

Improving children's policy through evidence.

Experiences from the UK's Early Intervention Foundation

Tom McBride – Director of Evidence



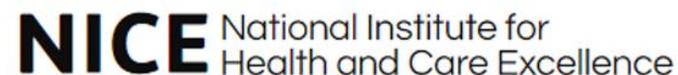
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What Works Centres – a culture of evidence



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2018: A new five year strategy for EIF

Our vision is that all children are able to achieve their full potential

Our mission is to ensure that effective early intervention is available and is used to improve the lives of children and young people at risk of poor outcomes.

When we talk about early intervention we mean identifying and providing effective early support to children and young people who are at risk of poor outcomes.

We define effective as showing evidence of improving outcomes for children and young people.



Making the case

Generating evidence

Using evidence to change
policy and practice

Communications

Funding

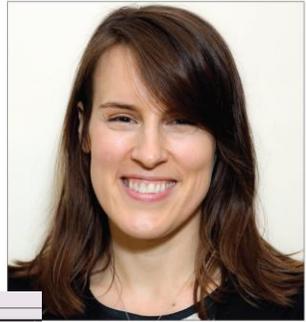
Working in partnership

Measuring our impact



Early help's new protagonist

In your previous role you did work on regional devolution. How will this change the delivery of children's services?
The new metro mayors and combined authorities have enormous potential for ensuring wider adoption of evidenced early interventions, because they are the right scale to achieve real change across public services. So for example, they have soft powers – such as the ability to access Secretaries of State and to bring leaders together locally to join services up – which could help develop a strategic approach to early intervention.



Combined authorities have enormous potential"

interview

Early intervention

Understanding local needs is key to intervening early to reduce demand for 'crisis' services such as children's social care, says Carey Oppenheim, Chief Executive of the Early Intervention Foundation

Local government is bearing the largest share of the almost £17 billion a year cost of reactive crisis services for children and their families in England and Wales.

So says the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF), a charity and part of the Government's Big Society Capital. It outlines the evidence for, and provides advice on, early intervention programmes aimed at reducing the risk of children and young people.

It recently published its second annual report on the costs of 'late' intervention, which found that around £4.6 billion of the £16.6 billion bill in England and Wales falls to local authorities, followed by the NHS (£1.7 billion) and the Department for Work and Pensions (£1.2 billion).



"Councillors and leaders in local authorities play a crucial role in shifting the culture from late to early intervention"

...social costs and the long-term costs, which they see through a child's life into their adulthood and their status as future generations."

If Chief Executive Carey Oppenheim is not quite out of the woods, good news is that she is not alone. She says that while some councils are struggling to get the right mix of services, others are doing well. She says that while some councils are struggling to get the right mix of services, others are doing well. She says that while some councils are struggling to get the right mix of services, others are doing well.

...workforce reform – getting people working in different services to work much more closely, with shared priorities. These changes are not changes that can be made overnight, but they are changes that can be made if the right people are in the right jobs, working in the right way.

Ms Oppenheim believes councillors have a crucial role to play in getting the right mix of services. She says that while some councils are struggling to get the right mix of services, others are doing well. She says that while some councils are struggling to get the right mix of services, others are doing well.

...local health services, schools and so on, if we're going to reach the problem. These would be benefits for each of those agencies – including for councils. If they can catch people early enough to reduce some of the pressure on children's social care, that's a benefit. It's important to get the right mix of services, and to get the right people in the right jobs, working in the right way.

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PROFESSIONAL INSIDE

THE MENTAL HEALTH DIVIDEND

The government's new mental health strategy, published in December, sets out a new approach to preventing mental health problems. It will be supported by new mental health support teams, which will provide more support for people with mental health problems.

Stephanie Waddell of the Early Intervention Foundation says proactive schemes in schools will help vulnerable children, prevent problems in later life and benefit society.

...important to have mental health and wellbeing. Schools also play a crucial role in supporting children's mental health. It's important to get the right mix of services, and to get the right people in the right jobs, working in the right way.



