



EARLY
INTERVENTION
FOUNDATION



Annual Report
2021–2022

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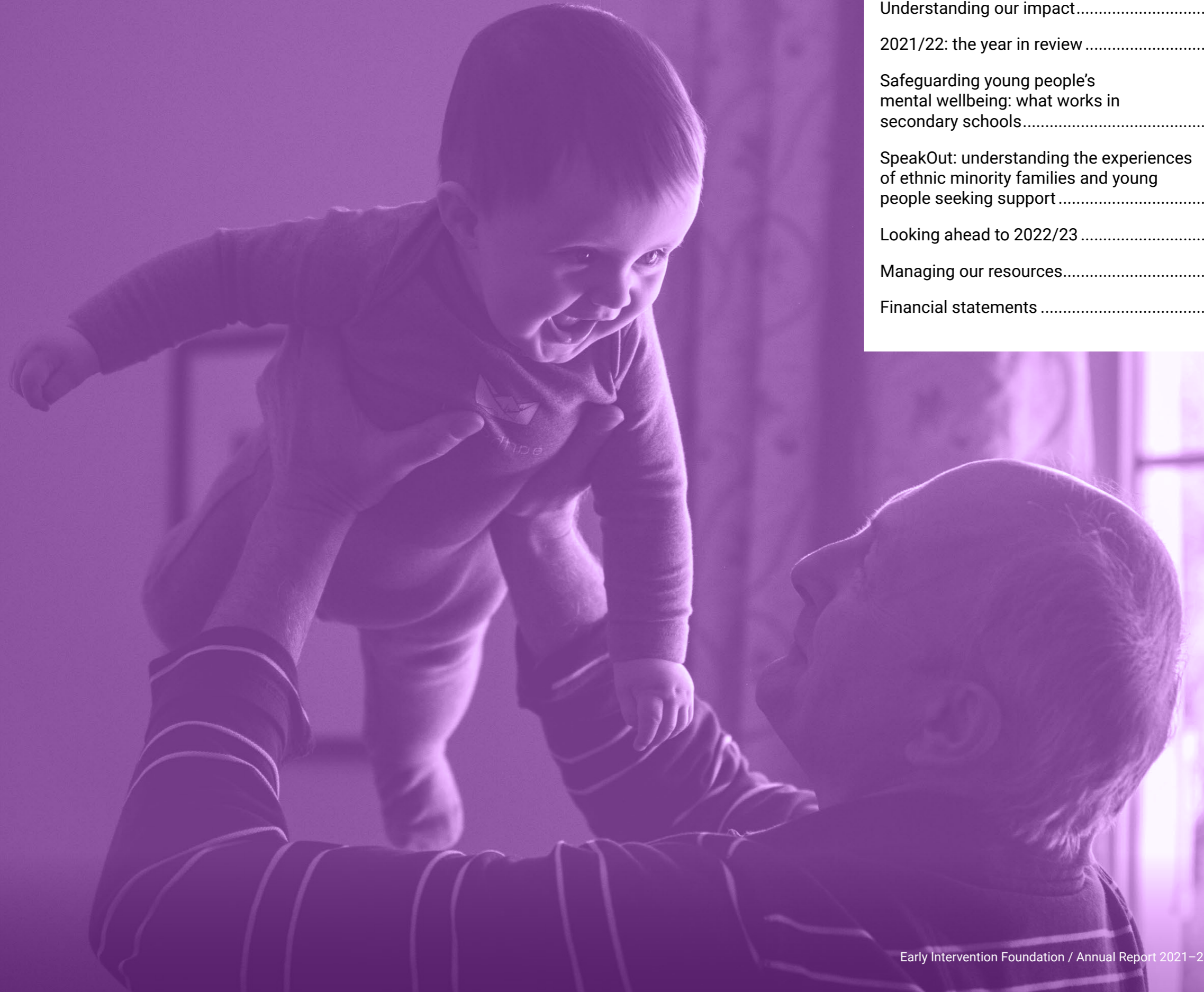
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Chair's message



Professor Nick Pearce
Chair of Board of Trustees

2022/23 promises to be a year of huge change for all the team at EIF. Indeed, we are now looking ahead to the most significant change since the charity was established in 2013, with the decision to merge with What Works for Children's Social Care, a fellow member of the UK What Works Network, and a frequent collaborator on work relating to support for vulnerable children and families.

By doing so, we will create a new, single, go-to organisation for all those working to support children, young people and families, at every level, from prevention, early help and early intervention through to child protection and children's social care services. This is a natural evolution that reflects and supports the shift we have seen over recent years, as early help and children's social care have moved closer together and developed increasingly shared ways of working. We see this also in the direction of key government policies and initiatives, including the updated Supporting Families Programme and, most recently, in the focus on family support that is at the heart of the recommendations of the independent review of children's social care.

By joining forces with What Works for Children's Social Care, we can expand our ambition, scale and reach. With our combined expertise and resources, the new centre will be able to generate much-needed evidence to fill critical gaps in our existing knowledge of what works to support families at all stages – including through more trials and high-quality studies – and to support more evaluation of existing policies and services at national and local level. This way, we can help to build a system that is both evidence-based and evidence-generating.

Our decision is the culmination of discussions with government, across the What Works Network and with other evidence partners, aimed at ensuring we're maximising the impact that our work and our evidence can play in important decisions at all levels. By providing a single front-door for policymakers, service managers and practitioners who work with and on behalf of families and children, we can ensure that vital evidence is available and accessible, that guidance and messages about effective practice are strong and consistent, and that our teams can work efficiently to reach as widely as possible across Whitehall and across the country. We can do more to fulfil the increasing demand for evidence and evaluation that we see across government, bolster efforts to join up policies and services, and support local decision-makers and practitioners to maximise the potential of key national policies and funding, amid ongoing pressures on their resources and capacity.

“With our combined expertise and resources, the new centre will be able to generate much-needed evidence to fill critical gaps in our existing knowledge of what works to support families at all stages.”

The new centre will have early intervention at its core. Indeed, in taking the decision to merge, both boards acknowledged the importance of early intervention in providing effective, sustained support for families, and early intervention runs through every conversation that we have about the future of the new centre, both with What Works for Children's Social Care colleagues and government partners.

