YEAR ONE EVALUATION REPORT

March 2018
Building Better Opportunities is a national programme aimed at tackling poverty and social exclusion by assisting the most disadvantaged people throughout England.
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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the Opportunity and Change project, and progression made during the initial fourteen months of delivery. The aim of the overall evaluation is to assess the impact and effectiveness of Opportunity and Change in:

a) Providing a service that makes a lasting contribution to the personal, social and economic stability of participants

b) Establishing a lasting partnership of voluntary sector organisations across D2N2 to enhance the quality of service provision and strengthen funding capacity for future collaboration.

Building Better Opportunities (BBO) is a national programme aimed at tackling poverty and social exclusion by assisting the most disadvantaged people throughout England. It is match-funded by the Big Lottery Fund and European Social Fund until December 2019, with the Department of Work and Pensions acting as the Managing Authority.

In the D2N2 region (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire), three organisations – Framework, Groundwork Greater Nottingham and Advice Nottingham – formed an alliance called the People First Consortium, and successfully bid for three separate strands of the BBO Programme.

Framework is the lead organisation of the Opportunity and Change partnership, which aims to support 650 individuals over the age of 15 with multiple and complex needs to move closer towards the labour market. Within the context of this project, people with multiple and complex needs includes those experiencing at least two of the following issues: homelessness or unstable housing, substance (drug or alcohol) misuse, reoffending, mental ill health, and domestic abuse.

The Opportunity and Change partnership consists of 21 organisations including sixteen delivering end-to-end support, and five specialist partners. Each organisation is unique; enabling the partnership to offer a broad range of services to suit the diverse needs of participants. By the end of 2017, Opportunity and Change had supported 383 participants, including:

- 224 men and 159 women
- 167 unemployed individuals
- 216 economically inactive individuals
- 65 participants over the age of 50
- 313 participants with a disability or chronic health condition
- 77 individuals from ethnic minorities.
The Opportunity and Change partnership consists of 21 organisations including sixteen delivering end-to-end support, and five specialist partners.

At their induction and initial support needs assessment:

- 74% of participants said they were homeless, vulnerably housed or at risk of homelessness
- 98.4% of participants said they had a mental health condition
- 44% disclosed some level of recent problematic substance (drug or alcohol) use
- 21.7% of participants stated they either had a recent and prolific record of offending, or were ‘at risk of offending’
- 56% of participants disclosed current or previous experience of domestic abuse.

Feedback from partners and participants engaging with the project has been, by and large, very positive. Framework is regarded as an excellent lead in relation to performance management and capacity building. In terms of the project outcomes, there is work to be done to ensure that data is more consistently entered onto the Management Information System, to provide a more accurate insight of performance and what the project is actually delivering and achieving. Specifically, the project’s results and outcomes relating to reducing complex needs and entering training or employment appear to be quite low. However, this is in part because results cannot be claimed until the participant has stopped engaging with Opportunity and Change, and many participants in training or even paid employment are still engaging with support from the project.

The performance section of the report highlights that Opportunity and Change is making very good overall progress in relation to its key objectives, including:

- Despite the low proportion of participants being referred to the Skills Plus for Change training programme (47.3%), at least 72% of these have attended one or more sessions
- 62.5% of participants have received 1-2-1 job coaching and support since engaging with the programme
- 92% of participants have been referred for a Care Act Assessment. 5.4% of these (19 individuals), have been allocated provision as a direct result of engaging with this process.

The partnership has faced a number of challenges during its first year of delivery, including:

- The size and scale of the partnership: the amount of resources required to deliver the project was underestimated
- Frequently conflicting and changing guidance
- Emphasis on ‘addressing complex needs’ over ‘increasing employability’
- High volume of erroneous claims from partners
- Attendance on the Skills Plus for Change programme cannot be counted towards the project’s ambitious training outcome
- Problems with IT and the Management Information System.
Opportunity and Change is a three year, grant-funded partnership, led by Framework Housing Association. It consists of twenty one community-based organisations that support vulnerable and socially excluded people across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire; the D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) region. The project is part of a national initiative called Building Better Opportunities (BBO). Match-funded by the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) and European Social Fund (ESF) until December 2019, Opportunity and Change aims to ‘provide a pathway to work’ for individual ‘participants’ with multiple and complex needs; adopting a collaborative approach to provide better access to support, training and employment opportunities.

The evaluation of Opportunity and Change began in January 2017 and will culminate in a third annual report and impact briefing in December 2019. Framework commissioned one of its own employees - Jess Smith, Evaluation Lead and author of this report - to complete the project evaluation. Jess has over ten years’ experience delivering and evaluating services for unemployed people with multiple and complex needs in Nottinghamshire. Jess is also using some of the data from the evaluation of Opportunity and Change to inform her PhD on the role of employment-related support in services for people with multiple and complex needs.

About the Evaluation

The Evaluation Lead works closely with the project lead team to capture and share learning on a formative basis; contributing to their on-going development of the partnership. The summative findings of the evaluation will identify and promote effective ways to deliver support to individuals with multiple and complex needs, with the ultimate aim of informing how future employability programmes of this kind are commissioned, designed and delivered.

The evaluation will critically examine the extent to which the project’s outcomes and results have been achieved. The aim of the overall evaluation is to assess the impact and effectiveness of Opportunity and Change in:

a) Providing a service that makes a lasting contribution to the personal, social and economic stability of participants

b) Establishing a lasting partnership of voluntary sector organisations across D2N2 to enhance the quality of service provision and strengthen funding capacity for future collaboration.

Methodology

This evaluation has adopted an innovative ‘participatory’ methodological approach. Working closely with the project’s specialist involvement and advocacy partner, SEA, the Evaluation Lead has contributed to the development of a local regional network of researchers, advocates and service users with a shared interest in user-led or ‘peer’
research®. Peer research is a type of service user participation, in which people with lived experience are directly involved in the design, delivery and shaping of research.

Although well established in the field of mental health, peer research on people with multiple and complex needs is still very new. To this end, the evaluation of Opportunity and Change will be able to offer a unique contribution to knowledge and practice, by adopting a peer-led approach to its evaluation of user experiences.

The evaluation has a mixed-methods (qualitative and quantitative) design. It draws upon a wide range of existing data including:

- The Opportunity and Change Project Plan
- ESF and BLF (BBO) Guidance
- Data entered onto the project’s Management Information System
- Literature relating to the project’s cross-cutting themes: Equality and Diversity and Sustainability
- Partnership Board, Project Team and Navigator Group Supervision (anonymised) minutes
- Monitoring reports
- A variety of procedural documents.

Primary data is derived from methods including:

- Observations
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Qualitative interviews
- Focus groups.

Evaluation Next Steps

This first annual report provides an introduction to the Opportunity and Change project and an overview of progress made during the initial fourteen months of delivery. What will be obvious from reading the report is that there is a lack of participant feedback. It was necessary to establish appropriate monitoring systems in order to provide much of the information presented in this report, before proceeding to a more in-depth analysis of user experience. This process, along with setting up the D2N2 Peer Research Network, took longer than anticipated. The second phase of the evaluation will be more focused on the experiences of participants, and insights from a front-line delivery perspective. Additionally, in the second phase of the evaluation case studies will be developed, and social return on investment methodology will also be applied.
Building Better Opportunities aims to support 104,733 individuals until the end of the programme in December 2019.
Building Better Opportunities

Building Better Opportunities (BBO) is a large scale programme aimed at tackling the root causes of poverty, promoting social inclusion and driving local jobs and growth, by assisting some of the most disadvantaged people throughout England. The programme is funded by Big Lottery Fund (BLF) and European Social Fund (ESF) with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) acting as the Managing Authority.

There are approximately 1955 delivery partners involved in the programme, with 129 lead organisations across 39 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas. Each LEP region has its own set of priorities and strategies as to how the funding should be spent. The total value of the BBO Programme is approximately £300 million and aims to support 104,733 individuals until the end of the programme in December 2019.

There are a variety of projects being delivered, ranging from those improving employability for the most disadvantaged, helping people with multiple and complex needs, to improving financial literacy. Although each project is unique, they each share the same five key principles:

1. Help the most disadvantaged

The European Commission cites the following disadvantaged groups of people as a priority:

- People with parental or carer responsibilities
- Women
- People with health issues and disabilities
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME)
- Refugees and recent migrants
- People aged over 50 with few or no qualifications and not in employment
- Low-income, single-earner households with children where one partner is not working
- Disabled people
- Those out of contact with the labour market
- Ex-offenders and offenders
- Homeless people
- People with low or no skills.

2. Tackle Social Exclusion

It is recognised that social exclusion profoundly impacts on a person’s physical and mental health, wellbeing and capacity to engage with support and opportunities. Furthermore social exclusion contributes
to significant economic disadvantage, including unemployment. The programme aims to tackle ‘the root causes of poverty and exclusion’\(^4\), which includes addressing individual barriers to employment.

3. Be focused on the capabilities of each individual
A ‘one size fits all’ approach to supporting the most disadvantaged people does not sufficiently address individual needs and barriers. The programme promotes the delivery of genuinely holistic, individually tailored packages of support to help those engaging to overcome the challenges they face. Key to this is ensuring that people receiving support should have a genuine and on-going role in how the project is designed and delivered.

4. Lead to better coordinated services
For a number of years many organisations delivering support to vulnerable people have operated in silo, which has created barriers for people experiencing multiple exclusion and disadvantage. The programme therefore encourages better-coordinated partnerships between well-established local delivery organisations, in order to improve the quality of support available for the most vulnerable people.

5. Create new opportunities for work
In order to effectively support individuals to increase their employability, it is crucial that there are suitable opportunities available for those in a position to work. Therefore, employer engagement will form part of the programme, alongside support around self-employment, and volunteering opportunities.

