large, complex or ambitious workstreams were being proposed was limited; so, activity tended to be small scale in nature. It was clear that capacity within organisations was limited to come back with proposals, and costings – and that much of the activity needed to be heavily supported by the Programme team in consultation with local areas. Significantly, from March 2020 it was clear that the workstreams already agreed needed to be halted, postponed or abandoned because of the Covid-19 pandemic. This heavily influenced the development of workstreams, with a greater need to be responsive and focused on meeting immediate need. This is reflected in the workstream statistics presented in the next sub-section.

3.3.2 Workstream statistics

In Year 1 of the Programme, 15 workstreams were funded - all of which were delivered by VCS organisations. The core Programme investment was just over £100k for the Year 1, with each workstream on average receiving £6,265.

Figure 7: Core financial investment in workstreams



Source: Cloud Chamber based on CCS monitoring data

Three workstreams were funded for amounts over £10,000. This included Mulberry Food and Advice Service in Tower Hamlets (£20,000), the Norwich Integration Partnership joint project (£16,298) and Housing Justice Cymru, Citadel in Swansea (£13,338).

The CCS Programme has successfully leveraged additional funding to complement the core CCS workstream funding. All leveraged funding sources specified that funding must be given directly to people who have need in direct response to Covid-19 i.e., for food, household items or expenses. The funders explicitly state that the funding should not be used for organisational or infrastructure costs. The CCS Team leveraged the funding and then identified how best to distribute it to ensure alignment with funder requirements whilst complementing planned workstreams. A total of £68,000 has been leveraged in total with the figure below summarising how this funding has been sourced and allocated:

Figure 8: Funding leveraged by the CCS Programme

Funding Source	Amount	Workstream / locality
Martin Lewis Foundation	£20,000	Tower Hamlets for Mulberry Food and Advice Service
East End Community Foundation	£8,000	Tower Hamlets for Mulberry Food and Advice Service
Martin Lewis Foundation	£20,000	Norfolk for distribution between organisations including NCAB, Leeway and NIP
Paul Hamlyn Foundation (Covid-19 Response Funding)	£20,000	Swansea - EYST partnership Oldham –SAWN Norfolk – NIP

Source: CCS Programme team

Combining core and leveraged funding, the amount of funding by pilot site has ranged between £23k and £61k, as shown in Figure 9 below. Norfolk has had the greatest level of investment (41%) and Oldham the least (15%). The average funding value for workstream was highest in Norfolk (£12,253) and lowest in Oldham (£5,674).

Figure 9: Total investment by workstreams and pilot-site area

Pilot area	Workstreams	Funding distributed	Funding (% of total distributed)	Average funding per workstream
Norfolk	5	£61,265	41%	£12,253
Tower Hamlets	3	£33,000	22%	£11,000
Swansea	4	£31,285	21%	£7,821
Oldham	4	£22,697	15%	£5,674
All sites	16	£148,246	100%	£9,265

Source: Cloud Chamber based on CCS monitoring data

3.3.3 Contribution to Key Performance Indicators

Five Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were set for the Programme at proposal stage. These are shown in the table below, and focus around receiving, and referral to crisis support, as well as engagement of organisations. Further analysis and reflection on the KPIs are included in Appendix 1.

Figure 10: KPI Summary

KPI No #	Indicator	Target (for end of Programme, year 3)	Quasi-baseline
1	Numbers receiving support through LWA scheme increases	LWA recipients increase by 2,000 above baseline in Year 3 across the four pilot areas.	Number of awards for three pilot areas in 2018/19 = 8,510
2	Numbers receiving support through other crisis support schemes increase	Crisis support received through other sources increases by 1,600 above baseline in Year 3.	Number of awards made in 2018/9 = 2,821
3	Numbers receiving referrals to other support services at point of crisis increases	360 successful referrals across the four pilots made through crisis support network in Year 3	31 – underreported in monitoring data
4	Numbers requiring repeat crisis support decreases	Of those successfully referred for ongoing support, follow up evaluation finds increases in financial stability and resilience.	Unknown
5	Widespread engagement of organisations is secured for a local crisis support network	At least 20 organisations engaged in each area in delivery of coordinated crisis support provision (80 across four areas).	Zero (0) organisations involved prior to CCS Programme launch

Source: Cloud Chamber based on external evaluation fieldwork and CCS monitoring data

4 Four workstream case studies

4.1 About the pilot site workstream case studies

As discussed in the Introduction of this report, it was agreed that a useful lens for the Year 1 evaluation would be for Cloud Chamber to conduct workstream case studies in each of the four pilot sites. The questions that workstream case studies aim to answer include:

- What happened in the workstream?
- How did the workstream adapt / respond to Covid-19?
- What have we learned as a result of the workstream?
- What was the impact of the workstream on service users? How many service users were reached?
- What was the impact of the workstream on local systems change?
- How did the CCS Programme add value to this area of work?
- To what extent did the workstream contribute to the initial five themes (access, simplified application, underlying need, aftercare, learning)?

The case studies aimed for a good balance of workstream type, beneficiary group and thematic focus. The following case studies were therefore identified and are presented in this document:

- Norwich Integration Partnership (Norfolk).
- Support & Action Women's Network (SAWN) Furniture Extension support service (Oldham).
- Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST) Centralised Hardship Fund (Swansea).
- Mulberry School Food and Advice Service (Tower Hamlets).

Funded workstreams represent just part of the CCS Programme. The CCS Team and Learning Facilitator have facilitated numerous meetings with stakeholders in the pilot sites to understand need in each area, discuss common challenges and begin to identify solutions. When consulting with stakeholders to inform these case studies, this broader range of activity – beyond the workstream itself – was also discussed. Fifteen (15) interviews were carried out with professionals, including volunteers, who led or partnered with workstreams.

The findings from these workstream case studies have been triangulated with other data sources to inform this report but excerpts from the case studies are included here to give additional context to the Programme, explain the unique nature of the workstreams and to bring to life the outcomes for people who access services. We have included outcomes for people accessing services in this full report. Specific outcomes relating to local systems change can be found in the standalone case study reports and a triangulated analysis can be found in chapter 6 of this report.

4.2 Norwich Integration Partnership (Norfolk)

4.2.1 About the workstream

Formed in 2015, the Norwich Integration Partnership (NIP) is a collaboration between three organisations - English+, New Routes and The Bridge Plus+. The partnership aims to improve service provision for people from ethnic minority communities, particularly those who are recently settled and dealing with complex issues. Each partner brings a complementary set of skills and expertise, with services offered including:

- Information, advice and advocacy.
- Language development and integration activities.
- Personalised one-to-one support.
- Skills development opportunities.

Each of the organisations tends to serve the same client groups, including those with NRPF, asylum seekers, refugees and economic migrants.

NIP received funding from the CCS Programme to support a collaborative response to Covid-19. The funding was used to support staffing, IT costs including additional infrastructure to facilitate new work from home requirements, and the provision of direct financial assistance. This support was suggested by partners during a 'Covid-19 response' meeting, facilitated by the Programme.

The funding aimed to ensure the availability of services to vulnerable clients and provide immediate relief from financial crises. This was in response to challenges clients face when accessing mainstream support, delays in universal credit payments, digital exclusion, access to free school meals – all accelerating crisis among vulnerable clients. The approach was to focus on an agreed list of 'vulnerable clients', shifting provision to a proactive model of support; contacting clients proactively, sharing information between partners and responding quickly to immediate need.

This proactive model of working required more time from existing staff, and the way in which staffing hours were structured across the organisations was piecemeal. For example, staffing within organisations within the partnership tended to be part-time, and reliant on time-limited grant or contract funding, with different working patterns for staff members. Funding from the CCS Programme enabled staff to have their hours extended to meet needs emerging from lockdown.

The funding allowed many staff to 'make up their hours' reflecting the intensity of support they were now providing – ensuring that staff morale was maintained throughout the lockdown and beyond. The funding also paid for organisational Zoom subscriptions, allowing services to be delivered online.

A shared database of vulnerable clients was established, building on pre-existing data sharing agreements between the three organisations. This allowed information to be systematically and accurately shared between partners, ensuring no duplication, improved efficiency, and improved experience for clients (who did not have to repeat their circumstances, for example).

Supplementing this way of working, the funding enabled the financial crisis to be alleviated directly through provision of supermarket vouchers and utility top ups. In addition, digital inclusion was supported through provision of mobile data top-ups and in some cases (funded from elsewhere) IT equipment.

For English+, staffing hours were increased, and in addition, sessional tutors were employed to enable English Classes to be run online. The charity relies on retired ex-teachers to provide English lessons, and a combination of shielding and technology literacy meant that there were holes in provision that needed to be quickly filled to meet demand. Existing volunteers were paid to ensure service to vulnerable clients.

English lessons, while not a direct response to crisis, were an important mechanism to promote social interaction and tackle isolation. Importantly, they acted as a way of keeping track of vulnerable service users, ensuring that people were coping during the lockdown.

New Routes offered some of their integration activities online, including homework support, families club, one to one support sessions, and mentoring and befriending. This was combined with doorstep visits from staff across the partnership. NIP (notably English+) worked with another charity, The Soul Foundation, to provide food boxes, toys and books for children all of which were distributed by NIP volunteers and staff. Cleaning products were also distributed as part of the funding, which were important in keeping clients safe.

At The Bridge Plus+, staffing hours were increased among several staff members, and extended one member of staff to full time to ensure continuity of service. Collaborative working with other organisations in the partnership meant that advice and guidance, particularly around benefits, was quickly accessible for vulnerable clients.

Vouchers were made available to service users as part of the funding, including supermarket vouchers, mobile data top ups and utility vouchers.

For some organisations in the partnership, this was the first time they had directly offered financial support to clients.

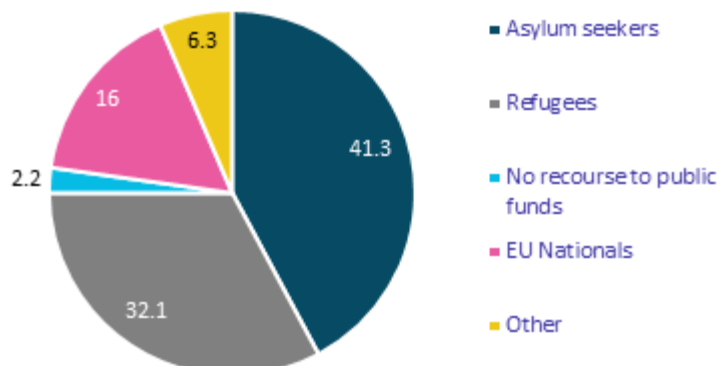
4.2.2 Reach

Partners reported back to us that they simply would not have been able to offer the dedicated response to Covid-19, without the funding from the CCS Programme. The funding was timely and pre-dated many of the other (and numerate) offers of emergency funding from other funders. This enabled the organisations to respond quickly to the need they were uncovering. In addition, the networking and collaborative thinking promoted by the CCS Programme encouraged a more collaborative approach than may otherwise have happened.

- *“In January to March we offered 20 hours of student support per week, within the next two months we had increased that to 80 hours.” (NIP Staff member)*

During July 2020, the workstream had engaged with 525 clients across the partnership. Most commonly service users were asylum seekers (41%) or refugees (32%) – see Figure 11. Three quarters of all those engaged received information and advice (392 clients), and around half were engaged in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Classes (281 clients). 78 received mobile phone top-ups, 67 were supported with food and essential items, and 39 with utilities top-ups – see Figure 12.

Figure 11: Clients supported by citizenship status (% n= 525)



Source: NIP Monitoring returns

Figure 12: Clients receiving services

Service	N	% of all clients (n=525)
Information and advice	392	75%
ESOL	281	54%
Other practical support	221	42%
Families club	135	26%
Mobile phone top-ups	78	15%
Food and essential items provision	67	13%
Homework club	60	11%
Utilities top-ups	39	7%
IT equipment and access	22	4%

Source: NIP Monitoring returns

Further monitoring data shows that in the month of July, 165 supermarket vouchers were distributed across 67 clients; an average of 2.5 vouchers per person. 93% of the vouchers benefited families with children.

4.2.3 Outcomes for people accessing services

Continuing services and delivering a proactive service had clear benefits for service users. While we were not able to consult directly with clients, staff reported the following outcomes:

- **Safety net:** for many clients, the grant provided a safety net for people at risk of falling into destitution, particularly where there was no recourse to public funds, or a convergence of multiple problems presenting at the same time. This was a result of the close collaboration between partners.
- **Quicker access to benefits and other advice:** the funding helped to secure income in circumstances where jobs were lost (often zero hours' contracts), quicker for those in the greatest need. This extended to immigration issues, health issues and also in understanding the rules around the pandemic.

- **Improved mental wellbeing:** regular and proactive contact with NIP helped to directly deal with financial hardship, improving their overall sense of wellbeing. For children, providing books and toys kept them occupied – improving physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Combating loneliness:** continuation of English lessons, doorstep visits and proactive contacting helped to tackle loneliness and isolation exacerbated by the lockdown. In some cases, the partnership connected clients/families with similar backgrounds to help form social ties.
- **Educational outcomes:** children were enabled to access data to continue their education, where otherwise they would have been excluded because of lack of data or lack of equipment. English+ used their training laptops to support lack of IT among clients. In one month, 68 children engaged in online ESOL classes, homework sessions or other online resources offered by NIP.
- **Prevention of further crisis:** the proactive approach meant that further and potentially more serious financial or personal crises were likely to be averted; this was done through the regularity of contact, high levels of trust developed, and pro-activeness and intensity of support.
- **Empowerment:** provision of supermarket vouchers gave service users more choice and autonomy over the food they had access to, compared to food bank provision, for example.

