

HeadStart 'Value for Money'

Final report to the Big Lottery Fund

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1)Introduction

The Personal Social Services Research Unit at the London School of Economics was commissioned by the Big Lottery Fund in 2016 – as part of a consortium led by the Anna Freud Centre – to develop a ‘value for money’ tool for the HeadStart Phase 3 evaluation.

The aim of the HeadStart ‘value for money’ project was to set up a framework for economic evaluation that will enable the local partnerships to assess whether their HeadStart initiatives (and their components) are likely to be considered a ‘good investment’.

Figure 1 shows the elements of the project:

- An evidence review providing information relevant to
 - Assessing the extent of poor mental wellbeing in young people, and the resulting consequences (and costs);
 - Estimating the (potential) savings from early intervention to improve mental wellbeing.
- A methodological and data framework for assessing the potential savings from HeadStart, building on our evidence review and the HeadStart Common Measurement Framework;
- Workshops and ongoing support for the HeadStart partnerships to facilitate their engagement in their process by establishing a consensus on the framework, and ensure their views and requirements are reflected in the final output;
- An involvement session with young people, facilitated by CommonRoom;
- A template for assessing the costs of and potential savings from HeadStart interventions across the life of the project, building on the draft framework and incorporating causal relationships and parameters identified in the evidence review.

In the following, we provide an overview of learning generated by the project to date by briefly summarising the findings from the evidence review, outlining the data framework and describing the economic model and economic toolkit to be made available to the partnerships. We give an overview of the support provided to the partnerships, engagement of young people, and outline suggested next steps for support to be provided by CORC and the wider Learning Team.

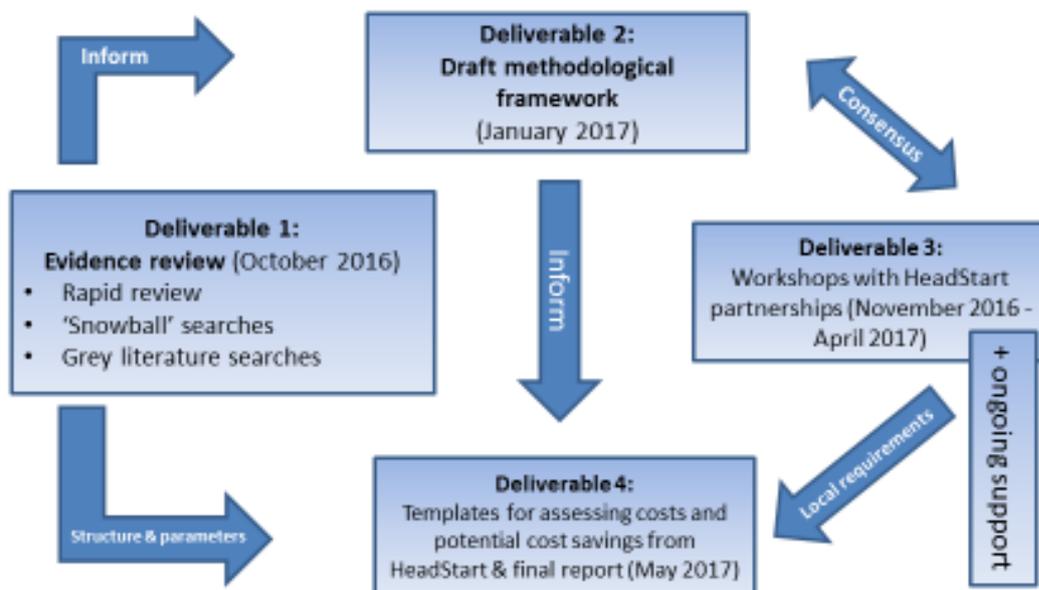
The 'value for money' project provides a template for economic evaluation to the HeadStart partnerships, but will not undertake an economic evaluation. The expectation is that the partnerships – supported by the Learning Team, and in particular, CORC – will

- Implement the data framework within their local evaluations
- Regularly collect data required to calculate robust unit costs for interventions and activities
- Use the template provided to assess the value for money associated with their local initiatives.

The template for economic evaluation was informed by a review of the data that will be available as part of the national HeadStart evaluation, aiming to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure the economic model is linked as closely as possible to the findings and data generated by the national evaluation. It should be noted that evaluation plans have not been fully finalised at the time of writing, neither at the national nor the local level, and given the time scale of the value for money project, there is a potential need for adjusting the template down the line as details of plans emerge.

In the following, we provide an overview of learning generated by the project to date by briefly summarising the findings from the evidence review, outlining the data framework and describing the economic model and the toolkit to be made available to the partnerships. We give an overview of the support provided to the partnerships and engagement of young people and outline suggested next steps for support provided by CORC and the Learning Team.