Stephanie Waddell



SPECIAL REPORT POLICY EARLY HELP

EIF VIEW BETTER EVIDENCE VITAL ON WHAT WORKS BEST



Donna Molloy, director of dissemination, Early Intervention Foundation

Improving support for vulnerable children and families is a multi-agency responsibility, and we need to understand which are the most effective multi-agency services. Greater integration of services has long been seen as a solution to the challenge of rising demand and shrinking budgets. This kind of "whole-system thinking" is relevant to the provision of early help services that reduce vulnerability. No single approach will work for all children and young people. Schools, health services and other...



PARENTING INPUT

Kirsten Assmusen, head of what works, child development, Early Intervention Foundation

Evidence summarised in our forthcoming report on key competencies in children's development highlights how cognitive development helps parents talk to their children in a way that supports their language development. Here are the key messages.

Quality over quantity

It is not just about words. While language disparities have traditionally been described in terms of a 'word gap', evidence tells us it is not...





The social and moral case

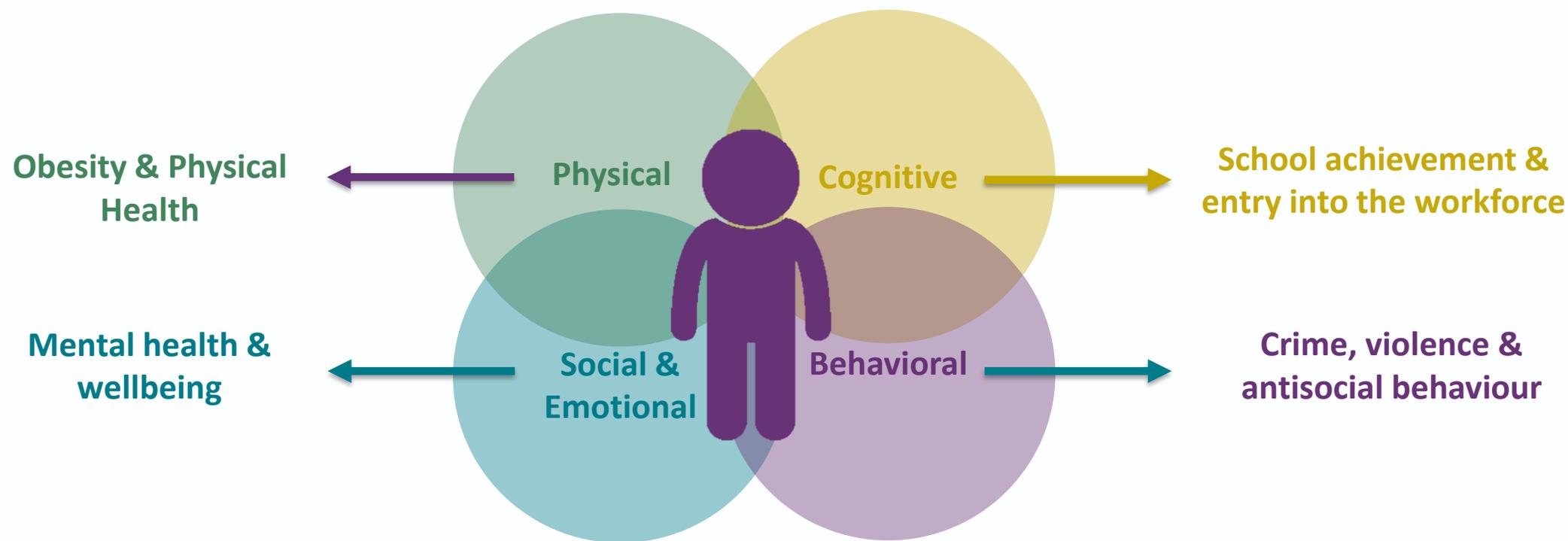
- Children deserve the best childhood and start in life.
- Too many children in England face disadvantages that affect their development and threaten their future health and happiness.
- Wide and persistent gaps in children's development open up early along socio-economic lines with significant consequences for future and intergenerational outcomes.
- Early intervention can play a part in giving these children and families the support they need to reach their full potential.

We simply cannot stand by while problems get worse



How does early intervention work?