**Building Better Opportunities within D2N2**

The D2N2 People First Consortium (PFC) is an alliance comprising three local organisations; Framework Housing Association, Groundwork Greater Nottingham, and Advice Nottingham. The three organisations were successfully allocated £15 million of funding to deliver three strands of BBO across the D2N2 LEP area (Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire)\(^5\). Framework leads on the multiple and complex needs strand (Opportunity and Change), Groundwork leads on the employability strand (Towards Work), and Advice Nottingham leads on the financial inclusion strand (Money Sorted in D2N2).

Money Sorted in D2N2 is being delivered by St Ann’s Advice Centre on behalf of Advice Nottingham. The project aims to combat financial exclusion; helping people in financial difficulties whilst out of work, by advising them on how to more effectively deal with money issues, and ensure they are accessing appropriate financial support and welfare benefits.

Towards Work aims to support unemployed individuals; offering one-to-one advice and support to help them overcome personal barriers to work or further learning. Specifically, Towards Work aims to support people aged 40 plus, 18-24 years olds, and women returning to work.

**Opportunity and Change: A Pathway to Work**

The main aim of Opportunity and Change is to support people over the age of 15 with multiple and complex needs\(^6\) to move closer towards the labour market. Within the context of this project, people with multiple and complex needs refers to those experiencing at least two of the following issues: homelessness or unstable housing, substance (drug or alcohol) misuse, reoffending, mental ill health, and domestic abuse. This aim is monitored via outputs, results and outcomes. Fig. 1 shows the project’s outputs: a socio-demographic overview of whom the project is profiled to work with over its three year lifecycle.

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\(4\) - For more information about ESF’s thematic objectives, visit: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/how/priorities

\(5\) - For more information about the D2N2 LEP visit: http://www.d2n2lep.org/

\(6\) - While there is an abundance of literature on multiple and complex needs, a useful overview can be found on the Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) website: http://meam.org.uk
Fig. 1: Project Reach and Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTPUTS</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PROJECT OUTLINE TARGETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of men</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of women</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who are economically inactive, including not in education or training</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who are aged 50 or over</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number with disabilities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number from ethnic minorities</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The project’s overall targets or ‘results’ (Fig. 2) are to support participants closer towards education, training and employment, so that by the time they leave the project: 30% of 650 participants will be accessing education or training; 30% will be actively seeking paid work; and 10% will have entered into paid employment (including self-employment).

Fig. 2: Increasing Economic Stability and Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>TARGET NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number who move into education or training on leaving</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who move into employment, including self-employment, on leaving</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of these, the number who were unemployed when joining the project</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of these, the number who were economically inactive when joining the project</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number that were economically inactive move into job-searching on leaving</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project Outcome 1: At least 455 (70%) of the 650 participants will have made significant progress towards resolving one of their complex needs issues. At least 295 (45%) of participants will resolve two, and at least 165 (25%) will resolve three.

Outcome One: Resolving Complex Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>TARGET NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants accessing stable accommodation</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants sustaining engagement with treatment services</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants accessing effective mental health care</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse, access support</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants reduce incidents of offending</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Project Outcome 2: At least 260 (40%) of the 650 participants will have improved their capability, confidence, skills and independence through a personalised package of life skills training on leaving the programme.

Outcome Two: Improving confidence, skills and independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants referred to the Skills Plus for Change Programme</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants attended strand 1 (Living) of Skills Plus for Change Programme</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants attended strand 3 (Wellbeing) of Skills Plus For Change Programme</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Project Plan, three ‘strands’ of the Skills Plus for Change programme were outlined: Living, Wellbeing, and Working. Each strand contains two modules made up of five taught sessions. Each session is delivered by one of three, Skills Plus for Change Workers (two employed by Framework, and one employee of YMCA Derbyshire). Session delivery is usually supported by a volunteer Learning Assistant who is often someone with previous experience of accessing the training themselves. The six modules are:

- Housing
- Healthy Living
- Money Matters
- Employability
- Positive Wellbeing
- Skills for Life

Project Outcome 3: At least 130 (20%) of the 650 participants will be work ready on leaving the programme, having received a personalised package of advice, coaching, skills training and other interventions preparing them for work.

Outcome Three: Increasing Employability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>TARGET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants enrolled on the Skills Plus for Change Programme</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants attended strand 2 (Working) of Skills Plus for Change Programme</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants receiving 1-2-1 job coaching and support</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project Outcome 4: System Change (the identification, location and coordination of statutory housing, support, care & employment duties) for people with multiple and complex needs in D2N2. In order to achieve this outcome, the People First Consortium has employed four Local Authority Stakeholder Managers, and two Social Workers who specialise in conducting Care Act assessments.

Specialist Care Act Provision: There is widespread evidence that people with multiple and complex needs are not being adequately assessed for entitlement to provision under The Care Act (2015). In order to address this, Opportunity and Change have employed two Social Workers, based within YMCA Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire Law Centre. Their role is to ensure that all participants are assessed for eligibility under the Care Act, and that longer term provision is allocated to those whom are entitled to support.

BBO Local Authority Stakeholder Managers: in November 2017 four Stakeholder Managers were employed in each of the Local Authorities: Derby City Council, Derbyshire County Council, Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council. The role of the Stakeholder Managers is to contribute to the overall success of the BBO programme by engaging and working collaboratively with a range of public, private and third sector stakeholders, raising awareness of the programme, promoting interdependency and sharing best practice.
While it is still early days, it is anticipated that the Local Authority Stakeholder Managers will play an integral role in influencing system change within the Local Authorities, to increase the number of successful Care Act Assessments for Opportunity and Change participants. Specifically, they can help the Care Act providers to establish positive working links with key members of staff within the Local Authority, break down any barriers in the process of trying to make a referral to Adult Social Care, and promote the innovative work that Opportunity and Change is doing in relation to the Care Act (2015).

In addition, the Stakeholder Managers have been keen to maximise participant access to Opportunity and Change through effective promotion of the project across all sectors. Furthermore, they have committed to promoting a more joined-up approach to evaluation and learning across the three strands of BBO, by facilitating evaluation-themed meetings and events.

**Outcome Four: System Change**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>TARGET NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutory services engaged with the programme and delivering more effective primary interventions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Stakeholder Managers have effectively enabled access to statutory services for people with multiple and complex needs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants referred for a Care Act Assessment</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authorities are fulfilling their duties under the Care Act</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Cross-Cutting Themes**

Framework and the Opportunity and Change partnership have demonstrated their commitment to supporting the EU’s cross-cutting themes, by promoting equality and diversity, and action on sustainability.

**Equality and Diversity:** Framework developed a seven-point Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Action Plan, which sets out how the partnership will integrate and embed equality and diversity within all aspects of Opportunity and Change. The action plan comprises the following key areas: **Understanding Needs and Challenges, Maximising Awareness, Overcoming Barriers, Enabling Access, Integrating Equal Opportunities and Diversity, Participant Involvement, and Policy and Procedure.**

All partners have contributed to the most recent review of the Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Action Plan, which is currently being finalised and will be disseminated later in spring 2018. The project lead team has taken positive action regarding its existing plan. This includes:

- Ensuring that all recruitment is in line with equal opportunities legislation
- Providing expenses for participants to increase access to the programme
- Providing participants with the opportunity to train as Peer Researchers and become directly involved with the project evaluation
- Creating an E&D subgroup to review and implement the equality and diversity action plan
- The audit team have developed an equality and diversity audit template
- A second annual staff demographic survey was completed
- An equality and diversity themed development day for managers is being planned for spring 2018.

**Sustainability:** Framework developed a five-point Sustainability Action Plan, which, like the Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Action Plan, is currently under review and has received contributions from all
partners. The five areas of the Sustainability Action Plan are: Developing Knowledge and Skills in Sustainable Development, Using Resources and Energy More Efficiently, Saving Money on Gas, Electricity and Water Costs, Reducing Waste, and Improving People’s Wellbeing by Developing Their Local Environment/Enhancing or Protecting the Physical and Natural Environment.

Opportunity and Change partners and the project lead team have taken positive action in the past fourteen months regarding the existing Sustainability Action Plan. This includes:

- Each partner has identified a Sustainable Development Champion
- The audit team have developed a sustainability audit template which was rolled out in December 2017
- Skills Plus for Change have incorporated sustainable development into their delivery
- For external referrals, the project team identify the most appropriate local provider to assign the participant to
- The amount of face-to-face meetings with Navigators has been reduced, and group supervisions are separated by locality to reduce the amount of travelling
- A highly successful sustainability themed development day for managers was held in December 2017.

Management and Governance

The Opportunity and Change Partnership Board meetings take place once every quarter and are attended by members of the project lead team, and all partner managers. The purpose of the Partnership Board is to review performance against the project outcomes and results, share best practice, and review monitoring, evaluation and finance.

The Project Lead Team is employed by Framework and consists of ten members of staff: a Programme Manager, a Partnership Manager, an ESF Project Lead, 2 x Auditors, an Evaluation Lead, an Administrator, an MIS Officer, a Finance Manager, and a Finance Apprentice. The team has increased in size since the start of the project in response to the administrative demands of the contract.

The project lead team has been responsible for the implementation and management of all monitoring systems and processes associated with the partnership. This includes designing suitable paperwork to track and monitor participant engagement and progression, creating service level agreements, developing tools for auditing and performance management reviews, checking appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure legal and contractual compliance (implementing new procedures where appropriate), and setting up systems to monitor performance in relation to project outcomes and results. A web-based Management Information System (MIS) was externally commissioned and is provided by a company called Hanlon. The MIS Officer was recruited in autumn 2017, and plays a pivotal role in increasing access to monitoring information for both performance management and evaluation purposes.

On a day-to-day basis, the Project Lead Team is responsible for a range of activities, including:

- Performance management via quarterly face-to-face partner review meetings
- Contractual compliance via monthly, face-to-face file audits
- Processing financial claims and expenditure
- Interpreting and sharing updated ESF, BLF and DWP guidance
- Disseminating new and updated procedures and associated paperwork
- Providing monthly and quarterly updates and reports to funders
- Delivering support and training to front-line delivery staff and management
- Coordinating participant referrals
• Advising on staffing and recruitment issues
• Facilitating quarterly Partnership Board Meetings
• Providing on-going communications and publicity for the project
• Fortnightly team meetings to discuss overall performance, resolve issues, and plan reviews, audits and events.