This ongoing focus is vital, because we know that too many children, young people and families continue to face a serious and deep-rooted set of challenges. Effective and accessible early intervention support remains vital to the collective goal of building back stronger following the disruptions and changes brought by Covid-19 and multiple periods of lockdown. More families have sought or needed additional support to deal with a wider range of issues – some experiencing new problems for the first time, others facing a ratcheting-up from stress to strife to crisis. More detail about the impacts of the pandemic continue to emerge – including a range of concerning signals across vital areas such as children's development, learning, physical health and mental wellbeing outcomes – and as a nation we continue to search for the right set of responses to reduce or curtail these impacts.

At the same time, families are experiencing new and rising pressures through spikes in the cost of living and the household financial stresses that come with it – with well-established consequences for children's short- and long-term wellbeing. In turn, these economic headwinds and aftershocks of the pandemic conspire to exacerbate persistent and widening disparities in people's experiences and outcomes – for minority groups and those in different parts of the country – which pose the additional challenge of ensuring that services are fit and able to provide support to all families who need it.

For all of us, a challenging and exciting year lies ahead. The trustees and I look forward to working with our partners at What Works for Children's Social Care, with the Department for Education and other Whitehall departments, and across our wider community nationally and locally to play our part in building a strong and sustainable system for all children, young people and families.

Professor Nick Pearce
Chair of Board of Trustees

Chief Executive's message



Dr Jo Casebourne
Chief Executive

The pandemic period has cast into stark relief the need for effective, sustainable solutions to reduce the harmful impacts of challenging circumstances on people's lives. Through lockdowns and other social restrictions, we have seen an intensification of the stresses being placed on the lives of families and children, rising pressures on the services designed to support them, and – while the data continues to emerge – worrying trends in how people's wellbeing and prospects have been affected.

Over the past year, EIF has continued to focus much of its work on understanding these impacts and identifying promising options – or 'best bets' – for reforming policies and services or designing new forms of support. Now, as we look ahead to a merger with What Works for Children's Social Care, it's a good time to reflect on a year that has put early intervention at the heart of a vital set of government programmes and initiatives, and set us up to create an authoritative, ambitious new what works centre for everyone focused on supporting the lives of children and families.

Crucially, we have focused on building and sustaining a range of strong and positive relationships with decision-makers in government and major bodies across the sector, through partnership working and a valuable role as a trusted voice and 'critical friend' to peers and colleagues at every level, from Whitehall to the front line. At a local level, over the past year, we worked directly with 85 different local areas across England and Wales, to share evidence, provide guidance and support vital local provision.

Throughout the year, it has been great to see our evidence and expertise reflected in a series of key policies and reviews designed to improve support for families. This includes important new investment from the spending review in the flagship Supporting Families Programme, as well as a range of crucial new steps across maternity and early years services, under the Best Start for Life banner; the independent review of children's social care, which lays down a roadmap for a new system of family help that provides consistent, accessible and appropriate 'wrap-around' support to vulnerable families when they need it most; and the government's domestic abuse strategy, which sharpens the focus on child victims and the distinctive forms of support they need. In each case, EIF has been able to provide information and advice grounded in the evidence, supporting coordination between teams and departments across Whitehall, and advocating for resources to help families and young people earlier.

At the same time, we remain closely involved in the implementation of several key government programmes. This includes our work as evidence partner within the National Centre for Family Hubs; continuing to provide expertise and guidance to the national Reducing Parental Conflict Programme, which we have supported as it has grown from an initial EIF evidence review to a nationwide programme of local work now in its fifth year and embedded in every local authority in England; and working with government colleagues to lay the foundations for local evaluations of Supporting Families approaches, so that the evidence base on how to make best use of this vital funding stream continues to grow.

As the pandemic and its after-effects have highlighted areas of particular concern for policymakers and service leaders, we have been able to deliver research to inform new and adapted forms of support. Our major report on adolescent mental health was the most significant UK review of the evidence on supporting positive mental health in schools for at least a decade, and the first to focus squarely on what works in secondary schools to support pupils' wellbeing during their critical teenage years. A review of the emerging UK and international evidence highlighted the

impacts of pandemic life on young children's physical activity, development and health outcomes. And by using data captured via our maturity matrix tools, we were able to paint a clear and compelling picture of the state of early years and maternity services across England and Wales, including the challenges facing those who shape and steer local systems, as well as inspiring examples of innovation and adaptation.

Over the past year, our SpeakOut project set out to collect and share the experiences of ethnic minority families and young people seeking family support. This is new and exciting work for EIF, and a vital learning opportunity. This focus on understanding racial and ethnic disparities through our research work reflects the journey we have been on organisationally to embed a new equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and action plan, with implications for all of the work we do and how we do it. As it is for many charities, making this vision a reality is an ongoing process, but it is great to have a foundational strategy in place, and with input and efforts from the whole staff team, we are making positive and steady progress towards our EDI goals.

Lastly, I am thrilled to note the recognition given to two crucial members of the EIF team over the past year. In January, our director of policy and practice Donna Molloy received an OBE for services to disadvantaged children and young people; and in June, Kelly Beaver, one of our trustees, received an MBE for services to academia, research and the Covid-19 response. I am immensely grateful to both for the work they have done in service to families and young people, through EIF and beyond.

As we look ahead to a year of exciting changes, and join with our colleagues in What Works for Children's Social Care to mould a new what works centre, I am looking forward to seeing the EIF team and our work continue to go from strength to strength.

Dr Jo Casebourne
Chief Executive

Understanding our impact

As a What Works Centre, it's vital that we understand how our work is having a positive impact in the world. Our impact framework helps us to plan, deliver and assess our projects and other activity in a way that focuses on achieving real, lasting change.

What is the EIF impact framework?

Our impact framework is rooted in the COM-B model developed by Professor Susan Michie: the theory that for people to behave in the way we want them to – in our case, to prioritise and invest in effective early intervention – they need to have the capability, opportunity and motivation to do so.