Studies show that early intervention is likely to have its greatest impact when targeting the four primary domains of child development





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Our work



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UK Late Spend: Context

“early intervention has the potential to reduce costs to the public sector before issues become entrenched and more expensive to deal with”

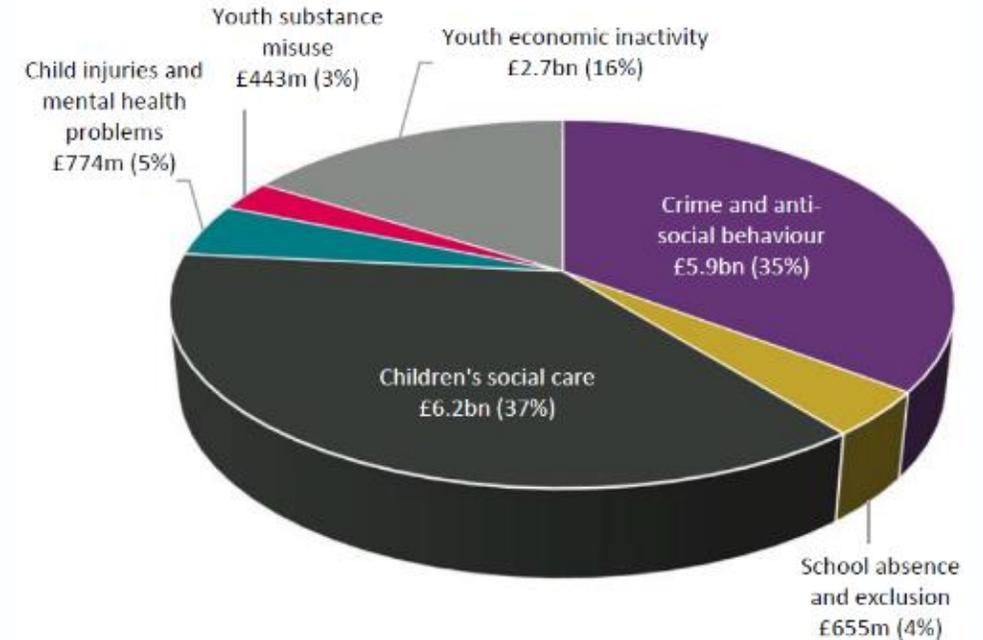


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- EIF has shown that nearly **£17 billion** is spent each year by local and national agencies on acute and statutory services for children, young people and families in England and Wales. This is equivalent to **£287 per person**.
- **£6.4 billion** is spent by local government, almost all of which is child protection and children’s social care.

Annual immediate fiscal cost for children and young people (E&W)

Total annual spend: £16.6bn (2016-17 prices)



¹<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-intervention-smart-investment-massive-savings>

