



EARLY  
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# Measuring our effectiveness

## **EIF impact framework**

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In support of our new five-year strategy, we have thought afresh about how EIF can best measure the impact of its work. Our new impact framework reflects our new strategy. It will enable us to check our progress against our mission statement, and to continually test, refine and develop our approaches.

Our ultimate aim or 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.**

In order to achieve this, we need to influence the behaviour of people in our key audience groups to increase investment in and prioritisation of effective early intervention.

Our impact framework is based on three principles:

1. All our work should be based on a sound understanding of current behaviour among our priority audiences, a clear articulation of the behaviour we want to see, and consideration of the things that get in the way of this happening.
2. The primary purpose of collecting data about our impact is to learn about the best ways to use evidence to drive behaviour change, and to continually refine our approaches. We also need to be able to recognise and illustrate our impact as part of being accountable to current funders and stakeholders, and developing future projects, partnerships and relationships.
3. Our approach to collecting impact data will be proportionate to the size and importance of individual projects, and we do not need to measure the impact of absolutely everything we do. We are interested in a core set of measures across our portfolio of projects, which can help us consider whether our approaches are having the impact we expect.

#### What do we mean by effective?

Rigorous evaluation and testing of early intervention programmes and approaches tells us which forms of support have been effective at improving child outcomes. This is what we mean when we talk about the importance of effective early intervention: on balance, families and children who receive interventions shown through rigorous testing to have improved outcomes are more likely to benefit, and to a greater degree, than those who receive other services.

## Understanding behaviour change

The COM-B framework, developed by Professor Susan Michie, forms the basis of the Behaviour Change Wheel. It provides a structure for us to think about our organisational aims at the level below our mission statement – and specifically in terms of desired behaviour change.

? Find out more at [www.behaviourchangewheel.com](http://www.behaviourchangewheel.com)

This framework identifies three factors which interact to generate behaviour change:

- **Capability** – the right knowledge and skills to engage in the desired behaviour
- **Opportunity** – the right conditions within the external context to facilitate the desired behaviour
- **Motivation** – the desire or intention to engage in the behaviour.

Using this approach, the EIF impact framework, as illustrated below, starts by specifying our **overall aim** in behaviour change terms. That is to say, in order 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, we want people to prioritise and invest in effective early intervention to a greater extent than they do currently.

At the level below this, we have used the COM-B framework to structure how we think about **short-term impact measures**, which are the prerequisites or antecedents of the desired prioritisation and investment behaviour change. Most of our project-related impact measures will sit at this level, gauging our success in improving or increasing the Capability, Opportunity or Motivation of people in our target audience groups.

This framework is founded on a set of **underpinning assumptions** about EIF as an organisation. That is to say, in order to influence behaviour change, EIF needs to be financially sustainable, to produce high-quality work, to be respected among the sector, to be a place that people want to work, and so on.

## EIF impact framework

<b>Strategic priorities</b>	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.		
<b>Desired behaviour change</b>	<b>Overall aim: To achieve greater prioritisation of and investment in effective early intervention.</b>		
<b>Short-term impact measures, via COM-B</b>	Improved <b>CAPABILITY</b> to prioritise and invest in effective early intervention	Improved <b>OPPORTUNITY</b> to prioritise and invest in effective early intervention	Improved <b>MOTIVATION</b> to prioritise and invest in effective early intervention
<b>Underpinning assumptions</b>	EIF is a sustainable, high-performing, well-respected organisation.		

# Whose behaviour are we seeking to change?

EIF has a wide-ranging remit, encompassing issues right across the waterfront of social policy, and with stakeholders and key audience groups working at all levels, from central government to frontline practitioners.

For the purposes of our impact framework, we are concentrating on those groups of people who are in a position to increase the prioritisation of and investment in effective early intervention:

- national politicians
- national policymakers
- sector & workforce bodies
- local politicians
- local system leaders
- local commissioners
- local service managers
- practitioners.

Of course, other groups of people – such as research funders, charities and sector commentators – are important audiences for individual EIF projects, or more generally in their ability to influence the behaviour of these key audience groups.