- **Capability:** the right knowledge and skills, in the right hands
- **Opportunity:** the right conditions around them
- **Motivation:** the desire, intention or belief to act.

This helps us to think about the barriers that might prevent people from taking decisions or actions that we want to see, and to plan and deliver projects that work to reduce or remove those barriers.

The impact framework and its COM-B approach is now firmly in place at the heart of all our project planning and review processes.



Strategic priorities	Vision: That all children are able to achieve their full potential.		
	Mission: To ensure that effective early intervention is available and is used to improve the lives of children and young people at risk of experiencing poor outcomes.		
Desired behaviour change	Overall aim: To achieve greater prioritisation of and investment in effective early intervention.		
Short-term impact measures, via COM-B	Improved CAPABILITY to prioritise and invest in effective early intervention	Improved OPPORTUNITY to prioritise and invest in effective early intervention	Improved MOTIVATION to prioritise and invest in effective early intervention
	EIF is a sustainable, high-performing, well-respected organisation.		
	Underpinning assumptions		

What does it take to get evidence used?

Our focus is on generating relevant evidence and ensuring that this evidence is being used in policy and practice decisions, both locally and nationally. Our work cannot sit on a shelf: it has to be seen, valued and used to inform and shape crucial decisions about how early intervention is planned, funded and provided. We call this knowledge mobilisation – putting evidence into action – and it's an increasingly vital part of our work.

We have continued to take an inquisitive and intentional approach to the planning and measurement of our organisational impact. In May 2021 we published a report, *Supporting evidence-use in policy and practice*, based on a review of the literature and engagement with academic and other experts.

The report was well received by academics in the field and by other What Works Centres, and we continue to share our insights across the What Works Network. In addition to shaping aspects of our 2021/22 work programme – notably on the early years, reducing parental conflict and mental health – it also led to collaborative opportunities with other What Works Centres and other organisations interested in supporting evidence use, such as an ESRC-funded What Works Network project to consider the latest thinking and evidence on implementation.

Read the report at [www.EIF.org.uk/supporting-evidence-use](http://www EIF.org.uk/supporting-evidence-use)



2021/22: the year in review

2021/22 was a strong year for EIF working on the national stage and at the local level. We were able to strengthen our relationships with government, actively supporting policy development in critical and potentially game-changing areas, and evolve our offer to local authorities and services so that we can support them to use evidence in a way that leads to demonstrable improvement.

While the impacts of the pandemic period continue to become clear, we have been able to share new evidence relating to many of the issues facing families under pressure, such as young people's mental health, domestic abuse and young children's development, as well as guidance and insights on designing effective services and forms of support.

Through a newly expanded team of local development advisers, we have been able to increase our engagement with local authorities and other key local agencies, to share evidence, best practice and experiences from other areas.

And we have continued to produce a wide range of practical resources that help to translate evidence from EIF and others into tools and reference guides that decision-makers and practitioners at all levels can use to engage with partners, shape strategies and plans, and embed the evidence on effective early intervention into policies and services.

A trusted, independent source

Firm foundations of robustness and quality in our research work, coupled with our understanding of the policy and practice context and ability to respond quickly and flexibly to new issues and questions as they arise, have enabled us to have a considerable impact on national policy over the past year. We have seen our influence grow steadily and are actively advising government departments on major policy areas that will shape the future of support for children and families.

This includes engagement with, among others, the Department for Education (DfE) on Family Hubs and the home learning environment; DfE and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) on the Supporting Families programme; the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) on the national Reducing Parental Conflict Programme; the independent review of children's social care on a new vision for family support; the Children's Commissioner; and the Home Office on trauma-informed care and domestic abuse.

We continue to provide expertise and advice on request from departments, to inform decisions and support coordinated planning across government.

A vital part of our role is consistently to restate and underline the case for early intervention, and investment in early intervention approaches, as an integral part of the landscape of policies and services for children and families. Our principal arguments for early intervention as a key factor in addressing national policy priorities were published in a July 2021 briefing, *The case for early intervention to support levelling up and Covid recovery*. Two other reports centred on highlighting the need for and potential shape of improved support and services in crucial areas of family support, focused on domestic abuse (April 2021) and families facing multiple and complex problems (October).

We also presented evidence to two parliamentary inquiries, on young people's mental health and child vulnerability. Committee inquiries provide a valuable opportunity to share the evidence with MPs and underline the potential of early intervention across a range of social policy issues.

Our efforts to embed evidence-based early intervention into significant government policies centred around a handful of key opportunities throughout the year.

Working with key government policy teams, we played an important role in the development of the successful spending review bid on expanding the Supporting Families Programme. We provided submissions to the DfE and DLUHC policy teams on how the programme could be developed, and facilitated cross-departmental meetings on key aspects of the policy which we were told *'provided clarity on the key issues that needed to be worked through, valuable insights on those issues, and was responsive to what was and wasn't realistic from a government perspective'*. We have also supported subsequent policy development of the Supporting Families Programme, providing direct advice to DLUHC on revisions to the programme's outcomes framework and early help system guide.

We provided ongoing advice to the independent review of children's social care on the evidence for how to support families at risk of involvement with children's social care and on policy options for strengthening family help. We provided initial inputs which fed directly into the review's *Case for Change* report (in June 2021), and conducted detailed work for the team summarising the strongest interventions for vulnerable children and families that might be relevant to a new offer of family help, which was published alongside the review's final report in spring 2022. EIF's wider work on the experiences of minority ethnic families, supporting children affected by domestic abuse, trauma-informed care and engaging vulnerable parents was also cited in the review and reflected in the narrative.

We have also had a direct impact on policy decisions in relation to the early years, including through our support for the DfE work on Family Hubs planning, and providing advice both to Andrea Leadsom MP and the DHSC Best Start for Life team on a range of evidence and evaluation matters. It is notable that the spending review announcement also included positive new investments in support for parents and families, including on breastfeeding and parental mental health, that we have previously advocated for.

Supporting and learning from local areas

At a local level, our work focuses on supporting local areas to gather, understand, and apply data and evidence that leads to informed decisions about vital system planning, strategy, and service design and delivery. Across all the issues and policy areas we work on, we have provided practical tools and resources, advice, and direct support on building knowledge and capacity to local authorities, public services and other local partners that are crucial to the early intervention system.