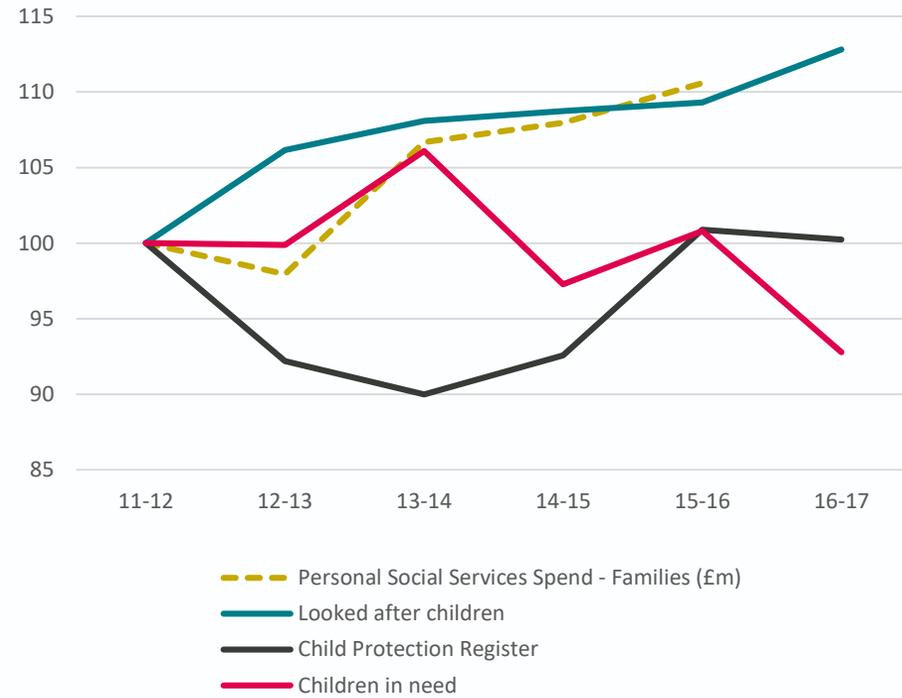
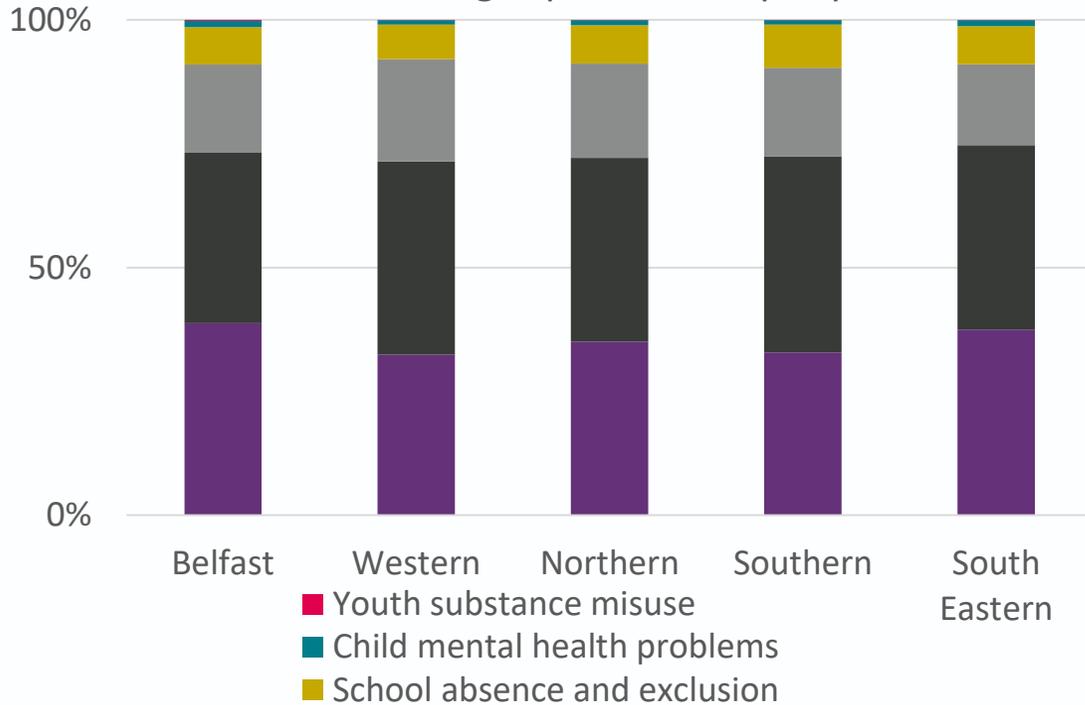
UK Late Spend: Northern Ireland Example

Comparisons of spending drivers by region



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Average spend: £272 per person