Figure 1: HeadStart 'Value for Money' project overview



2) Summary of project activities

2.1 Evidence review

The evidence review was sub-contracted to the Anna Freud Centre and carried out by Jessica Rees, Chloe Edrigde and Julian Edbrooke-Childs. It was submitted to Jessica Deighton on 01/11/2017.

Aims

Given that the HeadStart initiative focusses on prevention and early intervention, i.e. before significant and costly problems arise in the first place, a core element in addressing the research objectives of the economic toolkit project was to identify the down-stream consequences of poor mental wellbeing that are *measurable* and *quantifiable*. These consequences should be meaningful to individuals' future wellbeing (broadly defined), and reflect the perspective of professionals and agencies working to address these consequences. Negative outcomes (perhaps poor educational attainment or involvement with crime) have a cost and it is the reduction in these costs – due to interventions that improve mental wellbeing – that is the prime focus of this initiative.

Methods

The evidence review was conducted in two parts. The first aimed to find the information needed to estimate the costs associated with poor mental wellbeing. This review covered academic papers as well as grey literature and explored the following topics:

- Prevalence of poor mental wellbeing in young people
- Negative consequences and outcomes associated with poor mental wellbeing (guided by, but not limited to, the HeadStart outcomes framework)
- The extent of these negative consequences and outcomes

The second looked at the questions:

- What are the costs of interventions for improving the mental wellbeing of young people?
- What is known about the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of such interventions?

A scoping review of the economic literature on mental wellbeing undertaken to prepare this proposal revealed that there is a dearth of empirical evidence on 'mental wellbeing'

specifically. In part, this is because the concept is often not clearly defined, and different terms are used for similar concepts. In particular, 'mental wellbeing' is often used synonymously for 'absence of mental health problems'. Similarly, intervention trials often focus on a clinical outcome measure first, and mental wellbeing second. For this review, participant's wellbeing was defined based on the HeadStart Common Measurement Framework as

- High levels of mental health problems e.g. anxiety, depression, measured using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.
- Low levels of wellbeing i.e. not having positive mental health, measured using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale and the Student Resiliency Scale.

Given the short timescales associated with this project, it was necessary to balance the need for a comprehensive and credible evidence review with limited resources. The guiding principles in developing the review protocol were:

- Constraining the evidence review to a sensible geographic area (EU plus Commonwealth countries and USA). This ensures the evidence most relevant to the UK context (countries at a similar level of development and income) can be captured.
- Language restriction to publications in English.
- Constraining the time period searched (1996-2016).
- Limiting the number of databases searched. Here, we drew on our experience from the evidence searches conducted for 'Preventonomics'. Key databases included MEDLINE, PsychInfo, ERIC, the Cochrane Databases of Systematic Reviews and the Centre for Reviews at Dissemination, which includes HTA database, NHS EED and DARE.
- To ensure we also identify 'grey literature' (publicly available evidence not published in peer-review journals) we searched the following websites: Google, HMIC, PsycEXTRA, Social Policy and Practice.
- 'Snowball searches' to supplement the initial search: we checked the references of relevant papers to identify other important pieces of evidence that should be included, even if they should fall outside our search parameters.

Findings

Findings from the evidence review, as relevant to the economic evaluation of HeadStart, are outlined below.

- As expected, the concept ‘mental wellbeing’ is vaguely defined in the literature, and a plethora of measures is used to assess the concept.
- Prevalence rates vary depending on participants, context, measure and respondent.
- Most evidence unearthed in the review was from cross-sectional studies and therefore does not allow us to draw conclusions about causality and as a result, we have little “hard evidence” for the negative consequences of poor mental wellbeing from this review.
- A synthesis of cost-effectiveness results is complicated by the fact that results of economic evaluations are derived and reported in a variety of ways and using a variety of approaches, making them less comparable.
- The interventions for which cost and cost-effectiveness data were identified fall roughly into three categories:
 - Parenting programmes to prevent or treat behaviour and related problems, including conduct disorder and ADHD, usually provided to families of children younger than the HeadStart target group.
 - School- or classroom-based approaches
 - Targeted interventions for high-risk populations, such as children and young people in care, or in contact with the criminal justice system
- School-based interventions tended to have a lower per-head unit cost than targeted interventions, but several were reported to have no significant effect on outcome, or resulted in worse outcomes than the control condition.¹
- The unit cost associated with targeted interventions for high-risk populations tended to be much higher, but where they were found to be effective also tended to report high ratios of benefits or savings to costs.