Within early years and maternity services, for example, we supported 20 local areas (10 in England, 10 in Wales) in planning their early childhood systems, using the maternity and early years maturity matrix – a self-assessment tool – and a new validation process to support these local self-assessments. Towards the end of the year, we published a summary report, *Leading and delivering early childhood services: 10 insights from 20 places across England and Wales*, which identified a set of insights from across these areas into the conditions and support required to enable progress and highlighted examples of innovation and good practice within the sector.

We also published the results of the independent evaluation of the Early Years Transformation Academy (EYTA), the intensive 12-month programme whereby EIF and partners engaged with five local areas to support the development of integrated maternity and early years systems using the latest evidence, which ran between April 2019 and March 2020. The report concluded that: *'Overall it is clear the EYTA has been a very rich learning opportunity, and the evaluation points to clear strengths in the overall approach, content and delivery of the EYTA.'* On value for the participating areas, the report says: *'There was clear value for participants in having taken part. The clearest impacts were the development of stronger relationships and partnerships, and systems thinking – particularly the understanding of shared goals and interdependencies.'* This evaluation provides invaluable lessons on the opportunities and challenges of intensive support programmes as a way of supporting evidence use within local systems.

In our role as an evidence partner to the National Centre for Family Hubs (NCFH), with the Anna

Freud Centre, we developed the 'Family Hubs development process' that enables local areas to develop an evidence-based Family Hub model. We continue to work closely with NCFH regional co-ordinators to support five local areas to test this process, and have developed guidance to support the adoption of evidence use behaviours as part of this process. EIF has also advised the NCFH in relation to content of the Family Hub toolkit and development of their support for local areas.

On reducing parental conflict (RPC), we produced new evidence on local progress through analysis of data generated using the RPC Planning Tool in local areas across the country. Our analysis focused on practical local changes to track progress made and identify areas for development, including the common characteristics among RPC local support offers, the proportion of the workforces that have received RPC training, the proportion of local authorities with an active team of RPC trainers, the average awareness of the RPC agenda among senior leaders and partner organisations, and how these factors interact.

These findings have helped to shape the next phases of the DWP-led national Reducing Parental Conflict Programme, and will be followed by an in-depth analysis of the quantitative and qualitative Planning Tool data in the new financial year. The updated Planning Tool has been used by more than 125 local authorities as part of their relationship with the national programme.

We supported five local authorities in England on planning their RPC outcomes framework, support pathway and training evaluation, and we have published case examples of this work to share the learning with other local areas. All five local authorities provided qualitative feedback that EIF's support was extremely valuable in increasing their understanding of, and ability to use, evidence and created greater partnership engagement in the programme: *'Not only has this work enabled us to consider our outcomes framework and measurement tools, but it has also moved the RPC agenda on significantly'* (Thameside RPC lead).

In addition to these examples, we published a range of guidance resources and tools across many strands of work, including guides on running theory of change workshops, developing a support pathway model and evaluating practitioner training, and the first of a series of practical RPC evidence guides, focused on separating and separated parents.

Generating and sharing evidence

Our reputation is based on our ability to generate robust evidence that is useful for and relevant to our audiences.

In July, we published our major evidence review, *Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions*, which represents the most significant UK review of the evidence on supporting positive mental health in schools for at least a decade, and the first to focus squarely on what works in secondary schools to support pupils' wellbeing during their critical teenage years. The report provides a comprehensive and up-to-date summary of what works, for whom and under what circumstances (see page 18 for more on this work). Two earlier briefings set the scene for the final review by summarising the UK evidence on the prevalence of adolescent mental health problems and mapping out its long-term impacts on outcomes into adulthood.

We continue to play a leading role in the debate around adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), a popular framework for understanding and talking about a set of traumatic childhood experiences that can have long-term consequences for some people. Building on our major 2020 report on the evidence relating to how the ACEs framework should be used, we conducted an innovative 'Delphi' multi-stage survey, which was successful in engaging 70 practitioners, policymakers, academics and children's charities with a shared interest in improving children's lives. Through this project, this group achieved consensus on 41 statements regarding the quality of the ACEs evidence and how it might best be used to help vulnerable children. This culminated in a report, *Adverse childhood experiences: Building consensus on what should happen next*, that highlights key implications for development of policy and practice that uses the ACEs framework, including a recommended pause on using ACEs as a screening tool.

Another popular framework for thinking about early intervention services and people's needs across many issues is trauma-informed care, which describes a variety of approaches to providing support that are designed to recognise existing trauma, prevent retraumatisation, and give service recipients more choice. Our January report,

Trauma-informed care: Understanding the use of trauma-informed approaches within children's social care, explored in detail how this approach is being used via a survey of children's social care departments. We found that trauma-informed care is widely used and believed to contribute to a range of outcomes, but that it lacks a clear definition and that its use has far outpaced its evaluation. We also found that the use of trauma-informed care is seldom leading to children being referred to evidence-based interventions, which was its original intention. Further work in 2022/23 will focus on the impact and appropriate use of trauma-informed approaches in other policy and service areas.

While our work through 2020/21 understandably centred on the immediate impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown conditions, for both families and public services, our focus in 2021/22 turned towards understanding the long-term consequences. Through a rapid review of studies from the UK and around the world, we produced advice for Public Health England on the potential impacts on child development of the outcomes of social restrictions, and subsequently published a report, *Growing up in the Covid-19 pandemic: An evidence review of the impact of pandemic life on physical development in the early years*, that highlights concerning findings across a range of outcomes, including physical development, sleep, diet, dental health and breastfeeding. And bolstered by a survey of parents of young children, we have been able to keep the impact of 'pandemic life' on children's physical health and development in the press throughout the year.

With a firm eye on the future of early intervention policy, we convened a series of expert working groups to investigate some crucial questions surrounding the use of genetic data in early intervention policy and practice. This included participants from the worlds of policy, science and public services, from the UK, US and other countries, and resulted in a report, *Genetics and early intervention: Exploring ethical and policy questions*, published in August. This report acknowledged the pace of change, laid out some principles for the use of genetic data within early intervention, and highlighted the need for leadership and communication in the public sphere.