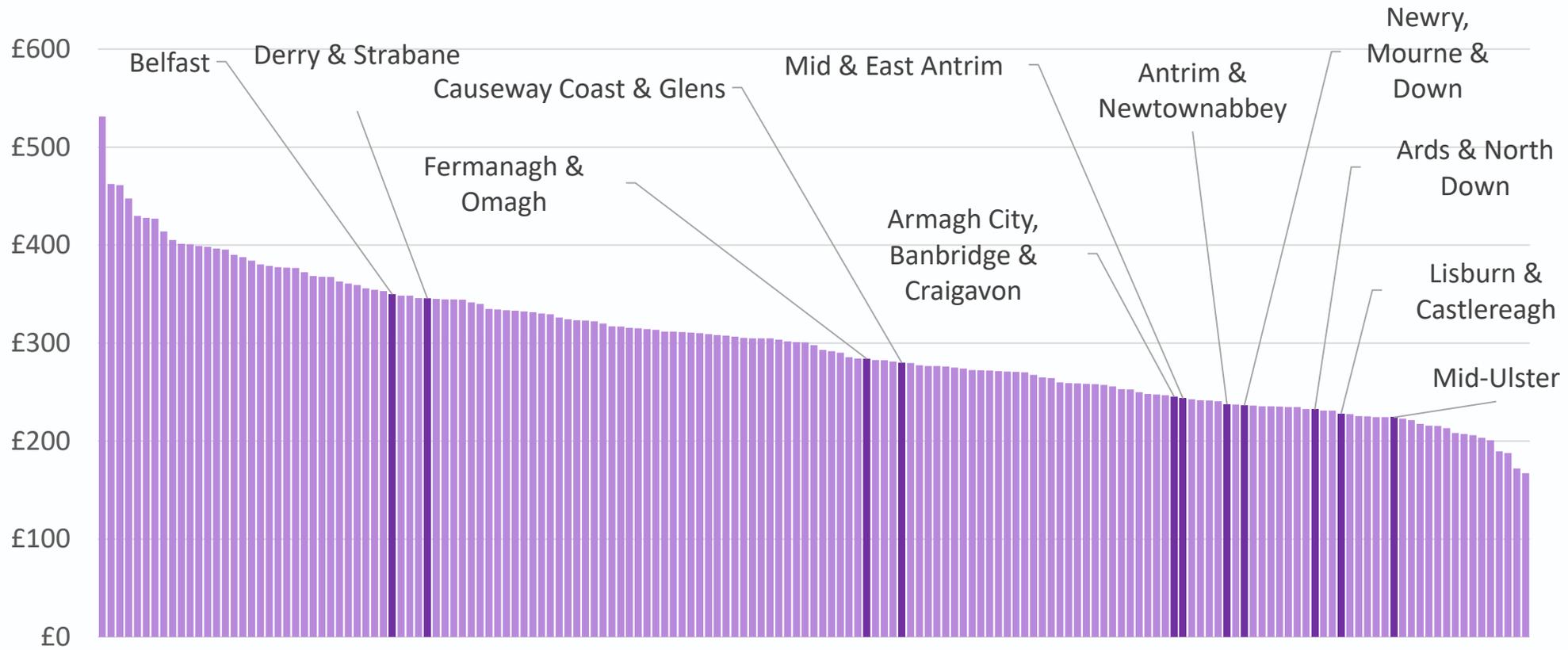


UK Late Spend: Northern Ireland Example

Comparisons between English Local Authorities and Northern Irish Regions



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English Local Authorities and Northern Ireland Local Government Districts ranked from highest to lowest late intervention spend per head

‘Foundations for Life’



“Foundations for Life: What Works to Support Parent Child Interaction in the Early Years” is a groundbreaking assessment by the Early Intervention Foundation of 75 early intervention programmes aimed at improving child outcomes through positive parent child interactions in the early years.

