

How can we tell if we've made a difference?

Frameworks for assessing the effectiveness of Kids Taskforce and other intervention programmes

Authors:

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'Pulling together safety messages for the emergency services'

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How can we decide where to invest funding, if, as a society, we are to be best placed to support children and young people's development? What type of intervention can make a real difference in children's lives, while giving taxpayers value for money?

The current financial crisis has acted as a catalyst to these questions, pressing researchers, practitioners and politicians to seek new means of assuring the effectiveness of interventions that promote pro-social behaviour and attitudes.

This report has been written to assist central and local government, funders, and delivery agencies in their task of answering that question.

It does so by examining the efforts that one organization – Kids Taskforce (KTF) – has undertaken in developing and delivering cost effective interventions to enhance children's safety. KTF is commended for the impact, value for money, evidence-based approach, and application of governmental policies that they are shown to be achieving. This is demonstrated through comparing KTF's performance against three different evaluative frameworks. The report demonstrates how such a comparative approach to evaluation can be valuable for any organization, and it offers 10 tips that other organizations can use to enable them to begin to deliver evidence of their own success.

The report is effectively a call to action, a prompt to professionals and society to think as astutely as possible about the establishment of criteria for effectiveness. KTF has been willing to put themselves forward as an exemplar in this debate in order to ensure that they, and the rest of the intervention field, are operating as confidently, creatively, and efficiently as possible.

The frameworks examined in the report are 3 of the most influential to have recently emerged in the UK: 1) *Project Oracle*, now operating in London, as developed by the Greater London Authority; 2) *Total Place*, now operating in 13 regions of the UK, as a more integrated model of service delivery; and 3) the *Big Society*, a vision for society devised by the current Conservative Party leader. All draw attention to outcomes and to financial yields, but they each apply different components in the process. A comparative approach enables readers to see how competing frameworks can lead to different conclusions about the effectiveness of any single programme, and how different. It makes clear how important it is that evaluators decide *which criteria* they wish to advocate for. The success of a programme can only be judged against the aims which are held for it.

The conclusions yielded by these three different ‘lenses’ are as follows:

In Project Oracle terminology, KTF programmes would be described as:

A strongly specific intervention, with clear goals and required training for practitioners, supported by practice manuals and by quality monitoring. The interventions are actively evaluated and have a history of external scrutiny, providing useful feedback. The impact of the work is well supported by individuals’ testimony, by pro-social behaviour observed in children, and by enthusiastic endorsement from professionals.

In Total Place terminology, KTF programmes would be described as:

A programme that accords strongly with the ethos of building an intervention around the needs of the citizen. User feedback is enthusiastic. The key domain which needs investigation is that of cost-benefit analyses. It is not clear how much money KTF programmes are actually saving to local areas. This would be the most valuable insight that future evaluation of the programmes could provide.

In Big Society terminology, KTF programmes would be described as:

A programme that seeks to empower individuals, particularly children and young people, through the help of community members. It is clear that one outcome of such empowerment will be safer communities. The suite of programmes is designed to be cost effective and to empower individual children, supporting them through local mixed groups, including statutory, voluntary and sporting bodies. KTF’s key aim, of delivering safer schools and communities, is fully in line with a Big Society vision.

Specific strengths for KTF programmes, revealed by the report, include the following:

- now been experienced by more than 1,000,000 children across the UK
- enhance empathy
- reduce risk
- enable learning
- build responsible young citizens
- foster real engagement from young people
- provide excellent value for money – at £4.00 or less per child
- content can be easily linked to the National Curriculum
- delivered through the use of contemporary media that is meaningful to young people
- supported by police, fire & ambulance services, sports bodies, politicians, & families of victims of violence
- valued by professionals, parents, and children
- have been evaluated empirically, using both quantitative and qualitative methods
- empirical findings have been validated by children’s real-life comments
- KTF is an independent organization, with a decade’s experience in programme development and delivery
- KTF is committed to strengthening and expanding its evidence base

We believe this report is timely because the debate about how best to evaluate intervention effectiveness – incorporating dimensions such as impact, value for money, and policy compliance -- is becoming very animated. It will become even more heated as the financial situation facing the UK

(and other countries) brings new pressure to bear on governments and funding agencies. We must find new ways to meet children's needs. Just because the provision of services contracts does not mean that children's needs do too.

This report commends KTF for its work to date, in terms of its content, its delivery, its broad engagement with children, families, and professionals – and especially for the efforts it continues to expend in ensuring its programmes are informed by evidence. Their efforts to develop a comprehensive monitoring system are thus particularly applauded. That system is intended to enable all participating schools to gain information about the effects of KTF programmes on the lives of their pupils, in domains such as: exclusion rates, bullying, aggression, racism, illness, and academic performance. The database that will be established can also serve as a national resource, as it will reflect the experiences of hundreds of thousands of participating children throughout the UK. This will be unique amongst all currently available schools-based intervention programmes.

The value of KTF programmes is also commended. The cost of the primary school programme is estimated at £4.00 per child, and the cost of the secondary school programme at £1.00 per child. (The latter is likely to be a conservative estimate, given that a boxed set of materials, purchased at £100, can be viewed by any number of young people within a school). Such costs are, as KTF themselves emphasise, less than that of 'a cappuccino per child'. This investment is striking when considered against the yearly cost of supporting a single child who is (as discussed in the report) placed into care (£100,000), or diagnosed with conduct disorder (£70,000), or receiving treatment for substance abuse (£17,000). The financial benefits stemming from KTF programmes are expected to be multi-faceted, and the planned comprehensive evaluation system should provide new economic insights. The challenge of trying to pin down precise cost-benefit ratios sheds light on the difficulty faced by all agencies interested in carrying out financial analyses of intervention programmes.

We hope that the insights yielded by this report will prove helpful to all those involved in generating or using evidence relating to effectiveness of UK intervention programmes. To this end, the report provides a set of guidelines that are designed to help any organization interested in demonstrating their effectiveness and in thinking through what kinds of criteria they might wish to invoke in doing so. It is only through the kind of deep reflection that this report calls for that it will be possible to nurture the transformational programmes that we are all seeking, which will help us to create the kind of society that we want our children to grow up within.

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FOREWORD

Kids Taskforce came out of my wish to create educational programmes that give every child the opportunity to learn that they have a right to be safe and that there are people in the community who want to support them. My passion for this idea came from my own experiences of violence and abuse as a child.

My father was violent and regularly beat my mother in front of me. Although I was not physically harmed, I was traumatised by the experience and spent my childhood, until the age of 7, living in what felt like a war zone. In an effort to keep me away from some of the violence, my mother left me with my father's parents. She had no idea that my grandfather was a paedophile and that I was regularly subjected to sexual abuse. I wondered as a child why no adult ever helped me, and my experiences left me unable to read or write until my mother escaped the situation and we went to live with my maternal grandmother in a place of safety. Once I was safe I quickly caught up on my reading and writing and went on to read the news to two million people a night on the BBC. I am living proof that children need to feel safe in order to flourish and reach their full potential.

In 1999, my husband, a retired police officer, and I opened a hostel for homeless families. Our experiences there led me to think more creatively about what we could do to break the cycle of the violence we saw – and particularly how we could help children feel safe so they could achieve their aspirations. Our investigations, in association with the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, revealed there was no agreed standard for the safety messages that children might be taught to keep them safe. And it was from a wish to change this situation that Kids Taskforce was born.

The two programmes that we eventually developed have now been delivered in hundreds of schools throughout the UK, with more than 1 million work books used by children, more than 10,000 DVDs given to schools, and over 3,500 teachers trained to deliver the programmes. The *missdorothy.com* programme, aimed at primary pupils, was developed in 2001, and the *Watch Over Me* programme in 2003, to meet the needs of secondary pupils. A Strategic Alliance was formed in 2007 between the Kids Taskforce, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Chief Fire Officers' Association and the Professional Footballers' Association to promote the programme and to develop the key messages in the materials. This

alliance was strengthened in 2010 to include the ambulance service, giving Kids Taskforce programmes the support of all the country's emergency services. Around 30 associate and corporate partners joined the Alliance, including Families United (representing the families of children who have been murdered), GFP (Government Finance Profession), the Crown Prosecution Service, the Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, Crimestoppers, BAMA (British Aerosol Manufacturers Association) and SERCO.

We have worked in regions throughout the UK, including Yorkshire, Merseyside, London, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and in 2009 were funded for a national roll-out of Watch Over Me by the Home Office. We feel fortunate to have had the chance to touch the lives of more than a million children, along the way receiving endorsements from individuals as eminent as Nelson Mandela, Prince Charles, two prime ministers, a range of celebrities, actors, sportsmen, and the children and their teachers themselves.

Young people usually know much more about the dangers that face them than do adults; what our programmes do is build a bridge to those adults who want to help them cope with such dangers. It is my strong belief that children should never be afraid when they are learning and that they remember things best when they learn through fun. Kids Taskforce programmes provide professionals, teachers and community role models with a mechanism to engage and speak to children in their own language. It was a privilege to be in the classroom the first time we piloted the Watch Over Me soap opera series and to realise just how engaged teenagers could be by the on-screen characters we had created. Perhaps my greatest joy comes when I attend a Kids Taskforce assembly in a primary school and see police officers, fire fighters, ambulance staff, football coaches and teachers being hugged by Cursor the cat and Wizard the dog, showing children they are all friends of Dot and there to keep them safe!