The reach of the partnership was reportedly greater, with increased referrals from other organisations, and re-emergence of ex-service users, or infrequent service users.

The following service user perspective illustrates the impact the workstream has had. It highlights that issues affecting crisis can often compound, and that holistic and joined up support is really necessary in dealing with crisis.

Natalie is a single mum living with four children/stepchildren. She is a foreign national who moved to the UK over 5 years ago. She speaks some English but has found it difficult to find time to learn English. Natalie is determined to make a better life for herself and her children/stepchildren. She continued to work part-time until the lockdown; she has sought advice on accessing childcare in order to work, access welfare benefits to be able to pay bills and look after the children; and she's applied for EU settled status.

Natalie first came into contact with NIP by word of mouth. She was new to Norwich, having previously lived in a more rural area of Norfolk. The Bridge Plus+ knew Natalie before the Covid-19 outbreak. Unfortunately, the pandemic and the lockdown situation have had a severe impact on her financial situation and the wellbeing of the family:

- Natalie lost her part time job. Despite having told her employer that she was entering the later part of her pregnancy and that she was worried about Covid-19, that she would struggle coming to work if childcare facilities closed, her employment was terminated during lockdown. Her employer had tried to contact her via their HR online system – which she cannot access due to lack of IT and English skills.
- Her stepson's mental health and well-being deteriorated as a result of the lockdown as he found it difficult to stay indoors and not have his normal routine. The family lives in overcrowded conditions – the local authority does not recognise that Natalie cares for her stepchildren, so they consider her housing needs as for a two-bed flat. This has meant their living conditions during lockdown were difficult. NIP partners helped N. to seek legal advice from a local partner (NCLS) and as a result, she went through the ACAS mediation process. The employer did not respond so NIP partners are now helping her to submit an employment tribunal claim. The referral was made via NCAN.
- Language and IT barriers have meant Natalie needed a lot of support from The Bridge Plus+ in order to access her welfare rights. Delays in benefits payments have meant that supermarket vouchers, mobile and energy top ups, and food parcels, all funded through The Children's Society funding to NIP partners, have made a very significant difference to Natalie's household finances, enabling her to stay afloat while waiting for benefits decisions. English+ also helped to source baby equipment and baby clothes before her baby's due date. English+ and New Routes provided family learning kits and family Summer activity packs.

The support NIP has provided has been holistic with so many different issues addressed (housing, welfare benefits, immigration advice, employment legal advice, family support through learning packs, as well as baby donations). The partnership has been able to provide intensive support to the family, thanks to additional hours funded through the Programme. The service user provided some feedback on her experience of working with the partnership:

- *"The Bridge Plus+ gives me hope that one day I will be able to understand all these letters myself. The food parcels, the vouchers and the donations that I have received from New Routes and English+ have brought big smiles on my children's faces. I am still worried about what will happen about the job I lost. But at least I am getting good advice on this." [anon]*

4.3 SAWN Furniture Extension support service (Oldham)

4.3.1 About the workstream

Support & Action Women’s Network (SAWN) was established in 2007 to promote the welfare of Black/African women in Oldham and Greater Manchester. SAWN’s aim is to realise the full potential of women by engaging them in activities, providing opportunities and events to make women independent, self-sustaining and key players in matters that concern them.

SAWN provide support and training to their service users as well as work with other organisations to raise awareness of female genital mutilation (FGM). SAWN provide furniture to people who need it and it is often through this furniture provision that other conversations are ‘opened up’ about complex and underlying need.

SAWN is managed by two volunteers both with a wealth of professional experience and skill. There are no salaried positions with the exception of some National Lottery Community Funding (NLCF) for someone to clean and prepare the furniture.

The CCS funding for SAWN arose from a recognised need that many service users needed furniture but were unable to access it due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. The CCS funding was for SAWN to safely supply furniture packs and fuel top ups to vulnerable clients illegible for support via the Oldham LWAS (i.e. people with NRPF). Although not an explicit aim of the project, it was recognised that this funding has the potential to support SAWN to offer wider holistic and ongoing support, information, and guidance.

4.3.2 Reach

A total of 109 people were supported in May, June, July and August 2020 with a peak in June where 63 referrals were received. All referrals were accepted, the majority of whom were supported with migration status issues and/or replacement goods.

Figure 13: number and nature of referrals to SAWN between May – August 2020

Statistic	Total
Number of referrals received	109
Number of referrals accepted	109
Need: migration status	55
Need: replacement goods	52
Need: unfurnished new tenancy supported	36
Need: fleeing domestic violence	14
Need: other	9

Source: CCS monitoring data

Most referrals, almost half, were self-referrals with people attending drop-in sessions or hearing about the service via word of mouth.

Figure 14: referrals by source (May to August 2020)

Referral source	N
Self-referral	53
Professional Referral - Other	29
Professional Referral - Local authority	20
Professional Referral - Housing association	6

Source: CCS monitoring data

Monitoring data tells us that all service users supported had no recourse to public funds (NRPF) and almost half of those supported include families with children. An estimated 73% of people who have been in receipt of furniture have also accessed other support from SAWN. This support is likely to be a combination of data/fuel packs, emotional support, migration support and/or signposting to other services.

Figure 15: nature of support provided and people who have received support

Statistic	N
The number of people with no recourse to public funds supported	187*
The number of people in receipt of furniture who then engaged with other forms of support offered by SAWN	79
Number of adult-only households supported	57
Number of families with children supported	53
The number of data/ fuel packs issued	45
Number of onward referrals to other support services	18

Source: CCS monitoring data. * Cloud Chamber and the CCS Team have queried this number as the number of people with NRPF who are supported by the project is higher than the total number of referrals mentioned elsewhere. Attempts have been made to rectify this data although limited capacity at volunteer-led SAWN has made it difficult to get clarity on this.

4.3.3 Outcomes

Our interviews with SAWN volunteers and qualitative monitoring data highlighted the following outcomes for SAWN service users:

- **Service users are treated sensitively, and the underlying need is understood:** the SAWN leads are highly skilled at creating a space where service users can safely share their experiences. The service users may present to the service for furniture but often stay for a cup of tea and, through these informal conversations and over time, other underlying needs – often complex - are identified. This makes it possible for the SAWN leads to signpost or refer – giving access to a wider range of support services.
 - *“Behind the furniture item there’s a trauma, there’s always a story.” (SAWN volunteer)*
- **Service users are listened to and treated with dignity:** SAWN ensures that everyone who accesses the service has a dignified experience. When service users share their stories, they are listened to and believed. When selecting furniture, service users can select their products, setting the tone for a relationship where their voice matters.
 - *“It is important for people to be able to choose what they want [furniture and home furnishings]. We make up sets so people can select. We did this over Zoom and WhatsApp*

[during lockdown] It is about self-esteem and dignity. We [service users] might be poor but we have a right to shop. We are still consumers.” (SAWN volunteer)

- **Peer and expert support provided for women:** during lockdown, the SAWN leads were aware of the challenges facing their clients including domestic violence, FGM and isolation. In response, they set up informal Zoom calls covering topics of interest and 40 women engaged. This was not part of their funded work and it is possible it contributed to unexpected outcomes around increasing awareness of health issues, increasing a sense of trust in SAWN, overcoming isolation and preventing further challenges.
 - *“DV was going up, FGM was going up [during lockdown]. We did some informal Zoom meetings. We [SAWN leads] are not techy! We just did them informally and gently introduced topics. What is mental health? What is menopause? In some languages these words don’t even feature. We got 40 women in the end. We talked about micro-enterprise, we asked women what they are good at”. (Local VCS organisation)*
- **Co-production in service journey at point of access:** at SAWN, co-production is central to their ethos of working with service users. Although they do not always describe their approach as a formal co-production technique, there is a commitment to placing women at the heart of their support structure, inviting women to describe how and what they would like to happen. This gives women the opportunity to shape and inform the care they receive.
 - *“It is a good idea to sit down with people and ask, ‘how would you like this to happen?’” (SAWN volunteer).*
 - *“We ask her what she wants. She finds her own solutions. These are not things we would have offered as options. Some of her solutions are not the best, but we give her space. It is about sitting where people are. We empower” (SAWN volunteer).*
- **Emotional support, feeling safe, building trust:** many of the service users have experienced trauma including domestic violence, FGM and/or bereavement. SAWN creates a space where women are able to share their experiences in a safe way. This can sometimes help with bridging to other statutory services such as social workers and medical professionals:
 - *“She thought the social workers wanted to take her kids away. We explained that, no, they’re here to help.” (SAWN volunteer)*
 - *“She needed to see a midwife but didn’t know how. I went with her.” (SAWN volunteer)*

The following service user perspective illustrates the impact the workstream has had. Some details have been removed to protect the anonymity of the service user.

“A lady came to our door one afternoon. We didn’t know her. It took her 3 hours to get to us by bus. She walks in and she’s smiling. We sat, had a cup of tea. She had very small children. She was told, by a friend, that we might be able to help her. We said, “what do you need, what is going on.” She told us untruths because she felt unsafe at first. Instantly [SAWN worker] picked up on this but we didn’t correct her, we wanted her to trust us. We sat with her, we played with the kids. Lots of cups of tea! We found her a new pram. After a while we found out she’s got no food, no money. She was a single parent and had some medical difficulties. She told us that she’d experienced a lot of trauma and loss in her home country. It was awful, very sad. She didn’t tell us at first but once she started to trust us, she told us more. She told us she still received threats from men. We’ve supported her with food, nappies and emotionally. Then she was being evicted from her home. She asked us for advice and showed us the eviction letters. I said, “ask the council to talk to me” – I said to the council “we are supporting her; she has nothing”. She’s in the process of being supported now. If we hadn’t had that time with her, those cups of tea, I don’t know what would have happened to her. She’s still alive. That’s an outcome. It’s a soft outcome. She’s come to understand what has happened to her, the trauma she’s experienced. We ask her what she wants. She finds her own solutions. These are not things we would have offered as options. Some of her solutions are not the best, but we give her space. It is about sitting where people are. We empower. We will find a way to get her to her appointments.” (SAWN Volunteer)

4.4 EYST Centralised Hardship Fund (Swansea)

4.4.1 About the workstream

Formed in 2005, Ethnic Minorities and Youth Support Team (EYST) was initially founded to support the needs of young Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people (11-25 years) in Swansea. Since that time, the organisation's role and mission has expanded across more areas of Wales to include families and individuals including refugees and asylum seekers. Much of EYST's growth has occurred in the last few years; in 2015/16 it had income of £345k, which rose to over £1m for the 2018/19 financial year. The organisation currently has five areas of work: BAME Young People; BAME Families; Refugees and asylum seekers; Supporting BAME Groups; and Challenging racism in the wider community.

EYST works with several partners across Wales and seeks to influence government and policy through its work. The organisation adapts its approach in different parts of Wales to reflect both the challenges and the work undertaken by others; for example, EYST runs a youth centre in Swansea but does not do so in Cardiff where there is more of a focus on support for asylum seekers. The types of project funded by EYST fall into five categories:

- Building skills, confidence and participation.
- Improving health, wellbeing and resilience.
- Providing support and advocacy; accessing rights and entitlements.
- Promoting safety, diversity and welcome.
- Increasing representation.

The Centralised Hardship fund (funded by CCS) arose when the needs of asylum seekers, refugees, and people with NRPF were identified as a priority during the early stages of the Covid-19 outbreak by a number of organisations working in this area. Due to capacity constraints of some of these smaller organisations, it was agreed that EYST would take responsibility for managing the fund and a Steering Group was formed comprising some of those bodies (specifically African Community Centre, Swansea Asylum Seeker Support and Latin American and Iberian Association of Wales).

The purpose of the fund is to support people financially to address an immediate and urgent need and to leverage this to provide further support regarding broader underlying needs such as legal advice and educational needs for children and young people. Clients are referred to the fund from organisations within the Steering Group and EYST assumes responsibility for processing the application. The relationship with the client is maintained by the referring organisation, which ensures that there is a continuity of support from the people who best understand the client needs and who are able to help shape and inform the broader package of support accordingly.

The project is a £9,000 fund to support people with funding in addition to ten hours of EYST staff time to manage and administer the fund. The project had four workstreams:

- **Children's fund:** clients supported up to a maximum of £30 each.
- **Phone and data top-up:** clients supported up to a maximum value of £10 each.
- **IT equipment (laptops and tablets):** clients supported up to a maximum of £200 for a laptop.

- **Discretionary fund:** clients supported up to a maximum of £20 each.

4.4.2 Reach

Statistics regarding reach are shown in the table below. Overall, there were 180 referrals and 144 awards which represents an 80% award rate.