Implications for the economic evaluation of HeadStart

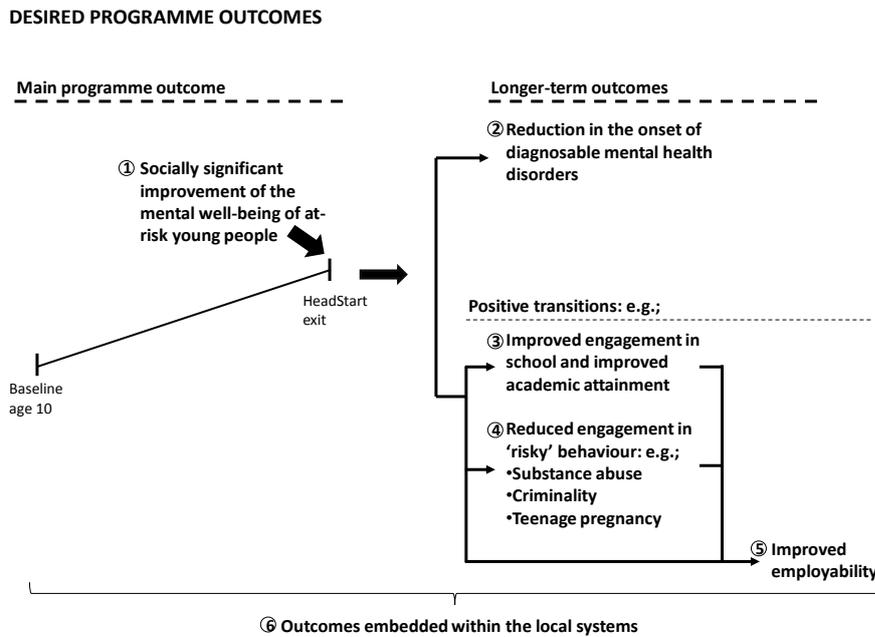
Reviewing the findings in the context of the HeadStart Common Measurement Framework (CMF; see Figure 2), the following gaps were noted:

- There appears to be little evidence for interventions to improve mental wellbeing defined more broadly, as opposed to a narrower concept such as ‘mental health problems’.

¹ Note that an intervention may be considered “cost-effective” if it is both less effective and cheaper than the control condition.

- While there was evidence for links between poor mental wellbeing and school engagement, risky behaviours, substance use and mental health problems, the review conducted by the Anna Freud Centre did not unearth evidence on links with academic attainment, criminality, teenage pregnancy and employability.

Figure 2: HeadStart common measurement framework



This means that we are at this time not able to establish causality between changes in mental wellbeing and improved outcomes. The economic model built on this evidence base therefore includes a set of assumptions about causality that we expect to be tested as the programme and its evaluation unfold. Any findings from the national evaluation and other research should be fed back into the assumptions of the model to ensure it stays up to date.

2.2 Data framework

Principles of economic evaluation

The framework for the HeadStart toolkit rests on the principles of best practice in economic evaluation. Therefore, key components of the methodological framework are:

- Comprehensive assessment of all costs and savings from the intervention²
- Assessment of outcomes
- A relevant metric to allow comparison of one or more alternatives.

It can be said that economic evaluation is “The comparative analysis of alternative courses of action in terms of both their costs and consequences.”³

Table 1, adapted from the same source, shows examples of partial evaluation approaches and full economic evaluation (red highlight).

Table 1: Partial vs full economic evaluation

	Costs only	Outcomes only	Costs and outcomes
No comparison	Partial evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of illness 	Partial evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of outcomes 	Partial evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-outcome description
With comparison	Partial evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost analysis 	Partial evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcomes analysis (efficacy) 	Full economic evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-consequence • Cost-minimization • Cost-effectiveness • Cost-savings • Cost-benefit

² Please note that the term “intervention” here is used as a shorthand that represents a young person’s journey through HeadStart, rather than necessarily only one separate activity.

³ Drummond et al (2005): *Methods for economic evaluation of health care programmes*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

We can see that this is the type of evaluation we want to achieve for HeadStart. As a consequence, we need to ensure that sufficiently robust data are collected – both in terms of costs and outcomes, and supported by a credible comparison with counterfactual data, using a relevant metric.

Cost avoided approach

Full economic evaluation requires not only an assessment of costs and effects of HeadStart interventions, but also a comparison with an alternative. In terms of the intervention effect, this comparison will be provided by the counterfactual. However, we have no information on the *impact of HeadStart on down-stream costs* for either the young people receiving interventions, or the comparison group. This will be crucial in demonstrating the impact of a programme of prevention, as the costs of not intervening often do not materialise until well into the future.

To circumvent this problem, we

- Employ an economic modelling approach to link the intervention effect with longer-term outcomes,
- Estimate the costs of not intervening by attaching a monetary value to some of the negative outcomes that the evidence tells us is associated with not intervening, and
- Using these data, calculate the potential savings from HeadStart based on “cost avoided”, i.e. the money that may not have to be spent on future problems because they were prevented by the programme.