I am pleased to endorse the findings of this report, not only because the authors have been able to draw attention to our successes at Kids Taskforce, but because they have pointed out future directions in which we can move. Most importantly, I hope that our own evaluation efforts may prove helpful to other organisations thinking through how they might go about demonstrating their effectiveness. When all our efforts are guided by evidence of what really works, then we stand the best chance of helping the children of the UK to fulfill their individual and collective potential.

Sharon Doughty

President, Kids Taskforce

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I. Introduction

How can we decide where to invest funding, if, as a society, we are to be best placed to support children and young people's development?

This report has been written to assist central and local government, funders, and delivery agencies in their task of answering that question.

The question of where to invest funds has acquired greater importance as the UK enters an extended period of financial constraint. It is essential that any publicly-funded intervention be able to show real benefits to society. Over the last few years there has been a growing need for programmes to be able to demonstrate both impact and value for money. It is no longer considered adequate for programmes, and the organisations offering them, merely to aim to be effective. Organisations are now expected to be able to demonstrate that their programmes are actually delivering such effectiveness. Such heightened expectations raise the question of what should count as demonstrations of effectiveness.

That is the question addressed by the present report: which frameworks should be employed when evaluating the effectiveness of intervention programmes?

The report will address this question by focusing on the activities of one specific organization – Kids Taskforce, a social enterprise organization operating in the UK since 2001. Over the past decade, Kids Taskforce (KTF) has developed programmes that help children and young people learn to keep themselves and others safe. The programmes are designed to be delivered in school, in conjunction with the national educational curriculum. It is now estimated that well over 1,000,000 primary and secondary school pupils throughout the UK have experience of KTF programmes. The programmes have received endorsements from a wide range of individuals and organizations, and have been subjected to seven different empirical evaluations. They are delivered at minimal cost, and feedback indicates they are very popular with children and teachers who use the materials.

KTF thus represents an excellent candidate as a focus for this report. This is because they are an independent organization, experienced now in programme development and large-scale delivery, and in possession of a varied evidential base. This signals a landmark point in their history: they need to know how evaluation of their effectiveness can be improved, how to demonstrate their effectiveness to others, and where the significant gaps in their current

evidence base lie. This report will provide advice on each of these fronts, by reviewing the evaluation activities in which KTF has engaged over the last five years.

It should be recalled, though, that this focus on KTF is illustrative. The primary purpose of this report, and of its authors (Clark and Zeedyk), is to stimulate debate about which evaluative frameworks are most helpful for the intervention sector, as a whole, to adopt. A variety of frameworks are now emerging, and more debate about the strengths and weaknesses of each is needed. It can be easy for organizations to think only in terms of a specific framework they have been prescribed by governing bodies. The purpose of this report is to encourage all those associated with intervention programmes to engage in epistemological reflection – to think more carefully about the criteria by which ‘success’ should be judged.

In short, this report is a call to action, a prompt to the field to think astutely about how it goes about setting itself criteria, and, indeed, who is best placed to set those criteria. KTF’s willingness to put themselves forward so publicly, as an exemplar in this debate, is a reflection of their motivation to ensure that they, and the rest of the intervention field, are operating as confidently, creatively, and efficiently as possible. How can we know for sure that our efforts are having the impact we hope for and that that they achieve value for money? Is it even possible that efforts are more successful than originally estimated, and how is it possible to make such a judgment? This is the reflection that this report seeks to generate.

This will be achieved by evaluating KTF’s performance against three different frameworks currently operating in the UK. They represent some of the most contemporary and authoritative frameworks in the country, in that they emerged only within the last year or two, and are now being used as the criteria against which actual funding decisions are being made. The three frameworks are: Project Oracle, Total Place, and the Big Society. All of these frameworks draw attention to outcomes and to financial yields, but they each apply different components in the process. That is why a comparative approach has been adopted in this report – to enable readers to see how competing frameworks can lead to different conclusions about any single programme. It is this realization that prompts deeper reflection about how the field should be constructing evaluative frameworks, in order to ensure that we gain as much insight from them as possible.

In summary, this report aims to achieve three specific goals:

First, it will make readers more aware of the range of criteria that can be used to evaluate programme effectiveness.

Second, it will reveal how one organization -- Kids Taskforce -- performs in relation to three different evaluative frameworks currently operating in the UK.

Finally, we hope it will help other organizations to think through how they might go about evaluating their own performance and disseminating news of their success, or indeed their disappointments.

A robust body of scientific evidence now leaves no doubt that intervention programmes can yield incredibly powerful benefits for children's lives. The task facing all of us at this juncture is to decide how to choose amongst the breadth of programmes on offer, in order to ensure the very best chances of success and wise financial investment.

II. Kids Taskforce: The Organisation

Kids Taskforce (KTF) was founded in 2001 to help young people in Britain learn how to handle risk. In the intervening decade, it has gained the support of a wide range of organisations, including, amongst others, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Professional Footballers' Association, Families United, the United Nations, and a range of individual sports personalities, actors, and governmental officials.

KTF programmes have now been experienced by well over a million children throughout the UK. By 2010, the primary school programme, missdorothy.com, had been introduced to almost one million children. In the 2010/2011 academic year alone, it was used by 165,000 children in 50 regions of the UK that have been identified as being at most risk from knife crime. The secondary school programme, Watch Over Me, has been made available to all 7000 secondary schools in England and Wales, through funding from the Home Office in 2009. Feedback indicates that 1000 of those schools are already using the materials in their curriculum. This is an impressive rate of take-up in the space of one year.

Children's feedback and stories make clear that many of them have found the programmes to be valuable. This is shown in incidents where they have, for example, reported internet friends as paedophiles, halted their own bullying behaviour, established friendship clubs to prevent other children from feeling excluded, and stood up against aggression in their school. Such accounts indicate that the KTF programmes have improved the lives of many children, while saving costs that would otherwise have been borne by government services.

III. The missdorothy.com and Watch Over Me Programmes

KTF has developed and delivers two programmes, one aimed at primary school pupils (7-11 years) and the other aimed at secondary pupils (14 – 18 years). Both programmes use character-based learning as a means of helping pupils to learn how to handle risk.

The primary schools programme, missdorothy.com (MDC), comprises a set of characters, at the heart of which is Dorothy, a 9-year-old girl. She is often known affectionately as Dot, and she has a host of friends, including other children such as Genie, Slam, and Pearl, as well as Cursor the Cat and Wizard the Dog. Together, these characters tackle challenges from domestic violence to racism to bereavement to how to make friends. Workbooks are available for each child of Years 3 – 6 (Key Stage 2), with activities in the workbooks making it easy to link the programme to a range of areas of the national curriculum.

Training is provided to all schools who adopt the MDC programme, along with follow-up support and a website with additional materials for teachers. A website is also available for children, including a facility that allows them to email Dot directly if they need help with a problem or simply want a chat. The cost of the programme is approximately £4.00 per child, which covers the cost of the materials and training for staff. The value this represents has come to be captured in the catch phrase ‘A Cappuccino per Child’.

The secondary programme, Watch Over Me (WOM), features a soap opera series, now in its fourth series. Production of the series has been carried out to the highest standards, with actors drawn from the National Youth Theatre and filming carried out by professional filmmakers. The WOM storylines feature a dozen or more characters, who encounter the kinds of risky situations faced by many young people today: extreme inter-personal violence, terrorism, bullying, gang violence, knife and gun crime, racism, debt, sexual harassment, pregnancy, forced marriage. By watching how the characters tackle the situations that they encounter, young people are supported in developing their own strategies for managing risk. Each episode is approximately 15 minutes in length. Training is available to all schools, and follow-up support is available from KTF. The cost to purchase the complete set of materials (all four DVD series, associated lesson plans, and other materials) is £100.00. This material can be viewed by as many young people as the school wishes. Thus, if it is assumed that the material is viewed by 100 pupils in a school (i.e., roughly two classes), this represents a cost of £1.00 per child. This is likely to be a conservative estimate, as the materials may be viewed by many more than 100 children over time.

What are the underlying principles that facilitate delivery of these two programmes? Central to both programmes is the framework they provide for helping children to recognise

and assess the risks they face. Character-based learning allows young people to explore their own ideas, views and feelings whilst projecting personal issues, worries and concerns on to the situations faced by the characters in the programme. This process is seen as facilitating the development of both self-awareness and empathy for others. That is, the materials are designed specially to help pupils understand and manage their own feelings, to evaluate their own behaviour, and to develop personal analytical, interpersonal and communication skills. They intentionally prompt people to analyse and regulate how they behave towards one another and towards their wider community. Thus, children build resilience whilst increasing their self-confidence and their social capacities.