Opportunity and Change Partnership

There are currently sixteen organisations offering end-to-end provision for participants across the D2N2 region. These are:

• Acorn Training
• Derventio Housing Trust
• Emmanuel House
• Improving Lives
• Nottingham Women’s Centre
• Nottinghamshire YMCA
• Riverside Care and Support
• Women’s Work Derbyshire
• Awaaz
• Double Impact
• Framework
• Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF)
• Nottinghamshire Women’s Aid
• POW
• Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire (RCAN)
• YMCA Derbyshire

In addition, the following five partners offer specialist services:

• Nottingham Contemporary Loudspeaker Programme
• SEA
• Derbyshire Law Centre (Care Act assessments)
• Framework Training Centre / Workshop
• Skills Plus for Change.

Having a partnership of twenty one organisations brings together the community, voluntary, public and private sectors, and enables Opportunity and Change to offer a truly diverse and holistic range of services to participants.

All organisations have responsibilities to ensure successful cohesion of the partnership and delivery of the programme. This includes: making accurate, timely monthly claims submissions, undertaking internal quality assurance checks, attending partnership board meetings and group supervisions, making contributions to the internal monthly communications bulletin, providing good news stories, engaging with the evaluation of the project, notifying the project lead team of any support required, and maintaining an open dialogue with partners and the lead.

The project lead team, also the BBO grant holders, are accountable to the funders and have responsibility for the overall management of the partnership. All partners are individually responsible for complying with all regulations and guidance relating to the programme.

7 - A full partnership directory, including partner contact details and links to their websites, can be accessed via the Opportunity and Change website: [http://www.opportunityandchange.org](http://www.opportunityandchange.org)
8 - As well as offering end-to-end provision, Improving Lives also function as a specialist provider, facilitating counselling and group-based social activities for participants.
The Navigator Role

In November and December 2017, three focus groups were conducted, in which a total of seventeen partner Managers and sixteen Navigators described their perceptions of the Navigator’s role and function within Opportunity and Change. The following table summarises this feedback:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What does the Navigator role ‘look like’?</th>
<th>What key activities are completed on behalf of and alongside participants, on a regular basis?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support, information, advice and guidance:</strong></td>
<td>‘Behind the Scenes’ Administration:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Weekly or fortnightly face-to-face meetings</td>
<td>• Visiting other projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Person-centred, holistic support; ensuring the participant feels valued, respected, listened to, accepted and not judged: feels part of something positive</td>
<td>• Promotion of the service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where possible, conducting meetings away from the home or service</td>
<td>• Drop-ins for new and existing participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Facilitating workshops and group activities</td>
<td>• Weekly Navigator / team meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One-to-one meetings and 3 way meetings with other agencies</td>
<td>• Attending training and group supervisions (every six weeks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting participants with their shopping and using public transport</td>
<td>• Liaising with other organisations: planning and discussing on-going participant support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working on the change plan and looking at how to achieve milestones; completing reviews</td>
<td>• Processing paperwork and preparing files for audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussing training, volunteering, employment, and signposting</td>
<td>• Updating the MIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attempting to contact and re-engage with disengaged participants</td>
<td>• Responding to emails</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support and Advocacy:</th>
<th>Signposting:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting participants to attend appointments and engage with a range of services and activities, such as: the GP, hospital, medical assessments, Jobcentre Plus (JCP), mental health, drug and alcohol services, Skills Plus for Change sessions, The Loudspeaker programme</td>
<td>• Referrals to other services, such as counselling, training, alternative therapies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting participants to communicate effectively with: housing providers, JCP, Local Authority services; advocating on their behalf as appropriate</td>
<td>• Supporting participants to attend Care Act assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Researching and maintaining up to date records of services and support networks available in the local area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Participant Journey

Individuals can either refer themselves to Opportunity and Change, or be referred via an existing support agency. To meet the eligibility criteria and access support, an individual must be:

- Aged 15-18 years and NEET, or,
- Aged 16 years or over
- Have proof of their right to work in the UK
- Be unemployed or economically inactive
- Have two or more ‘complex needs’.

A range of participant costs are met by the programme, including: childcare, interpretation and translation, travel, and one-off payments to meet support plan goals. One-off payments can include payment for a passport or birth certificate to enable proof of eligibility, which could then be used as proof of identity for employers.

Once a participant’s eligibility has been confirmed, and a support needs assessment is completed, a change plan is developed with the Navigator, highlighting actions and interventions that will help the participant to progress towards agreed ‘milestones’. Participants can access the project for up to 18 months. Due to the diverse range of delivery partners, participants have access to a multitude of interventions and activities. To this end, no two participant journeys look the same, however participants accessing Opportunity and Change can benefit from:

- Housing-related support
- Drug and alcohol treatment and recovery support
- Mental health support
- Support to access training, including Skills Plus for Change
- Support to complete a Care Act Assessment
- Access to a personal budget
- Employment-related advice and guidance
- A range of support from specialist services, including: counselling, advocacy and involvement, services for women and domestic abuse survivors, support for participants from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds, support for refugees and asylum seekers, support for sex workers, and support for participants in rural localities.
Project Aims:
• The overall project aim is to support 650 people across D2N2 with multiple and complex needs to move closer to the labour market
• In addition the project aims to improve partnership working and collaboration in the D2N2 region across the voluntary, public and private sectors
• Furthermore the project aims to influence system change by ensuring Local Authorities meet their duty to people with multiple and complex needs under the Care Act (2015)

Inputs / Resources:
• A diverse partnership and workforce with a broad range of skills, knowledge and experience
• 21 community-based partners across the D2N2 LEP region
• Participants who want to engage with the project
• 3 year funding via ESF and BLF for BBO Programme (October 2016 – December 2019)
• 4 Local Authority Stakeholder Managers

Participant Activity:
• Engagement in a range of support and interventions reflecting the individual’s Change Plan; aiming ultimately to reduce complex needs and increase employability
• Building positive social networks
• Involvement & participation (SEA, Mentoring, Volunteering Peer Research)

Navigator / Delivery Staff Activity:
• 1 to 1 and group support: holistic; flexible; person-centred; consistent; reliable; trust building; empowering
• Navigators working intensively with small caseloads
• Navigators investing time listening to participants, and enabling them to work ‘at their own pace’
• Signposting, advocacy & partnership working
• Care Act Referrals
• Ongoing training and clinical group supervision

Partnership Activity:
• FHA as lead partner developing robust and effective performance management systems and processes, providing ongoing training and support, and frequent engagement/communication with partners
• Partners engaging with the support available from the lead
• Collaborative work across the partnership
• Social Workers and LA Stakeholder Managers collaborating to maximise access to provision under the Care Act
• Ongoing training & supervision of Navigators facilitated through the partnership
OUTCOMES
THESE POSITIVE THINGS CAN HAPPEN

Participant Outcomes:
More positive attitudes and beliefs:
• Confidence & self esteem
• Self awareness & self realisation
• Motivation & hope
• Resilience & empowerment
• Trust in services
• Belief in own capacity

Improved knowledge / skills:
• Improved personal, social, life & work skills
• Better understanding of where to get help and support if needed
• Better able to manage independently

Lifestyle / behavioural changes:
• Improved support networks
• Improved relationships with families and communities
• Engagement in ‘meaningful activity’
• Improved health & wellbeing

Navigator Outcomes:
• Improved knowledge, skills & confidence to support people with multiple and complex needs including delivering employment-related support

Partnership Outcomes:
• Improved knowledge and capacity to deliver BLF / ESF funded contracts
• Improved collaborative working
• Raised profile of smaller organisations
• Improved capacity to deliver employment-related support to people with multiple & complex needs
• Increased number of Care Act assessments taking place

LASTING IMPACT
AND THIS COULD BE YOUR LEGACY

Participant Impacts:
Living independently and securely:
individuals better equipped to manage crises and less dependent on support services

Better health and wellbeing:
Reduced or better managed complex needs

Increased economic and social inclusion:
engagement in job search, education / training, volunteering or employment, contributing more broadly to the economic regeneration of local communities

Better partnership working:
Collaboration across partnership and geographies becomes embedded and part of future organisational cultures. All partners have improved capacity through knowledge and skills transfer

System Change:
An effective, transparent process in place to ensure Local Authorities are meeting their duty to vulnerable people under the Care Act so people with multiple and complex needs have access to long term support beyond Opportunity and Change
Initial Findings

Learning and development across the partnership, from management and front-line delivery perspectives, has been captured by drawing upon a range of existing monitoring data, conducting observations and interviews, attending meetings, and analysing documents.

In addition, two in-depth online surveys were completed by partner managers and Navigators in spring and summer 2017. This section provides a summary of those findings.

Spring 2017 Partner Manager’s Survey

Managers of partner organisations were invited to share their feedback and experiences of the implementation and early delivery of Opportunity and Change. Fourteen partner managers completed the survey, the findings of which are summarised here:

- Partner organisations described how the project had provided new opportunities for joint working, even in previously well-integrated services. For example, the partnership enabled more open sharing of facilities and premises, in order to meet the needs of participants.
- Organisations with the most experience of joint working were largely based within Nottingham City, and organisations based in more remote localities had worked together less often prior to Opportunity and Change.
- The breadth of knowledge and understanding of ESF funded contracts varied amongst partners. The majority (around three quarters) of those who took part in the survey felt their knowledge of ESF requirements had improved since an ‘expression of interest’ was made.
- Partners identified the following key benefits of the partnership, for their own organisations:
  - **Opportunity**: ‘to become known and trusted by a much larger range of organisations, across a broader geographical area’, and ‘developing and embedding further professional relationships’; providing opportunities ‘to show others what [they] can offer’.
  - **Capacity Building**: ‘Sharing expertise is not only good for the participant but good for the sector’.
    Framework was described by one manager as ‘a great prime: organised, innovative, and supportive’.
  - **Legacy and System Change**: Working in partnership is more likely to ‘influence local and national government to recognise the need for this asset-based and person-centred work’.
    - Partners identified the following key benefits of the partnership, for participants:
      - **Increased Access**: Participants were described as benefitting ‘from a more joined up approach’, ‘Increased access to a diverse [range of] service provision’, and ‘working closely together’.
      - **Resources**: ‘to provide in-depth and lengthy support’ to aid participants in their recovery longer-term; a ‘joined up approach’ is seen as beneficial in bridging gaps in service provision such as ‘employment-related support’, and ‘free legal advice’.
      - **Person-Centred Approach**: partner manager’s understanding of delivering a person-centred service included: ‘focused, on-going, one-to-one support’ that is ‘participant centred, not target-driven’. The
benefits of person-centred support included consistency, a focus on longer-term goals, and greater structure.