*We can define the “**cost of problem**” as the cost of not providing interventions, and following on from this, “**cost avoided**” as the potential savings from intervention. “**Net savings**”, then, is the cost avoided minus the cost of the intervention. By using the cost of not intervening, we have a built-in comparison – satisfying the final of our three requirements for full economic evaluation.*

Elements of the data framework

The data framework for the economic evaluation of HeadStart builds on data used in the main evaluation. We will need to know:

- Whether a young person has received an intervention (intervention exposure);
- The cost of the intervention;
- Whether and how well the intervention worked (intervention effect);
- How this improvement links to outcomes;
- How these improved outcomes may translate into savings and
- How savings compare to the cost of the intervention (“net savings”).

The elements of the framework and the corresponding data sources are described in more detail in Deliverable 2. *Figure 3* maps the available data sources to the elements of the data framework, with the elements of the economic modelling toolkit highlighted in orange:

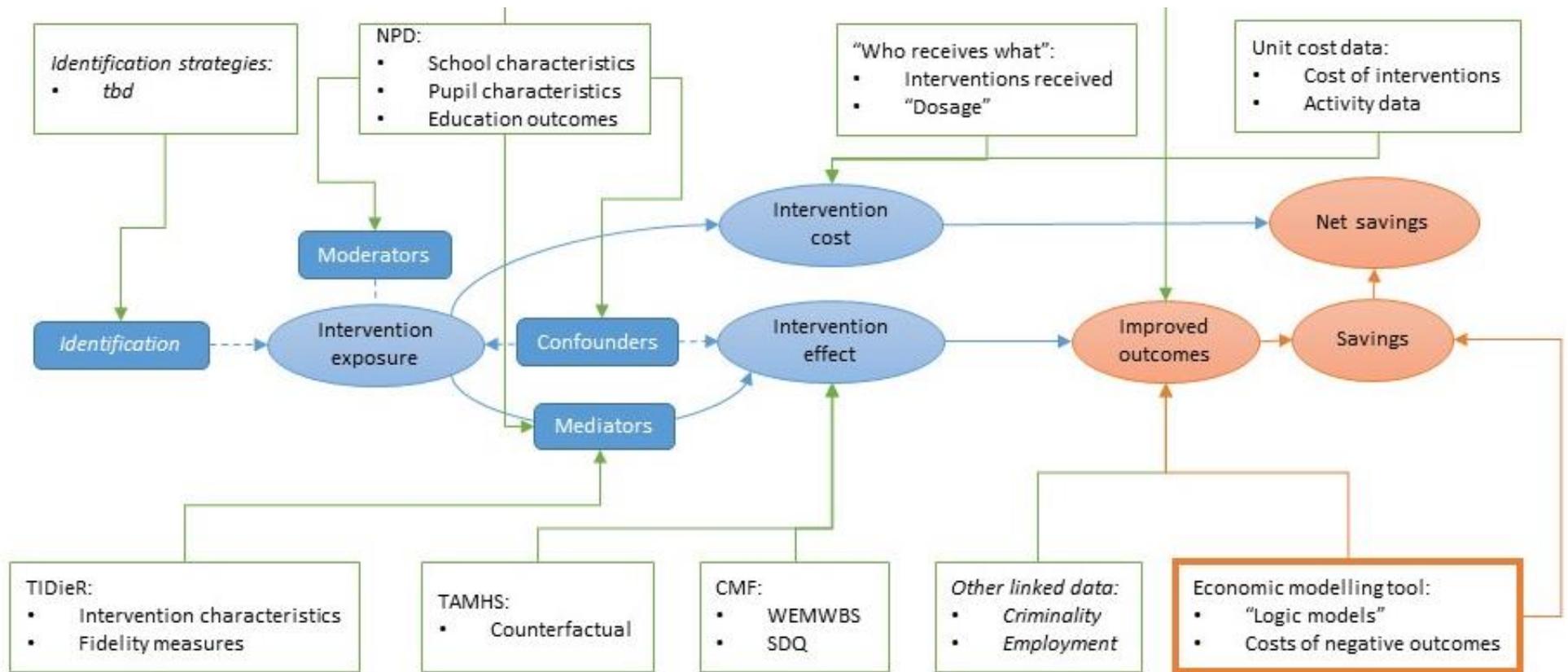
- A set of assumptions that will link intervention effects with a set of quantifiable short- and long-term outcomes;
- Evidence-supported monetary values placed on these outcomes to calculate the societal costs that might be expected in the absence of intervention (“cost of problem”);
- A mechanism for combining the intervention effect, information on intervention costs and projected outcomes, resulting in estimated net savings (“cost avoided” net of intervention cost”) from intervention.