Figure 16: Referrals and awards by type

Fund	Referrals	Awards	Total spend
Children's fund	51	36	£1,500
Phone and data top-up	57	45	£1,000
IT equipment	58	38	£4,000
Discretionary fund	14	25	£1,000
Total	180	144	£7,500

Source: CCS monitoring data

4.4.3 Outcomes for people accessing services

Our research identified the following outcomes for people accessing services:

- **Minimising the need for people to repeat their experiences contributes to a dignified experience:** maintaining the client relationship with the referral organisation means that the persons' needs are understood and that they do not have to present at multiple agencies in order to secure funding.
 - *"The application was successful, and the family received the laptop, the lady was overjoyed to receive it and she now had the ability to support her children's schoolwork. The lady is very shy and didn't feel confident to seek support on school issues but through the relationship with the support worker these needs were identified and through the funding we have been able to support the family with an immediate need which will have a lot of long-lasting benefits."* (EYST team member)
- **Working towards a streamlined referral process:** referrals are based on the relationships between the client and the support worker with clear responsibilities throughout the process.
 - *"The initial feedback we have had from our clients who have benefited from the fund is very positive. Many did not expect this support to be available and were amazed when their referral led to crisis support."* (EYST team member)
- **Underlying need:** the aim of the fund and the participating organisations is to address both the immediate crisis need and to understand more broadly the range of needs faced by the client more holistically. The funding has been able to support the most vulnerable in the community including a wide range of clients from within the asylum and refugee community.
 - *"The model of support we provide alongside our partners is not simply to support clients with their immediate need (which is vitally important) but we offer holistic support where it is possible. A lot of the underlying need will be wrapped in their asylum claim but we aim to support them along their journey."* (EYST team member)

4.5 Mulberry School Food and Advice Service (Tower Hamlets)

4.5.1 About the workstream

At the beginning of lockdown, staff at Mulberry School identified that certain products were disappearing from shops due to stockpiling – nappies, sanitary towels, lentils and flour, for example. There was also evidence of profiteering by local shops near to the Mulberry School.

Staff at the school set up a 'Go Fund Me' page to raise money to provide food for families and had an excellent response. On 2nd April 2020, the school set up a food bank for an expected 200 families identified by colleagues at the school. They built a relationship with Bow Food Bank who put the school in contact with the CCS Programme who provided additional funding and support. The service was very well used with over 400 families accessing the service.

The service provided food parcels, household necessities, toiletries, and sanitary hygiene kits. The CCS Programme support included welfare referrals to a school social worker and local advice agency, Island Advice. The funding provided by the CCS Programme was used alongside money raised by the project and donations from Beauty Bank, Bloody Good Period and Clean Consciousness.

The aim of the CCS funding was to empower the project to not only provide much needed products, but to also refer to additional advice and support. Initial funding from the CCS Programme for this workstream was £20,000 for food parcels and household necessities provided to support students and families of Mulberry School set up in response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

4.5.2 Outputs

At time of writing the data for the Mulberry Food and Advice workstream is incomplete and represents just one month (May 2020) of a possible four months during which the workstream was delivered. In May alone, Mulberry report:

- 1848 food / toiletry packs were provided per household.
- 482 service users were supported with both underlying needs and aftercare.
- 31 families were successfully referred for Information, Advice or Guidance.

4.5.3 Outcomes for people accessing services

Our research identified the following outcomes for people accessing services:

- Mulberry School identified a barrier for people to access food – travelling can be costly, time consuming and inaccessible. The Mulberry Food and Advice Service therefore improved access to food and toiletries. Furthermore, for many people, access to advice was improved, as some of the service users would not have been aware or considered accessing advice services.
- Island Advice reported that many of the referrals received from Mulberry School were in relation to form filling, completing applications and supporting service users through that process. While this was not an intended outcome of the workstream, the Mulberry Food and Advice Service has contributed to improving a simpler, supported application process.
- Accessing fresh fruit, vegetables and culturally appropriate foods for the Mulberry School community has possibly contributed to an unexpected outcome around maintaining healthy, varied diets.

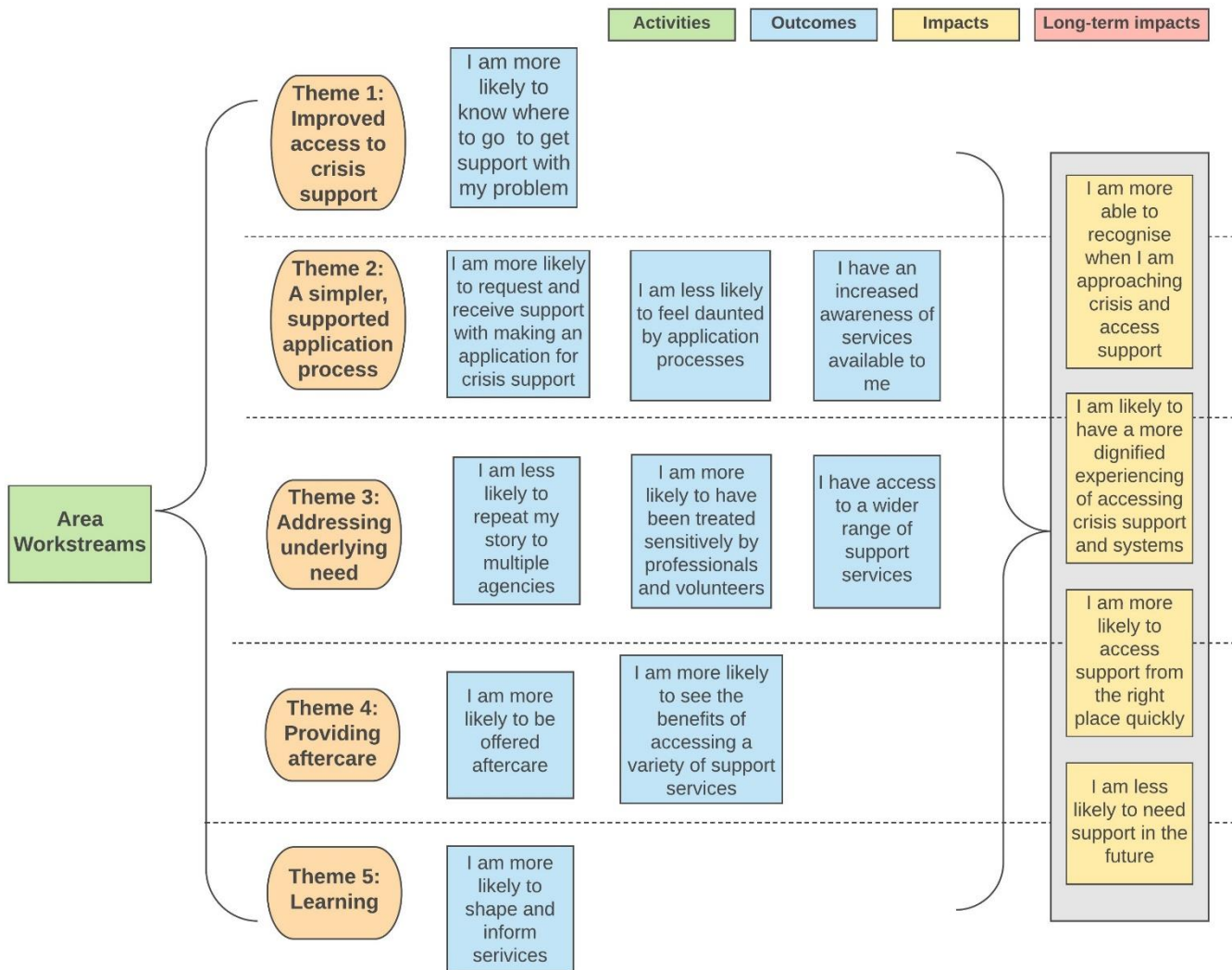
- As many of the beneficiaries of the Food and Advice Service are children and young people, it is possible that a further unexpected outcome has been achieved enabling Mulberry students to participate in education activities during lockdown.

5 Impacts for people accessing services

5.1 Introduction

The primary way in which service users have been supported through the Coordinated Community Support Programme in Year 1 is through the funded workstreams. Tier 1 of the CCS Programme Theory of Change depicts the intended impact on service users.

Figure 17: Coordinated Community Support Programme Theory of Change – Tier 1



Source: Cloud Chamber 2020

5.2 Programme reach

Lead workstream delivery organisations have been invited to complete monitoring data on the numbers of people they support with CCS funding and information regarding outcomes. Five workstreams have completed these returns. While this is not representative of all workstreams, the data provides some insight on both the reach and outcomes for service users.

Monitoring data from the Programme shows at least 2,000 individuals have been supported directly through the Programme's workstreams in 2020. Due to differences in how data was recorded, this is likely to be an underestimate with wider members of households also directly accessing and benefiting from services. There is also some under-reporting as some workstreams have not, at time of writing, provided their monitoring data and other workstreams are not expected to.

Monitoring data includes information about specific crisis support interventions received by service users. The most frequently accessed were as follows:

- Food (1,848 food/toiletry packs delivered).
- Mobile data / top up (123 people).
- Gas / electric / data fuel top up (c.90 people).
- Furniture (79 people).
- Supermarket vouchers (69 people).
- IT equipment and access (60 people).
- Successfully referred for Information, Advice or Guidance (31 people).
- Food parcel leaflets printed for Swansea CAB (5,000).
- Leaflets printed for Ancora in Oldham (2,000).

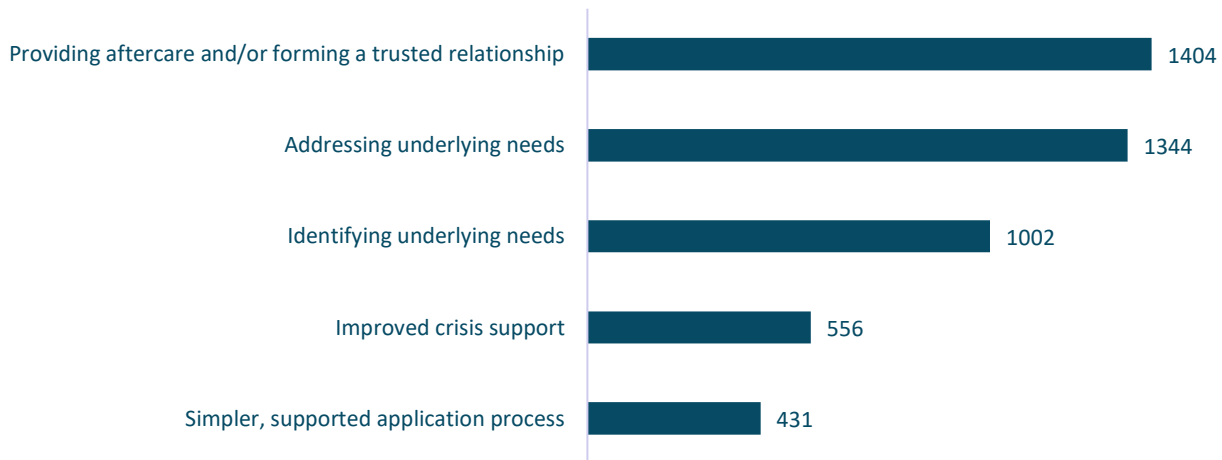
As mentioned in previous chapters, the workstreams in Year 1 have been designed, to a large extent, in direct response to Covid-19. As the list of services suggests, Covid-19 workstreams has a focus on timely access through provision of food, furniture, and advice in a timely and Covid-safe setting via trusted agencies.

5.3 Outcomes

5.3.1 Monitoring data

Aftercare and forming a trusted relationship are the most significant outcomes with an approximate minimum of 1,404 people supported with this through workstream funding. This is closely followed by addressing underlying need with an estimated 1,344 people supported. See Figure 18 below for full data.

Figure 18: Number of people supported with thematic outcomes



Source: CCS Monitoring data

Our analysis of this data, when triangulated with workstream case studies, tells us that all five workstreams providing monitoring data described the primary outcome of their workstream as about improving access to crisis support when designing their projects. However, the numbers of people supported with access has relative fewer responses when compared to aftercare and underlying need.

This suggests that workstream leads have described their intended work as ‘access to crisis support’ when in reality, they are doing more complex work. As a result, we assume that many of the workstreams identify their work as ‘access’ for simplicity when, in fact, their work contributes to more of the thematic areas.

It could also suggest that the five thematic areas of the CCS Programme are difficult to disentangle from the perspective of the workstreams. This blurring of themes was supported in what we heard from workstream leads during our case study research.

We do not draw any definitive conclusions from the monitoring data in isolation but suggest that the ways in which workstream leads have responded to it highlights the ways in which the five themes are interrelated for service providers.

5.3.2 Outcomes identified in case studies

Four workstreams have been consulted in detail – one in each pilot site - via workstream case studies. We asked interviewees about the outcomes from the funding. Some of these were reflected in the initial Theory of Change, while others are likely to be a reflection of the changing nature of the Programme in response to the Covid-19 crisis. This is illustrated in Figure 19 below.

Figure 19: Intended and unexpected outcomes

Intended outcomes	Unexpected or additional outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More likely to access support from the right place, quickly (access theme) ○ Access to a wider range of support services (underlying need theme) ○ More dignified experience of accessing crisis support and systems (cross cutting theme) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More able to trust someone who can help ○ Wellbeing is maintained or prevented from entering crisis ○ More likely to have had support with additional needs (beyond my immediate crisis) ○ Mental and/or physical health is maintained ○ Children are more likely to be able to engage with education ○ Empowerment

Source: Cloud Chamber

5.4 Consideration points

Based on emerging findings from Year 1 of the evaluation, Cloud Chamber encourage the Coordinated Community Support Programme Team and broader partnerships to consider the following:

- **Ensure that system pathways allow space for practitioners to build trust with service users:** evidence from workstreams and partnership meetings suggests that cross-referrals between organisations can be challenging because service users can be reluctant to place their trust in a ‘new’ organisation. While an online referral system has the potential to improve outcomes for service users, it is important that the Programme seizes the opportunity to support warm referrals by empowering professionals to accompany service users to appointments (taking an intensive ‘casework’ model, for example). This is likely to make cross-referrals smoother, more successful and contribute to outcomes around increasing aftercare and addressing underlying need.
- **Access to goods and finance are an opportunity to start a conversation:** the Programme has shown us that, in many cases, access to goods and finances are the ways in which crisis presents itself. However, this is an opportunity to start a conversation with a service user to both address additional needs and/or identify underlying need. Partner organisations recognise this potential but do not always have the capacity or knowledge to respond. It is recommended that the Programme encourages delivery organisations to think and plan beyond goods and finance provision towards a more holistic approach to support.

