**About the project**

**Funding awarded:** £1,119,097  
**Duration of funding:** 5 years  
**Number of beneficiaries:** 92 children aged 5 to 11 years  
**Areas of delivery:** The London Boroughs of Enfield and Waltham Forest

Chance UK is a specialist early intervention mentoring organisation working with children with behavioural difficulties. It has 21 years’ experience of delivering solution focused mentoring to children, many of whom have been excluded from school or are at risk of exclusion at time of referral. Children receiving support from volunteer adult mentors over the course of a year tend to be those assessed as being at risk of involvement in anti-social behaviour, gang activity and the criminal justice system in adolescence and early adult life. Realising Ambition represents the first replication of Chance UK’s [Early Intervention Mentoring](#) (EIM) programme in Enfield and Waltham Forest.

**Lessons learnt**

Chance UK’s experience shows that although a service may be readily replicable, the context in which new replications are delivered is important to achieving anticipated reach.

The replicability of EIM has been enhanced by it being one of the three Realising Ambition randomised controlled trail (RCT) sites. Through participating in an RCT, Chance UK has invested considerably in refining and defining - through the development of key documentation and resources - the key core components of this mentoring programme that enable replication. EIM has all of the elements of effective mentoring programmes which serve children with an elevated level of need. This process provides a high level of confidence that the programme is replicable and the RCT will seek to ascertain whether EIM improves outcomes for children.

Although EIM is highly replicable, Chance UK has found it challenging to introduce the programme into the two new replication areas – as the organisation was not established in them previously, it was difficult to quickly attract local volunteer mentors, despite Chance UK being highly experienced in doing so. This practical challenge illustrated the importance of researching the demographics and volunteering culture of a new replication area and the value of understanding volunteers’ motivations for participating. The organisation has subsequently used such information to adapt its recruitment strategies.

The organisation also began using current and former mentors to promote EIM and hired a dedicated volunteer manager in the latter stages of the programme, which drove a significant increase in mentors. Chance UK’s experience has highlighted that service providers may need to adapt their tried and trusted models when introducing a volunteer-based service into a new area. It has also shown that funders and commissioners considering replicating such services should allow sufficient lead-in time for volunteer recruitment before core service delivery begins.
Chance UK’s RCT will help determine with a good degree of confidence whether the outcomes of young people receiving EIM differ from a comparable group of young people not receiving the programme. The RCT is still underway. Between May 2014 and December 2015, 246 eligible referrals were randomly allocated to either receive the programme or be in the control group. All baseline and mid-point data collection has been completed and the final follow-up data collection - one year on from starting the programme - will be completed in July 2017. The trial will be analysed during summer 2017 with its results anticipated to be published in November 2017.

Outcomes for beneficiaries

Each organisation has sought to monitor the outcomes of children and young people prior to and after service delivery. Find out more about outcome measurement in Realising Ambition.

EIM is Chance UK’s core service offer. The organisation intends to broaden its funding base in order to mitigate the risk of relying too heavily on single sources of income. This includes delivering its services through a mixed economy of grant funding and directly commissioned work.

What next

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Case study

Five key ingredients of successful replication

The Realising Ambition consortium has mapped each project’s journey against our five key ingredients of successful replication. The key points from this follow below. Find out more about these ingredients.

A tightly defined and replicable service: EIM is supported by a logic model which is evidenced with a theory of change and is underpinned with a clear set of activities articulated in a programme implementation manual. That is effectively and faithfully delivered to those that need it: Robust fidelity checks were further developed as part of the organisation’s preparation for the RCT. Referral criteria are clearly set out and are an established element of the programme. Evidence is used to learn and adapt, as required: Chance UK has intensively developed and analysed evidence, and used it to guide adaptations of the programme. This includes using evidence on recruiting volunteers, and the organisation is informing its other service offers with this learning.

There is confidence that outcomes have improved: Data is still being collected for the RCT, which was introduced in our sixth Programme Insight. The trial will be analysed during summer 2017 with its results anticipated to be published in November 2017. The service is cost-beneficial and sustainable: Chance UK is developing a clear understanding of the business metrics required to make the programme viable and once the RCT is completed it will be in a strong position to clearly ascertain the cost-benefits of EIM. Preliminary data analysis from studies of similar mentoring programmes suggests there will be a good return on investment once service impacts are verified.