In addition to the toolkit, several data sources will need to be drawn upon to generate model inputs:

- The Unit Cost dataset, combined with information on “Who received what” to calculate unit costs;
- Data on the effectiveness of HeadStart interventions, drawing on a variety of sources, in particular the Common Measurement Framework and a relevant counterfactual.

Supporting the practical implementation of the data framework is beyond the scope and resources of this project and will be taken on by the wider Learning Team going forward.

Figure 3: Data framework elements and sources of information



2.3 Economic model

The final (and crucial) element of the economic evaluation data framework is the economic evaluation toolkit, provided by the PSSRU to the HeadStart partnerships to enable them to assess the ‘value for money’ of their local initiatives.

It is common in economic analysis to make use of modelling techniques to synthesise and analyse evidence from various different sources in a single overarching model. Given the paucity of evidence on preventative interventions generally, and the economics of mental wellbeing specifically, all of the above apply to HeadStart in some fashion, and the use of economic modelling techniques allows us to provide the partnerships with a means of making the best of the available data.

Structure of the model

The economic model that is part of the toolkit was built on the basic analytic model underlying the HeadStart national evaluation, shown in Figure 4. While detailed plans for these evaluations are still in development, and will in part depend on the research questions emerging over the course of the programme, we have endeavoured to align the model structure and measurement of outcomes with the national evaluation – insofar as plans are known at the time of writing – as much as possible. Here we provide a brief overview of the model. A fuller description, including sources of parameters and assumptions, can be found in the guidance document that accompanies the economic evaluation toolkit and is submitted separately.

The “logic model” underlying the economic model used for evaluation is shown in Figure 5. The evidence review unearthed a link between mental wellbeing and mental health problems. While most of this evidence suggests a correlation, i.e. a bi-directional relationship, we focus on the trajectory from improved mental wellbeing to a reduction in mental health problems to avoid double counting. The evidence review did not provide conclusive data on a causal relationship between improved mental wellbeing and school engagement, we have built this relationship into the model to allow for this link to be assessed as the national evaluation proceeds (indicated by a dotted arrow). Within the cluster of outcomes related to school engagement, we assume that attendance and exclusions have an effect on attainment and NEET status, and attainment has an effect on NEET status. This means we need to be mindful of avoiding double counting of programme impacts (and therefore double counting savings). Lastly, the model reflects that mental health problems have a likely impact on school engagement and related outcomes.