Summary of Key learning: Impacts on people using services

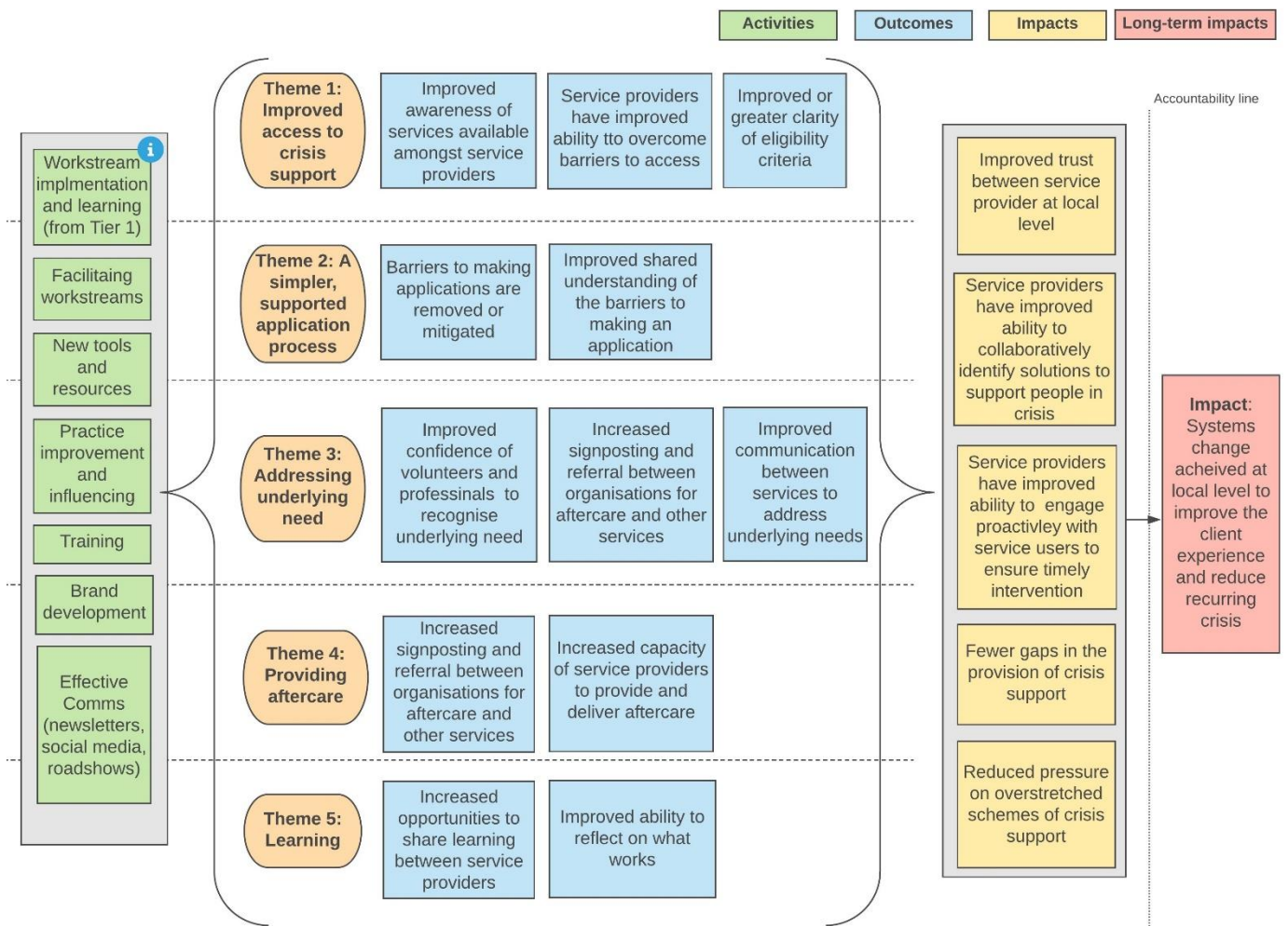
- Most of the impact on people using services in Year 1 has come through the funded workstreams rather than the broader systems change work of the Programme.
- During Year 1, we have seen outcomes for services users around increased speed and relevance of services accessed, a dignified experience and greater access to a wider range of services.
- We have also observed a number of outcomes beyond our initial Theory of Change around improved wellbeing, improved support with additional (beyond immediate crisis) needs and increased sense of trust.
- Given Covid-19 and the challenges it presents to service users, it is appropriate to have a different set of outcomes to those initially intended and it is credit to the Programme for adapting to service user need.

6 Local systems change

6.1 Introduction

Tier 2 of our Theory of Change relates to impact on local systems. This is concerned with local systems and their ability to respond to the five themes of our Theory of Change. Much of the work in Year 1 of the Coordinated Community Support Programme has been focused on building the necessary foundations for enacting systems change - the networks and relationships of organisations working at pilot site level.

Figure 20: CCS Programme Theory of Change – Tier 2 Local systems change



Source: Cloud Chamber 2020

Several activities have been carried out to support achievement of systems change at local level. These included:

- Workstream funding.
- Facilitating meetings and calls within the pilot sites to discuss responses to Covid-19.
- Facilitating meeting and calls across the pilot sites on specific themes, such as reach of services.

- Brokering relationships between organisations to support joined-up working.
- Training and development for professionals (e.g. grant awareness webinar).

6.2 Pulse check of local systems

In this section, we present data collected via an online survey by ‘analysis of perspectives of crisis provision’ research project ⁷. The data is from all four areas of the Programme and provides a ‘pulse check’ of local crisis systems in relation to a number of key factors suggested as important in the CCS Theory of Change.

Respondents rated several statements on a Likert scale. Whilst not an official baseline (as it was conducted towards the end of Year 1 of the Programme) it does serve as an indication of where local providers feel they are with regards to their confidence, ability and perceptions of the five thematic areas of the CCS Programme.

This data has not been used to inform any Year 1 delivery (due to timing) although does contribute to the CCS Team’s (and partners’) understanding of where providers feel confident and less confident. For example:

- There were two statements where a high level of confidence (where 51% of more of respondents agree or strongly agree) was evident, relating to data sharing and the strength of inter-organisational referral processes.
- All other statements had a relatively low level of confidence (where less than 40% of respondents agree or disagree) with ‘adequate services for supporting clients with long term, complex need in our local area’ scoring lowest.

The data is tabulated in Figure 21.

⁷ Data includes responses from Oldham (9) Norfolk (14) , Tower Hamlets (6) and Swansea (14). Respondents include a mix of those who are engaged (50%), aware (30%) and not aware (20%) of the CCS Programme. Questions in this section of analysis designed by Cloud Chamber and survey delivered by the CCS team and Amy Edwards.

Figure 21: Crisis support in local areas

Statement	% agree or agree strongly	N
“Comfortable that we can share client data safely and securely with other organisations in our local area when needed”	80%	41
“There are strong referral processes (for clients) between organisations in our local area”	61%	41
“It is easy for our client group to access crisis support in our local area”	39%	41
“We have a strong working relationship with other providers in our local area”	36%	42
“Our organisation has a remit to provide ongoing, long term support to clients beyond an initial crisis”	27%	40
“Our organisation is clear on the eligibility criteria for crisis support grants (e.g. Resident Support Scheme)”	27%	38
“We are proficient and experienced at co-designing services with our users / clients”	26%	39
“Within our local area there is a strong knowledge of VCS services amongst the sector”	24%	41
“Our organisation has the resources to provide ongoing, long term support to clients beyond an initial crisis”	21%	39
“There are adequate services for supporting clients with long term, complex need in our local area”	11%	42

Source: CCS based on questions designed by Cloud Chamber “The analysis of perspectives of crisis provision” research project survey, CCS, 2020

To help us assess how pilot site organisations feel in response to the five CCS Programme themes, Figure 22 below summarises some indicators from the data. All themes score less than 40% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing.

Figure 22: Analysis of perspectives of crisis provision research project data by CCS Programme theme

CCS Theme	Indication of confidence
Access	39% of organisations report it is easy for their client group to access crisis support in their local area
Application processes	27% of organisations report that their organisation is clear on the eligibility criteria for crisis support grants
Addressing underlying need	11% of organisations report that there are adequate services for supporting clients with long term, complex need in their local area
Providing aftercare	21% of organisations report that their organisation has the resources to provide ongoing, long term support to clients beyond an initial crisis and 27% of respondents had a remit to provide ongoing long term support to clients
Learning	26% describe that they are proficient and experienced at co-designing services with our users / clients

Source: Cloud Chamber based on questions designed by Cloud Chamber for 'analysis of perspectives of crisis provision' research project survey, CCS 2020

As mentioned previously, there is a particularly low score for organisations agreeing that there are ‘adequate services for supporting clients with long term, complex need in our local area’, suggesting that there may be a gap of provision for addressing underlying need.

6.3 Local systems change outcomes

Based on the CCS Programme activity and the consultation we have completed, we identify the following outcomes related to local systems in Year 1 of the Programme:

- **Increasing levels of communication between organisations:** the CCS Programme has offered a unique opportunity for organisations to communicate with each other in their localities. In some cases, the CCS-facilitated meetings were the first time that organisations were made aware of one another.
 - *“We were all sat around this big table [at the first CCS meeting] – some of the people I knew, some I didn’t. Since then, I have made my own relationships with people. I think like-minded people have come together and made their own connections. And made our own network, a smaller network. [Colleague] from DWP – I’d ring her up now. If I’m worried about somebody [service user] or need to make a connection, there are people who can help. Someone at Job Centre – they can escalate things. I’ve seen a softer side to people – some people [organisations] can’t give more money but they can refer [service users] to us.” (VCS organisation)*

Organisations funded through workstreams in the pilot sites report an increased level of trust since the inception of the CCS Programme. This has been somewhat catalysed further due to joint working in response to Covid-19 which has placed clients at the heart of the organisations service offer.

- **Clarity of responsibilities and strengths of VCS provision:** the CCS Programme has provided a platform for organisations to share their strengths with one another. This has raised the visibility of the unique nature of organisational offers and it is possible that this has led to increased referrals between organisations in the network (although at present, the data is not available to verify this).
 - *“I believe that we [our local authority area] are really lucky to have a lot of advice agencies – different advice agencies have different strengths and weaknesses. Referrals are time consuming due to complex need – not everything can be done by one organisation.” (VCS organisation)*
- **Agility of VCS sector is better understood:** some small VCS organisations report that they are more agile and able to respond to vulnerable clients compared to statutory services. This is, in part, due to the fact that their referrals systems are person-centered and build on strong relationship between practitioners. The CCS Programme has highlighted their unique strengths to others.
 - *“It is easier to send them to us [volunteer-led organisation] because other systems are too slow.” (VCS organisation)*
- **Shared vision for a more holistic system:** VCS organisations involved in the CCS Programme have had the opportunity to share their vision of what improved crisis provision should look like and feel like for a client. In all four pilot sites, a vision has emerged for a more accessible, warm and holistic system. The CCS Programme has been a catalyst for organisations to jointly identify and articulate this vision and for many a referral system is the first step.
- **Joint understanding of the importance of referral systems:** in most of the areas, there is appetite for a referral system as many organisations recognise this as the single thing that is likely to improve the

experience of service users. Respondents to our June 2020 survey were asked if there was ‘one thing’ that would support coordination among services in their area, and a single access point and centrally managed referral system was one of the key messages emerging from that data. Transparency and openness were noted as a key feature of any such system, with an online directory - open to all providers - mentioned a number of times to help signpost and increase awareness. This was further clarified in the outcome-setting sessions facilitated in September 2020.

- **Building upon learning within the Programme:** in at least one pilot site we have seen how workstreams are developing based on learning. For example, the Island Advice referral project is based on learning from the Mulberry Food and Advice workstream.
 - *“We have since received funding to put a referral process in place. After what happened in Mulberry, we realised that a lot of people are not aware they can access advice. So people get in touch with GP or Foodbanks but don’t know about advice centre. Not everyone has email.” (Advice provider, Tower Hamlets)*

6.4 Learning

6.4.1 Barriers to achieving local systems change

There are several barriers identified by organisations in the pilot sites to achieving the systems change outlined in the initial Theory of Change. While many of these are beyond the sphere of control (or scope) of the CCS Programme, it remains useful to note these in this evaluation report to help shape the role of the Programme with regards to local systems change:

- **Systems are influenced by funder requirements:** the nature of short term funding that many VCS organisations rely upon, makes their approach to service design ‘target-driven’ rather than focused on addressing complex, underlying need. CCS partner organisations report that their funders do not always consider funding longer term aftercare provision. The trusted relationships (which could also be classified as aftercare) that many partner organisations build (or could build) with their service users are often done so through goodwill rather than through formal funded workstreams. There is a perception that funders do not fund this work. Furthermore, some VCS partner organisation also report that they do not request funding for the time it takes to build these trusted relationships.
 - *“We need an investment in caring, believing, providing hope. These are soft outcomes.” (VCS partner)*

This is reinforced by ‘analysis of perspectives of crisis provision’ research project data described above whereby just 11% of respondents agree that there are adequate services for supporting clients with long term, complex need in their local area.

- **Systems need to consider how best to build trust with service users:** organisations recognise there are times when other agencies are best placed to support a service user, but service users are often reluctant to be referred to other agencies once the trust has been built with an initial agency. This makes ‘handing over’ service users challenging and even if a system is coordinated in theory, there are other barriers that need to be addressed.
- **Mental health provision is lacking and a barrier to addressing underlying need:** CCS partner organisations note that there are limited referral options for clients who are experiencing mental health challenges. They anticipate that this need will increase because of Covid-19. Mental health provision

was a commonly identified gap in our June 2020 survey, with notable gaps including geographical inequities and support for asylum seekers and refugees.