Key messages



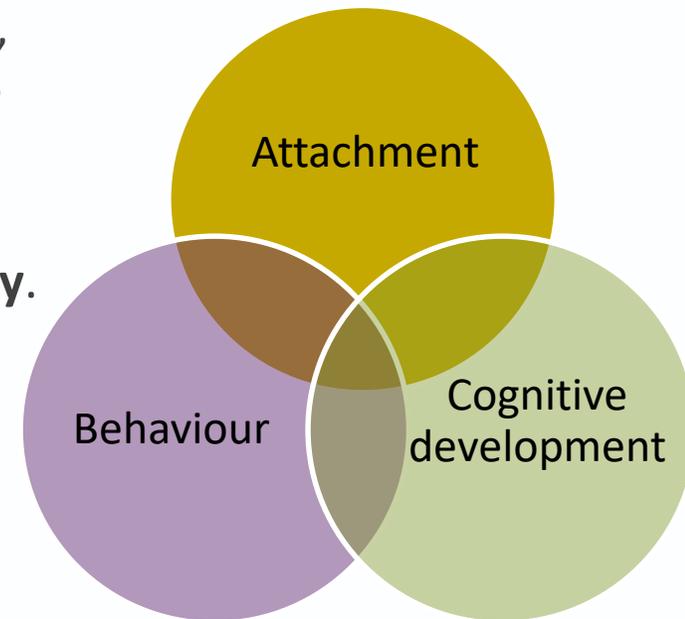
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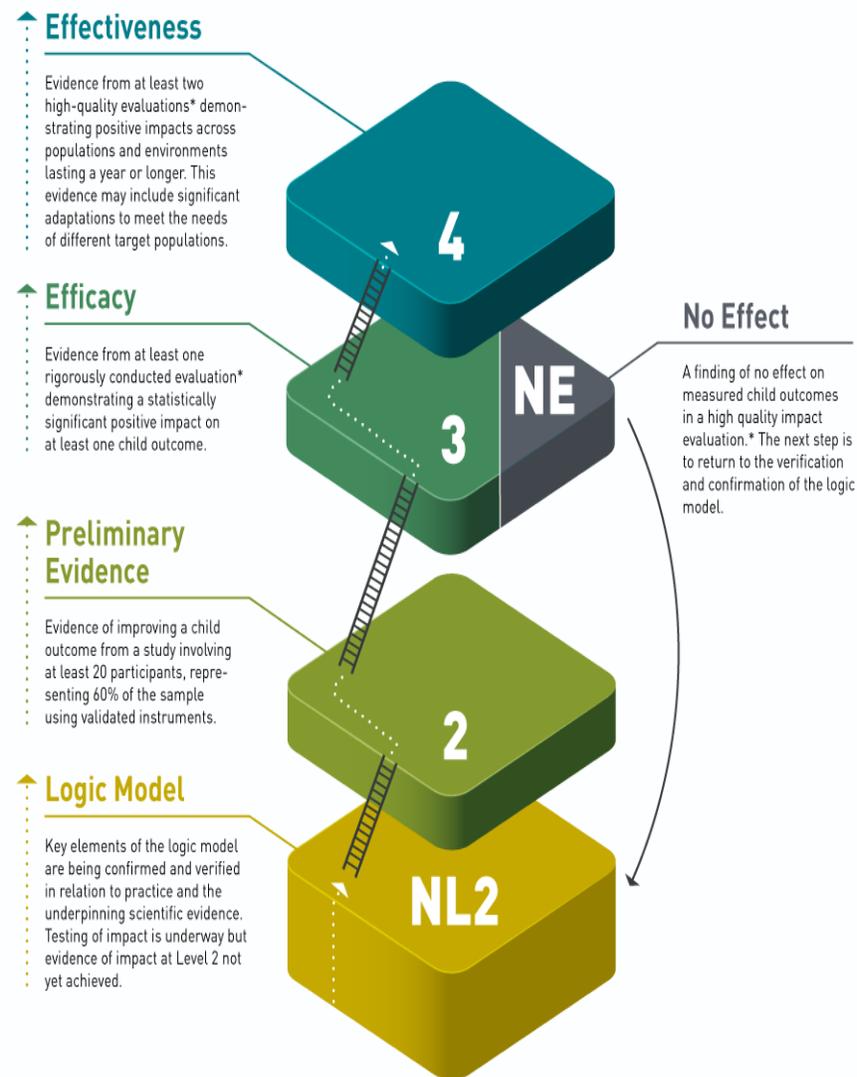
The evidence and cost of 75 interventions were assessed. 17 interventions were identified as evidence-based.

There is already **good choice** of effective addressing **children's noncompliant behaviour**. There is good evidence to suggest that if offered at age 3 or later, they may reduce the likelihood of persistent non-compliant behaviour. These programme are **low cost**.

There is **less choice** of programmes addressing **children's attachment security**. These programmes are likely to be **high cost**.

There is **less choice** of evidence-based interventions that support children's early learning through parent child interaction. These programmes should be offered in addition to centre-based programmes and are likely to be **medium to high cost**.