**Specialised Support and Training:** ‘Support to engage in educational, volunteering and employment opportunities through access to workshops and in-depth employment-related support, and the knowledge and confidence [participants] can gain from this’.

**Funding:** The discretionary fund and support to apply for additional provision under the Care Act were regarded as beneficial to participants in helping them ‘towards achieving their personal end goals’.

- Managers expressed that having highly skilled delivery staff in place was increasing participant engagement; with many individuals showing an interest in accessing support from the project
- Managers were asked to comment on Framework’s communication, training and support as the lead partner. Almost three quarters (71.4%) of respondents felt increasingly or consistently satisfied with levels of communication from Framework up to the point of early stage project delivery
- All managers said they were satisfied with the training and support received on the project’s systems and processes. In addition, the following comments were shared:
  
  “All staff have been helpful with any queries we have raised. There have been just the right amount of meetings with us one-on-one, and as a delivery partnership.”
  
  “Framework have done as much as they could to get the project underway. Framework have also been helpful if any additional training is required.”
  
  “Regarding monitoring and processes we have been offered a lot of support [and the project leads] have welcomed our additional approaches.”

- Recommendations from the survey were fed back to the project lead team and followed up where appropriate. These included:
  
  - More structured lead-in time, including training on systems and processes for managers prior to the project launch, would be beneficial
  - Webinars and online resources for partners to share knowledge and practice, could reduce travel time/cost, and carbon emissions
  - Information and clarity for organisations delivering on multiple strands of the same programme is required
  - It could be useful to develop a procedure for effectively signposting ineligible or ‘exited’ participants to relevant support elsewhere.

**Summer 2017 Navigator Survey**

In July 2017, seventeen Navigators shared their feedback via an online survey, on which aspects of the partnership they felt were working well, and suggested areas for improvement.

Adopting a participatory approach, the survey questions were designed jointly, through partner consultations with managers from: SEA, Framework (SPFC), and Improving Lives. Independently of each other, these three organisations said they had concerns about engagement and participation, and were therefore keen to ask Navigators what steps they could take to improve their provision and make it more accessible, relevant and effective. Early findings from the survey were, upon request, anonymised and fed back directly to the Partnership Manager, SEA, and Improving Lives, in mid-August 2017. The Partnership Manager discussed these findings at subsequent monthly review meetings and a number of recommendations from the findings were implemented.

When asked to describe the potential key benefits of engaging with Opportunity and Change, the majority of Navigators (88.2%) identified Building Confidence, Developing Life Skills, and engaging with Meaningful Activity (76.5%). ‘Coping with Change’ and ‘Meeting New People’ were broadly recognised as advantages of attending the Skills Plus for Change sessions. Conversely, a majority of Navigators (82.4%) felt that some
of the participants on their caseloads were either ‘not ready’ or ‘not well enough’ to engage in group-based learning activities.

It is not yet known the role Navigators play in the decision making about participant readiness to engage with such interventions. However, from broader observations of Navigator and participant activities, it is evident that participants are facing a wide range of barriers, and participant experience varies considerably from person to person. For example, some individuals are receiving support to leave their own home more frequently or independently, go shopping, or use public transport, whereas others are engaged in training and volunteering, and feel confident and motivated to seek paid employment.

**Participant Socio-Demographics**

*Outputs by the End of December (Q4) 2017*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>PROJECT OUTLINE TARGETS</th>
<th>END OF DECEMBER 2017</th>
<th>% TO TARGET NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of men</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of women</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who are unemployed, including long-term unemployed</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who are economically inactive, including not in education or training</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number who are aged over 50</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number with disabilities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>240.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number from ethnic minorities</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gender**

By the end of December 2017, the Opportunity and Change Partnership had supported a total of 383 Participants, of whom 224 (58%) were men and 159 (42%) were women. Across the D2 and N2 areas, there were a greater number of male and female participants in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire accessing the project.

*Gender of Participants in Derbyshire (D2) and Nottinghamshire (N2)*
The majority of participants are between the ages of 25 and 50. At the end of December 2017, Opportunity and Change was supporting 65 people over the age of 50, the majority of whom (72%) were accessing the project in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

Participants Aged Over 50 in Derbyshire (D2) and Nottinghamshire (N2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>D2 Total</th>
<th>N2 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any other ethnic group</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other White background</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British – Any other Asian background</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British – Indian</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian British – Pakistani</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - African</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Caribbean</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black / African / Caribbean / Black British - Any other Black/African/Caribbean background</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/Multiple ethnic group – any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/Multiple ethnic group – White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/Multiple ethnic group – White and Black African</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/Multiple ethnic group – White and Asian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White English/Welsh/Northern Irish/Scottish/British</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – Gypsy, Irish Traveller or Roma</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White – Irish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ethnicity**

By the end of December 2017, Opportunity and Change was supporting 77 participants from ethnic minorities.
**Disability**

Opportunity and Change is supporting a far greater number of individuals with either a disability or chronic health condition than was originally profiled. One explanation for this high number could be that individuals are asked at induction if they think they have a work-restricting health condition or disability. The individual is not asked whether they are registered disabled, or have a diagnosed health condition, for example. There are also a significant number of participants (98.4%) with mental health conditions accessing the programme, but again, this figure is based primarily on the individual’s own perception of their health and wellbeing.

![Number of Participants with a Disability or Chronic Health Condition against Profiled Outputs](image)

**Employment Status**

All Opportunity and Change participants must be unemployed to be eligible to access the service. According to the BBO Guide to Delivering European Funding, an unemployed participant is defined as someone who is not working, but is available for and actively seeking work. An economically inactive participant is defined as someone who is not available for work and is not currently seeking work\(^9\).\n
![Number of Unemployed and Economically Inactive Participants in Derbyshire (D2) and Nottinghamshire (N2)](image)

\(^9\) This can include full-time carers, people in receipt of benefits such as Employment Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit or Income Support, full-time students, those not claiming any welfare benefits, and people who are distant from the labour market and require additional support, skills and confidence to enable them to move towards employment.
Referral Data

Until the end of 2017, individual partner organisations were keeping their own records of referrals. However, this data was not always maintained and recorded consistently, so a function was added to the MIS (Hanlon), to capture referral information in a more streamlined way.

Navigators are now asked to enter referral information onto Hanlon from a series of drop-down boxes indicating referral type, and in instances of referrals being made by external stakeholders a referral category can be selected.

By February 2018, 15 of the 17 Opportunity and Change delivery partners delivering at that time\(^{10}\) had provided data on referred participants\(^{11}\). According to this dataset, a total of 432 referrals had been received; of which 66 had not yet started receiving support. Of the 366 participants who were receiving support on 31/12/17:

- 258 were ‘Current’ participants
- 100 participants had not engaged with the support for a number of weeks
- 8 participants had ended their engagement with the project (‘exited’).

Although incomplete, this data provides a good indication of referral activity across Opportunity and Change; highlighting numbers of:

- Individuals referring themselves independently to an organisation within the partnership for support, as a ‘self-referral’
- Existing or previously known individuals accessing the same partner organisation, as an ‘internal referral’
- Individuals whom have been referred by an external stakeholder, as an ‘external referral’.

Fig. 1: All Referrals by Type

![Fig. 1: All Referrals by Type](image)

Fig. 1 shows that the majority of recorded referrals have been internal or external, and Fig. 2 shows referral type by organisation. From this we can see that Riverside Care and Support, Framework and YMCA Derbyshire, which predominantly provide housing-related support services, have worked with the highest number of internal referrals. Framework in Nottinghamshire, Acorn Training in Chesterfield, and Derventio Housing Trust in Derbyshire have received the highest number of external referrals.

We can also see that six individuals made self-referrals into Opportunity and Change across Derbyshire, and nineteen self-referrals were made to the project in Nottinghamshire.

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10 - Derbyshire Law Centre ceased delivering end-to-end Navigator support in December 2017, but continue with their specialist Care Act provision.
11 - At the time of writing, Nottingham Women’s Centre and Emmanuel House had not submitted referral data and therefore we were unable to include them in this section of the report.
### Types of Referrals to Opportunity and Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>SELF REFERRALS</th>
<th>INTERNAL REFERRALS</th>
<th>EXTERNAL REFERRALS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acorn Training</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awaaz</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derbyshire Law Centre</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derventio Housing Trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double Impact</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Lives</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum (NNRF)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nottinghamshire YMCA</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POW</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCAN</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside Care and Support</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Aid Nottinghamshire</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Work Derbyshire</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA Derbyshire</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Internal Referrals

There has been a fairly even split across Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, of internal referrals made from/to the same partner organisation (Fig. 3). The column charts on the adjacent page illustrate which organisations have made internal referrals to Opportunity and Change; highlighting the highest and lowest frequencies of internal referrals by county and organisation:

#### Fig. 3: Internal Referrals by Percentage

![Fig. 3: Internal Referrals by Percentage](image)

#### Fig. 4: Internal Referrals - Nottinghamshire

![Fig. 4: Internal Referrals - Nottinghamshire](image)
External Stakeholder Referrals

Fig. 6: External Referrals in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire by Agency (Highest to Lowest)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Derbyshire referrals</th>
<th>Nottinghamshire referrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JCP</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug &amp; Alcohol Recovery Services</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless &amp; Multiple Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Services</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Services - Housing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Services - Statutory</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment &amp; Skills Services</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Services - Children &amp; Families</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Bank</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Services - Non Statutory</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunere Centre</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Provider / Landlord</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee Services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were a total of 158 referrals made to Opportunity and Change by external stakeholders up to 31/12/17. In **Derbyshire**, the following organisations received a total of 71 external referrals:

- Acorn Training (44; 62%)
- Derventio Housing Trust (21; 29.6%)
- YMCA Derbyshire (2)
- Riverside Care and Support (4)
- Women’s Work Derbyshire (2).