Sustaining strong partnerships

Partnerships provide another route to increasing our influence and expanding the pool of experience and expertise that we can draw on. It is a sign of strength that so many important projects over the past year and ongoing have been conducted in collaboration with partners from across the charity and research sectors.

We led on the 'SpeakOut' project with valuable support from the Race Equality Foundation and Action for Children (see page 20 for more on this work). Our work on trauma-informed care in children's social work was a collaboration with What Works for Children's Social Care. We became an evidence partner in the National Centre for Family Hubs, run by the Anna Freud Centre, which puts EIF in the position to ensure evidence is at the heart of a major government-funded programme. Our multi-year project with the PEDAL centre – Play in Education, Development & Learning – at the University of Cambridge, on common elements in effective early years education, culminated in a set of practical guides published in summer 2022. And other established partnerships continue to bear fruit, such as our work with the Association for Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) to deliver leadership workshops.

In early 2022, we commenced work on the What Works Ireland Evidence Hub project, whereby the programme evidence content of the EIF Guidebook will be licensed to and adapted for publication in Ireland by the Irish Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). As part of a multi-year project, we have begun the technological and content development work required to populate a user interface to be built by our Irish partners.

2021 saw an exciting evolution to one key EIF partnership. In early 2019 we were successful, in collaboration with Impetus and Social Investment Business, in bidding to establish the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF), a new Home Office-funded organisation tasked with identifying what works to reduce youth violence and its impact on young lives. In April 2021, the YEF team was spun out into a single organisation to ensure an integrated approach to YEF's grant-making, evaluation and change work. EIF has continued to support YEF to fund and evaluate promising approaches and interventions. We have provided expert advice to support the work of the YEF team in relation to their funding and evaluation work, and to identify where the opportunities for impact from their work lie both locally and nationally. We look forward to this partnership continuing.

Adapting to a post-pandemic world

Since the end of lockdown restrictions, EIF, like many organisations, has had to think carefully about how we respond to the changed working world. We spent a lot of time talking with staff to get their views on how we should manage the return to the office, and offered a phased return, recognising that there are many factors – physical, emotional, mental – that needed to be taken into account.

Our move to the Evidence Quarter – a unique office space in the heart of Westminster, which is home to a number of What Works Centres and other evidence-based organisations – in September 2021 provided an opportunity for staff to gradually get used to working again in an office environment. The central London location has proven successful with staff, who enjoy the facilities on offer as well as the opportunity to engage with peers in organisations with similar approaches and challenges.

We formalised our arrangements in the new financial year, and have now implemented a hybrid working model that gives staff the benefits of continuing to work from home – particularly in terms of managing their work/life balance – and creates opportunities to meet with colleagues and share ideas in person. We also relaunched our flexible working arrangements.

Fostering a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion

In September, we published EIF's first equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy, which cements the principles and benefits of actively pursuing measures that support equality and inclusion both in our work and in how the organisation grows and functions.

It establishes internal and external targets for assessing progress, and a detailed work plan of tasks and changes required to foster an organisation with EDI at its heart.

We also designed a new approach to ensure that we search for and comment on evidence on the impact of interventions, policies and practices on children and families from minority groups in our evidence reviews and guidance resources, and, where such evidence does not exist, to highlight these gaps to improve the research that is done in future.

Other changes are happening behind the scenes, to guide how we work and reflect how our team grows and changes. We have created a governance structure with two highly engaged and supportive trustees in the lead,

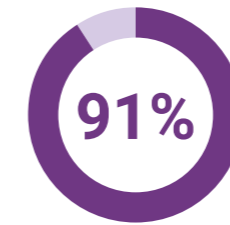
“We must give all families and communities a real opportunity to bounce back positively and ensure that the inequalities in society that Covid has exacerbated now begin to be reversed.”

– Dr Jo Casebourne, chief executive, on the EIF blog

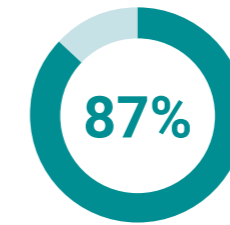
Alongside the strategy development process, a series of ‘action learning sets’, facilitated by the Race Equality Foundation (REF), supported the creation of a set of language principles designed to ensure our work is clear, accurate and respectful when it covers issues relating to the experiences or outcomes of minority ethnic individuals, families or groups.

It also led to the development of the ‘SpeakOut’ project, which was designed to gather the views and ideas of minority ethnic people seeking family support, to understand their experiences and identify potential barriers to family support services being accessible and effective for all families. See page 20 for more on this work.

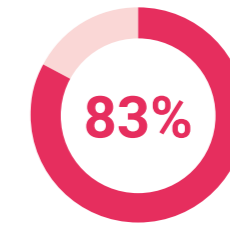
and staff working groups to shape our work overall and develop specific EDI projects. We have embedded diversity and inclusion in our annual performance framework and introduced mandatory training for all staff on equality and unconscious bias. We are exploring ways to create opportunities for positive but potentially ‘uncomfortable’ conversations about personal experiences of race, discrimination or disparities. We have revamped our recruitment processes – resulting in a more diverse group of candidates over the second half of the year – and have better data about job applicants, staff views, events participation and the content of our projects with which we can track progress.



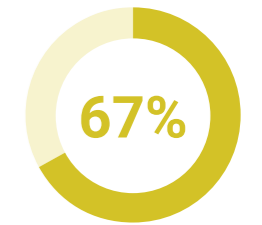
of staff agree that EIF clearly demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion
21% higher than in 2020/21



say that they feel a sense of belonging at EIF



say they feel respected by their colleagues



say that the culture at EIF means they feel comfortable talking about racism at work

“No one who has been involved in writing the strategy, scoping out specific plans or identifying the activities required to achieve the change we’re working towards would say that it’s been an easy task. Indeed, casting a net so wide as to cover and embrace every aspect not only of our workplace but also the work we do, is tremendously challenging. We are clearly building momentum, and I am excited for what comes next.”