The programmes are designed to be strongly collaborative in approach. Delivery is achieved by drawing on local agencies such as the police, fire service, ambulance service, and sports teams. This integrates the local community, supports schools in their educational aims, and introduces young people to actual individuals in their community to whom they might speak if they need support or have concerns for their personal safety.

The websites that have been designed to support the programmes are intentionally comprehensive, having sections for the young people, parents, and for teachers. Children are encouraged to use the interactive elements of the site as a means of gaining information and promoting pro-social abilities. Teachers will find full lesson plans, including learning objectives and outcomes linked to National Curriculum objectives. They can follow such plans closely, if they wish, or use them as a basis for generating ideas that allow them to work creatively and independently with the programme content. In short, the materials are designed not to be prescriptive, but to instil the kind of confidence that enables teachers, children, and parents to draw on it in ways that fit individual needs.

The teaching and learning strategies situated at the core of the programmes fit with the most recent governmental directives on personal learning and thinking skills. These include being creative thinkers, effective participators, and self-managers, and especially, reflective learners. It is now argued by all within the education system that education should be about more than learning and teaching; young people should be assisted to reflect on their own experiences and abilities. KTF materials are designed to do just this – to motivate pupils to take charge of their own learning and to reflect on what they have talked about in workbooks and discussions. Thus, the materials encourage participation by all. They are not dependent upon academic ability but are inclusive for all students, from those who have special needs to those who are classified as gifted and talented.

In summary, KTF programmes fit the needs of schools for a well thought out, cohesive programme of PSHE education (personal, social, health, and economic education). They also generate opportunities for a teacher to use the materials in a variety of ways, as they are cross-curricular, with lessons suitable for use in English, Drama, Art and PE, amongst other subjects. Without a well structured programme, pupils cannot fulfil their individual potential and achieve their best possible academic results. KTF programmes are designed to help both schools and young people to do this, while also going a step further in helping them to cope with specific safety risks that confront them today. It is with this combination that KTF feels that, as a society, we have the best chance to help young people develop the skills and competencies that will enable them to develop into engaged citizens.

IV. Social and political concerns addressed by Kids Taskforce Programmes

The descriptions given above make clear that KTF programmes address several major themes currently operating in contemporary governmental, financial, and social contexts.

These include the following:

1. *Local coalitions.* They build coalitions between state services (e.g., school, police, fire) and local organizations (e.g., sports societies, sport coaches, businesses, charities, and volunteers).
2. *Nurturing engaged citizens.* They are grounded in children's real life, every day experiences, and aim to help them reflect on how to cope with those experiences, balancing their own needs with those of others. This is precisely what is meant by the term 'engaged citizens'.
3. *Universal.* The programmes are envisioned as a form of 'universal inoculation', which enables them to be fully inclusive, giving all participating children a boost to their developing abilities.
4. *Value for money.* They are not expensive, offering extremely excellent value for money.
5. *Evidence based.* There is a firm base of empirical evidence that shows they are both effective and popular with users.

All of the above elements speak to points that have been made by bodies seeking to fund or implement children's intervention programmes. KTF has chosen to tackle the social concerns that have prompted the need for such programmes through a proactive and pre-emptive approach. They aim to prevent problems, rather than waiting to turn them around once they have become established. KTF's efforts illustrate how mainstream providers of children's

services can contribute toward a genuinely comprehensive intervention strategy, through a programme that is based in local communities but that addresses wider national themes and aspirations. Crucially, KTF is showing that all of this can be done affordably and efficiently.

V. Evidence of Programme Effectiveness

What are the ways in which it can be decided if intervention programmes are effective? That is the core question being tackled by this report. In the next section, we examine three different indicators that can be used to judge a programme's effectiveness: empirical evidence, real-life evidence, and financial evidence. KTF has been successful in generating evidence in all three domains. We will review the evidence base available in regard to each domain, summarizing the insights emerging from it and also making recommendations as to how it could be strengthened.

1. Empirical Evidence: Research Studies

KTF programmes have been formally evaluated, through empirical studies, on seven occasions.² This is an impressive attempt on the part of an independently-funded organisation to examine its own effectiveness and to report the findings to others.

The range of study designs is notable. A variety of methods have been utilised (e.g., questionnaires, validated psychological scales, interviews, behavioural observations) and a range of research designs employed (e.g., control comparisons, pre-post, narrative analyses). The sizes of participating groups vary between two and 50 schools, and include up to 50 teachers and 500+ children. All the studies have concluded that the programme is well received and that it has a positive impact. Most have focused on the views of users, although the most robust designs have investigated outcomes, including changes in children's attitudes and behaviour. The brief details of these evaluations are as follows:

1. In 2004, the Cabinet Office carried out an audit of MDC, soliciting interview and questionnaire feedback from teachers in 50 schools. They concluded that MDC was well supported in schools,

² Cabinet Office (2004). Evaluation of the *missdorothy.com* and *Watch Over Me* programmes.

National Children's Bureau (2005). An evaluation of the *missdorothy.com* programme in primary schools.

Office of Fair Trading (2006). Evaluation on the delivery of the *missdorothy.com* and *Watch Over Me* programmes

Lancaster Healthy Schools Advisor (2007). Evaluation report of the *missdorothy.com* learning programme.

Craigatin Psychological Services (2008). The *missdorothy.com* programme in Harrow: Comparing empathy, self-esteem, and safety perceptions in two London Schools.

Craigatin Psychological Services (2009a). Building safety awareness: Do the *missdorothy.com* and *Watch Over Me* programmes work?

Craigatin Psychological Services (2009b). Promoting empathy and self-reflection: Why do the *missdorothy.com* and *Watch Over Me* programmes work?

that children's self-esteem was believed by the teachers to be boosted, and that the programme was increasing children's confidence in the criminal justice system.

2. In 2005, the National Children's Bureau attempted to move beyond perceptions of MDC and to measure actual changes in pupils' knowledge or capacities. The study administered standardised measures of self-esteem and safety awareness to 537 children in 8 primary schools. These data were collected at the beginning and end of the school year during which the MDC programme was in operation. It also conducted focus groups with pupils from those schools and interviews with teachers in the schools. The authors concluded that teachers valued the programme and that children enjoyed it. The majority of pupils reported that MDC made them feel safer.
3. In 2006, the Office of Fair Trading investigated the views of teachers, pupils, and key stakeholders (e.g., police, educational representatives) in 10 primary schools and 10 secondary schools, distributed over 10 local authorities. The authors concluded that both the MDC and the WOM programmes were being received positively by all participants.
4. In 2007, the Lancaster Healthy Schools Initiative carried out interviews with staff at 21 primary schools in 4 local authorities. The authors concluded from participants' comments that the programme had had a "huge impact on children's safety, in ways that other programmes do not".
5. In 2008, Craigatin Psychological Services followed up the NCB's earlier study, by moving beyond perceptions of the MDC programme and measuring its actual impact on children's capacities. This study assessed changes in pupils' self-esteem, empathy, and safety awareness, using validated psychological scales. Involving a total of 513 children, outcomes for 2 London schools were compared, one in which MDC had been implemented and one in which it had not. Findings indicated that children in the MDC school showed slightly higher empathy scores, a higher awareness of risk, and less fear of bullying. The authors stressed the importance of being able, in future, to use a research design in which data were gathered at both the beginning and end of the year. This would allow the effectiveness of the programme to be more robustly tracked.
6. In 2009, Craigatin Psychological Services investigated MDC's and WOM's effectiveness in delivering safety messages. A combination of written questionnaires, interviews, and, unusually, behavioural observations (via video recordings) was undertaken. A total of 179 pupils participated, distributed over 7 schools in different regions of the UK. Results showed that attention levels were high during lessons, with many pupils never taking their eyes off the screen/teacher during the core element of the lesson. In interviews, almost all pupils spontaneously provided examples of important safety lessons they had learned, and a significant proportion believed they would act on the information, in ways that would keep either themselves (e.g., not getting into strangers' cars) or others (e.g., they would be less likely to bully others) safe. The authors concluded that the programmes were effective in teaching safety messages and promoting behavioural change.
7. In 2009, Craigatin Psychological Services conducted a second study, which was designed to yield a better understanding of why KTF programmes are effective (i.e., to determine which mechanisms are driving the behavioural changes reported in previous studies). A total of 118 young people were interviewed. It was concluded that two key factors in the programmes' success are the increases they promote in 1) empathy and 2) self-reflection. Boosts in empathy were especially strong for secondary pupils, with 57% spontaneously commenting that the insights they had

gained about other people, as a consequence of watching the WOM materials, were novel ones for them. Boosts in self-reflection were particularly strong for the primary pupils, which were spontaneously shown by up to 72% of pupils in participating schools. Respectful (empathic) listening was demonstrated by 75% of the participating pupils, as they turned their heads to listen to their interview partner while they spoke. It was concluded that KTF programmes are effective not because they are teaching pupils new rules, but because the messages they are delivering help young people to think in richer ways about themselves and about others. The authors stressed the value that would be gained by being able to carry out comparisons between pupils exposed to KTF programmes and those working with other PSHE programmes.