The largest referring agency in Derbyshire was Jobcentre Plus (JCP), whom were responsible for almost half (35; 49.3%) of the total number of referrals to Opportunity and Change across the area. The majority of these referrals (85.7%) were made to Acorn Training.

The second largest number of referrals in Derbyshire (14; 19.7%) came from Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services. Ten of these referrals (71.4%) were made to Derventio Housing Trust.

In **Nottinghamshire**, 85\(^\text{12}\) external referrals were received by these organisations:

- Framework (60; 69%)
- Double Impact (14; 16%)
- Awaaz (3)
- Improving Lives (5)
- Nottinghamshire YMCA (3).

Similarly to Derbyshire, the largest external referring agency in Nottinghamshire was Jobcentre Plus, who made 26 referrals (29.9%) to Opportunity and Change. The majority of these referrals (88.5%) were made to Framework; by Mansfield JCP (12), Newark JCP (5) and JCPs in and around Nottingham City (6).

The second largest number of external referrals in Nottinghamshire (16; 18.4%) came from Homeless and Multiple Needs Services.

Notably, the Nottingham city-based project, Opportunity Nottingham\(^\text{13}\), made seven referrals to Double Impact: a Drug and Alcohol Recovery and Treatment Service.

**Fig 7: Most common external referral sources across the partnership, by agency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Referrals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jobcentre Plus</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Drug &amp; Alcohol Recovery Services</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Homeless &amp; Multiple Needs Services</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Women’s Services</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Local Authority Services - Housing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Employment &amp; Skills Services</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Local Authority Services – Children &amp; Families</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^\text{12}\) Referrals are monitored according to the participant’s home address, rather than by the postcode of the referring or referred-to agency. Whilst referral across counties is rare, in Nottinghamshire, one referral was made by JCP to Acorn Training on behalf of someone living in Mansfield. Another referral was made by Framework to Derventio Housing Trust, on behalf of someone living in the Broxtowe district.

\(^\text{13}\) Opportunity Nottingham supports individuals with multiple and complex needs in Nottingham City. For more information about the project visit: [http://www.opportunitynottingham.co.uk/](http://www.opportunitynottingham.co.uk/)

\(^\text{14}\) It would be interesting to monitor ‘cross-referrals’ and perhaps useful for these to be recorded as a distinct sub-group within ‘internal referrals’, rather than counted as ‘external’ as they have been here. Currently Hanlon is not set up to monitor referral organisations in this level of detail but this could be amended.
There were also some ‘cross-referrals’; from one partnership organisation to another. For example, Emmanuel House made three referrals to Framework, and YMCA Nottinghamshire received three referrals from Framework.

The third largest number of referrals in Nottinghamshire (11; 12.6%), came from Drug and Alcohol Recovery Services. Two thirds of these were made to Framework through Nottingham Recovery Network; a service which co-locates with Framework’s Nottingham City-based delivery team, at the Nottingham Wellbeing Hub.

**Initial Support Needs Assessment Data**

Each participant completes a support needs assessment (SNA) when they start engaging with Opportunity and Change, and subsequently every three months until they cease engaging with the programme. This information is now regularly inputted onto the project’s MIS and can be extracted for monitoring and evaluation purposes. However, at the time of writing only the initial support needs assessment data was available.

An additional set of ten questions were added to the SNA in February 2018. These questions enable participants to reflect on their ‘distance travelled’ in relation to the soft skills and employment-related skills they are developing throughout their engagement with Opportunity and Change. While there is not scope here to explore the correlations between support needs, and there is currently insufficient ‘distance travelled’ data, this information will be available to the partnership in future board meetings, reviews and other communications, via the project lead team.

By the end of December 2017 (Q4), Opportunity and Change had supported 383 participants. At the time of writing, there was access to completed initial SNA data for 368 of these participants via the MIS. The following section provides an overview of this initial data.

**Housing:**

Of the 368 participants with completed initial SNA’s there were:

- 11 participants rough sleeping
- 73 participants were ‘sofa surfing’ or vulnerably housed
- 115 were living in short-term or temporary accommodation
- 73 disclosed problems with sustaining their tenancy
- 96 participants were ‘living in stable accommodation’.

**Housing-Related Support Needs**

![Diagram showing housing-related support needs]

- **3%** Rough sleeping
- **26%** In stable accommodation
- **20%** Issues with sustaining tenancy
- **20%** Sofa surfing or vulnerably housed
- **31%** Living in short term or temporary accommodation
Therefore, more than half of the participants (54%) were homeless or vulnerably housed at the point of accessing Opportunity and Change, and a further 20% could be considered at risk of becoming homeless due to issues relating to their tenancy (the number of participants who own their home, and type of tenancies - private or social housing – is currently not known).

Interestingly, a small number of participants (15) who said they were ‘living in stable accommodation’ still gave a support score of more than 1 (1 = ‘no support required’, 9 = ‘full support required’). This could suggest that some participants may be accessing the programme for support to maintain some of the more stable factors in their lives; perhaps in order for them to focus on more problematic issues.

**Mental Health:**

At their initial support needs assessment, the vast majority of Opportunity and Change participants (98.4%) said that they had a mental health condition; only six said they had no mental health issues. More than half of the participants (211; 57.3%) stated that a recurring or persistent mental health condition was having a significant impact on their everyday lives. A further 102 participants (27.8%) said their recurring mental ill health was having a moderate impact on everyday life, and 49 participants (13.3%) said they had a mild to moderate mental health issue that was having a limited impact on their everyday lives.

**Mental Health-Related Support Needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recurring, with significant impact on everyday life</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurring, with moderate impact on everyday life</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recurring, with limited impact on everyday life</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild to moderate mental health issue</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No mental health issue</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Substance Misuse:**

132 participants (36%) said they were abstinent and did not use alcohol or drugs. Within this group, 14 individuals gave a support score of five or above; suggesting perhaps that some participants not using alcohol or drugs at all may still have been at risk of substance misuse or relapse. However, the majority of those stating they were abstinent (110; 83.3%) required no drug or alcohol-related support. Seventy-four participants (20%) said their drug or alcohol use was occasional and unproblematic.

Therefore we can say that half (50%) of Opportunity and Change Participants did not disclose any problematic substance use when they first began accessing the service.

Sixty-seven participants (18%) said their substance use was having ‘some effect’ on their functioning. A further 54 (15%) said their recurrent use of alcohol or drugs was having a significant impact on their functioning, and 41 participants (11%) said they were drug or alcohol dependent; with daily use causing significant impairment of functioning.
Offending:

Almost half (46.5%) of the participants said they had no offending history and did not require any support in this area. Fifty-two participants (14.1%) said they were ‘at risk of offending’, and required some support. Amongst the 39.4% of participants who disclosed some offending history, a large number (117; 80.7%) had no recent convictions and only required low levels of support in this area. There were, however, 28 participants (7.6%) who stated they were either awaiting sentencing or had a recent and prolific record of offending. Amongst these, support scores were much higher.

Support Needs Relating to Criminal or Anti-Social Behaviour

Domestic Abuse:

During their initial support needs assessment, more than half (206; 56.0%) of the 368 participants disclosed experience of living in an abusive relationship, including 8 individuals currently in an abusive relationship or living in a refuge. Of the total number of participants with experience of domestic abuse, 86 (41.7%) were men and 120 (58.3%) were women. This is similar to the ratio of men and women thought to have experienced domestic abuse across England and Wales in 2016-17.15

Almost all of the 65 participants who said they felt at risk of abuse (18%) also required some level of support in this area.

15 - An estimated 1.9 million adults aged 16 to 59 years experienced domestic abuse in the last year, according to the year ending March 2017 Crime Survey for England and Wales (1.2 million women (63%), 713,000 men (37%)).
98 participants (26.6%) said they had no experience of domestic abuse and did not require any support in this area.

**Participant Experience of Domestic Abuse**

- 18% AT RISK OF ABUSE FROM OTHERS
- 2% CURRENTLY LIVING IN AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP OR LIVING IN A REFUGE
- 27% NO EXPERIENCE OF DOMESTIC ABUSE
- 35% PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE ON AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP
- 18% REPEATED EXPERIENCE OF AN ABUSIVE RELATIONSHIP
Performance Overview

Outcomes and Results against Profile

*Increasing Economic Stability and Inclusion*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Target Number</th>
<th>End of December 2017</th>
<th>% to Target Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants accessing stable accommodation</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants sustaining engagement with treatment services</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants accessing effective mental health care</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse, access support</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants reduce incidents of offending</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results achieved at this stage are understandably low given that the project supports individuals with multiple and complex needs whom are furthest away from the labour market. Furthermore, a result cannot be claimed while the participant is still accessing Opportunity and Change. There are a number of individuals who have entered employment or training, but these results cannot be counted yet because the participant has not exited the programme.

Outcome One: Resolving Complex Needs

Evidence of progression in relation to resolving a complex need is captured in two ways. Firstly, a minimum of 3 change plan reviews and interventions relating to the particular support need must have been completed. Secondly, the relevant section within the support needs assessment must indicate a reduced score.
While a result can only be claimed when a participant exits the programme, outcomes can be claimed at any point. However, there are still a large number of outcomes that have not been entered onto the MIS. The project leads are keen to support partners in the coming months to ensure that all activities and outcomes are appropriately recorded on the MIS, so that it more accurately reflects the progression that participants are making and the level of support that is being provided by Navigators.