- **The shift to online delivery has been tough, leaving little space to participate in long term planning:** many organisations are in ‘fire-fighting’ mode as a result of Covid-19 (and in some cases, before that) and have had to put their limited resource and capacity into shifting service provision to online delivery. This has left little capacity for any other systems change thinking or action.
 - *“I wish we could engage more with meetings and workshops, but we are so busy and stretched to the limit with all the needs.” (Response to Systems Change survey)*
 - *“I feel this project has been an incredible support and kept us updated, with such a small resource team we haven’t been able to attend all of the meetings, but we have still been kept informed thank you.” (Response to Systems Change survey)*
- **Some providers are not active participants in CCS Programme:** in some areas, CCS partner organisations note that there are some organisations locally who have not been able to engage with the CCS Programme as they simply do not have the resource to do so. However, their expertise would be welcome and their organisations and service users could benefit greatly from involvement.
- **Commissioning culture makes joint working difficult:** in one of the localities there are several organisations commissioned by the local authority to provide similar services. This has contributed to a sense of distrust and reluctance to work collaboratively.

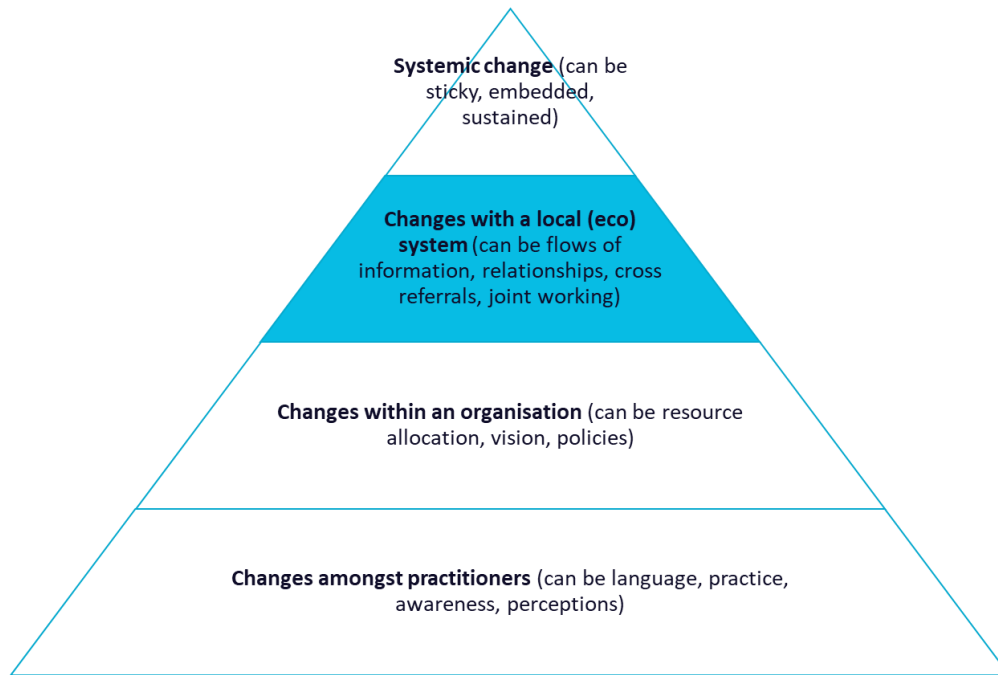
6.4.2 Bringing together our learning on local systems change

This section reflects on how we conceptualise systems change building upon The Children’s Society’s recent thinking on systems change as described in the Introduction to this report.

Much of the energy of the Programme in Year 1 has been focused on Tier 2 – local systems. At the time of writing, the Programme is working with the four pilot sites to identify the steps needed to make ‘good’ coordination happen.

We have developed some ways of conceptualising what systems collaboration looks like for the CCS Programme in Figure 23. We identify three ‘routes in’ to making systemic change as illustrated below.

Figure 23: Conceptualising systems collaboration and coordination for the CCS Programme



Source: Cloud Chamber 2020

Our observation of the CCS Programme in Year 1 is that the Programme has attempted to encourage change at the local ‘eco’ system (the ways in which organisations and services interconnect) level in the following ways as described above:

- Increasing levels of communication between organisations.
- Increasing levels of trust between organisations.
- Improved clarity of responsibilities and strengths of VCS provision.
- Agility of VCS sector is better understood.
- Development of a shared vision of a warm network.
- Joint understanding of the importance of referral systems in the pilot sites.

It is anticipated that the above outcomes will continue to be a priority in Years 2 and 3 and there will be goal to contribute further in the following ways:

- Improving flows of information between organisations.
- Improved on referral mechanisms between organisations.
- Improving jointly designed person-centred services, projects and workstreams.

This model assumes a set of ‘preconditions’ or assumptions amongst practitioner and organisations for enabling this. These preconditions include willingness, skills and capacity of practitioners and organisations. It also assumes that the pathway to collaboration is inclusive for all organisation types.

6.4.3 Role of CCS in facilitating systems change

Based on feedback from the stakeholders involved in the four case studies and Cloud Chamber's observation of partnership calls, we have observed that the Coordinated Community Support Programme has contributed to local systems change in the following ways:

- **CCS as a broker:** organisations in the pilot sites, especially VCS organisations, value the brokerage role that the CCS Team have played. This has taken place both through facilitating CCS Programme meetings and through direct contact between organisations.
 - *"[CCS Team] have supported people to action. They say to others [agencies] 'why can't you support SAWN?' We are beginning to get meaningful relationships with [the] local authority. They've helped us to question statutory organisations, especially Housing Associations. She [CCS Team] will ring them up and link us in so we can have a conversation. She's not always part of the conversation but she says 'I want to introduce you'. I think the fact it is an outside pair of eyes looking in."* (VCS partner)
- **CCS as an asset-identifier:** the Programme has been credited with helping organisations in the pilot sites share their strengths and better understand the strengths of others. Before the CCS Programme, there were mixed levels of understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Since the 'bringing together' of organisations through the Programme, further catalysed through the needs arising because of Covid-19, organisations report an improved awareness and understanding of the strengths of other organisations in their local areas.
 - *"We forged a relationship with [another VCS org] and I'm hoping it will continue. There is lot of opportunity for this joint working. We can understand more about what each other can do. This is beneficial for the people we are trying to support."* (VCS partner)
- **CCS workstreams welcomed as a non-target driven space:** some organisations funded to deliver workstreams report that the CCS Programme is a space to try new things and is refreshing when compared to the target-driven requirements from other funders. Organisations welcome the spirit of the Programme and, in some cases, understand that outcomes are more important than outputs. This is generally welcomed by VCS organisations involved, although it should be noted that the sometimes onerous nature of monitoring requirements may counteract some of the ethos of the Programme.
- **CCS as a platform, boosting credibility:** there is some early evidence of VCS organisations feeling 'seen and heard' because of the facilitation of the CCS Programme. Being involved in the Programme has raised their profile in their localities and boosted their credibility. This is particularly the case for small, volunteer-led organisations.
 - *"Some good links, some good support. Maybe we are on the radar now."* (VCS partner)
- **Flexible, warm and responsive central CCS Team is valued:** consulted stakeholders have really welcomed the relationships built with the CCS Team and value their flexibility, especially in relation to Covid-19. Partners welcome the collaborative approach the team have taken. The team are increasingly being approached by local authorities for advice.
 - *"I wasn't sure how honest I could be with [CCS Team] at the beginning [...] now I am. Now we've built that relationship. I tell them everything including our [challenging] relationship with local authority."* (VCS partner)
 - *"I feel like there's a bond [with CCS Team]."* (VCS partner)

- **A blended approach of workstream funding and facilitation has been welcome:** the value of workstream funding combined with facilitation has been valued by partners.
 - *“Working with CCS and local partners as part of the Programme adds significant value to local approaches, more than the value of funding available.” (Respondent to Systems Change survey June 2020)*

6.4.4 Testing Theory of Change assumptions

This section reexamines Tier 2 of the Theory of Change regarding local systems change, through the lens of the assumptions which underpinned it and evidence from Year 1. Pre Covid-19, there was limited evidence that organisations had the capacity to jointly identify solutions in the form of workstreams. In the table below (Figure 24), we compare the assumptions of the ToC against evidence gathered in Year 1.

Figure 24: Testing ToC Assumptions

Assumption	Evidence
Organisations would take ownership of the Programme in the four local pilot sites and would be in a position to co-produce, coordinate and lead with minimal direction from the central CCS Team.	This has not been the case. In part, this is due to Covid-19 and the need for organisations to reposition their activities. Furthermore, the culture of ‘responding to’ funding calls or commissioning processes rather than coproducing projects is new for many of the organisations involved.
Organisations would have the skills to develop workstreams. Due to the culture of funding Programmes, many professionals are used to responding to specific requests or outcomes. The CCS Programme was different because it gave organisations a ‘blank sheet’ to design their own projects based on their own knowledge. This expected organisations to be proactive rather than reactive to designing solutions.	It became apparent that for many organisations this way of working was new and, in some cases, a barrier to developing project solutions. The CCS Team have had to guide organisations to designing projects.
Organisations would have capacity to develop workstreams and engage with the Programme: there was an underlying assumption that organisations would have the resource to engage with the Programme – both participating in meetings and also to develop projects as mentioned above.	In some cases, capacity has been challenging particularly for volunteer-led organisations and schools. Implicit within this was an assumption that organisations would be able and willing to begin ‘work’ on the Programme before or without receiving workstream funding. It is thought that some organisations may envisage the Programme starting when workstream funding hits their bank account (also raised by Learning Facilitator at the Feb 2020 Programme Board meeting).
Any developed workstreams would have coordination at the core: it was assumed that developed workstreams would have an element of coordination.	This has been the case in some workstreams (Mulberry School and EYST, for example) although in other cases the workstreams have been to ‘boost’ capacity to address service user need exacerbated by Covid-19.
Workstreams would be designed with all five Programme themes in mind. There was an assumption that partner organisations would consider all 5 Programme themes (access, application process, underlying need, aftercare and learning) when designing their workstreams.	When articulating their workstreams, the access theme has been disproportionately represented in Year 1. This may be somewhat due to the fact that addressing underlying need and aftercare are underreported. There is evidence that Year 2 is likely to focus more on the other themes with a referral system being an all-encompassing mechanism to support all themes.

Source: Cloud Chamber and Janet Grauberg, 2020

Reflections from Learning Facilitator

Reflecting on the text above, it appears that a number of assumptions underlay the Programme approach:

- That there was, or would quickly be assembled, a definable group of organisations (comprising both local authority and VCS representatives) who would form a Steering Group.
- That these organisations would already have, or develop quickly, a shared view of what coordinated crisis support looked like in their area and what was required to make progress towards it.
- That what was missing could be largely solved by additional funding.

In reflecting on the reality of the pre-Covid-19 phase of work, a number of points were discussed:

1. There is a lack of capacity, particularly in the smaller VCS organisations, to engage in the group meeting process as envisaged. In our February 2020 call one of the Norfolk VCS representatives said, *“we’re having to borrow funding from another project to go to these meetings, develop plans and costings, run it past people who need to see it, and send it on.”*
2. The relationships between organisations were less well developed than envisaged. At some of the information meetings in Autumn 2019 people were meeting for the first time. Time was needed to build relationships of trust between the organisations, before they were confident in suggesting ideas for shared projects. Further, in one local authority area, there was constant reference to the fact that the VCS organisations competed for funding.
3. A concern was raised by one local authority about the legitimacy of the decision-making process in the groups, as there was not a stable membership and people who did not have the full picture were taking decisions on other organisations’ funding proposals.

The approach taken by the CCS Programme of looking to the local areas to come forward together with ideas was unfamiliar. Most funding programmes specified tightly the outcomes or approach to be taken, and most VCS organisations were used to bidding as single agencies, or small partnerships. It was unusual for organisations to be asked to take shared ownership of projects.

6.5 Local Systems Change: Reflections from Learning Facilitator

6.5.1 Introduction

The learning programme has focused from the start on reflecting on how the local areas are understanding and making progress towards a more coordinated community crisis response. The funding bid for the Programme stated:

- *“At a local level, each of the pilots will be led by a local project Steering Group made up of representatives of organisations working in the local area. The local Steering Groups will each be responsible for putting together a proposal for how the coordinated crisis support Programme will be delivered in their area.... based on this proposal, grant funding would be distributed to local organisations (in a way determined by themselves in collaboration with the Programme manager)”.*

In reality, organisations involved in the initial meetings in Autumn 2019 found it hard to identify and agree proposals for activities to take forward as part of their implementation plans, and the CCS Programme team took on a greater role than expected in summarising key issues arising from the meetings and shaping them into proposals.

During the Covid-19 pandemic organisations were quicker in coming forward with funding proposals, although many of these were from single agencies or small partnerships and focused on crisis responses (such as enabling digital delivery or food provision).

As organisations began to move from crisis response to longer term thinking over the Summer, the Programme team returned to encouraging the local areas to come forward with proposals for coordinated working and set up a series of ‘partnership meetings’ to encourage commitment to working together.

6.5.2 Coordination prerequisites – capacity, legitimacy and motivation

In reflecting on how local areas responded to the Covid-19 crisis and the role that the Programme had played in bringing people together, it was noted that in most areas there was a lack of coordination capacity – i.e., someone who could take on the day-to-day tasks of arranging meetings, booking meeting rooms and chasing action. The exception was Oldham where the Partnerships Director from the VCS infrastructure organisation ‘Action Together’ had taken on this role and had invested a lot of her time in getting and keeping organisations around the table.