In summary, a notable body of empirical evidence has now been collected in relation to KTF programmes. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have been employed. Changes at the levels of knowledge, attitude, and behaviour have all been investigated, with input solicited from children, teachers, and stakeholders. Where possible, robust research designs have been utilised (e.g., control groups, pre-post designs). Some large sample sizes have been attempted (e.g., 50 schools; 500 children).

Results make it clear that the programmes are well-liked and regarded by staff as effective and easy to use. Studies identify changes in self-esteem and empathy, which could be seen as outcomes as well as theoretical explanations of the programmes' effectiveness.

Recommendations. To strengthen KTF's existing empirical base, it would be helpful to have an even stronger, more robust data set than is currently available. This is because it has been necessary, so far, for studies to be undertaken on an ad-hoc, opportunistic basis. This limitation has yielded practical problems in terms of research design and also resulted in levels of statistical significance that, while adequate, are not strong. If it were possible to put in place a more comprehensive, proactive evaluation system, this would make it possible overcome current limitations. If such a system were able to involve all schools participating in KTF programmes, this would generate very unusual insights into the effectiveness of a mainstream intervention programme. To our knowledge, no other intervention programme in the UK has developed such a comprehensive evaluation structure. We are aware that KTF has been considering the development and implementation of such a system, and we recommend that KTF proceed with these plans at the earliest possible date. Later in this report we provide more details on our own recommendations for such a system.

2. Real-life Evidence: Children's Emails to Dot

One of the support facilities created for the MDC programme is an interactive website that allows children to email Dot directly. This facility provides unique insights into the ways

in which a school-based PSHE programme impacts on children's everyday lives. Young people make use of the website if they have problems, need advice, seek companionship, or just wish to have a chat. Enquiries range from asking advice on what present to ask for on their next birthday, to how to stop their father from hitting their mother, to how to deal with bullying on the internet. We do not believe there is any other intervention programme in the UK that has such rich access to information on the changes that an intervention programme is actually achieving in children's personal lives.

What do these emails tell us about children's needs, and about the ways in which the MDC programme is meeting those needs?

First, *children need someone to turn to for advice*. Children's use of the MDC website has increased every year since it was established in 2007, as shown by the below figures. In 2008 and 2009, the increase in email traffic was an astounding 60% or greater over the previous years.

Total number emails sent to Dot: 2007 – 2010	
Year	Number of emails
2007	1763
2008	2751
2009	3999
2010	4298 (projected, based on 2198 emails sent by end-July)

Second, *the most significant problems for children are those that involve negotiating emotional relationships*. This includes bullying, transitioning to new peer environments, and resolving arguments. These are the most common problems that lead children to seek advice from Dot. The following figures show the breakdown of topics on which children wrote to Dot during 2009.

Topics about which children emailed Dot during 2009	
Topic	Number of emails
Bullying	223
Transition and moving on	200
Resolving arguments	108
Domestic worries	73
School work	58
General conversation	2657

Adults may imagine, as a result of the labels employed in the table above (e.g., ‘bullying’, ‘domestic worries’), that children’s concerns are rather benign. This is not how children experience them. The examples given below show how serious these issues are for children. (In the table below, children’s grammar has been retained, as a means of giving some sense of the children’s presence. Any names have been changed, though, as one means of protecting their confidentiality.)

Examples of children’s emails to Dot: Requests for advice
It is a real pleasure meeting you. My name is susan and i`m 9 years old. My school everyday goes to your website and read your news. I really enjoyed your workbook, it is very fun but i had this problem that my friends tease me and swear at me. I told my parents but that didn`t really work. i wish you could help me soon as possible.
In school some people bully me and i have no friends and they say that im fat what should i do? and they threaten me. my teachers tryed talking to them but thay say that they'll talk to me and i've treid every thing you said but it just dosen't work do help me no one in my class out of the children will talk to me and and play time i'm left by my favorite tree crying and i've not done eney thing wrong

<p>Hello dot my name is kristen my sister told me about this website so I thought I would check it out she told me that i could email you about my problems I am 13 and I go to (anonymised) secondary school and am getting bullied by a boy called (anonymised). he is being really out of order and I don't want to tell my mum because she will laugh and I can't tell the teachers because they won't do anything so I cam for a bit of advice from you. Thank you for listening from kristen x</p>
<p>HEYYYYYYA DOT IM BEING BULIED IN SCHOOL I GOT CALLED A BIG FAT (anonymised) AND THAT MY NOSE IS BIGGER THAN THE HOLE CLASSROOM :(BUT I CANT STAY AWAY BECAUSE THEY ARE ON THE SAME TABLE AS ME AND IT SCARES ME BECAUSE ITS EVERYDAY AND AT THE SAME TIME :/ PLEASEE HELP ME DOT YOUR THE ONLY 1 I KNOW WHO WILL SORT IT OUT EVE THOUGH IM NOT WITH U</p>
<p>hi dot, i have emailed you before but now i have moved up to secondry school and people are saying that i am preganant when im not and i am under pressure with my boyfriend and i dont know what to do.help me please, thanks sarah xxx</p>
<p>hi miss Dorothy/dot im really exited to email u. my school introduced ur website I think its soooo cool and helpful. OK so i got a few problems and I don't feel comfortable sharing with my parents so I thought u might help. ok my teachers is quite strict. and there is a girl in my class who just came recently like today and missed four weeks of school. and he always shouts at her but i can't do anything about that but i feel real bad. she s really nice and kind but...you know ya. so I hope u have a solution and also i help her as much as i can but i feel my teacher thinks of her as a victim.</p>
<p>hi my names barbara and im nearly 11 i have a lot of things on my plate at the mo SATs all that , but the main thing is my parents. they hurt me inside without knowing it. im quite depressed at the moment and would like someone to talk to. i have an imaginary friend who's called fred but i know he is not real. i normally cry my-self to sleep or don't have any sleep. if i do sleep its not till 12:00 am normally also people at school have been upsetting me for the last 4 years and i've told the teacher, headteacher, dinner ladies but nothing works. please please help me. from Barbara at (anonymised) primary school, soon to be in (anonymised) high</p>

The emails make clear that many children feel that they have no one else in their lives who feel safe and reliable enough to turn to for help in dealing with bullying, death of a loved one, domestic violence, school performance, and the many other challenges in their real lives. It is likely that those adults who would like to help them – teachers, parents, other family members – may not even be aware that these events are occurring. Indeed, some emails make clear that children are experiencing situations that would qualify as a criminal matters (e.g., sexual abuse from family members, sexual bullying over the internet). Those examples have not been included in the above table, though, because the children so strongly expressed the need for privacy in their emails to Dot.

The content of these emails provides evidence that the MDC programme is having an impact on children's real lives. More specifically, MDC is helping children to find solutions to the problems they experience. This is illustrated particularly by the reply emails that

children sometimes send, where they tell Dot how they have applied her advice. A few examples of these replies include:

Examples of children's emails to Dot: Demonstrations that Dot's advice was helpful
Hello miss dorothy I just wanted to thank you so much for helping me in year 4 . They stoped bullying. But now there bulling my friend please could you send me sone advise wich i can give to her. That would be great. thanks miss dorothy you are so cool
hi dot i just wanna say hi how are you and a massive thank you for your help these girls are my friends now alll thanks to your information
Thank you so mega-much dot you are the best! I took your advice ...

In summary, MDC's unique email service has generated an evidence base that makes clear the programme is having an impact on children's real lives. When it is recalled that MDC is doing so for the cost of £4.00 per child, this indicates extremely good value, given that long-lasting damage is known to be done by the kinds of problems the children are encountering (e.g., bullying, domestic violence, sexual violence). Moreover, the primary years are those when children are strengthening skills in emotional negotiation, which lie at the heart of happy, effective lives. The emails demonstrate the ways in which MDC is helping children to develop such negotiation skills.

Recommendations. Our use of these emails as evidential data base points to the many types of evidence that organizations will have available, but which may not have viewed in this manner. An evidence base does not have to exist only of empirical research studies using validated scales. We therefore recommend that KTF reflect on whether they have available any other input on their programmes that could be treated as data sets, especially those that reveal insights on real-life impact of the programmes.

We also recommend that KTF develop a procedure or software package that allows for regular and systematic classification of all children's emails coming into the MDC website. This would allow up to date reports about the real-life problems being encountered by children involved in the programme. If this option is pursued, it is recommended that KTF obtain assistance from skilled qualitative researchers (e.g., those experienced with content analysis or grounded analysis) to assist them in developing a sensitive and robust classification system for tracking the content of the emails. While they could of course use

their existing classification system, a more nuanced one will provide them with richer insights about MDC's effectiveness.

Financial Evidence: Savings generated by KTF programmes

Society and governments have always sought, understandably, to get the most from their financial spend. However, the need to be resourceful has increased dramatically in the recent period of financial restraint. Whilst the need to spend wisely applies as much to intervention programmes as to any other initiatives, it is interesting to note that investigating financial yield for intervention programmes is a relatively recent step. Traditionally, the focus of evaluation has been placed on outcomes, rather than financial savings. The growing understanding that early intervention can substantially reduce later costs has generated new interest in financial assessment of programmes.