Outcome Two: Improving confidence, skills and independence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>% ☺</th>
<th>TARGET NUMBER</th>
<th>END OF DECEMBER 2017</th>
<th>% TO TARGET NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants referred to the Skills Plus for Change Programme</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants attended strand 1 (Living) of Skills Plus for Change Programme</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants attended strand 3 (Wellbeing) of Skills Plus For Change Programme</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The aim is for all participants to be referred to the Skills Plus for Change programme (SP4C) by their Navigator, and all participants should be informed about SP4C during their induction. It is then the participant’s choice whether or not they attend the sessions. Participants only have to attend one session for it to count towards an outcome.

Only approximately half of the participants (47.3%) have been referred to SP4C, and the project lead provided a couple of reasons for this. Firstly, a number of participants disengage from the project very soon after starting. Secondly, Navigators have fed back that in some cases an early referral is not the most appropriate intervention. Despite the low proportion of participants being referred to SP4C, of those who have enrolled on the programme, at least 72% have attended one or more sessions.

In relation to Outcome Three, 1-2-1 job coaching and support consists of any employment-related support activity or intervention recorded onto the MIS.

Outcome Three: Increasing Employability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>% ☺</th>
<th>TARGET NUMBER</th>
<th>END OF DECEMBER 2017</th>
<th>% TO TARGET NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants enrolled on the Skills Plus for Change Programme</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants attended strand 2 (Working) of Skills Plus for Change Programme</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants receiving 1-2-1 job coaching and support</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Outcome Four: System Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR</th>
<th>% ☺</th>
<th>TARGET NUMBER</th>
<th>END OF DECEMBER 2017</th>
<th>% TO TARGET NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statutory services engaged with the programme and delivering more effective primary interventions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority Stakeholder Managers have effectively enabled access to statutory services for people with multiple and complex needs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of participants referred for a Care Act Assessment</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authorities are fulfilling their duties under the Care Act</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A referral for a Care Act assessment takes place when a Navigator completes a series of questions, known as the Pre-Care Act Questionnaire, with the participant during their induction. This information is then shared with the specialist Care Act providers via the project’s MIS. The social workers then review the questionnaire to assess whether or not it would be worthwhile for the participant to be more fully assessed by the Local Authority, with the potential for them to be referred to Adult Social Care for additional support.

Around 92% of participant Pre-Care Act Questionnaires had been shared with the Care Act providers by the end of December 2017, and 19 participants had been successfully allocated provision, including 12 whom were awarded a personal budget to pay for additional care and support. Other outcomes as a result of going through the Care Act process include being signposted to Occupational Therapy or specialist mental health services, and receiving equipment or adaptations to the home.

**Specialist Providers**

While each organisation brings something unique to Opportunity and Change, there are a number of organisations providing specialist services which compliment the end-to-end Navigator support, the Skills Plus for Change programme and the Care Act provision.

**Services for Empowerment and Advocacy (SEA)** are an independent advocacy and participation social enterprise, working across D2N2 and Lincolnshire. Their overall aim is to enable people within housing, health and social care settings to have a voice and participate within the services they receive.

By the end of December 2017, SEA had supported Opportunity and Change participants to:

- Attend volunteer training and become enrolled as SEA volunteers (4 participants)
- Attend ‘A better, More Positive you’ confidence building training (4 participants)
- Four participants completed a ten week community theatre project
- Two participants have trained as Peer Researchers, and are now members of the D2N2 Peer Research Network
- A number of participants have been supported by SEA to pursue complaints and advocacy cases.

For more information visit the SEA website at: [http://www.seaparticipation.org.uk](http://www.seaparticipation.org.uk)

**The Loudspeaker programme** is a series of workshops run at Nottingham Contemporary art gallery, for female participants accessing Opportunity and Change. The purpose of the Loudspeaker programme is for women to increase their self-esteem and self-awareness, gain better understanding about their own identity and opinions, and develop skills to make healthier life choices.

A 2.5 hour weekly workshop typically involves a visit to an artwork in the exhibition, group discussion, and a creative making aspect in response to the artwork. This is followed by reflections on the work made and seen, in relation to participants’ own opinions and identities. The session is concluded with a debriefing and evaluation for project staff. Part-way through the 10 week programme, the group takes a trip out from the gallery to visit another cultural destination, to encourage new experiences, find out what is on offer for free in their locality and develop confidence to try new things.

Between October 2016 and December 2017, the Loudspeaker programme was delivered three times. A total of 24 women engaged with Loudspeaker and 18 women completed the programme. Sessions are supported by an artist, a support worker from Opportunity and Change, and up to three peer mentors, including women who have previously completed the programme through their engagement with Opportunity and Change.

The overall impact of the programme can be summarised as three key areas: improved mental health, increased engagement with social, volunteering, training or employment opportunities, and improved physical health.
For more information about Nottingham Contemporary and The Loudspeaker programme, visit: http://www.nottinghamcontemporary.org/loudspeaker

**Framework’s Training Centre**, situated in Bulwell, Nottingham, has provided a range of practical courses for some 50 Opportunity and Change participants since October 2016, including:

- Painting and Decorating (4 week course)
- Bike Club (Bike Restoration - 2 week course)
- Wood Peckers (Wood Craft)

The benefits of attending the provision includes:

- The opportunity to develop skills in the chosen subject
- Developing confidence through social interaction
- Developing self-efficacy and self-esteem through achieving
- Progression into volunteering after completion of the courses (2 participants).

For more information about the courses available at the Training Centre, telephone: 0115 9709536 or email: workshop@frameworkha.org

**Improving Lives** deliver end-to-end Navigator provision on Opportunity and Change, clinical group supervision for Navigators, and group-based social activities for participants. In addition, they provide a person-centred counselling service for participants.

Rachel Hollands is a qualified and experienced counsellor with a Diploma in Integrative Therapeutic Counselling, and is a registered member of the BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy). As a counsellor Rachel offers a safe space to enable trust to develop, an opportunity to share difficulties, and to work together to develop goals and work collaboratively to find solutions. Approximately 25 participants to date have benefited from the counselling provision.

The key benefits include: seeing things from a different perspective, finding time to talk through difficulties, and feeling less isolated when working through problems.

All Opportunity and Change participants can access the counselling, which is delivered in Nottingham City and also in Derby. Referrals can be made to the provision via a Navigator.
Key Challenges, Learning and Best Practice

This section of the report presents the key challenges encountered during the first 14 months of delivering Opportunity and Change, the subsequent learning that has taken place, and the best practice that has been developed in response.

Reflecting on the experiences of implementing and delivering the project, from the strategic perspectives of the lead agency and feedback from delivery partners, this section draws upon data from a range of primary and secondary sources, including:

- Partner Manager’s Survey Report: findings of an online survey completed in spring 2017
- Partner Navigator’s Survey Report: findings of an online survey completed in summer 2017
- Interviews with the Project Lead Team: one-to-one and group interviews with the Partnership Manager, Programme Manager, Audit Team, MIS Officer, and Finance which took place in February 2018.

Challenges

Some systemic issues posed challenges for delivery from the beginning: applying for funding for Opportunity and Change was a lengthy, two stage process which took three years to complete; from LEP events that started in 2013 through to the contract being awarded in 2016. The Programme Manager commented that despite the lengthy application process, there was too little preparation for leads before the contract went live; six webinars were delivered, which was not sufficient to cover the expectations of the programme.

There were also time delays in key stakeholders becoming involved. The Managing Authority, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), did not have the resources in place until late 2017 to provide audits for BLF, who had limited experience of European funded contracts prior to the Building Better Opportunities Programme. Furthermore, in the D2N2 region, the four Local Authority Stakeholder Managers were not recruited until one year into delivery.

The size and scale of the partnership: in October 2016 there were twenty seven partners involved with Opportunity and Change. This number has reduced to twenty one, with sixteen organisations currently offering front-line Navigator support. The project lead commented that starting out with a smaller number of delivery partners may have been more manageable, and larger financial incentives could have provided the selected partners with more resources to deliver the service.

Diversity of the partnership: it has taken time for the project lead team to fully appreciate how each partner works; as each organisation is structurally different and has its own internal systems and processes. For example, one smaller organisation employs an external accountant to process their payroll, while a larger organisation has several people involved in processing financial claims and evidence, located in different parts of the country. In addition, partners have varied levels of experience working on ESF and BLF contracts, managing financial returns, and receiving audits, etc. It does not follow that smaller or newer organisations with less experience are underperforming; some of the more well-established partners
have had more issues relating to performance, and these cannot be attributed to lack of experience. Each organisation has its own ethos and approach to working with vulnerable people. The project lead team is process-driven, with a vast amount of experience of DWP, ESF and BLF projects as a subcontracted delivery partner. However, when it comes to the front line support of individuals, the team have been mindful not to impose any unnecessary restrictions or guidelines beyond what is required by the funders; rather they are focused on capacity building, development and best practice, and recognise that they are also part of this broader learning process.

Conflicting and changing guidance: each of the three key stakeholders of Building Better Opportunities - the DWP Big Lottery Fund (BLF), and European Social Fund (ESF) - have made numerous adjustments to the BBO guidance which has, on several occasions, led to conflicting advice and a lack of clarity on how to proceed with systems and processes. These factors, as well as some ill-timed amendments to paperwork have had a negative impact on time and resources, which created tensions in the earlier stages of the project. Framework has developed a positive relationship with their funding officer from BLF; enabling them to communicate openly, and effectively challenge some of these issues. However, it has been a test for the project lead team to maintain positive relationships with all partners at all times. Understandably, frequent changes to somewhat complex processes, has caused frustration amongst delivery partners. The wider impact of these issues - on participant engagement and staff retention, for instance - has yet to be examined. Despite this major challenge, the project lead team has been impressed with partners’ continued perseverance, and overall performance on the project has been steadily improving.