Figure 4: HeadStart national evaluation analytic plan

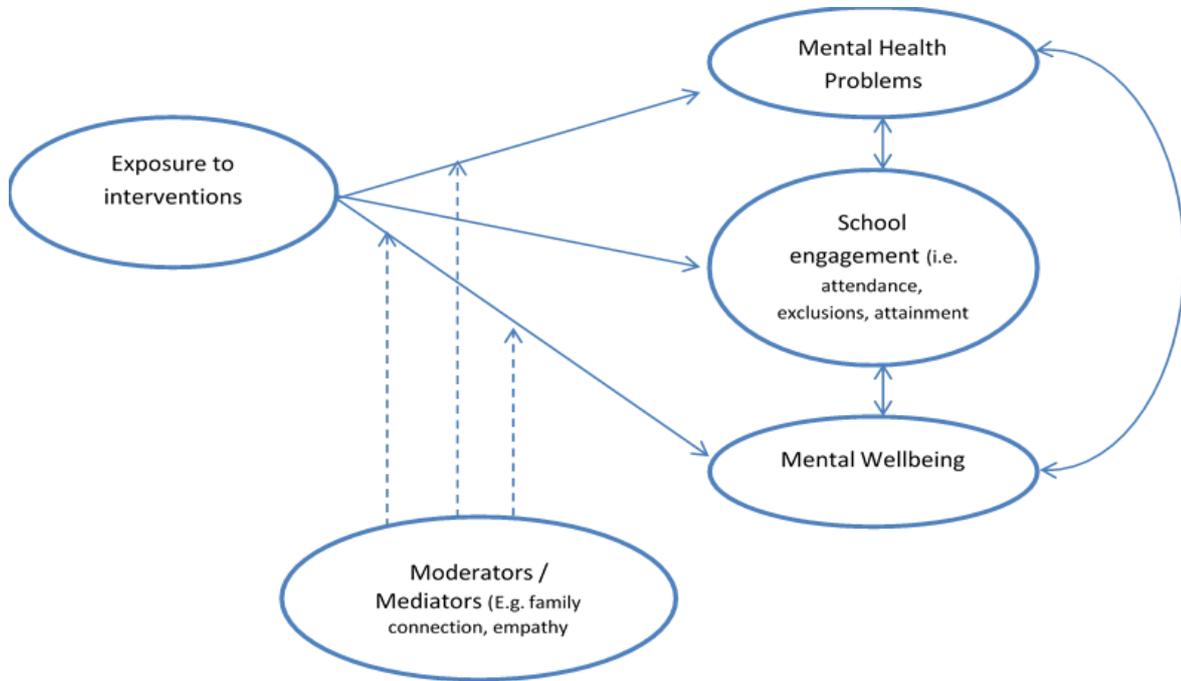
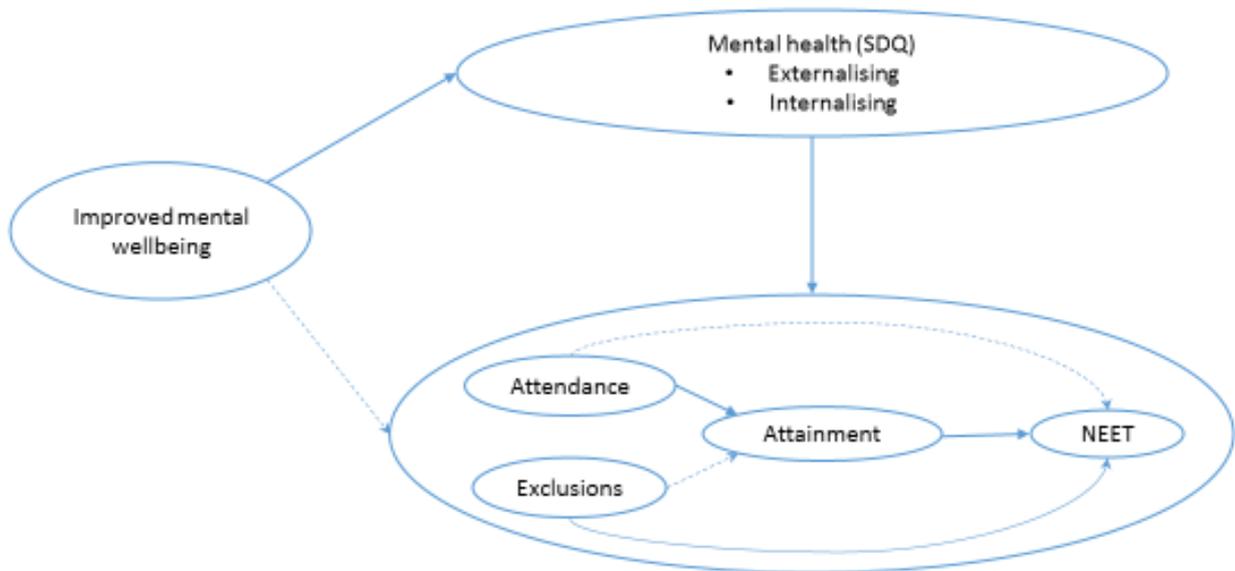


Figure 5: "Logic model" for economic evaluation



Outcomes measurement

Note that we use the term “outcome” to describe a state or event that is captured in the model in economic terms. The outcomes included in the model are therefore:

Mental wellbeing

Proportion of young people with poor mental wellbeing, measured on the SWEMWBS. While currently no established cut-offs exist, this is an active field of research and something that can be explored over the course of the programme. Note that this outcome is not currently captured in the HeadStart model, but the model structure has been set up in such a way that parameters can be added once these become available.

Mental health problems

Proportion of young people with severe behaviour problems

Measured on the conduct problems sub-scale of the SDQ. Assuming a 4-band categorisation, this would include young people scoring 5-10, or 6-10 on the 3-band categorisation.

Proportion of young people with moderate behaviour problems

Measured on the conduct problems sub-scale of the SDQ. Assuming a 4-band categorisation, this would include young people scoring 4, or 3 on the 3-band categorisation.

Proportion of young people with emotional problems

Measured on the emotional problems sub-scale of the SDQ. This would include young people scoring 6-10 regardless of categorisation used. Note that we do not currently have the data to distinguish between severe and moderate emotional problems.

School engagement

Proportion of pupils permanently excluded

Annual percentage, reflecting the risk of the “average pupil” of being excluded. In the model as initially made available, this is drawn from national statistics which do not provide a breakdown by age. Given that the main cost of exclusion is providing alternative education, and that most fixed-term exclusions are under five days, i.e. there is no duty to provide an alternative placement, temporary exclusions are not currently included in the model.

Proportion of pupils with persistent absence in Key Stage 4:

Defined as absences of 15% or more in Key Stage 4. Note that this covers absences across the two-year period.

Proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more ‘good’ GCSEs

Proportion of pupils achieving 5 or more ‘good’ GCSEs, i.e. graded A*-C at the end of Key Stage 4.⁴

Proportion of young people who are NEET

This is measured as the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training (age 16-24).

Avoiding double counting

The model takes into account that a proportion of young people are affected by both behaviour and emotional problems. Given that there are overlaps and dependencies within the set of ‘school engagement’ outcomes, and that the costs of mental health problems include some education costs, the following rules apply:

- If both mental health and school engagement outcomes are measured, do not include education support in costs avoided through a reduction in mental health problems.