So what, precisely, are the costs that early intervention programmes are seeking to reduce? The following extracts from two sources (The Independent, October 2010 and The Centre for Social Justice Early Intervention Report, 2009) set out clearly the costs that society pays when children and families are left to struggle.

The Independent (Oct 2010): Nuisance families 'cost £275,000'

A "typical unruly family" costs taxpayers almost £275,000 a year, a council has said.

Westminster Council said the costs included those incurred by police, the NHS and the council, as well as the burden of welfare benefits and the cost of associated problems like drug abuse and truancy.

The annual figure, some £273,781, includes a year's foster care at £900 per week, £24,000 to tackle the risk of a young prolific offender and £23,200 to deal with domestic violence in each nuisance family, the council said.

Other costs included £13,000 for an eviction, almost £20,000 for six months' temporary accommodation post-eviction, and more than £17,000 to tackle substance misuse.

Centre for Social Justice Early Intervention Report 2009: The costs of early damage

A large part of the difference in empathic capabilities which children develop comes from the way they are disciplined. Children are more empathic when discipline includes clearly drawing attention to the distress their behaviour causes to someone else. Empathy is shaped by how children see others responding to distress. By imitating the adult response, children develop a repertoire of empathy – or its absence.

All party leaders need to ask themselves: How can we have a balanced society leading to a thriving economy whilst carrying this growing burden? We need to ensure that all school leavers have the personal and social abilities to adapt and learn new skills if we are to compete globally. Failure to prepare children aged 0-3 properly already results in 38 per cent of school leavers, after 11 years (over thirteen thousand hours at school!), not attaining 5 decent GCSEs, despite enormous remedial efforts.

The following are some broad brush, headline figures for the annual costs of dysfunction:

- Violence costs the country at least £20 billion
- Violence towards NHS staff estimated at £69m
- Children in care cost £2 billion;
- Child abuse: at least £1 billion (mostly dealing with consequences, not prevention)
- A child with severe conduct disorder costs £70,000 (1995 estimate)

What impact does an intervention programme have on such costs? A precise estimate can be difficult to judge, because it depends on how much the programme costs to deliver; how many children participating in the programme experience social dysfunction; which domains are addressed by the programme; and how many people's lives are affected (either directly or indirectly) by a change in an incipient pattern of problems. Moreover, it is not always clear how any of these factors can be reasonably measured and assessed.

Is it possible to begin to make some judgment of the financial savings being generated by KTF programmes? Yes. What is undeniably clear is that MDC programmes are very inexpensive at the point of delivery. The MDC programme costs approximately £4.00 per child (including training and support), the equivalent of a cappuchino per child. A liberal estimate of the WOM programme is £1.00 per child; the costs are probably much less than this. It is obvious that such costs are miniscule compared to the costs of social dysfunction as just outlined.

The financial yield of KTF programmes will be increased by the breadth of the programme content. KTF programmes are purposely designed to have a potential impact on a range of domains of young people's lives: pro-social behaviour, academic performance, self-confidence, peer relations, violence, and pregnancy, amongst others. The empirical and real-life evidence of outcomes, as already discussed, indicate that changes in these areas are being achieved. Thus, the financial benefits stemming from KTF programmes are expected to be multi-faceted and may be much greater than an initial estimate suggests.

Recommendations. It is important that KTF devise means of systematically assessing financial savings generated by their programmes. This could be initiated by focusing on only one or two domains; there is no need to tackle gaining a comprehensive picture (at least in the first instance). Acquiring any systematic account of such savings would be innovative step, for most organizations offering school-based intervention programmes have not put in place such assessment structures. We recommend focusing on potential outcomes that are easily measured and for which recording systems are already in place, such as school absences, exclusions, acts of violence, additional learning support needs, and academic performance. These are precisely the domains that KTF seeks to have an impact on, and schools already collect much of this data. Thus, it makes conceptual and practical sense that KTF begin by focusing on these types of factors. This requires simply devising a means of capturing

existing data. After such ‘capture’ is achieved, KTF could, later on, begin to think about how they might systematically measure, track, and cost additional outcomes. Overall, any systematic measurement of financial yield would benefit numerous sectors. KTF would know more about their own effectiveness, as would participating schools. Funders would also be better able to judge the value of their investment, and society at large would be better placed to think about how to best track the costs and savings associated with the ‘social good’ of happy, safe, emotionally engaged children.

VI. Frameworks for Evaluating Effectiveness

How should the effectiveness of intervention programmes be assessed? That is the central question of this report.

On what basis are we, as a society and as funding bodies, able to determine the overall value of a programme? A variety of evaluative frameworks are now operating within the public sector, and each framework yields a particular view of a programme’s overall effectiveness. In the next section of the report, we will use three different frameworks to assess the overall effectiveness of KTF programmes. Our specific aim is to evaluate KTF’s existing evidence base against each of the frameworks. This will reveal where gaps exist in the current evidence base, thus drawing attention to the areas that would most benefit from future evaluation efforts.

Our purpose in carrying out this analysis is two-fold. Foremost, it provides an example to any organization as to how they could carry out an evaluation of their overall effectiveness, drawing attention to the different outcomes that emerge from the use of different frameworks. Secondly, it provides feedback to KTF about the current state of their evidence base. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of an existing evidence base is crucial for organizations today, because it is that evidence base that will enable them to make robust claims about the value of their programmes.

The three frameworks on which this report will focus report are: Project Oracle, Total Place, and the Big Society. These particular frameworks have been chosen because they currently command high levels of political and societal attention within the UK. Assessment frameworks have become increasingly desirable as society, often represented by local and national governmental structures, seeks to determine whether the money and efforts invested in programmes are yielding the expected outcomes. Frameworks thus bring together the various components that could be used to judge effectiveness, and combine these to derive a more integrated picture of effectiveness.

In this report, a grid will be presented for each framework, which shows the components relevant to that framework. Components have been obtained from descriptions of the frameworks, in documents published by the authors of those frameworks (as referenced in forthcoming sections). In instances where those components have not yet been explicitly articulated, they were deduced from those documents. The grid will show how KTF's current evidence base performs against each component. A 3-point rating scale will be used to indicate performance: 'strong', 'medium', 'weak'.

A. Project Oracle

Project Oracle is the evaluative framework designed to operate in London. It was conceived in 2009 and developed as part of the Greater London Authority's (GLA's) 'Time for Action' initiative.³ The aim of that initiative is to better equip young people for the future, and Project Oracle's role within it is to set out clear criteria by which intervention programmes funded by the GLA can be judged for their effectiveness, deliverability, and value for money. Project Oracle's particular strength is that it draws attention to the evidence base that underpins a programme; the more empirically robust this is, the more confidence the GLA can have in a decision to endorse the programme.

The table below summarises the criteria that Project Oracle has identified as evidence of effectiveness. As the table shows, Project Oracle identifies three dimensions that need to be considered during assessments (as shown in column headings): intervention specificity, evaluation quality, and intervention impact.⁴ Project Oracle conceives of interventions as achieving one of five levels of effectiveness (as shown in Column 1): early evidence of effectiveness, promising, effective, model, and system-ready. These criteria were devised based on the work of an international team and were drawn together into an integrated Evaluation Toolkit by the Dartington Social Research Unit. The table below has been created

³ Time for Action and Project Oracle sources:

<http://www.london.gov.uk/who-runs-london/mayor/publications/safety-and-policing/time-action>

<http://london.gov.uk/archive/mayor/crime/timeforaction/docs/timeforaction-update-0709.pdf>

⁴ Specificity of intervention: Is the intervention practical and logical? Is it clear as to expected outcome? Does it have a theoretical or logical framework driving it? How much attention is given to fidelity?

Evaluation quality: How much confidence can be placed in the evaluations carried out of the programme? Is the evaluation strategy clearly laid out? Have sensible control groups been employed? Have randomised trials been undertaken? Have outcomes been shown in several different contexts?

Intervention impact: How much difference does the intervention make to children's lives? Where empirical evaluations have been carried out, what are the effect sizes for outcomes? What do cost-benefit analyses indicate; how expensive is the programme to administer and what kinds of savings are yielded, over the short and long-term?

(by the authors of this report) as a means of displaying these two intersecting types of information.

TABLE A PROJECT ORACLE CRITERIA			
LEVEL	INTERVENTION SPECIFICITY	EVALUATION QUALITY	INTERVENTION IMPACT
1 EARLY EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS	Specified outcomes exist for the programme. Specific target group criteria exist for the programme.	A coherent strategy for evaluation is in place.	Evidence exists that the intervention is being implemented as intended.
2 PROMISING INTERVENTION	A clear logic or theoretical basis underpins both the process and the content of the intervention.	A study with matched comparison or control groups has been completed.	Evidence exists that the programme has a positive or deterrent effect.
3 EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION	Training & implementation manuals are available	A study using a randomised control design has been completed. The effects of the first study have been replicated in a subsequent study.	A consistent pattern of statistically significant positive effects is demonstrated
4 MODEL INTERVENTION	The intervention is delivered under real world conditions	An external replication study has been carried out, showing suitable outcomes.	Effects are sustained beyond treatment for at least 1 year. There are no known negative or harmful effects.
5 SYSTEM READY INTERVENTION	The intervention is delivered at scale, in real world conditions, by appropriate professionals. Manuals & technical support are readily available.	Cost benefit analyses have been undertaken. Monitoring and evaluation tools are available to providers.	Cost-benefit information suggests that the intervention breaks even. Impact is established for sub- groups.