Establishing participant eligibility and the ‘verification’ process were widely reported to the project lead team as being problematic, particularly in the implementation stage of the project. Key issues highlighted were:

- Inconsistent cooperation from Job Centres across D2N2, regarding evidencing an individual’s benefit claim status, and a lack of support from the DWP to streamline this process, created barriers for some individuals wishing to gain access to the project;
- The sometimes difficult and lengthy process of acquiring suitable documentation (such as a passport or a birth certificate), delayed access to support for some individuals;
- The large volume of paperwork required to be completed at the initial engagement stage, led to some individuals choosing to not pursue support from the project;
- Getting the correct participant information uploaded onto the Management Information System (MIS) for processing, led to delays in the verification process.

Participants can access multiple strands of the BBO Programme, however, an outcome relating to one participant can only be claimed once, and a participant cannot access support from multiple strands at the same time. This may create a disincentive for providers to ‘share’ referrals, or signpost individuals to another of the three local strands of BBO. Since each strand offers different support, this may be problematic for some individuals, for example, those with multiple and complex needs whom also require financial support. The Programme Manager suggested that in future programme design, a solution could be to have a built-in financial inclusion element within each strand, or perhaps commission a financial delivery partner to work across multiple strands.

Communication across the partnership: although partner managers shared positive feedback about communication from Framework in the spring 2017 survey, both the project lead team and partners have experienced some issues with communication. The project lead team has struggled to elicit timely responses to requests sent by email. On the other hand, Navigators and managers have felt a little bombarded at times by the large volume of emails circulated by the project lead team. Delivery partners have very limited time to look through lots of emails, but as the Partnership Manager explained, information must be shared somehow across the partnership, and emails can provide a useful audit trail. The project leads have committed to being more flexible in their approach and feel that developing positive relationships with key members of staff is helping to improve communication over time.

Staffing: at the time of writing there were ninety-six staff delivering on Opportunity and Change. Less than one third (30.2%) deliver ≥30 hours per week, with the majority (61.5%) delivering ≤22.5 hours each week,
and 8 (8.3%) delivering between 22.5 and 30 hours. Since October 2016, thirty members of staff have left the programme, and twenty-eight new staff have been recruited. This high turnover and large volume of staff delivering part-time hours, is happening in a variety of roles including Navigators, Administrators, finance and managerial staff. The project lead commented the high staff turnover creates a sense of ‘continuously starting again’, with an on-going need for recruitment, induction, training, and handovers across the partnership. Increased caseloads and delays in processing information and claims due to lack of time, is said to be having some impact on existing members of staff and in some instances, participants.

**Emphasis on ‘addressing complex needs’ over ‘increasing employability’:** Opportunity and Change offers unique provision across D2N2 that is designed to support those furthest away from employment, in addressing their multiple and complex needs. With a strong focus on capacity building across the partnership, on-going needs led training, rigorous performance management, and clinically-led group supervisions have provided partners with plentiful opportunities to enhance and share their best practice. However, by the end of the first year of delivery there was still very much an emphasis on better enabling staff to support individuals with multiple and complex needs; with less of a focus on developing employment-related IAG and interventions. The lead partner acknowledges this inconsistency, and has suggested the issue is linked to the way in which the funding application process was approached internally. Employment-related support and interventions are evidently taking place across the partnership (for example, the Skills Plus for Change ‘Working’ module was attended by eight participants, and eleven participants received ‘job coaching and support’ between October-December 2017), but these interventions are not being recorded and monitored in the same level of detail as support relating to addressing multiple and complex needs. This has been identified as an area for review and development moving forward.

**The Peer Mentoring Project,** written into the project plan, was not implemented as intended. This is because, by the end of the first quarter there were a number of existing provisions available exclusively to participants that were being under-utilised. The decision was therefore made to continue promoting existing provision, and encourage Navigators to promote wider volunteering and mentoring opportunities. These include: The D2N2 Peer Research Network; which enables participants to become Peer Researchers, Skills Plus for Change whereby attendees can become Learning Assistants, SEA, which provides a range of involvement and participation activities, and Double Impact, with their own well-established Peer Mentoring programme for individuals in recovery.

**Getting used to being the lead partner organisation:** Framework has been responsible for creating and implementing an internal monitoring structure, paperwork, and training across the partnership. Initially the team was smaller, and it was a challenge starting with ‘a blank piece of paper’ and identifying what needed to be put in place. As a team, the project leads have been successful in rolling out models and templates to measure the performance of partners. This was difficult initially until it was decided to make individuals responsible for certain areas and tasks, and the team also increased in size. Being accountable to the project funders has also been a significant learning curve. Some decisions made by the funders and project leads have caused disagreements within the partnership, and Framework have had to learn how to communicate final decisions assertively, yet in as supportive a way as can be. The project lead team’s aim is to make delivery of the project as easy and effective as possible for partners. Equally, the project lead says, admitting failures and taking on board feedback from partners is an essential part of successful collaboration.

**High volume of erroneous claims:** partners were making repeated basic errors in claims, which was costly in time for the project lead team as they had to repeatedly recheck submitted information. Guidance was provided regularly at Partnership Board Meetings, training sessions, via phone, email and during face to face visits, without any significant improvement taking place. In response to this, the project lead team introduced new systems for monitoring and auditing, in autumn 2017. This has proven to be effective, and the majority of partners have fed back that they are finding the new processes very clear and helpful.

**The amount of resources required to deliver the project was underestimated:** prior to the project launch, Framework facilitated an information day about Opportunity and Change and invited all partners to attend. The aim was to introduce the project, and communicate processes and expectations from the outset. The
project lead’s managers also met with partners independently over a period of several months leading up to this event. The lead tried to emphasize the scrupulous nature of ESF funding requirements, and warned there could be lots of changes in guidance throughout the course of the project. It is fair to say that despite this preparation, both the lead and partner organisations underestimated the resources required to deliver the project efficiently in its early stages of implementation and delivery. The volume of paperwork that needs to be completed with participants, ‘behind the scenes’ administrative tasks including evidencing financial claims, and adherence to guidance in order to make files and paperwork compliant, meant that most partners initially did not have enough staff in place and struggled to meet the deadlines. In order to address this, a number of partners have now re-profiled to enable them to recruit more members of staff, and additional time has been allocated to complete some of the administrative tasks. Changes in guidance (with subsequent impact on resources) is still happening, but the project lead and partners have learned to expect this and are very much ‘one step ahead’.

Problems with IT and the Management Information System: In autumn 2017 Framework experienced a serious malware issue, which caused three months of disrupted IT access. This created a significant backlog of work and interrupted communications with partners. The malware issue has been resolved; however, there are some outstanding problems with the organisation’s server. Issues with the server can limit access to the project’s online management information system, which has impacted on the lead’s capacity to process data in a timely manner. In some instances this has delayed participants gaining access to support, as their data has not been able to be verified within the agreed 48 hour turnover period. There have also been some issues with the reporting functions of the MIS. Data has not been readily available to export, with a lot of its reporting features ‘on lock down’. There is an on-going process of meeting with the developer of the MIS to get the relevant exports set up, so that data can be accessed by the monitoring and evaluation team as and when they require it.

Skills Plus for Change provision: The Skills Plus for Change (SP4C) provision was developed specifically for the project with the understanding that attendance would count as a training outcome. However, in autumn 2017 it was confirmed that the provision cannot be counted. This is because in order to claim a training result, a participant must be exited from the project, and only active, engaging participants have access to SP4C. This will have an adverse impact on the project’s ambitious training forecast. Despite this, the project lead team insist that SP4C will remain an integral part of the Opportunity and Change delivery model; as engagement with the provision can count towards other outcomes related to a participant’s complex needs.

Learning and Best Practice

Building Relationships: identifying key individuals or a ‘single point of contact’ with whom to liaise; to ensure that communications are received and followed up appropriately, is regarded as a two-way process. For example, within the project lead team, auditors and finance staff have specific partners allocated to them. This enables positive working relationships to be developed over time and provides a level of continuity to partners. Equally, the project lead team has invested time to become familiar with ‘who does what’ within each partner organisation – which varies considerably as the partnership is very diverse.

Communication: the project lead team have to share a lot of information with partners, and it has taken time to establish the best approach to doing this. In addition to getting to know key contacts within each organisation, they have found the most effective way to communicate is to aim for transparency and repetition. Transparency is sharing expectations, new information, and feedback openly, and in a concise and timely manner. Repetition involves sharing the same messages in a variety of different ways until the information is evidently understood. Examples of communication methods adopted by the project lead include the Opportunity and Change website, monthly e-bulletins, training, face to face meetings, telephone calls and emails.

Training and Sharing Best Practice: the majority of training has been provided or facilitated by the lead partner in response to training needs identified by Navigators and other delivery staff, through audits and
partner review visits, online surveys, and group supervisions. New training is provided every quarter, and all staff are encouraged to attend. The project lead team feel that they have been proactive in identifying, organising and maintaining appropriate levels of support and training for staff; making information accessible as soon as possible, and providing opportunities for learning in response to need. The overall feedback from partners is that they feel well supported in this way by the project lead team; there is a confidence in Framework’s capacity to provide good practical advice and guidance.

Group Supervisions are regarded as good practice sharing sessions for Navigators; facilitated by a mental health professional from one of the project’s specialist partners, Improving Lives. There is an expectation that all Navigators must attend and participate in group supervisions once every six weeks, as they provide opportunities for staff to support each other as peers, acquire new theoretical and practical knowledge, and share ideas, resources and ‘best practice’. Some Navigators have been reluctant to take part in the group supervisions, for a variety of reasons. The decision to make participation mandatory was to enable all Navigators the same opportunity to access support from their peers; as the lead identified that Navigators were receiving varying levels of support and supervision from within their own organisations.