⁴ Note that definitions for indicators such as ‘persistent absence’ and ‘good GCSEs’ may change in response to changes in policy and practice.

- If both exclusions and attainment are included, do not include costs related lower attainment in cost of exclusions
- If both attainment and NEET are included, do not include cost of lower attainment in the cost of NEET.

It should be noted that no one model exists that estimates *marginal* impacts of exclusions and absences on attainment and NEET status. The model parameters can be modified to include these figures from baseline data, should this be estimated as part of the national evaluation. It is recommended that the parameters currently in the model be replaced in due course.

2.4 Working in partnership and knowledge transfer activities

Developing the economic evaluation toolkit

The economic evaluation toolkit – the collection of templates and guidance documents – was developed with input from the Learning Team, the HeadStart partnerships and the Big Lottery Fund.

The toolkit consists of two elements, one relating to the unit cost dataset and one relating to the economic model:

1. Unit cost data set

- Template for requesting data and guidance document;
- Excel model demonstrating how collected data can be transferred into a database;
- Calculations for obtaining unit costs.

2. Economic model

- Technical description of the model and guidance for use, including assumptions and capabilities;
- Excel template allowing for data input and generating a standard data set and report.

The timing of this project meant that local evaluation plans had not been finalised by the end of it, and similarly, local evaluation systems were still in development. This meant that the final product needed to be flexible enough to be adapted and implemented by the individual partnerships later.

This was in line with the expectations that in the medium to longer term, the partnerships should take ownership of the economic model to generate savings data, with ongoing support from the wider Learning Team.

In conversations with Elly DeDecker and Felicity Bennet, it was further agreed that the toolkit should not be a standalone tool, such as the Access-based model developed for 'Preventonomics', but should be build onto the Common Measurement Framework. It was also stressed that the toolkit should provide the partnerships

with the option of running forward looking analyses of their planned interventions to assess potential savings before the interventions were implemented or completed.

These considerations and requirements informed the choices made in developing the toolkit:

- To ensure the toolkit was flexible enough to be implemented across (potentially) different platforms, we opted for Excel-based templates because this should be familiar to most users.
- An Excel-based working model was provided to ensure partnerships could run the model from the start, but this is intended to be a temporary measure to be used until the model can be implemented locally – and updated to reflect local conditions.
- Choosing Excel over a software more suited for handling larger databases (such as Access) has the advantage of (relative) simplicity and familiarity, the expectation is that the model will be incorporated into local data structures, so the template does not include a facility for automatically storing model results.

Workshops, webinars and presentations

To assist the development of a common method for estimating the potential savings from HeadStart, we facilitated three workshops with the HeadStart partnerships. These provided a mix of knowledge transfer, discussion hands-on tutorials. Representatives from the partnerships, the Phase 3 evaluation partners and the Big Lottery Fund attended these workshops.

The overarching aim was to establish a common understanding of the key tasks related to the value for money analysis, and to develop a sense of ownership of this material within the HeadStart sites. At the same time, there are certain elements that are a basic requirement of conducting economic evaluations. These include:

- The need to estimate costs comprehensively
- The need for a comparison group / counterfactual
- An assessment of the intervention effect

To ensure the partnerships have a grounding in the basics of economic evaluation, we provided three workshops and two shorter, presentation-focussed sessions over the course of the year.

In Birmingham (11/07/2016) we introduced the project, outlined data collection requirements and provided the partnerships with a timeline. We also asked them to identify a local point person who could champion the economic evaluation.

The first workshop was held in Manchester (28/09/2016) and introduced the principles of economic modelling and estimating unit costs.

In London (28/11/2016), we delivered a 1-hour session to check on progress and prepare the partnerships for the next workshop. The partnerships requested more detailed advice on data to be collected from commissioned activities, which resulted in the development of an Excel-based unit cost data collection template that was circulated and agreed with the partnerships.

At a second workshop in Manchester (31/01/2017), final agreement was reached on the unit cost data template that the partnerships agreed to implement. We provided an overview of findings from the evidence review, and the draft data framework for economic evaluation was presented to the sites.

The final workshop was hosted in London at the LSE (04/04/2017) and focussed on a hands-on introduction to working with the draft templates for the economic evaluation toolkit. It was attended by representatives from the partnerships, the wider Learning Team and the Big Lottery Fund. An opportunity to discuss any open questions around the implementation of the unit cost data template was followed by a practical on working with the resulting data. Following an overview of the economic evaluation toolkit, we provided an introduction to the model and another practical, working with the model and the resulting data. Local implementation was discussed. At the time of the workshop, most partnerships were still in the early stages of developing their evaluation plans and data systems, so that no final decision could be made on how best to implement the economic evaluation toolkit across partnerships. Therefore, the suggestion to provide the data and assumptions in Excel form was noted, and the model included in this deliverable is included as an Excel workbook. This will allow the partnerships to implement the model using a platform of their choosing.