It was suggested that this was a key Programme learning point - that a coordinated crisis response might require some dedicated capacity to act as coordinator. In the absence of this in most of the areas, the Programme team were picking up these tasks.

There was also a discussion as to whether capacity was necessary, but not sufficient - the value that the Partnerships Director brought was legitimacy, in terms of her role in the infrastructure organisation. This would hinder, for example, a local authority taking on the coordination role. The CCS Programme team derived its legitimacy as coordinator from its funding role. A coordination role also requires legitimacy.

As the Programme team encouraged the local areas to submit further funding proposals over the Summer a further question arose - whether all the organisations actually wanted more coordination. A number of the

organisations were struggling to cope with demand, or facing uncertain funding situations, for others crisis response services were peripheral to their main work, or they served a discrete client group and did not have interest in the wider Programme.

This was another key learning point – that coordination was a desirable outcome was taken for granted in the Programme design. But for many organisations, the costs of coordinating with other organisations (in terms of time attending meetings and considering changed ways of working) were here and now, but the benefits (in terms of more seamless referrals of individuals between providers, or increased reach) were uncertain and in the future.

A final learning point was the realisation that most progress in coordinating activities had come from smaller clusters, for example, the Tower Hamlets advice providers, and the refugee and migrant charities in Swansea. These organisations shared values, client groups, and delivery approaches, and it was therefore easier for them to work together. It was possible that expecting a whole-system coordinated response was too challenging, and greater progress would be made by encouraging smaller, themed coordination activities.

6.5.3 Local Ownership of the CCS Programme

A related concern about the progress of local systems change was whether the local areas were taking ownership of the issues that were highlighted as needing addressing locally. Issues were discussed in the local area calls, but it fell to the Programme team to take away the actions and shape the ideas into proposals.

The idea of local organisations signing a ‘Charter’, which was put forward at the September 2020 partnership meetings, was meant to create additional commitment and ownership from the local areas.

However, there was a debate about whether the position of the Programme team as decision-makers on the funding meant that local areas were always in a position of seeking permission to proceed on an issue, rather than making their own decisions about how to deploy the resources.

This issue will come more to the forefront as the Programme reaches the half-way point and begins to think about legacy and sustainability.

6.5.4 Conclusions: local systems change

There are four key conclusions about local systems change from the learning Programme work:

1. The experience of the Programme suggests that coordinated crisis response in a local area might require some dedicated capacity to act as coordinator.
2. Such capacity is necessary, but not sufficient. An effective coordination role also requires legitimacy. The inherent tensions between LAs and VCS organisations suggests that it would be the exception for the LA to succeed in the coordinator role.
3. The Programme has assumed that all organisations are motivated to coordinate more effectively. However, this may not be the case. For many organisations, the costs of coordinating with other organisations are here and now, but the benefits are uncertain and in the future.
4. Leading on from this, it is possible that expecting a whole system coordinated response was too challenging, and greater progress would be made by encouraging smaller, themed coordination

activities, where the values, client groups and modes of delivery are more similar, and the costs of coordination are therefore smaller.

6.6 Consideration points

Based on Year 1 learning, Cloud Chamber encourage the Coordinated Community Support Programme Team and wider partnership to consider:

- **How best to increase awareness amongst the partnership at site level that CCS is about influencing a change in local systems:** organisations involved in the CCS Programme have often sought funding for workstreams with an ‘access’ focus. Few organisations have sought workstream funding with a systems change objective. It is recommended that the CCS Team reiterate that workstreams which aim to influence systems – at practitioner, organisation or ecosystem level – are welcome (see Figure 23).
- **Consider where on the ‘ownership continuum’ the project wants to aim for:** an early aspiration of the Programme was for local organisations to ‘own’ the direction of the Programme and come forward with workstream ideas. Evidence suggests (namely the reluctance of organisations to come forward with workstream ideas in the early stages of the Programme) that the open nature of the workstreams has been challenging to engage with (as described above). Given that local organisations continue to struggle with remote working and an increase in caseloads both as a result of Covid-19, we invite the team to consider how realistic true ‘ownership’ of the Programme at pilot site level is likely to be. We recognise that full co-production may not be possible. Steps towards ownership (such as calling meetings, offering to lead on workstreams etc.) should still be regarded as a success especially given the organisational pressures due to Covid-19.
- **Consider how the Programme can improve the ability and confidence of organisations to place value on aftercare:** evidence suggests that many of the organisations involved in the Programme are working hard to provide emotional support, to build long term trusted relationships with their service users. However, this work is done outside of their core funded work (both within and beyond the CCS Programme). We invite the CCS Programme team to consider how the CCS Programme can be an opportunity for organisations to understand and articulate the value of their work in this space and ultimately, identify funding so this work can not only continue but grow.
- **Consider ways to better engage smaller, voluntary led organisations in the Programme:** there are a number of organisations who may have ideas to contribute to the Programme but are either unaware of the Programme or their capacity to engage is too limited. It is important to recognise that engaging with the Programme assumes that an organisation has resource and capacity. As a result, the Programme is potentially missing specific expertise and insight. Our suggestion is that the Programme should identify (and possibly fund) a piece of work to enable such organisations to engage. This may include some ‘light’ engagement through dissemination of knowledge gained, a consultation with small organisations to better understand their needs, encouraging larger organisations to engage smaller organisations in their workstreams and/or providing funds to smaller organisations so that they have the capacity to engage with the Programme in a strategic way.
- **Consider the role of schools in the Programme and beyond:** the Programme has highlighted the strength of schools in being able to communicate effectively and quickly with vulnerable communities. However, learning indicates that schools do not have time to engage with the Programme nor to coproduce solutions to crisis. It is recommended that the Programme identify an ideal legacy for

schools for the CCS Programme – this may include further consultation / research with schools to identify their assets and gaps in responding to crises.

Summary of Key Learning: local systems change

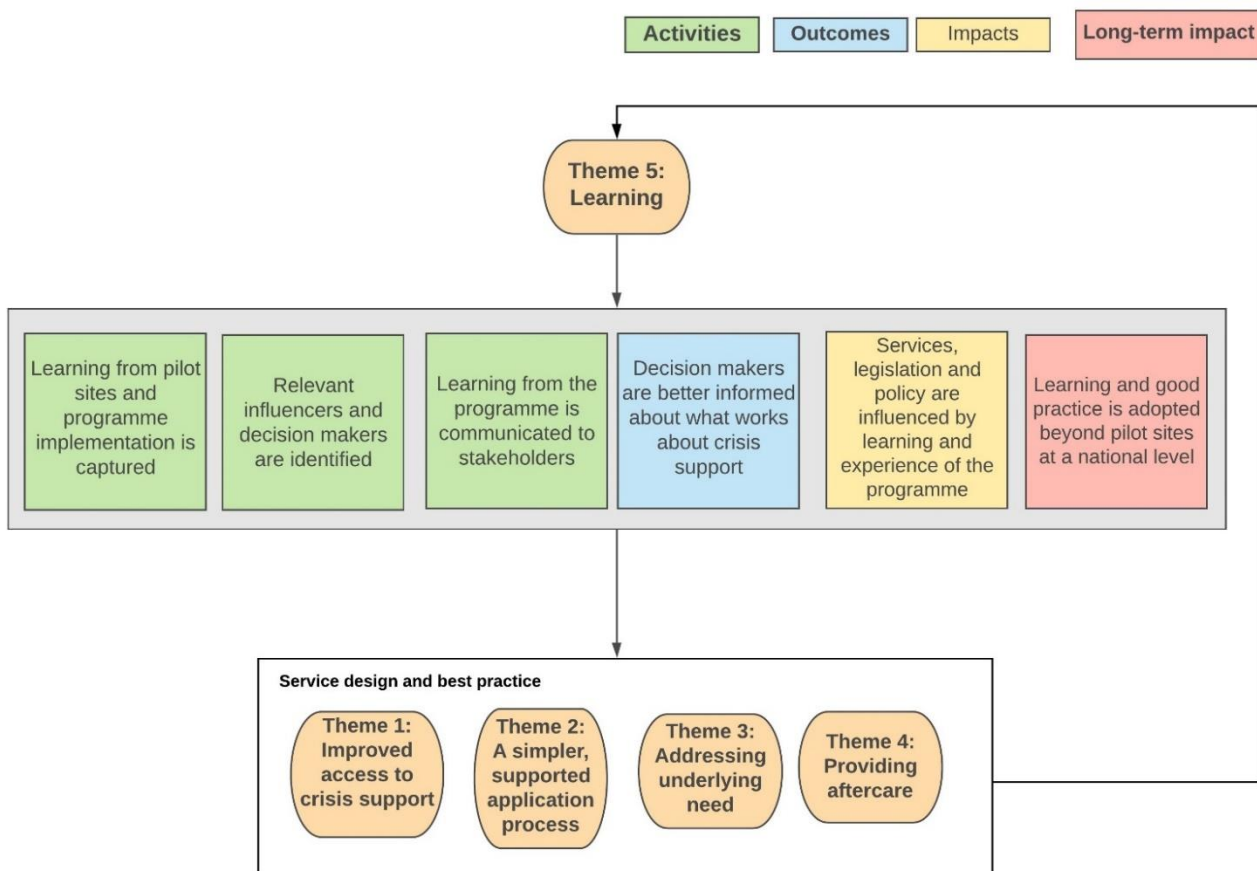
- The CCS Team have worked hard to lay the foundation for systems change in Year 1 of the Programme. There is evidence of increased communication between VCS providers and an improved clarity of the strengths of different organisations. The importance of a referral system in contributing to systems change is recognised by many partners indicating a shared understanding.
- The blended approach of both workstream funding together with the facilitation, expertise and capacity provided by the CCS Team has contributed to laying these foundations. It is probable that workstream funding alone (or indeed the CCS Team facilitation, expertise and capacity) would not have been able to garner momentum – the blended approach has lent both credibility and built trust amongst pilot site partners.
- The Programme design made some assumptions about the pre-existence of local coordination structures and capacity which have been questioned during Year 1 of implementation.
- The CCS Team have reflected that effective local coordination requires capacity – one or more individuals for whom this is part of their day job. Further, that they need to have legitimacy in the local system to bring people together. Coordination has costs to individual organisations and the benefits of coordination need to be seen to outweigh them.
- A number of barriers to systems change remain and our consideration points invite the CCS Programme to consider its role in removing or minimising some of these barriers.

7 National systems change

7.1 Introduction

The overall objective of the Programme with respect to national systems change is to ensure that learning and good practice is adopted beyond pilot sites at a national level. Figure 25 below shows how the national systems change agenda links with the Theory of Change for the Programme. The key aspect of this is that the lessons from each of the areas and across the four themes of service design and best practice are captured and reflected upon to identify key learning points. Note that within the context of this report ‘national’ applies to both the UK wide government and also to the devolved national administrations where relevant.

Figure 25: CCS Programme Theory of Change – Tier 3 National Systems Change



There are two key operational steps to achieving the national systems change goals. Firstly, the role of the Programme in identifying key lessons in terms of service design, best practice and contributing to understanding how these relate to the local context. Secondly, at a national influencing level, to maximise the potential for learning and good practice to be adopted beyond the pilot sites. This second step is predicated on:

- Learning from the pilot sites and Programme implementation is captured.
- Relevant decision makers are identified.
- Learning from the Programme is communicated to stakeholders.

Once the learning from the Programme has been articulated to the appropriate stakeholders, the short term objective is for the relevant decision makers to be better informed about what works for crisis support. Consequently, the Programme will be able to influence services, legislation and policy and ultimately drive learning and good practice to be adopted at a national level.

7.2 National systems change outcomes

In terms of national systems change, progress needs to be considered within the context of the long term nature of influencing coupled with the fact that the Programme is in its first year and its focus and ways of working were significantly shifted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, attribution of change is challenging to assess, and at a national level, we would only ever look to evidence contribution to change. Nonetheless, we note that there have been a number of areas where TCS has leveraged the lessons from the Coordinated Community Support Programme and there is evidence of national level systems change happening. These include:

- **Policy influence:** the following examples are how evidence from the Programme is informing policy and practice beyond the four pilot sites.
 - **MHCLG and the Treasury funding:** The Children’s Society was active in engaging with the UK Government regarding financial hardship and Covid-19. An additional £63 million was provided by the UK Government in June to be distributed to Local Authorities in England to help those most in need.
 - **Discretionary Assistance Fund (Welsh Government):** contribution of evidence to decision regarding provision of additional support to this fund. Subsequently, a further £11 million was allocated in May to the fund which supports individuals and families facing extreme financial hardship.
 - **Local Government Association (LGA):** the CCS Programme is directly influencing good practice reports and recommendations provided by the LGA to local councils under the Reshaping Financial Support Action Learning Programme. This Programme aims to support Local Authorities to establish best practice and seek to continually improve the support delivered to low income households. Having the LGA on the Programme Board plays a critical role in allowing the Programme to influence Local Authorities beyond the four pilot sites.
 - **Coordinated opportunities to share experiences:** TCS invited organisations to complete evidence surveys in order to provide examples of ‘on the ground’ experience in a rapid way. For example, one call for evidence was on Universal Credit (UC) and led to a submission to DWP in April 2015. Thirteen (13) responses from organisations in the four pilot sites were received and included feedback on the accessibility of UC to inform the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)’s response to UC operations in light of Covid-19.

In addition, several other activities are taking place to raise awareness and insights from the Programme, including a networking event regarding digital exclusion. There is some emerging evidence that national funders, such as The Trussell Trust, are also using some of the learning of the Programme to review their approaches to emergency provision and this will be explored in more detail in Year 2 of the evaluation.