Moreover, the Partnership Manager noted a positive correlation between the amount of management hours and support offered to Navigators and that partner’s overall performance. There are a group of partners who have completed full caseload reviews and internal audits. These partners have the highest levels of participant engagement, outcomes and results.

Diversity of the staff and organisations involved with the project is regarded by the lead partner as a key strength. Although the size of the partnership and different organisational structures has created some challenges from a management point of view, ultimately, the project’s end goal is to reach as many participants as possible; geographically and in terms of supporting diverse communities. To this end, enabling partners to maintain their own unique identities and ways of working is essential.

As part of the project lead’s equality and diversity strategy, an annual survey is conducted to examine demographics and also ‘lived experience’ amongst delivery staff. The most recent survey indicated that from sixty-two respondents, almost two thirds (61.3%) said they had either current or past experience of at least one of the five support needs Opportunity and Change helps participants to address. This indicates that in terms of lived experience, the partnership is representative of the diverse communities it supports.

The project lead recognises that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to supporting people with multiple and complex needs is ineffective and can exacerbate circumstances that lead to the social and economic exclusion of vulnerable groups. The delivery model of Opportunity and Change enables Navigators to ‘think outside of the box’: adopting a more holistic, flexible and person-centred approach to delivery, whilst taking advantage of the project’s budget and opportunity to work more intensively with fewer individuals on caseload.

Examining the practices of front line delivery staff in more depth, and improving the quality of activities, outcomes and change plan data captured on the project’s MIS, will be central to the next phase of the project, from both performance management and evaluation perspectives.

**Improvements to systems and processes:**

- The performance dashboard is a monitoring and reporting tool which highlights performance using a red, amber and green (RAG) rating system. There are eight areas that are monitored via the performance dashboard: partnership board meeting and Navigator group supervision attendance; participant file audits; themed audits; participant expenses accuracy; financial monitoring spreadsheet (FMS) accuracy and timescales; performance against minimum service level agreements; and participant starts against profile. The performance dashboard was introduced as a tool to improve efficiency and accuracy of information that is submitted, and to encourage more open dialogue about performance across the partnership. Partners are updated on their performance using the dashboard data, at quarterly board meetings, audits and partnership reviews. The performance dashboard helps
to prevent a performance improvement plan (PIP) being implemented by highlighting issues as they are emerging. Since the introduction of the dashboard in September 2017, overall performance across the partnership has significantly improved.

- The Performance Improvement Process is informed by the performance dashboard, and can offer partners specific, targeted support to improve their performance. This was introduced at the end of 2017, and there are currently two partner organisations working closely with the Partnership Manager to address areas of underperformance using this process.

- Adjustments to the way that financial claims are processed. The new process offers partner organisations clearer guidance and a limited number of attempts to submit the information correctly. Information that is not submitted correctly can now result in payments and reimbursements being withheld or delayed. Since this change in process has been introduced, there has been a significant reduction of errors being identified in the financial claims. There has also been a noticeable reduction in erroneous claims being submitted by organisations that have started double-checking and countersigning their claims internally with another member of their team before submitting them to the project lead. In addition, partners have been able to ‘claim back’ more time spent on the financial returns, as the complexity of the process - particularly for new or inexperienced staff – has been recognised.
The Opportunity and Change partnership has provided new opportunities for joint working, even in previously well-integrated services.
• The Opportunity and Change partnership has provided new opportunities for joint working, even in previously well-integrated services

• Organisations with the most experience of joint working were largely based within Nottingham City. Organisations based in more remote localities had worked together less prior to Opportunity and Change

• The majority of partners felt their knowledge of ESF requirements had improved as a result of the Opportunity and Change partnership

• Managers expressed that having highly skilled delivery staff in place was increasing participant engagement; with many individuals showing an interest in accessing support from the project

• Almost three quarters (71.4%) of partner managers felt increasingly or consistently satisfied with levels of communication from Framework up to the point of project implementation

• All managers said they were satisfied with the training and support received around the project’s systems and processes

• It is anticipated that the BBO Local Authority Stakeholder Managers will play an integral role in influencing system change within the Local Authorities in relation to the Care Act provision available to Opportunity and Change participants

• The partnership has taken positive steps regarding the cross-cutting themes of Equality and Diversity, and Sustainability. Most partner organisations have contributed to reviewing and updating the latest cross-cutting themes action plans

• The Opportunity and Change workforce can be regarded as representative of the diverse communities it supports: 61.3% of staff have either current or previous experience of at least one of the five support needs the project helps participants to address

• The majority of referrals to Opportunity and Change are either internal (183; 50%) or external (158; 43.2%). The highest number of external referrals has been made by Jobcentre Plus (61; 16.7%), followed by drug and alcohol recovery services (25; 6.8%), and homeless and multiple needs services (17; 4.6%)

• Opportunity and Change is supporting appropriate numbers of people aged over 50, ethnic minorities, men, women, and those whom are economically inactive and unemployed

• Significant numbers of participants with disabilities and chronic health conditions, including mental health conditions, are engaging with Opportunity and Change

• Three quarters (74%) of participants have disclosed housing-related support needs upon accessing the programme

• More than half (56%) of participants have experienced domestic abuse

• 82.4% of Navigators felt that some of the participants on their caseloads were either ‘not ready’ or ‘not well enough’ to engage in group-based learning activities
The majority of partners felt their knowledge of ESF requirements had improved as a result of the Opportunity and Change partnership

• It is evident that participants are facing a wide range of barriers, and participant experience varies considerably from person to person

• The project’s results and outcomes relating to reducing complex needs and entering training or employment do not currently reflect the actual level of engagement, activities and interventions taking place and the project lead team aims to address this as a priority

• Despite the low proportion of participants being referred to the Skills Plus for Change training programme (47.3%), at least 72% of these have attended one or more sessions

• 105 participants have received 1-2-1 job coaching and support since engaging with the programme, which is 62.5% of the overall target number

• 92% of participants have been referred to the Care Act providers for further assessment. Nineteen individuals have been allocated provision as a direct result of engaging with this process, which is 29.2% of the overall target number

• The partnership has faced a number of challenges during its first year of delivery, all of which are fully explored in the previous section of this report

• Identifying key individuals or a single point of contact with whom to liaise enables positive working relationships to be developed and provides a level of continuity to partners

• The project lead team has provided appropriate levels of support and training for all staff, and partners feel well supported in this area. There is a confidence in Framework’s capacity to provide good practical training, advice and guidance

• Navigator clinical group supervisions are highly valued by the majority of partner managers and Navigators. Participation in the group supervisions has been made mandatory to ensure that all Navigators can benefit from peer-led support

• Partners who have completed full caseload reviews and internal audits have the highest levels of participant engagement, outcomes and results

• New systems and processes such as the performance dashboard, performance improvement plans, and amendments to how financial claims are processed, have all contributed positively to overall performance across the partnership.
evaluation of local services for people with multiple and complex needs. The network meets as a steering group every 4-6 weeks and currently includes researchers, advocates and service users from: Opportunity and Change, SEA, Nottingham Trent University, ConnectMore Solutions, and Opportunity Nottingham. Working in partnership, the network has the advantages of pooling together a diverse range of skills and experience; maximising the potential for system change through a collective voice; and offering a broader choice of projects for Peer Researchers to become involved with. The Opportunity and Change evaluation will benefit from the expertise of at least two of its participants who have been trained as volunteer Peer Researchers.

The steering group held 8 meetings between April and December 2017, during which:
• Common frameworks of understanding and practice were established, and a Terms of Reference document was written
• The Peer Research recruitment process was designed and implemented
• In May 2017, four members of the D2N2 Peer Research Network attended the Homeless Link Multiple and Complex Needs Conference in Milton Keynes, and engaged with a number of individuals and groups currently involved with peer research, including representatives from: Fulfilling Lives National Expert Citizen’s Group, CFE Research, Revolving Doors Agency and Mind

What is Peer Research?
Peer research is a type of service user participation, in which people with lived experience are directly involved in the design, delivery and shaping of research.

Typical peer research activity can include:
• Deciding on research topics
• Designing research questions
• Conducting focus groups and interviews
• Assisting with the analysis and writing up of findings
• Presenting findings at events.

Peer research can offer a broad range of benefits to individuals, including increased self confidence and the development of transferrable skills for the workplace. It can also support the journey of recovery by reducing isolation through the provision of meaningful activity, and opportunities to build positive social networks.

Peer research also helps to:
• Ensure that the most relevant evaluation questions are asked, in the most appropriate way
• Bridge gaps in understanding that evaluators don’t always recognise
• Place the needs of service users at the centre as they decide what should be researched, and how.

What is the D2N2 Peer Research Network?
The D2N2 Peer Research Network was established in April 2017 by a group of individuals involved in the evaluation of local services for people with multiple and complex needs. The network meets as a steering group every 4-6 weeks and currently includes researchers, advocates and service users from: Opportunity and Change, SEA, Nottingham Trent University, ConnectMore Solutions, and Opportunity Nottingham.

Peer Research was promoted at two Opportunity and Change participant forums facilitated by SEA in July 2017
• An information day was held in Nottingham in July 2017 and was attended by ten individuals interested in becoming Peer Researchers, including several Opportunity and Change participants
• In Autumn 2017, candidates were given one-to-one support and guidance through the application and recruitment process
• Successful candidates attended a Training Day in November 2017, delivered by Peter Bates: an Associate of the Institute of Mental Health, University of Nottingham. Peter has more than 25 years’ experience in the field of peer involvement and advocacy.

By February 2018 there were eight trained Peer Researchers involved in the network, including two Opportunity and Change participants. The focus of the steering group has subsequently evolved to discussing and planning upcoming research and sharing best practice. Peer Researchers continue to receive ongoing training and one-to-one guidance throughout their engagement in any given project, whilst every third steering group meeting they can take part in a peer-led ‘learning and reflection forum’, facilitated by SEA. Opportunity and Change partners and participants will be made aware when recruitment for new Peer Researchers reopens later in spring 2018.
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