In response to a request by the sites at the January 2017 workshop, a webinar going into more depth regarding methods of economic evaluation and the data framework for the economic evaluation of HeadStart was put together and presented (15/02/2017). The recording is available on Trello.

Representatives from Blackpool and Newham agreed to share their experience (process, learning, problems encountered and possible strategies to address these) with the unit cost data template in a webinar, supported by Lot 3 (23/03/2017). A recording is available on Trello.

Other support and liaison activities

Over the course of the project, we liaised with individual partnerships to meet the support needs they identified. Given that collecting and working with the unit cost data is the main task for the partnerships when it comes to the economic evaluation, the focus of much of our support was on working with the partnerships on understanding the data requirements, how

Site visits and other support activities were conducted with the partnerships as follows:

- Kent (one phone conversation): The data requirements for the unit cost dataset were discussed and potential solutions for the challenges identified by the team were suggested.
- Blackpool (one visit): During the visit, data requirements for the unit cost dataset were discussed.
- Newham (one visit to Newham, one meeting at LSE): Data requirements for the unit cost dataset were discussed. Following a discussion of the HeadStart programme that is to be implemented in Newham, we provided an adapted unit cost template that covers a core team providing several interventions.
- Hull (one visit): A site visit with Hull involved a presentation of the data framework to the Hull data subgroup. Support needs identified going forward included having the opportunity of discussing concrete questions that arise as the data framework is implemented, as this can be difficult to foresee. In addition to this visit, we have provided feedback on the draft evaluation plan.
- Wolverhampton (one visit): The unit cost template was discussed and the team attempted completing it for one of their HeadStart interventions.

A workshop for the CORC team introducing them to the economic evaluation toolkit was provided to them prior to the data workshop with the partnerships on 28/03/2017. The workshop covered the unit cost template and the economic model, with a focus on identifying areas where the partnerships may require support going forward.

A session with young advisors, facilitated by CommonRoom, took place at the LSE on 24/11/2017. In addition to the young advisors, Kate Martin (CommonRoom), Eva-Maria Bonin and Nicola Brimblecombe (LSE) and Felicity Bennett (BLF) attended the workshop. Topics discussed included:

- How do YP understand the term “mental wellbeing”?
- What outcomes are important to young people?

- Are we able to capture the most important outcomes in the economic evaluation, and if not, how can this be addressed?
- How can we communicate the methods and results of the economic modelling / evaluation to make it accessible and meaningful for young people?

While young people stated that they were comfortable with the language used, it also became clear that the concept of “mental wellbeing” is more complex and broad than can be captured in an economic evaluation that usually relies on a causal model. Based on the data available to us, our model is largely linear, and does not capture the multi-directional relationships pointed out by the young advisors. This will be important to keep in mind when interpreting results, and should be used to contextualise any findings derived from the model.

3)Support needs going forward

Support needs going forward arise from a) the need to update and adapt the economic model to a changing evidence base and b) differences and gaps in the skills and capacity available across the partnerships. We briefly outline perceived support needs that emerged during the course of our work with the partnerships.

3.1 Updates to the model

Routine annual updates to the model, such as adding inflation indices, are described in the guidance document (section 2.3 above). Given that HeadStart is a long-term investment, we expect the evidence base to evolve significantly over its lifetime. We recommend the following activities be undertaken by the Learning Team:

- Annual review of the evidence base.
- If indicated, an update to the parameters and / or structure of the model and its assumptions.

As local evaluation plans evolve, especially when it comes to data linkage, the evidence base grows and as the national evaluation supports or rejects our current hypothesis about outcomes linked to improved mental wellbeing, there may be a demand for outcomes to be added to or removed from the model to reflect the resulting changes to the underlying “logic model”. This will require expertise in economics and economic modelling as well as technical skills relating to updating the Excel model.

3.2 Supporting the partnerships

There is a range of valuable skills available across the partnerships. Working with the partnerships, the following support needs have been identified:

- Technical skills in Excel and other data management options;
- Practical support with unit cost data collection;
- Providing expertise in addressing queries related to the economic evaluation as they emerge;
- Best practice in evaluation, especially ensuring that intervention effects are calculated in a robust and consistent manner.

Trello boards have been set up where materials coming out of this project have been shared, and discussion topics have been started to encourage the partnerships to exchange ideas and find common solutions. Going forward, it will be important to facilitate collaboration across partnerships with regard to the economic evaluation. Trello provides one option, but other ways of collaborating (e-mail, meetings etc.) should be explored.