- **Scalable potential:** the following examples are initially focused on the four pilot sites although there is longer term aspiration for these initiatives to benefit a wider range of localities.
 - **Digital Grants Portal:** CCS was working with JP Morgan through to July to develop a grants portal and intends to further build on this to respond to demand from pilot areas to improve their capacity to apply for grants and funding. This, alongside linked activities regarding grant awareness, has the potential to be scalable at a national level in support of improving access and simplifying application processes for community organisations themselves.
 - **Public Law Project (PLP) support:** PLP are providing training and legal support in the pilot areas. It is thought that national partners will also be able to benefit from this in terms of improving understanding and legal awareness.

The above examples are suggestive of national funders' and government thinking in terms of both improving access to the immediate crisis support and how this support can be provided in the longer term - given the anticipated rise of people requiring help in the next few years. In addition, the local sites also highlighted that many funders have simplified application processes both for clients and for supporting organisations at the start of the pandemic to positive effect, although there was some nervousness that these would revert back over time.

In terms of addressing underlying need and providing aftercare, evidence of achieving national systems change was more anecdotal with references to shifts in thinking among funders from specific immediate needs (e.g. food, school uniforms) to the broader situation of the individual and how they interact with organisations in their community. While there are some examples of progress on these themes in terms of local systems, it remains to be seen what the routes to action will be at a national level in the longer term, particularly in terms of the UK Government.

A final factor to consider when reviewing the national systems change perspective is that the Programme has been able to leverage its work to secure additional funding at a local level, including from the Martin Lewis Coronavirus Fund and from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. These demonstrate how the Programme can act as a catalyst for further funding which may in turn offer potential to 'scale up' lessons from pilot areas more broadly.

7.3 Learning

A number of key themes and challenges arose when discussing national system change objectives and progress during our conversations with the CCS Team during October 2020.

7.3.1 Key themes

- **Identifying and working with the right partners:** the LGA has been noted as a particularly valuable partner due to their shared interest of improving practice at a local level. Similarly, the links with The Trussell Trust and its network of food banks are considered to be complementary to the Programme. There is recognition amongst some TCS leaders that the approach to national partners was driven by which partners were known to TCS. On reflection there may have been some value in a more strategic assessment of which partners would add value to the Programme (for example those representing BAME communities, or with specialisms supporting older people and/or supporting those with long term health conditions). However, it is also acknowledged that for Year 1, it has been appropriate to tap into existing relationships, networks and build upon willingness to engage.

- *“It would’ve been better to think more strategically about this. We have a range of partners. This is something that could still be addressed.” (TCS team member)*
- **Adding value to broader TCS campaigns:** the CCS Programme has added value to lobbying and campaigning delivered by TCS. The relationships built in pilot sites have provided qualitative examples of logistical challenges felt in community. For example, in Oldham it was relayed to the CCS Team (and in turn to the TCS Policy team) that NRPF families are more likely to enroll children later in the academic year – which can result in them being placed in a school far from home. This means that during lockdown / school holidays families need to go significant distances to collect their Free School Meal (FSM) vouchers. Some FSM vouchers can often only be used at supermarkets which are more expensive. This has been taken to the UK Government as a key concern and adaptations to FSM vouchers have been made as a result. The CCS Team felt that practical and ‘on the ground’ stories from local areas have been particularly valued by influencing audiences in terms of identifying need and priority issues during the Covid-19 pandemic. Case studies were particularly valuable in terms of highlighting the issues of digital exclusion and the challenges faced by people with NRPF, as well as presenting a broader picture of the ways of improving services in these areas within the context of underlying needs and access to support.
- **Joined-up working with pilot sites:** the CCS Team felt that the two-way relationship with pilot sites was very helpful in terms of identifying which issues to raise and providing a platform for organisations in each area to influence more effectively. This was a benefit to the organisations participating in the Programme as they would otherwise lack the scale to influence nationally.
- **Welcome opportunity for local providers:** organisations in local pilot sites were keen and responsive to sharing evidence and case studies. For example, 35 organisations contributed to a campaign planning session on digital exclusion hosted by TCS. For smaller organisations, they often do not have other routes in to influence policy and practice, so this has been an empowering part of the Programme for them.

7.3.2 Challenges to overcome

- **Complexity of issues:** while the Programme has been successful in terms of raising issues like digital exclusion and highlighting how central this can be to supporting people in financial crisis, some organisations can focus on short term solutions (such as provision of a laptop) without considering the broader drivers of need. This complexity can be difficult to convey to influencing audiences and requires a balance of quantitative and qualitative evidence as well as different communications approaches, including workshops and policy papers.
- **Short termism:** the challenges of articulating complex issues are exacerbated by the focus on addressing access to support issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. For this reason, CCS Team members considered that the themes of assessing underlying need and providing aftercare were not being highlighted at a national level.
- **Gaps in coverage:** while the Programme has highlighted the challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers, other potential beneficiaries such as the elderly and people with disabilities are potentially underrepresented by the Programme. Initial discussions with Age UK and Mind to explore partnership opportunities have taken place but did not progress further.

7.4 Consideration points

Based on Year 1 learning, Cloud Chamber encourage the Coordinated Community Support Programme Team and wider partnership to consider:

- **Continue to ensure the Programme can align with wider TCS influencing activities:** the CCS Programme has both been driver of influencing for TCS and an informer of evidence for ongoing TCS influencing work. It is recommended that insights from CCS continue to inform wider TCS initiatives and ensure that the insights generated are fully leveraged.
- **Identify ways to reinforce the importance of aftercare:** the ongoing need to address immediate access to support during the Covid-19 crisis has led to a loss of focus on providing aftercare to prevent recurrence of crisis. This is relevant for all influencing audiences.
- **Develop a strategic view of national system aspirations:** building on the ‘analysis of perspectives of crisis provision’ research project currently being undertaken by the CCS Programme, there is a need to develop an evidence base to understand which support needs are not being met and which audiences (e.g. people with disabilities) may require more support. There is an opportunity to invite additional members to the Programme Board to ensure all community needs are represented. The Programme Board, and the respective research being undertaken in their organisations, could have a role to play in influencing national systems change although would need a more joined up approach.
- **Articulating need in terms of both clients and supporting community based organisations:** we have observed that two issues can become conflated in terms of articulating needs at a national level: the needs of people in crisis; and the need to help local organisations who help to support clients. Many of the community organisations can be small, have only limited resources and provide informal support. Nevertheless, they are able to invest in client relationships and often have a good understanding of underlying needs and appropriate aftercare. As well as advocating for people in financial crisis, there is demand at a local level for national organisations such as TCS to influence on behalf of these smaller organisations.

Summary of Key Learning: national systems change

- The CCS Programme has added value to lobbying and campaigning delivered by TCS. The relationships built in pilot sites have provided evidence challenges felt in communities. This has led to adaptations to operations around Universal Credit online systems, free school meals and LWAS and DAF funding.
- The two-way relationship with pilot sites is very helpful in terms of identifying which issues to raise and providing a platform for organisations in each area to influence more effectively. This was a benefit to the organisations participating in the Programme as they would otherwise lack the scale to influence at a national level.
- There have been a number of examples of national systems change during Year 1 which have demonstrated the potential for The Children’s Society to leverage the insights and lessons from the CCS Programme to influence effectively.
- The Covid-19 situation has created a need to think differently in order to ensure people have access to support, however it has led to less emphasis on understanding underlying needs and providing aftercare.
- However, there is evidence that the learning gathered from the Programme is valued by national decision makers and had the potential to influence effectively at this level.

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusions

Our conclusions for Year 1 of the Coordinated Community Support Programme can be summarised as follows:

- **Significant progress made and strong relationships built:** the CCS Team have exceeded the number of people and organisations they have engaged through the Programme. The CCS Team have gained credibility and trust of a range of VCS organisations within 1 year. This achievement, especially during Covid-19 where face to face meetings have not been possible, is notable.
- **The Programme has been agile in response to Covid-19 with coordination remaining a key priority:** the Programme has allowed space for workstreams to be Covid-19 responsive (i.e. providing support in direct response to needs emerging because of the pandemic). Furthermore, the Programme team facilitated useful conversations at pilot site level to increase awareness of community needs arising due to Covid-19. While the focus of Year 1 at pilot site level has been somewhat adapted due to Covid-19, the core value of improved coordination remains visible and attainable. In some cases, Covid-19 has catalysed improved coordination.
- **Preconditions for systems change at local level:** Year 1 of the Programme has built some solid foundations for systems change in each of the four local areas. This includes improved coordination, improved recognition of the strengths of different organisations and some firm plans to develop coordinated systems for Years 2 and 3 of the Programme.
- **Learning how to improve pathways and experiences for people who access services:** through the funded workstreams, Year 1 of the CCS has enabled some rich learning and reflection about how VCS organisations support their communities. For example, the unique and trusted relationships that are built, innovative ways to keep in touch with people during lockdown and how to mobilise resources at times of crisis.
- **Iterative and evolving Programme:** the Programme has learning at its heart. There is an acknowledgment amongst the CCS Team that the initial five Programme themes will need to be adapted – partly in response to Covid-19 and partly due to learning via the workstreams.

8.2 Reflections on the Learning Programme (from the Learning Facilitator)

Overall reflections

As the rest of the Programme, the planned learning activities had to adapt to the Covid-19 situation. Plans for a termly physical get-together of key people from the four pilot sites were dropped in favour of a series of open and themed Zoom calls over the Spring and Summer, and continuing into the Autumn of 2020. It is likely that relationships between key actors in the pilot sites are less well developed as a result, but the use of online approaches has meant that a much wider group of organisations in the four areas have been able to take part.

The engagement of the learning partner sites in the Programme has been less significant than planned. This was partly due to the increased pilot site activity during the height of the crisis, and partly due to uncertainty about the right time to contact the partner sites. In retrospect, earlier and more frequent engagement with the partner sites would have been beneficial for both them and the pilot sites.

Programme design

The CCS Programme is complex, with many different dimensions. The reflective calls and Learning & Evaluation meetings debated a number of these:

a) *Where does the core value of the CCS Programme lie?* Does it lie in the funding offer, the capacity and expertise of the Programme staff, the link to national influencing opportunities, the opportunity to leverage in other funds? There is a particular debate about the funding offer. For the first few months of the Programme the team were keen to start which was largely interpreted as signing off implementation plans and making grants to the local areas. The original funding proposal and delivery timetable set out an expectation that the first grants would be made three or four months after the Programme team started in post. On reflection later in the year team members suggested that this did not leave enough time to understand the local context of each area and develop relationships of trust with the key players. It did not allow time to understand the networks and forums that already existed, to communicate the full breadth of the Programme to all the relevant agencies, and to tune in to how the local areas were framing the challenges they faced. Programme team members wondered whether, taking the first year as a whole, they might have agreed pilot site workstreams more quickly if they had spent the first few months of the Programme in the local areas and used that time to identify the key issues. They also noted that there was a risk that the desire to get funds to local areas during lockdown meant that some organisations saw the CCS Programme as simply another funder, rather than a wider systems change programme.

b) *What support is the Programme trying to coordinate?* The dimensions of local coordination are multiple – across the VCS, between the VCS and the local authority, and between different levels of local authority i.e. districts and shire counties. Much of the bid documentation focuses on improving access to the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme, but most of the Programme delivery has focused on improving coordination across the VCS. This may be because grants can only go to voluntary organisations, and/or because LAs have been cautious about generating additional referrals because of the pressure on their funding.

c) What form is the Programme expecting coordination to take? In reflection in the Summer, members of the Programme team noted that they did not have a clear model of a Steering Group when they held the introduction meetings at the start of the Programme. They probably thought that there would be about a dozen key organisations with existing relationships who would form a stable group. In fact, there were many more organisations engaged in the Programme, but there was never the same group from one meeting to another. The Programme has identified a number of possible coordination models, including co-located services, online referral systems, bilateral partnerships and area-wide networks. It is not yet clear what to look for in assessing whether a local area's crisis response is becoming better coordinated.

8.3 Recommendations for the Programme Theory of Change

The Programme had, based on research, five themes underpinning it (improved access to crisis support; a simpler support application process; addressing underlying need; providing aftercare and learning). Year 1 of the Programme has helped evolve the ways in which themes are experienced, articulated and delivered by service providers. Based on the learning outlined in this report we recommend a 're-visioning' of the five themes for the remainder of the Programme to bring them in line with how service users describe their work and how the themes intersect from a service user perspective.

This is a consideration point for the Coordinated Community Support Programme team as we enter Year 2 of the Programme. Please see below for more details, and further consideration points.

- **Envisage access as a cross-cutting theme:** when taken on its own, a thematic outcome around 'access' risks being about resolving an immediate crisis rather than taking steps to address underlying need and build a trusted relationship. However, we have seen some evidence of workstreams being able to work beyond an 'access to goods/food/furniture' service and provide holistic support and/or make robust referrals. Observation of Year 1 suggests that the access to crisis support can be a gateway to support with other Programme theme areas such as application support, aftercare and underlying need. Increased access can, if done well and is coordinated, lead to increased chances of success with other Programme outcomes. We have heard that some providers may not identify as offering crisis provision including food banks and advice services. We recommend broadening out the language used when describing the Programme and including examples of holistic, long term support.
- **Responding to additional needs:** we have seen how services have been supported beyond the immediate crisis presented – for example, brokering conversations with housing teams or helping register with a GP. While this does not go so far as addressing an *underlying* need it does address additional, sometimes multifaceted need. At present, this is not represented in the Programme Theory of Change and we invite the CCS Team to consider it as a valid objective of the Programme.
- **Building trusted relationships:** some of the support provided by organisations is informal, relationship building. It shares some characteristics with aftercare although the term does not always resonate with delivery organisations. As a result, some organisations are not requesting funds (both within the CCS Programme and beyond) for this work. We recommend shifting the discourse from aftercare to 'building trusted relationships' (or similar) in an attempt to support organisations to do this work. Building these trusted relationships is critical to helping identify and respond to identifying need.