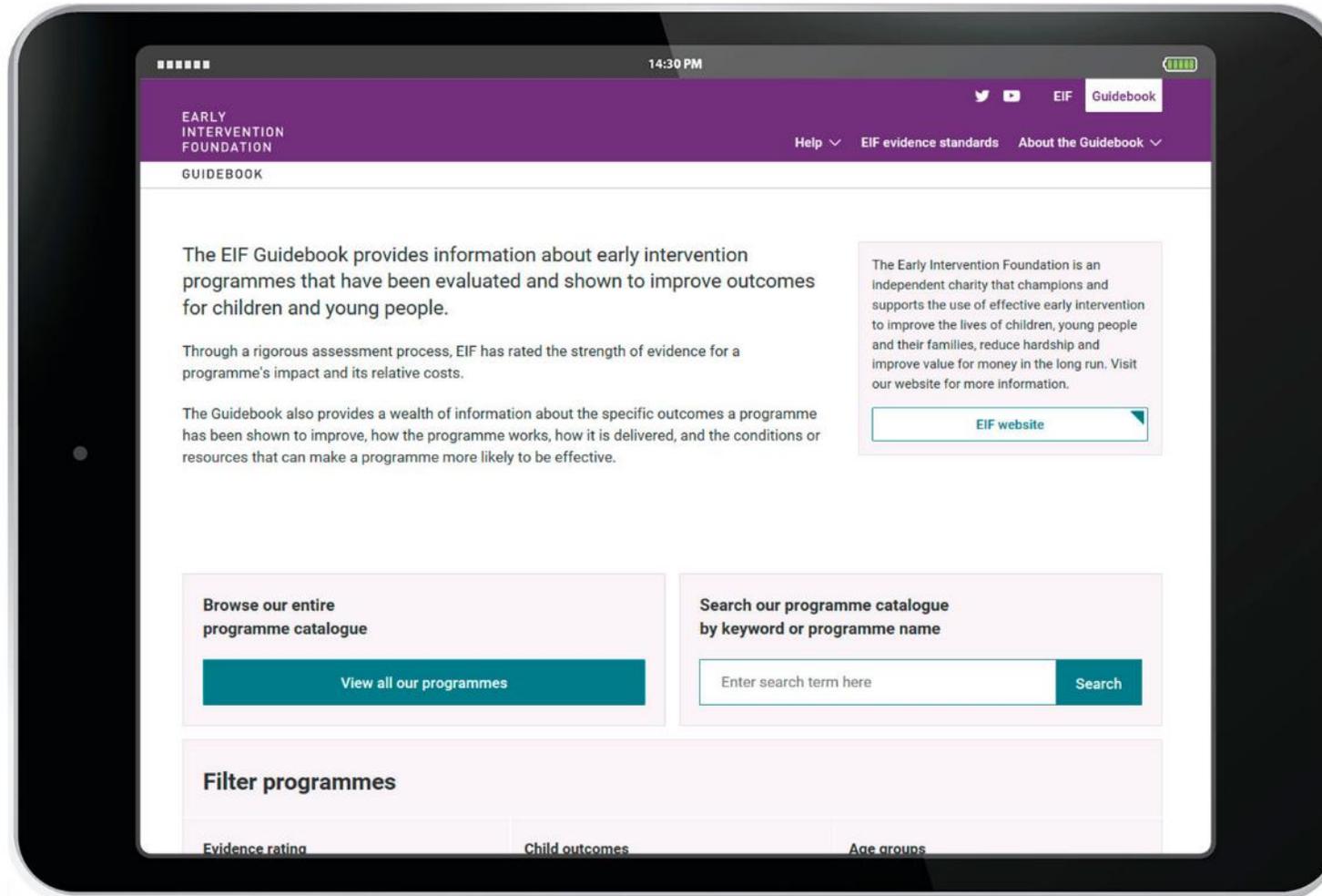


*High quality evaluations do not need to be randomised control trials if a relevant and robust counter-factual can be provided in other ways.