– Tanya Bunney, head of people, on the EIF blog



Find out more at www.EIF.org.uk/about/edi-at-eif

2021/22: the year in numbers



464,000
visits to EIF.org.uk from
191,000 visitors



Over 280,000
downloads of reports and
major resources



16,000
Twitter followers, generating over
3,500 retweets and likes



142
instances of national and
sector press coverage



85
different local areas
directly involved in EIF
research, training or
support



38,000
views of EIF videos across
all social media channels



127,000
pageviews on the EIF
Guidebook from 37,000
visitors



78%
of UK visitors across all
EIF websites come from
outside London



82%
of EIF staff said in our 2021 staff
survey that they'd recommend
EIF as a great place to work

New reports and resources



2021

April

Improving services for
children affected by
domestic abuse

Adolescent mental health
evidence brief 2: The
relationship between
emotional and behavioural
problems in adolescence
and adult outcomes

May

Supporting evidence-use
in policy and practice:
Reflections for the What
Works Network

Evaluation of the Early Years
Transformation Academy

Early childhood services local
case examples

July

The case for early
intervention to support
levelling up and Covid
recovery

Adolescent mental health:
A systematic review on the
effectiveness of school-
based interventions

January

Trauma-informed care:
Understanding the use of
trauma-informed approaches
within children's social care

2022

November

Growing up in the Covid-19
pandemic: An evidence review
of the impact of pandemic life
on physical development in the
early years

October

Developing a relationship
support pathway for families:
A support pathway model

Improving support for families
facing multiple and complex
problems

August

Genetics and early intervention:
Exploring ethical and policy
questions

Adverse childhood experiences:
Building consensus on what
should happen next

February

Supporting healthy
relationships among
separating and separated
parents: A practical guide

Leading and delivering
early childhood services:
10 insights from 20 places
across England and Wales

Leading and delivering
early childhood services:
Case examples

March

How to evaluate training on
reducing parental conflict:
A practical guide for local
areas

Running a theory of
change workshop: A quick
reference for workshop
facilitators

Supporting healthy
relationships among
minority ethnic parents:
A practical guide

Our reports set out all of the findings, conclusions and recommendations from our research programme.

Visit www EIF.org.uk/reports

EIF resources are designed to help decision-makers and practitioners to put effective early intervention into action.

Visit www EIF.org.uk/resources



Safeguarding young people's mental wellbeing: what works in secondary schools?

Published in July 2021, our major report *Adolescent mental health: A systematic review on the effectiveness of school-based interventions* is the most significant UK review of the evidence on supporting positive mental health in schools for at least a decade, and the first to focus squarely on what works in secondary schools to support pupils' wellbeing during their critical teenage years.

Over recent years, and particularly as a result of the Covid pandemic and social restrictions, claims of a crisis occurring in young people's mental health have got louder. It is vital that local leaders and head teachers understand the scale of the issue and what kinds of interventions or approaches are most likely to be effective in helping young people to be well and thrive.

Drawing on evidence from 34 systematic reviews published since 2010 together with 97 primary studies published over the past three years, our review provides a comprehensive and up-to-date summary of what works, for whom and under what circumstances.

“This important report demonstrates the crucial role that schools can play in supporting children’s mental health. The pandemic has put extraordinary pressures on young people, and the government must do all it can to ensure that all schools are equipped to provide evidence-based interventions and to make mental health a priority in everything they do.”

– Emma Thomas, chief executive, YoungMinds

What did we find?

The review identified some important findings for the kinds of interventions and approaches that are more likely to help. For supporting the good mental health of all programmes, we highlighted the positive evidence for universal, teacher-delivered interventions that focus on developing social and emotional skills, which can be effective in reducing short-term symptoms of anxiety and depression. By contrast, there is weak evidence for mindfulness or ‘positive youth development’ approaches, in terms of improving mental health.

Young people who are already displaying signs of depression, however, may require targeted interventions delivered by a non-teaching professional, such as a psychologist. Approaches based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) show promising evidence of impact, particularly for addressing depression symptoms.

In addition to reviewing the evidence for different programmes and methods, the review also identified some significant overarching lessons for schools and local areas seeking to improve support for young people's mental health. This includes the importance of giving equivalent priority to mental health as to academic attainment, and the potential for coordinated ‘whole school’ approaches to support good mental health and reduce risks through a combination of day-to-day school activities and targeted interventions for those who need it.

By the numbers



34
systematic reviews



97
primary studies



11,000
downloads



18,000
webpage visits

The report was welcomed by leading academics, colleagues at the Department for Education and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, and influential charities, including the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition. The report and our oral evidence was quoted in the health select committee's report on children and young people's mental health, and formed the basis of the oral evidence we gave to the all party parliamentary group (APPG) on wellbeing economics.

The review also generated significant interest in the national and sector press, with EIF chief executive Dr Jo Casebourne appearing on both BBC News and Times Radio to share our findings.

This work has led to a collaboration with the Anna Freud Centre to translate the findings into guidance for secondary school teachers on how best to support young people's mental health and wellbeing. This aims to tackle low levels of teacher confidence in supporting mental health by providing them with practical strategies to support mental health which can be integrated into teachers' everyday interactions with pupils, and will be published in the new school year.

Download the report at
www.EIF.org.uk/amh2021



SpeakOut: understanding the experiences of ethnic minority families and young people seeking support

High-quality family support, delivered in the right way at the right time, can make a real difference for children and their families. There are, however, stark and persistent inequalities in outcomes for children from minority ethnic groups and many families struggle to get the help they need at the time they need it.

This innovative project – SpeakOut: You and your family's experiences of seeking support – explored the experiences of minority ethnic families in accessing and receiving family support, to better understand the challenges they face and the opportunities for changing how services operate.

family support or in the course of receiving that support.

This was an entirely new and exciting approach for EIF research, to reach out to new audiences and incorporate the voices of young people and minoritised groups directly in our work.