Where would KTF's current evidence base allow it to be placed within the Project Oracle framework? Grid A, below, answers that question by giving our assessment of KTF's performance, using the 3-point rating scale of 'strong', 'medium', 'weak'. It should be understood that the scores do not give an assessment of the ultimate value of the programme. Instead, the scores should be seen as providing guidance as to the claims that KTF could reasonably make at the moment in regard to the effectiveness of their programmes. Such claims would be substantiated by KTF's current evidence base (as summarised in the last section of this report). Should KTF aim to make stronger claims as to the effectiveness of

their MDC and WOM programmes, then the scores in the grid will help them to understand where they need to direct their evaluative efforts in future, if those claims are to be robustly defensible.

GRID A			
KTF's performance against PROJECT ORACLE Framework			
	INTERVENTION SPECIFICITY	EVALUATION QUALITY	INTERVENTION IMPACT
Performance Rating – using the present report's 3-point scale	Strong	Medium	Medium
Performance Rating – using Project Oracle's 5-level scale	Project Oracle Level 5: System Ready Intervention	Project Oracle Level 2: Promising Intervention	Project Oracle Level 3: Effective Intervention
Reasoning for classifications (using Project Oracle definitions)	“Intervention is delivered at scale, in real world conditions, by appropriate professionals. Manuals & technical support are readily available.”	“Studies with matched comparisons groups have been carried out”	“A consistent pattern of statistically significant positive effects is demonstrated.”

Our reasoning for awarding the rating scores shown in the grid is as follows.

Intervention specificity: Strong. KTF programmes achieve the highest levels of Project Oracle's expectations. They are system ready, given that they are already being delivered to thousands of children, in schools throughout the UK. Manuals and support materials, along with training, are a core component of programme delivery. These are the key criteria for Project Oracle's Level 5. The programmes are conceived as universal, addressing the needs of all children, thus overcoming the need for target group identification. Of the three dimensions contained within the Project Oracle framework, KTF scores most highly on Intervention Specificity.

Evaluation Quality: Medium. Empirical evidence of KTF's effectiveness has been collected. Systematic evaluations have been carried out on seven occasions, and ad-hoc feedback on the programmes is collected constantly, if informally, throughout the year. The formal studies have included both quantitative and qualitative data, using a variety of methodologies (e.g., interview, questionnaires, validated scales, and observations). Some of the studies have utilized quite large samples (i.e., 500+). Crucially for Project Oracle, some

of the studies have adopted a matched comparison group design; this is the key criterion for Level 2. KTF has been exploring a more comprehensive data-collection strategy (as described later in this report), which would provide a rich and intriguing national data set, including cost-benefit analyses. This would address the requirements of Levels 3 – 5. The randomized-control trials sought within a Project Oracle framework may prove challenging for KTF to achieve.

Intervention Impact: Medium. A mass of evidence exists, obtained from a variety of participant groups (e.g., children, teachers, partners, stakeholders) over a number of years, of the positive impact that KTF programmes are making in children's lives and school environments. These outcomes have been yielded by both quantitative and qualitative data sets. Outcomes from these studies are all consistent: the programmes are liked by users and they are having the desired effect of promoting self-esteem, empathy, and other qualities. Statistical effects are, as yet, somewhat tentative, and more robust designs are required in order to allow reliable calculation of effect sizes (as required within Project Oracle criteria). The balance of evidence relating to the dimension Intervention Impact thus places KTF programmes within the range of Levels 3 / 4. A comprehensive data collection process should permit systematic cost-benefit analyses (although on the basis of the information available already, there is no doubt that the programme breaks even, which is a necessary requirement of Level 5).

Overall, KTF could currently be described in Project Oracle terminology as:

A strongly specific intervention, with clear goals and required training for practitioners, supported by practice manuals and by quality monitoring. The interventions are actively evaluated and have a history of external scrutiny, providing useful feedback. The impact of the work is well supported by individuals' testimony, by pro-social behaviour observed in children, and by enthusiastic endorsement from professionals.

To strengthen KTF's performance under a Project Oracle framework:

More work is required to enhance the existing evaluation evidence. The evidence base needs to be strengthened, particularly through a more systematic and sustained data set, especially in regard to the cost effectiveness of impact over time. The comprehensive evaluation system that has been proposed would achieve these requirements.

B. Total Place

Total Place is an initiative now operating in 13 regions of the UK.⁵ It was introduced in 2010, with the key aim of offering a new approach to the delivery of public services. At its core, the Total Place approach is an argument for genuine joint-working, with the wholistic needs of people – as citizens -- as its centre. Such a ‘whole area’ approach is effectively conceived as leading to better services at less cost. It creates efficiencies in service delivery, whilst improving programme impact and achieving outcomes at an earlier point than is often possible otherwise. This contrasts with more traditional models of service delivery, which have as their organizational framework the type of service and the associated budget. This contrasts with Total Place’s framework, which is organized around the needs of people.

A grid has been compiled (as shown below) that displays the key components of a Total Place approach against an initiative’s level of compliance. This comparison provides an indicator of the initiative’s effectiveness. The key components are those that any intervention is seen as needing in order to comply with the basic principles of the model. There are six key components (as shown in Column 1): citizen at the heart of service design, agencies combine to deliver joint working, process of delivery is reduced, user-validated evidence of change, minimum resources used to effect change, and locality place-based solutions. Total Place conceives of effectiveness in three stages (shown in column headings): 1. activity accords with components; 2. evidence of citizen engagement/validation; 3. evidence of change at reduced cost.

How does KTF perform against the Total Place criteria? Our judgements as to the claims that KTF could reasonably make about the effectiveness of its programmes, *based on its current evidence base*, are shown in Grid B. These judgements are represented by the 3-point scale of ‘strong’, ‘medium’ and ‘weak’.

⁵ Total Place sources:

<http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/>

<http://www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Total-Place-a-practitioners-guide-to-doing-things-differently.pdf>

<http://www.croydon.gov.uk/contents/departments/democracy/pdf/617342/child-family-place.pdf>

GRID B			
KTF's performance against TOTAL PLACE Framework			
Key Components	Stage 1: Programme activity accords with component	Stage 2: Evidence of citizen engagement / validation	Stage 3: Evidence of real change at reduced cost
Citizen is at heart of service design	Strong	Strong	Weak
Agencies combine to deliver	Strong	Strong	Weak
Process of delivery is reduced	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Clear user validated evidence of change	Strong	Medium	Weak
Minimum resources used to effect outcome	Strong	Medium	Weak
Locality place based solutions	Strong	Medium	Weak

Our reasoning for awarding the rating scores shown in the grid is as follows.

1. *Programme activity: Strong.* The ethos of KTF programmes fits well with a Total Place approach. The child, and his or her needs, sits at the centre of the intervention. Local representatives from the emergency services (fire, police, ambulance) are called on to assist in delivering and supporting the programme. The programme thus draws on existing local human resources for delivery, supplemented by low-cost materials. On this basis, KTF can be seen as achieving a strong rating, across all dimensions, for the Programme Activity dimension of the Total Place approach.

2. *Evidence of citizen engagement: Medium.* The current evidence base for KTF would, in our judgement, achieve a medium rating in regard to citizen engagement. A number of the evaluations already carried out for KTF confirm children's, teachers' and stakeholders' enthusiastic endorsement of the programme. Agencies also combine to deliver the programme; indeed, such joint working is central to KTF's core model. The evidence base is weaker concerning the full extent of change in children's behaviour or how resource use is altered by the programmes. In particular, there is too little systematic indication in the

existing evidence base as to how different areas and schools are drawing on KTF programmes to address local challenges. A range of very encouraging anecdotes of behavioural changes exist (e.g., reductions in bullying, knife carrying, aggression), but greater systematicity in collecting such accounts is desirable. A comprehensive monitoring system (as discussed later) might be able to address some of these gaps. It is likely that additional measures would need to be put in place to achieve insights into locally based solutions. Details of such differences would be valuable, because this would allow organizations participating in KTF programmes to compare their approach in using the programmes to the approaches adopted in other regions. In short, a framework for ‘KTF Best Practice’ might begin to emerge.

3. *Real change at reduced cost: Weak.* This is currently not a strong area of KTF’s performance within a Total Place framework. Although there is certainly basic evidence of compliance with all six components of Total Place that show a low-cost, high impact approach, a robust set of relevant data is not yet available. There are two key gaps in the current evidence base. The first is a lack of detailed cost-benefit analyses. Whilst it is clear that delivery of the programme incurs low costs (£4.00 per child per year for MDC; £1 or less per child for WOM), detailed information is not available on the wider savings generated by the programmes. It can be confidently assumed that KTF is helping to reduce the huge costs to society that are known to be associated with even a single child who is unable to learn or with a single family struggling with domestic violence. It would be immensely valuable if cost-benefit information could be generated for KTF programmes.