The EIF Guidebook



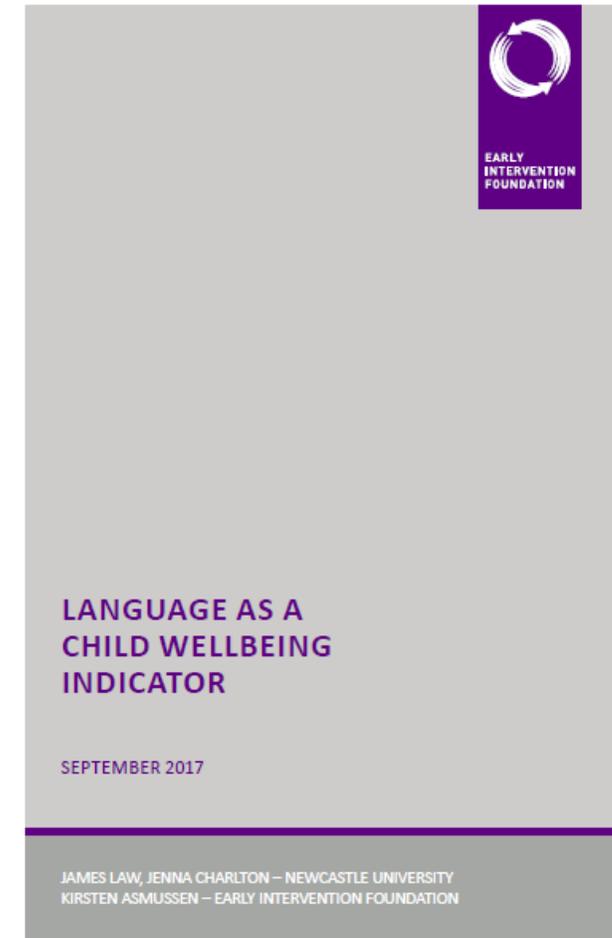
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Language as a Wellbeing Indicator

What we did

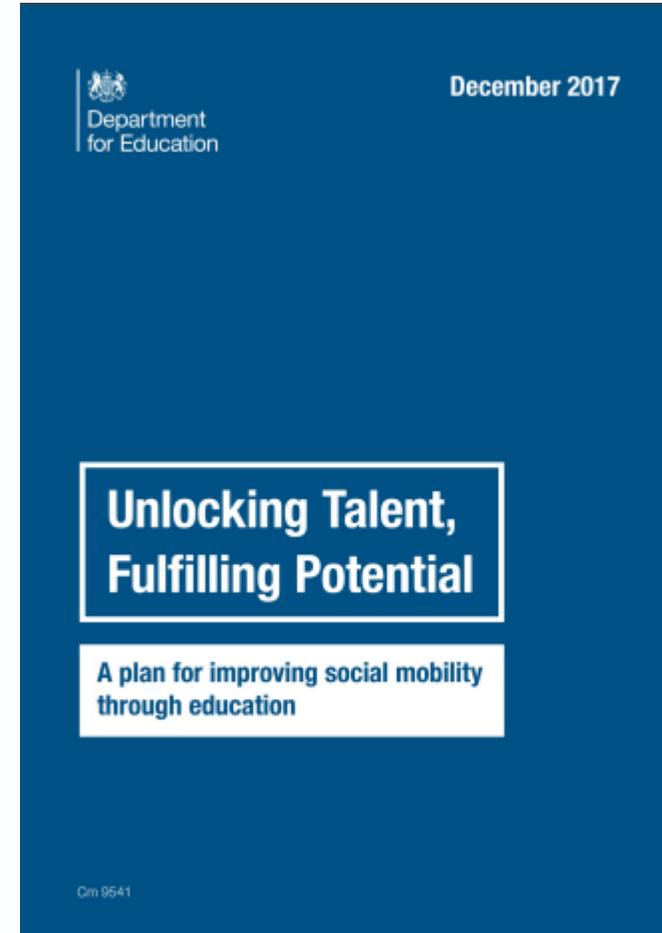
- In the UK between 5% and 8% of all children in the UK experience early language difficulties. It is over **20% for children growing up in low-income households**
- Early language acquisition impacts on all aspects of children's non-physical development: their ability to manage emotions, communicate feelings, establish relationships and to learn to read and write.
- The report made several recommendations relating to how children's language development should play a more prominent part in the government's social policy agenda.



Language as a Wellbeing Indicator

Route to impact

- ‘Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential’ Part of government’s new agenda for tackling the causes of social immobility.
- Contained recommendations and policy announcement in relation to the importance of reconciling gaps in early language development.
- We continue to work with DfE in the design and delivery of many of the policy strands.



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Lessons on changing policy



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Overall Reflections



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- **Having a foot in both the research and policy camps is critical**
- **Embrace complexity and nuance**
- **Aim to be a critical friend**
- **Invest in depth, breadth and rigour to earn the right to be part of the conversation**
- **Get off the fence**



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