This project originated in a series of 'action learning sets', facilitated by the Race Equality Foundation, that were designed to bring out views and generate ideas on how EIF's work could create a deeper understanding of the causes and impacts of social disparities, and start to help to close some of the existing gaps. In addition to this project focused primarily on the experiences of minority ethnic families and young people, we have also incorporated a specific focus on minority groups into other new and existing projects, such as our support for the national Reducing Parental Conflict Programme and all new evidence reviews.

Through this research, we have been able to gather worrying personal testimony from both young people and parents about experiences of racism and discrimination, of not being taken seriously or treated fairly, in trying to access

Download the report at
[www.EIF.org.uk/SpeakOut-report](http://www EIF.org.uk/SpeakOut-report)

“Through this report, we hear the voices of young people and parents as they recount the kinds of experiences that make it less likely for some families to successfully access much-needed support, less likely to develop supportive relationships with practitioners, and consequently less likely to see the positive benefits that these services can provide.”

– Dr Jo Casebourne (EIF), Jabeer Butt OBE (Race Equality Foundation) and Melanie Armstrong (Action for Children), from the foreword to the report

What did we do?

This research was carried out by the Early Intervention Foundation in partnership with the Race Equality Foundation and Action for Children.

The research project was guided by parents and young people with experience of seeking or accessing family support, as well as by an advisory board.

The work included two strands of primary data. The first was a qualitative survey with 102 parents and 59 young people (aged 12–18); the second was a series of complementary focus groups, including two sessions with young people and one with parents. Survey responses were collected via the SpeakOut website, which was promoted by distribution through a network of services and community groups.

EIF’s final report of this work, *Improving the way family support services work for minority ethnic families*, lays down not only a set of recommendations from the authors and research partners, but also a set of ideas and priorities for change directly provided by those who took part in the survey and focus groups.

Crucially, EIF is well positioned to share the lessons and experiences from ‘SpeakOut’ with policymakers and organisations who can work towards change. Initial findings were shared with the independent review of children’s social care, who cited the research in their final report, as well as policy teams shaping the Supporting Families and Family Hubs programmes, and the Children’s Commissioner’s review of family support.



Key findings

- Experiences of discrimination and racism were commonly reported among the parents and young people who participated in our research.
- One in three survey respondents felt that they were treated unfairly when seeking or receiving support for their family. A further 24% told us they were unsure about whether they had been treated fairly.
- Minority ethnic families were proactively seeking help and support but encountered multiple barriers in doing so, including finding appropriate services, issues with capacity and waiting lists, and negative experiences at the first point of contact.
- More than 40% of survey respondents said the support they received made no difference or made things worse. Notably, parents and young people experienced a series of challenges around their relationship with the practitioner working with them.

- Parents and young people also identified a lack of cultural sensitivity within family support services.

What did we recommend?

- All services working with children and families must embed effective approaches to eradicate racist and discriminatory practices.
- Local areas must ensure first impressions of family support services are positive, integrated and joined up.
- Early help and wider family support services must be designed to better respond to the needs of minority ethnic families.
- Workforce planning in relation to early help and wider family support services must include a focus on the skills needed to build trusting relationships with minority ethnic families.



1 in 3

survey respondents felt that they were treated unfairly when seeking or receiving support for their family.





Looking ahead to 2022/23

Our four major portfolios of work cover areas where early intervention can be effective, and where there is considerable demand for evidence and evidence-informed guidance from national, local and frontline stakeholders.

2022/23 is the final year in our current strategy cycle. Our priorities for the year ahead are:

- To be integral to achieving increased government prioritisation of and investment in effective early intervention and family help.
- To address the most substantive gaps in the evidence base by generating new evidence, including through running trials or robust impact evaluations.
- That our evidence is changing policy and practice, through applying tested methods to support evidence-use locally and nationally.

In addition to the planned projects outlined below, we will continue to provide bespoke advice to stakeholders working in relevant Whitehall departments, to inform and support government policies and programmes.

Creating a new what works centre for children and families

Alongside delivery of our work programme, a major focus for EIF trustees and staff will be the planned merger of EIF with What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) to create a single organisation covering the full range of support for children and families, including preventative approaches, early intervention and targeted support for those at risk of poor outcomes, through to child protection and children's social care services.

The two boards each agreed to pursue the merger in June 2022, and this decision was publicly announced in July. EIF and WWCSC are undertaking steps towards the legal merger of the two charities, which is expected to conclude by spring 2023.

Initial developments include the recruitment of an independent executive chair, who will lead the merger process and new board.

Find out more at www EIF.org.uk/joining-forces

Improving outcomes for children in the early years

In 2022/23, our work in the early years will:

- Fulfil our role as an evidence partner to the National Centre for Family Hubs, including supporting evidence generation on multi-agency working and implementation of the Family Hubs Development Process.
- Create and deploy a self-assessment process for planning local parenting support pathways.
- Support local areas in Wales to use the EIF maternity and early years maturity matrix tool as part of planning early childhood services.
- Provide strategic advice, support and challenge to Nesta, the innovation thinktank, on its work on the early years, with a particular focus on the home learning environment and early childhood education.
- Adapt a well-evidenced book-sharing intervention to enable virtual delivery.

Supporting strong parental relationships

In 2022/23, our work on parental relationships will:

- Fulfil our role as evidence partner to the national Reducing Parental Conflict Programme, including producing reviews of evidence on priority groups, light-touch intervention assessment, reviewing measurement tools, and providing advice on engagement strategies.
- Test and scale up support for 'evidence-use behaviours' in commissioning, delivery and evaluation of local services to reduce parental conflict.

Improving children and young people's mental health and wellbeing

In 2022/23, our work on mental health and wellbeing will:

- Complete our work to identify the most commonly used practices and routines that can support cognitive and socioemotional development in early years education

settings, including publication of the Early Years Library for early childhood education practitioners: a set of booklets that provide guidance on low-burden strategies to support children's literacy and oral language, numeracy, social-emotional and general cognitive skills.

- Publish comprehensive guidance for secondary school teachers on promoting positive mental health through everyday interactions, addressing mental health difficulties, and supporting an inclusive classroom environment.