The second gap concerns a lack of available comparisons to other safety or PSHE programmes. The absence of useful comparative studies renders it difficult to judge whether the costs (and associated savings) are greater for KTF programmes than is the case for other similar schools-based programmes. Achieving this degree of insight will require the development of research designs where comparisons can be made to PSHE programmes not managed by KTF. Encouragingly, this has been attempted in one of the earlier KTF evaluations (conducted by Craigatin Psychological Services in 2008). Were it possible, a more comprehensive use of this research design (perhaps even in the form of a randomized controlled trial) would be immensely beneficial, not only to KTF, but to the whole sector interested in evidence-based interventions for children and young people.

Overall, KTF could currently be described in Total Place terminology as:

A programme that accords strongly with the ethos of building an intervention around the needs of the citizen. User feedback is enthusiastic. The key domain which needs investigation is that of cost-benefit analyses.

To strengthen KTF's performance under a Total Place framework:

It is not clear how much money KTF programmes are actually saving to local government areas. This would be the most valuable insight that future evaluation of the programmes could provide. KTF need not be solely responsible for gathering such information; a better model would be to work with partners in a local area to gather such financial information. Indeed, this model of evidence gathering would be an illustration of the Total Place model of joint-working.

C. The Big Society

The Big Society is a vision for society created by the current Conservative Party leader, David Cameron. Generated over the past year, this is a vision where power shifts from central government back into the hands of individuals and local communities. Cameron sees this as radical cultural change in the way that societal problems are solved. In his own words, as stated in a 2010 speech:⁶ “You can call it liberalism. You can call it empowerment. You can call it freedom. You can call it responsibility. I call it the Big Society. The Big Society is about a huge culture change.”

. Grid C shows the key components comprised in a Big Society framework, as can be discerned from key government documents.⁷ We conceive of there being eight key components (as shown in Column 1): building strong communities, empowering individuals, supporting and strengthening families, giving information to empower individuals or communities, moving power from politicians and systems to people and communities, enabling local problem solving, working with local issues involving a mixed economy, and achieving impact for less cost. There are three stages of success (as shown in column headings) implied in published documentation (as shown in column headings): 1. aims of the programme support Big Society components; 2. evidence that the programme is promoting engagement from individuals or communities; 3. evidence of impact on communities or individuals.

⁶ Transcript of speech by Cameron on the Big Society (July 2010):

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/speeches-and-transcripts/2010/07/big-society-speech-53572>

⁷ Sources describing specific elements of The Big Society:

Conservative Party Manifesto: Mending Our Broken Society:

http://www.conservatives.com/News/News_stories/2010/01/~~/media/Files/Activist%20Centre/Press%20and%20Policy/Briefing%20Documents/Draft%20Manifesto/DraftSocietyManifesto.ashx

New Economics Foundation: Ten Big Questions about the Big Society:

<http://www.neweconomics.org/publications/ten-big-questions-about-the-big-society>

Grid C has been constructed to allow the integration of the two dimensions. The 3-point scale (of ‘strong’, ‘medium’, ‘weak’) can then be used to evaluate KTF’s existing evidence base against each component.

GRID C			
KTF’s performance against BIG SOCIETY Framework			
Key Components	Stage 1: Basic aims of programme support components	Stage2: Evidence of individual or community engagement	Stage 3: Evidence of individual or community impact
Building strong communities	Strong	Strong	Medium
Empowering individuals	Strong	Strong	Strong
Supporting and strengthening families	Medium	Medium	Medium
Giving information to empower communities or individuals	Strong	Strong	Strong
Moving power from politicians & systems to people & communities	Strong	Medium	Medium
Enabling local problem solving	Medium	Medium	Medium
Working with local issues and involving a mixed economy	Medium	Medium	Medium
Achieving impact for less cost	Strong	Medium	Medium

So, overall, how does KTF perform against the Big Society criteria, based on its current evidence base?

1. *Programme supports Big Society components: Medium.* The ethos of KTF fits very well with a Big Society approach. The aim is to empower children to keep themselves and their peers safe. This will help to build safer and stronger communities. Schools are encouraged to make use of programme materials in ways that address local problems and challenges, and they work with local partners, especially the emergency services, to deliver the programme. The programme is thus designed to

operate locally, despite its national spread and its view that central government funding offers one key way of supporting programme delivery. Additionally, community change is certainly not seen as coming through children alone. KTF envisions the programmes as ultimately promoting community change (e.g., greater empathy transforming a school). Thus, KTF might consider emphasising community impact more forcefully in their documentation and discussion. Perhaps the area in which most work is needed, in order to meet the aims of a Big Society framework, is (as has been stressed before) evidence relating to the financial costs and benefits of KTF programmes. Overall, a reasonable assessment of KTF programmes, against Big Society Stage 1, is a rating of ‘medium’.

2. Individual or community engagement: Medium. There is a raft of evidence within the existing evidence base that KTF programmes engage users and communities. That is not in doubt. What remains less clear is evidence of the precise ways in which that engagement is affecting and changing communities. Such evidence could be gathered through studies utilising interview and other qualitative techniques, as well as systematically collecting feedback from schools and partners. Overall, the combination of ‘strong’ and ‘medium’ ratings yields a summary ranking of ‘medium’.

3. *Individual or community impact: Medium.* The existing data base (especially that obtained from emails to the MDC website) shows that KTF programmes are meeting this aim. In addition, KTF possess a wealth of anecdotal stories of individual children and adults, as well as groups of children and whole classes, who have changed their behaviour as a result of KTF programmes. There thus seems little doubt that KTF programmes are increasing pro-social attitudes and actions. However, it is important that the anecdotal accounts are captured systematically, so that they can be fed into the evidence base. It is through such systematicity that these accounts will generate robust evidence of the programmes’ impact.

Overall, KTF could currently be described in Big Society terminology as:

A programme that seeks to empower individuals, particularly children and young people, through the help of community members. It is clear that that one outcome of such empowerment will be safer communities. The suite of programmes is designed to be cost effective and to empower individual children, supporting them through local mixed groups, including statutory, voluntary and sporting bodies. KTF’s key aim, of delivering safer schools and communities, is fully in line with a Big Society vision.

To strengthen KTF's performance under a Big Society framework:

The processes through which increased safety is being achieved could be more clearly articulated. For example, at a community level, is the primary aim for decreased violence? Or are there additional ways in which KTF explicitly sees itself as promoting community change? Articulating this vision will help to illuminate more clearly the fit with a Big Society framework.

VII. Recommendations

On the basis of our considerations, we offer the following recommendations to KTF. Because this report is concerned primarily with the quality of the evidence base, we will focus particularly on approaches to strengthening the existing evidence base. However, we will also offer suggestions for future content development.

A. Develop a comprehensive monitoring system for programme outcomes

We are aware that KTF has been contemplating the creation of computer-based system that would enable routine monitoring of outcomes for children and schools enrolled in the MDC and WOM programmes. We would strongly encourage this step. It would provide KTF with the robust and cutting-edge evidence base that it is capable of generating.

We recommend that such a programme be designed such that schools provided information on the following types of factors: exclusion rates, bullying, aggression, racism, illness, academic performance and demographics such as gender, age, disabilities, and social deprivation. These factors include those regularly kept by schools, as well as supplementary items pertinent to KT interventions. Entry of this information would quickly yield a large database, reflecting the experiences of hundreds of schools throughout the country and tens of thousands of participating children. Schools could be given support and training for use of the system, and analysis of the data set could be handled by a statistical team specially contracted to manage and interrogate the information. This would allow extensive and national insights into the effects of intervention programmes, including questions such as:

- How do schools' rates of exclusion, bullying, and aggression change after enrollment in KTF programme, as compared to the period before enrolling?
- Does enrollment KTF socio-emotional safety programmes affect academic performance?
- How do outcomes for individual schools compare?
- How do rates of exclusion, bullying, aggression, etc., compare between schools using KTF interventions, other interventions, and no interventions? How do these rates differ by social deprivation and other regional factors?
- What are the characteristics of the young people and schools participating in KTF programmes?

The impetus for creation of this automatic database system has arisen out of KTF's awareness that they have access to an exceptionally large group of young people and schools.

Information about outcomes would thus be of interest not only to KTF themselves, and to enrolled schools, but to all bodies interested in promoting and funding interventions (e.g., national government, local governments, emergency services) and to the academic literature on interventions. Having gained experience with the limitations of small-scale, ad-hoc evaluation studies, we hope that KTF now feels ready to undertake a more prospective, controlled, large-scale approach to evaluation.

B. Investigate the mechanisms of behavioural change

One of the major gaps that this report has identified in the current evidence base for KTF programmes concerns the need for a theoretical explanation of the behavioural change observed. All of the evidential domains examined in this report – quantitative (questionnaires), interviews, narrative (emails), and incidental (descriptions of events) – revealed instances of change in young people's behaviour toward one another. We recommend that KTF devote more attention to explaining what is driving such change.