Appendix 1: KPI summary and narrative

Five Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were set for the Programme at proposal stage. These are shown in the table below, and focus around receiving, and referral to crisis support, as well as engagement of organisations.

Figure 26: Key performance indicators for the CCS programme

KPI #	Indicator	Target (for end of Programme, year 3)	Quasi-baseline
1	Numbers receiving support through LWA scheme increases	LWA recipients increase by 2,000 above baseline in Year 3 across the four pilot areas.	Number of awards for three pilot areas in 2018/19 = 8,510
2	Numbers receiving support through other crisis support schemes increase	Crisis support received through other sources increases by 1,600 above baseline in Year 3.	Number of awards made in 2018/9 = 2,821
3	Numbers receiving referrals to other support services at point of crisis increases	360 successful referrals across the four pilots made through crisis support network in Year 3	31 – underreported in monitoring data
4	Numbers requiring repeat crisis support decreases	Of those successfully referred for ongoing support, follow up evaluation finds increases in financial stability and resilience.	Unknown
5	Widespread engagement of organisations is secured for a local crisis support network	At least 20 organisations engaged in each area in delivery of coordinated crisis support provision (80 across four areas).	Zero (0) organisations involved prior to CCS Programme launch

Our analysis of the KPIs in year 1 tells us the following:

- **KPI 1:** Figures for 2020/21 are available (consistently for three areas) for four months of the year (April to July). To aid aid comparison with previous years data, we annualize the figures which demonstrates **that around 21,411 support** awards will be made for crisis support within the year. This suggests an increase in the number receiving crisis support through LWAS. However, both additional demand for crisis support and increased supply of funding (£63m of central government funding in June 2020), mean that attribution of any increases to the work of the CCS Programme is not possible.

The average number of applications per month doubled from 2019/20 to 2020/21, with the number of awards in 2020/21 exceeding those for 2019/20, despite not having data for the full year (only five months was available for 2020/21). The average award rate increased from 48% in 2018/19 to 61% in 2020/21; reflecting relaxation of eligibility and/or reward criteria, alongside increased funding and personnel to deliver the scheme.

Figure 27: LWAS application and award statistics in three pilot sites

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21*
Applications	14,422	16,812	11,742
Awards	6,979	8,510	7,137
Average applications per month	1,202	1,401	2,936
Awards per month	582	709	1,784
Award rate	48%	51%	61%

Source: CCS, from LWAS schemes in three pilot area. Excludes data for Norfolk, where statistics were only available for 2018/19. *Data is for four months only, April to July.

- **KPI 2:** The number of awards made between **February/March -July 2020 is 384**. While prima facie, this is a reduction compared to the baseline figure (2,821), the data refers to a shorter time period (5 or 6 months) compared to the 2018/19 baseline, with fewer funders providing data. Covid-19 is likely to have affected data collection, the supply/demand for grants, and availability of data making it difficult to draw any firm conclusions.
- **KPI 3:** For Year 1, **31 referrals** have been recorded. Feedback from the programme team is that this is not systematically collected/asked for all workstreams. It is only collected where this clearly linked to the activities taking place within in the workstream.
- **KPI 4:** The fourth KPI ‘numbers requiring repeat crisis support decreases’ is problematic. In the short term, including the three years of the Programme, we would expect the number requiring repeat crisis support to increase as a result of Covid-19. Furthermore, a successful coordinated Programme may see an increase in requests for crisis support as awareness and referrals increase and networks are established. In addition, it will be difficult to mitigate double counting in such a data set where various agencies are reporting repeat visits potentially from the same clients. We recommend repositioning this to collect data on a) numbers of people having additional needs met (beyond immediate crisis) and b) increased trust or awareness of local services is reported amongst clients. We feel that these indicators better capture the ethos of the CCS Programme and prevent overburdening workstreams (many of whom are volunteer led) to collect meaningful data on repeat referrals.
- **KPI 5:** The fifth KPI shows significant engagement in the Programme, with **121 organisations** engaged in Year 1, and **over 20 in every area** of the Programme (four areas). Progression against this KPI is well above the target set and illustrates the ‘set up’ nature of Year 1 whereby engaging partners has been a critical success factor and positions the Programme to achieve in Years 2 and 3. The degree to which this engagement is sustained throughout the Programme will be monitored by the evaluation.

Appendix 2: Local Systems Change survey

This Appendix provides contextual findings from the local systems change survey conducted in June 2020.

Objectives

On the whole, local authority and VCS organisations in the pilot sites understand and value the objectives of the Programme. 84% (n=33) were fully aware (45%, n=33) or somewhat aware (39%, n=33) of the objectives of the Programme. When asked to describe what they thought the objectives were, the vast majority mentioned coordination as the key mechanism the Programme is trying to utilise. The conduits of that coordination varied by respondent, but included removing duplication, developing a joint referral system, intelligence sharing, influencing decision makers. Many mentioned the importance of the local nature of the Programme, in identifying gaps and responding to local issues. A smaller number of respondents mentioned a preventative aspect to the project, while there was only one respondent who was unsure of the aims and objectives. Only a few respondents mentioned funding as something the project was providing or seeking to provide.

The data above is likely to be biased towards those already highly engaged with the Programme, and with a better understanding of its objectives. It was acknowledged by the Programme team that some organisations have had little or inconsistent engagement with the Programme. Expectations for the remainder of the Programme include an intention to improve coordination with other organisations (54%) and joined working with other service providers (51%). See Figure 28 below.

Figure 28: Expected benefits of participating in the CCS Programme over the next 12 months (n=39)

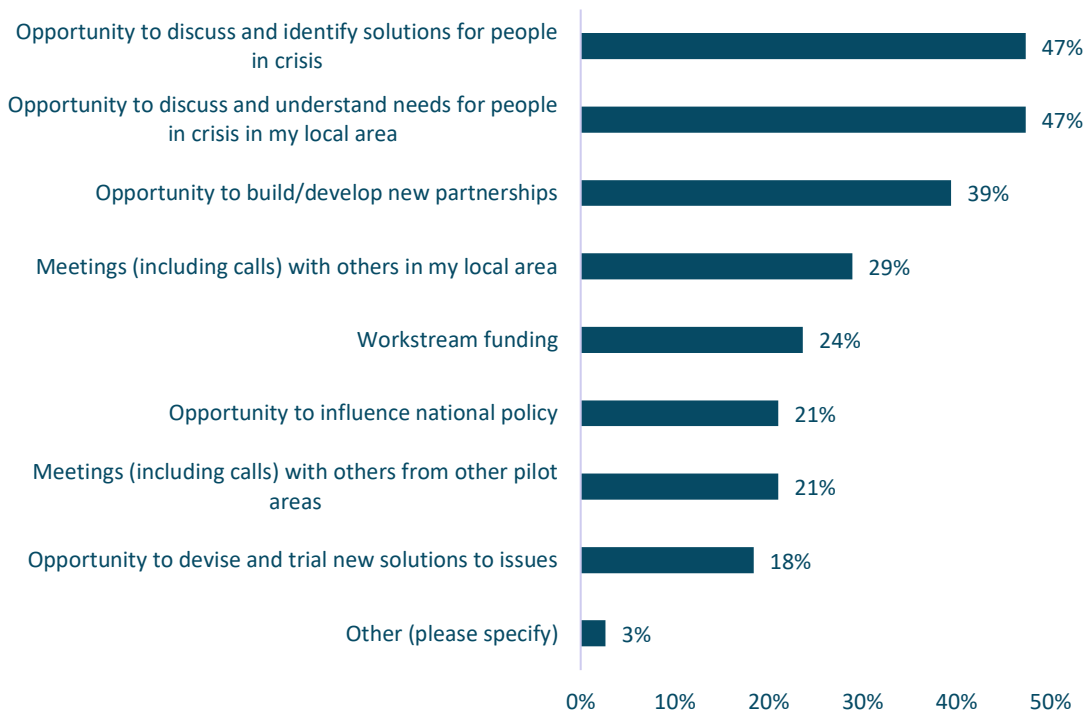
Statements	% agree
Improved coordination with other organisations in my area	54%
Improved joined working with other service providers in my area	51%
Ensure my services reach the most vulnerable	44%
Improved referrals to and from other organisations in my area	38%
Improved awareness/access to funding opportunities for my organisation and clients	33%
Improved signposting to and from other organisations in my area	31%
Sharing experiences with other professionals in my sector or sub-sector	31%
Making national government aware of the issues in my area	28%
Opportunity to try new ways of working	28%
Sharing good practice with other pilot sites	26%
Improved access to my services	18%
Improved capacity for my organisation	18%
Improved the quality of my services	18%
Improved skills for me personally	8%
Other	3%

Source: Systems Change Survey

Rationale

Responses to our survey in June 2020 suggest that getting support to people (Tier 1 of our Theory of Change) has been of significant value to partner organisations in local pilot sites for Year 1 of the Programme. Respondents have valued the ability provided by the Programme so far to discuss and identify solutions for people in crisis (47%, n=38), and discuss and understand needs of people in crisis (47%, n=38). This has been reflected on with the Programme workstreams where the ability to get goods (food, furniture, finance, for example) in response to Covid-19 has been valued by VCS providers.

Figure 29: Most helpful element of the CCS Programme (n=38)



Source: Systems Change Survey

Appendix 3: Workstream Summary for Year 1

Norfolk

- **Norwich Integration Partnership (NIP):** NIP is a pre-existing partnership of three organisations (The Bridge Plus+, New Routes Integration & English+) who work to provide welfare rights advice, ESOL lessons, homework clubs and community engagement and integration programmes for families and individuals with NRPF, migrants and asylum seekers. This funding was expected to help reach 250 clients, of which circa 100 are households with children. Project value was £16,298.
- **Norfolk Community Law Service (NCLS):** This workstream responded to increased demand on family solicitor services during the pandemic. Funding is helping NCLS increase their capacity to expand their offer to clients, providing an additional 6.5hrs p/week for an initial period of 10 months. Funding is expected to help the service to reach 140 clients in need of legal advice and support. Project value was £5,000.
- **Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN):** This workstream was already agreed before lockdown but was slightly delayed as NCAN sought to respond to the crisis. The workstream will help NCAN to further develop the online referral system; allow closer monitoring of uptake; promoting the system to new and existing users. This is supported by increased staffing resource with a project value of £6,522.
- **Grant awareness (NCAB):** Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau (NCAB) received funding for the development of a database and delivery of training for staff and volunteers across Norfolk, to help address underlying needs and improve access to crisis support. Project value was £1,200.

Oldham

- **Reused furniture pack provision and existing core offer of wider support – Support & ActionWomen’s Network (SAWN):** Funding for SAWN to resume safe supply of furniture packs to vulnerable clients illegible for support via the Oldham LWAS (i.e. NRPF). SAWN also offer wider holistic and ongoing support, information and guidance. Some funding for fuel top-ups and other emergency costs. The project had a value of £9,650 and ran for 12 weeks.
- **Emergency hardship fund - KeyRing- Ancora Project:** Hardship fund to cover emergency expenses for clients of the Ancora partnership project (KeyRing, Oldham foodbank and Christians Against Poverty). Items covered include fuel and phone top-ups, safe travel costs and digital devices. The project had a value of £3,125 and ran for six to eight months.
- **Clothing bank interim funding - Real Education Empowering Lives (REEL):** REEL developed a clothing bank in response to an identified need during Covid-19. Recent months have demonstrated the ongoing need for such a project across Oldham. REEL provide a range of family support including online support for people across Oldham. The CCS workstream funding provides interim funding for eight weeks, pending outcome of REEL's Big Lottery bid. The project ran for eight weeks and has a value of £3,200.

Swansea

- **Centralised Hardship Fund:** the project managed by EYST is a centralized hardship fund accessible to local organisations to improve the access to crisis support of asylum seekers, refugees and those with no recourse to public funds. The fund focuses on IT equipment, data and phone top-ups, children’s

needs (e.g. baby food) and other emergency costs. The project has a value of £9,000 and ran for 12 weeks.

- **HJC Citadel:** the HJC Citadel project is a one-year scheme which will pair 12 volunteers with 15 people moving into permanent accommodation who do not have very complex needs and therefore do not qualify for more intensive support from Swansea Council's Housing Support Team (who provide referrals to the service). Improving economic and mental wellbeing are the priorities for the project which has a value of £12,883.
- **Wallich Starter Pack:** the Wallich Starter Pack Project administered and coordinated the distribution of 75 starter packs for people leaving temporary B&B accommodation provided during the Covid-19 pandemic. The project has a value of £2,625 and ran for eight weeks.
- **Food Parcel Leaflet:** the Food Parcel leaflet project was run by Citizens Advice Swansea Neath Port Talbot and enabled a basic description of the CAB services to be included in all food parcels in the area to raise awareness of the support available. The project ran for eight weeks and had a value of £150.

Tower Hamlets

- **Mulberry School Food and Advice Service:** £20k for food parcels and household necessities provided to support students and families of Mulberry School set up in response to the Covid-19 outbreak. Support includes welfare referrals to school social worker and local advice agency.
- **Island Advice Referral Project:** £5k funding for a Triage referral role for one day per week for six months. The role will process referrals and triage to organisations within the Tower Hamlets Community Advice Network (THCAN) network.