## Specifying behaviour change

In order to describe in more detail the short-term outcomes in the middle, COM-B level of our impact framework, we have been through an initial process of specifying the current behaviour of key audience groups and the specific behaviours or changes we would like to see. These are the actual behaviour changes EIF seeks to achieve or support through its work as a whole or through individual projects.

This allows us to explore current behaviour and to identify the barriers and enablers of behaviour change that we will need to overcome or harness through our work.

For example, we know that approaches to social and emotional learning (SEL) vary considerably between schools, and that most schools are not delivering evidence-based programmes. We know that some of the barriers to this are Capability barriers (such as a lack of time to access the evidence, or a lack of knowledge about what works), and some are Opportunity barriers (for example, a perception that Ofsted does not focus on SEL, or because the Department for Education is seen to prioritise academic attainment over SEL).



Motivation is likely to be an important enabler, at least at primary level: primary school teachers tend to recognise the importance of children’s social and emotional development and to see this as a core part of their teaching role.

It is worth noting that impact measures around evidence generation or the way evidence is valued sit at this level within the overall framework. For example, we want local commissioners or service leaders to ensure that their services are evaluated in a robust way. This increases the opportunity for commissioners to invest in evidence-based early intervention (the central behaviour change we want to see) because, as a result, they understand more about the impact of services locally.

## Examples of desired behaviour changes among key audience groups

<b>National politicians</b>	An increase in investment in effective early intervention.
<b>National policymakers</b>	<p>An increase in investment in effective early intervention.</p> <p>Greater use of the evidence on early intervention in policy and funding decisions.</p> <p>Increased application of the evidence on early intervention to workforce development.</p>
<b>Sector &amp; workforce bodies</b>	Increased application of the evidence on early intervention to workforce development.
<b>Local politicians</b>	An increase in investment in effective early intervention.
<b>Local system leaders</b>	<p>An improvement in the level of coordination of early intervention within local partnerships.</p> <p>Greater use of the evidence on early intervention in local services and funding decisions.</p>
<b>Local commissioners</b>	<p>An improvement in the quality of local commissioning decisions in terms of use of evidence, programme fit, targeting and implementation conditions.</p> <p>An increase in the number of evidence-based programmes commissioned.</p>
<b>Local service managers</b>	An increase in the use of evidence-based practices at a local level.
<b>Practitioners</b>	An increase in the use of evidence-based practices at a local level.

Developing this understanding enables us to design a project and specify the short-term outcomes (or factors that influence behaviour change) using the COM-B barriers and enablers as a starting point.

For example, if one barrier is a lack of understanding of what works, we might design a project to produce accessible guidance aimed at teachers, and as a short-term measure of impact, we might measure the increase in understanding of what works among those who have accessed the guidance.

## Capturing impact data within the framework

We will collect data at the various levels of the EIF impact framework. Most of this data will sit at the COM-B level of short-term impact and depending on the project, may focus on several or just one of Capability, Opportunity and Motivation. We might publish a commissioning guide and look at a small set of Capability measures to gauge, for example, improved understanding of what works, improved understanding of which programmes best fit local need, and improved understanding of implementation requirements.

In order to collect this data, we will select from a range of methods including qualitative interviews or process evaluations at the project level, a stakeholder survey or qualitative interviews at the national level, simple client satisfaction requests, case studies, and 'reasonable inference', such as where there are reasonable indications that a policy change has been influenced by EIF recommendations, advice or engagement.

## Implications for project management

To implement this new approach to impact measurement at EIF, a process of defining behaviour change outcomes will be built into our projects. We will do this at a theme or wider programme level, as well as at the individual project level.

For EIF, developing this impact framework is just the start of a process, and it represents a significant cultural shift in the way we scope and plan projects. We will work to embed this approach as business-as-usual, building it into our project documentation, ensuring that we set out the methods we will use to measure the impact of each project we design, and using the data and findings to inform decisions about future projects.

We will review this framework regularly, and would welcome feedback, particularly from organisations interested in influencing evidence-based decision-making or influencing the level of investment in early intervention.

**We thank colleagues at the Education Endowment Foundation, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, NSPCC and Power to Change for their openness in sharing thoughts, experiences and ideas which have helped to shape this framework.**

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