The most likely explanation seems to be that KTF programmes are fostering empathy and pro-social attitudes. This is what the accumulated evidence base suggests, and it is a possibility that is fully in keeping with the content of both MDC and WOM. The programme's founder, Sharon Doughty, certainly believes that the programmes enhance children's empathy.

It is recommended that KTF invest evaluative efforts in confirming this is the case. This can be done in two stages. First, behavioural change needs to be more systematically documented. This could be achieved through quantitative methods, such as questionnaires that would estimate rates of reported behavioural change, interview methods that would generate details of behavioural changes, and ethno-methodologies that would yield actual observations of change, for example in the classroom, on the playground, at the bus stop, and even outside school settings. Secondly, evidence that can provide a theoretical account of such changes needs to be generated -- guided by the current hypothesis that it is driven by a rise in empathy. Valid evidence that speaks to the cause of behavioural change will certainly be useful to KTF, as it will help them to better understand and promote their own programmes. It will also meet the expectations of evaluative frameworks such as Project Oracle, which regards theoretical grounding to be an essential component of robust intervention programmes. And it will be of interest to partners such as emergency services, as

well as funding bodies, as it will help them to reflect more deeply on the relationship between ‘soft’ emotional capacities and the ‘hardcore’ aggressive behaviour that is so costly for society.

C. Develop a programme aimed at preschool children

To date, KTF has focused on children and young people aged 7 – 18 years. This has understandably arisen from the school structures within which the organization has traditionally worked, and which have supported the delivery of programme material. This focus makes sense when one conceives of the programmes as teaching safety messages.

We would encourage KTF to consider extending their remit by developing a preschool programme. While this may be a stretch for current resources, it would make conceptual sense if the theoretical explanation just discussed, of a rise in empathy, is indeed driving behavioural change. This is because neuroscientific and psychological studies have confirmed that it is during the first years of life that empathy develops. Indeed, children who are not demonstrating empathy by 2 years of age are more likely to engage in aggressive and violent behaviour in later years. This is due to the neural pathways that are established in the brain during this earliest period of life. This insight suggests that the most effective means of reducing violence and aggression may be through ensuring that those engaging with children in their earliest years (e.g., parents, day care staff, nursery staff) relate to them in as sensitive and attuned a style as possible. Certainly this is an understanding that is reshaping the thinking of a number of emergency and health services (e.g., Strathclyde Police, London Metropolitan Police, World Health Organisation).

The wider Early Years Agenda, into which this focus on empathy falls, is currently drawing extensive attention throughout political, governmental, and societal structures. This is because economic analyses have made clear how great the costs to society are when the needs of children fail to be sufficiently supported during the early years. Investment during the earliest years can yield a return, in later years, of up to 1400%, for groups who need intensive support.⁸ Groups for whom less specialized support is needed (e.g., through universal services) can yield savings of 200%, which represents considerable savings over a large population.

⁸ Articles discussing the economics of early years investment, including 2010 testimony to the Scottish Parliament’s Inquiry on Preventative Spending:

<http://www.pnas.org/content/104/33/13250.full>

<http://www.jstor.org/pss/30034418>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Research/by-topic/children-and-young-people/EarlyYears>

If empathy is a key mechanism driving the pro-social behavioural change seen in KTF programmes, then an additional means by which safety could be achieved is through boosting empathy capacities during earlier years. KTF could begin to consider how materials might be created for nursery schools, day care centres, and perhaps parent groups. Materials might include stories, activities, and information that teachers and staff could use during daily interactions with the very young children in their care. The fact that a growing number of primary schools have nursery schools attached to them would make it possible to extend the themes that are so central to the MDC programme to the whole-school environment. It would also perhaps provide new material for future updates of current MDC content. (Perhaps Dot or Genie or one of the gang might soon be gaining a baby brother or sister?)

In short, a better understanding of the mechanisms that are driving behavioural change provides new avenues for developing and promoting KTF programmes. If increases in empathy and pro-social attitudes are playing a key role in keeping children safer, then this is a point worth making to users, to funders, to partners, and to government. It may seem a radical and yet inspiring idea to take seriously the idea that strengthening empathy should have a major impact on violence and aggression rates. KTF could promote themselves as having the practical means for applying the insights that neuroscience has been generating over the past decade. It would be important, in that case, to collect evidence systematically demonstrating KTF's success in a) promoting empathy and then b) linking those shifts that directly to behavioural change. The new evidence database system that is under construction (described above) offers a good opportunity for beginning to be able to make such links.

VIII. Suggestions to Other Organisations for Gathering Evidence of Effectiveness

How might the insights yielded by this report be utilized by other organizations? If, as a sector, we are to know what works and what doesn't, it is essential that organizations, both large and small, work hard to ensure that the evidence of what they do is not lost. It needs to be captured in ways that lets both themselves and others see what they are doing, to understand why it works, what financial benefits it yields, and to reflect more creatively on how this could be measured and demonstrated. Such insights are all the more important in times of financial restraint, even though the administrative services that would usually collect data may be cut.

In this final section of the report, we considered it useful to highlight ways in which other organizations might draw on the approach we have adopted here, as one means of thinking about how they could evaluate their own services. The three grids used in the report frame

ways in which an organisation's effectiveness can be matched against other bodies' criteria. Many organizations tend to focus on gathering basic statistics or feedback, as their main form of evaluation data. These grids show how much more information can be gathered, with relatively low effort and cost, but which yield high value. Such information can prove very helpful in determining how effective an organization is (or isn't), and how to tell that story to others.

We have therefore devised the following 10 suggestions for cost-effective and innovative collection of evaluation evidence.

1. Be specific about what your work does, its focus, what should change if it is effective, and what exactly that change would look like.
2. Keep the history alive. Tell others – users, funders, staff, managers – how the initiative was invented, by whom, what their motivation was, and what the theory guiding it was.
3. From the very outset, long before a programme is implemented, identify the information that will be needed to tell the story of your effectiveness. Who are the users? What is their starting point? What are the hopes for them? What will show they have achieved those aims?
4. Compare what is done and what is desired for the programme to similar organizations and initiatives. What overlaps are there, and what distinctiveness? These organizations provide strong comparison and control groups, against which outcomes can be compared. Such comparisons are useful for all organizations involved, and others reading about the findings.
5. Regularly ask the users and staff to record their views. What are the strengths and the challenges of the initiative? What would they change? Why? These can be captured in written or recorded format. Even if they are not examined in depth at the time they are taken, they will be available if one needs to refer back to them.
6. Think creatively about how to measure impact. When measuring impact, many organizations focus on basic statistical information, such as attendance rates or narrative feedback; some may also use validated scales measuring an aspect of child development or behaviour. Do not limit your considerations to this narrow range of measurements. Think creatively about what outcomes with 'look like' and how they might be measured. The key feature of outcome evaluation is its clarity and systematic nature, not the particular form it takes.
7. Be sure that the records being kept are systematic. Most organizations keep records, but they are not always as systematic as they could be. It is the systematicity of a data set that allows it to generate robust insights.
8. Be sure to keep records relating to economics and finances. For evaluation purposes, this is more than tracking cash flow and other accounting issues. Rather, it is being able to demonstrate how much (or how little) a programme cost, in relation to the financial benefits it yielded. Try to be creative in measuring the financial benefits, savings, and income generation that is

occurring as a result of the programme. Such economic insights are exceedingly important in today's climate.

9. Ask someone independent to review the suggestions above and convey their views on these or other matters. Alternatively, carry out peer reviews with organizations that are similar to or sharply contrasting with your own.
10. Crucially, publish what is done. Without publications, observers cannot become acquainted with an organisation's efforts or their outcomes. So, make available written documents that convey the kinds of information explored in this report. Show what's been done right, what areas have been identified for improvement, and what conclusions have been drawn about making practice effective. Take it for granted that other people will want to know – because they will! Success stories, especially those that contain economic insights, are highly desired commodities these days.

IX. Conclusion

This report aimed to ask the question: How can we decide whether an intervention programme is effective? We have highlighted the point that a range of evaluative frameworks are now emerging to answer that question, and that choices are likely to be made amongst them.

To illustrate this point, we subjected the evidence base gathered by the organisation Kids Taskforce to a comparative analysis comprising three different, contemporary evaluative frameworks. Each showed KTF to be effective on a number of fronts: the programmes are endorsed by users and partners, they change attitudes and behaviours, they are deliverable across a wide population, already having reached thousands of UK children, and they offer extremely good value for money. KTF is thus commended for its efforts to date and its future aspirations in acquiring a really robust evidence base.

More importantly, though, this report has demonstrated how to evaluate a programme's effectiveness against a range of frameworks. What counts as success will differ as a consequence of the particular concerns of a funding body or sponsoring organization. It is imperative, with pressure growing for implementation of strong, evidence-based programmes, that we all continue to have informed discussions about the epistemology of evidence – about what counts as evidence, who is best placed to make that decision, and how the stories of that evidence can best be disseminated. It is only with such thoughtful reflection that we will be able to nurture the kinds of transformational programmes that we are all seeking, and thus to create the kind of society that we want our children to grow up within.



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