Supporting the most vulnerable children and families

In 2022/23, our work on addressing vulnerability will:

- Build the evidence for what works in early help for families with multiple and complex needs, including continuing 'evaluation readiness' work with local services to prepare for efficacy trials (small-scale pilots); and work with intervention developers, academics and training providers to develop a pipeline of new approaches for trials where there is little existing evidence. Further work could include support on aspects of policy development and specific support on increasing the uptake of evidence-based programmes.
- Strengthen understanding of effective interventions that support families with young children affected by domestic abuse.
- Provide advice to NSPCC, the children's charity, to identify areas in which the charity can make the greatest impact in reducing child abuse and neglect through early years services, including identifying new areas for service development.
- Support the evidence and evaluation functions of the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF), including work on evaluation in violence reduction units (VRUs); scoping an upcoming grant round focused on agency collaboration for children at risk of extra-familial harms; developing guidance and practical case studies on how to use the YEF Toolkit in local decision-making; and YEF's forward strategy.

Managing our resources



**staff employed on average
over 2021/22**

Income

EIF receives core funding from central government. In 2021/22 this totalled £2.5 million (compared to £2.6 million in 2020/21). While this forms the majority of our funding, we continually aim to diversify our income sources. To that end, we have secured £55,000 of grants from trusts and research councils and £182,000 of funding on a commercial basis from contracts for services, all of which further our charitable purpose.

54% of our income in 2021/22 was restricted, meaning it can only be used for specific purposes

As a registered charity, the EIF is required to account for its income in line with the Charities SORP.

Thank you

We could not have delivered our work in 2021/22 without the support of our funders, listed on page 31.



Expenditure

EIF looks to maximise its in-house capacity to deliver its evidence-based analysis, policy and practice work (project direct costs), and to minimise the cost of its corporate core (management costs).

Of the £2,428,000 disbursed on project costs, the equivalent of £2,138,000 was delivered using in-house resources, meaning £290,000, or 12%, was delivered using external resource (compared to 17% in 2021/22). Performing our work in house delivers a high degree of efficiency and great control over quality.

88% of evidence-based analysis, policy and practice work delivered in-house

EIF employs people with a variety of skills in the field of evidence-based policy and practice, some of whom are subject experts in the field of early intervention. EIF provides excellent value for money and does not currently employ any fundraising staff.



Financial statements

Statement of Financial Activities (Including an Income and Expenditure Account) For the year ended 31 March 2022

Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2021/22 Total funds £	2020/21 Total funds £
INCOME:				
– Investments	1,666	–	1,666	625
– Charitable activities	* 1,280,302	1,495,478	2,775,780	2,724,143
Total	1,281,968	1,495,478	2,777,446	2,724,768
EXPENDITURE:				
– Charitable activities	1,194,832	1,541,816	2,736,648	3,034,532
NET INCOME (EXPENDITURE)	87,136	(46,338)	40,798	(309,764)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Transfers between funds	(13,295)	13,295	–	–
Total funds brought forward	1,605,993	33,043	1,639,036	1,948,800
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	1,679,834	–	1,679,834	1,639,036

Balance Sheet At 31 March 2022

	2022 £	2021 £
FIXED ASSETS		
– Tangible fixed assets	–	7,703
	–	7,703
CURRENT ASSETS		
– Debtors	513,936	586,344
– Cash at bank	1,509,697	1,494,098
	2,023,633	2,080,442
LIABILITIES		
– Creditors falling due within one year	(343,799)	(449,109)
NET CURRENT ASSETS	1,679,834	1,631,333
TOTAL NET ASSETS	1,679,834	1,639,036
FUNDS OF THE CHARITY		
– Restricted funds	–	33,043
– Unrestricted funds: General Fund	1,265,927	1,178,791
– Unrestricted funds: Designated Fund	413,907	427,202
TOTAL FUNDS	1,679,834	1,639,036

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 21 July 2022 and were signed on its behalf by:



Mr MG Pilgrim MBE, Honorary Treasurer

**Early Intervention Foundation
Cash Flow Statement
For the year ended 31 March 2022**

	Total 2021/22 £	Total 2020/21 £
Cash flows from operating activities:		
Net movements in funds for the year	40,798	(309,764)
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items		
Depreciation	15,118	7,538
Interest receivable	(1,666)	(625)
	54,250	(302,851)
Working capital adjustments		
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	72,408	(297,219)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	(105,310)	210,669
Net cash flow from operations	21,348	(389,401)
Cash flows from investing activities:		
Interest received	1,666	625
Purchase of fixed assets	(7,415)	(15,241)
Net increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents	15,599	(404,017)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period	1,494,098	1,898,115
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period	1,509,697	1,494,098

The summarised accounts presented here are extracted from the Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2022, which were approved by the Trustee Board on 21 July 2022. The report of the auditors on these Accounts was unqualified. These summarised accounts do not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of EIF. A copy of the full document can be obtained from the charity commission website or EIF's registered office.

**Notes to the Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 March 2022**

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2021/22 Total funds £	2020/21 Total funds £
GRANTS FROM CENTRAL GOVERNMENT				
– Department for Education	854,895	795,666	1,650,561	1,512,400
– Department for Work and Pensions	150,000	292,972	442,972	283,038
– Public Health England	–	–	–	45,000
– Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)	90,000	170,000	260,000	95,500
Cross Government Grant	1,094,895	1,258,638	2,353,533	1,935,938
OTHER GRANTS				
– Youth Endowment Fund	–	–	–	644,886
– Home Office	–	183,935	183,935	–
– Nuffield Foundation	–	52,405	52,405	52,735
– Other	1,800	500	2,300	–
	1,800	236,840	238,640	697,621
OTHER SOURCES				
– Contracts with charitable purpose	181,886	–	181,886	35,303
– Conferences and events	–	–	–	55,071
– Other income	1,721	–	1,721	210
	183,607	–	183,607	90,584
	1,280,302	1,495,478	2,775,780	2,724,143

The work that we have undertaken in 2021/22 would not have been possible without the support of our funders. Accordingly we would like to extend our thanks to all these organisations for their support.

Early Intervention Foundation

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EIF is a member of



EIF is a registered charity (1152605) and a company limited by guarantee (8066785).