



Applying Behavioural Insights in Essex

Final Report | January ~ May 2019



In partnership with

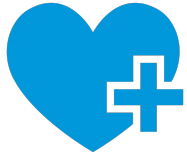


Cabinet Office



Background and scope

- In January 2019, Essex County Council (ECC) commissioned the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) to run a five-month programme of work designed to improve existing services using behavioural and data science.
- The workstreams included:



Identifying and
Supporting
Carers



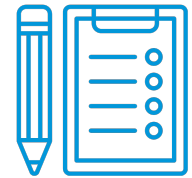
Improving Written
Communications



Capacity
Building



Data Science
Approaches to
Children's and
Adult's Social
Care



Applying
Behavioural
Insights to
Reablement



Across the workstreams

- We aimed to (a) identify some areas to which changes could be immediately made, (b) provide materials to make those changes, and (c) make some longer-term recommendations. These included:



Identifying and Supporting Carers

Identifying carers not currently known to the Council, and designing a trial to reduce carer burnout



Improving Written Communications

Identifying a range of written communications where behavioural insights could improve outcomes, and suggesting behaviourally informed adjustments



Capacity Building

Conducting Behavioural Insights workshops for senior staff, and running evaluation training for Research and Citizen Insight team, and collaborating with internal Data team



Across the workstreams



Data Sciences Approaches in Adult's and Children's Social Care

Using data science to identify the prevalence of loneliness in older people, understand Learning Disabilities and Autism package cost differentials in different quadrants, and predict risk in children's social care



Applying Behavioural Insights to Reablement

Identifying ways to reduce failed starts, improve goal-setting practice, and increase signposting

In this slide deck, we offer an overview of the work in each area, and link to each full report.



Outputs and next steps

	Carers	Written Comms	Capacity Building	Data Sciences	Reablement
Outputs Jan - May	Implemented Facebook trial	Materials redesigned in 6 areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior workshops• Evaluation training completed by research team• Data team collaboration on data science projects	Analyses in 3 areas <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children's Social Care• Learning Disabilities and Autism• Older people	Recommendations in 3 areas <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reducing failed starts• Improving goal-setting• Increasing sign-posting
Next steps June ~	BIT to implement full burn out trial	ECC to implement	ECC to take thinking forwards	Results to feed into ALT decision-making, BIT to continue collaborating with ECC	BIT to implement training and test new materials

Overview of individual workstreams



Working with Carers



Around 145,000 carers provide vital support to friends or relatives who need help with daily living. If they do not access support this can lead to carer breakdown with poor outcomes for both carer and care recipient and high costs for statutory services. Essex County Council wishes to develop a preventative and light-touch offer of support.

Carers in Essex experience a range of barriers in terms of living their best possible lives:

- **Identifying as a carer:** Many carers fail to recognise their role as a carer or the strain caring has on them. Irrespective of whether they are aware of their situation, many carers fail to access support because they are not aware of what is available.
- **Living well as a carer:** Those carers that do access support could receive more effective help. There are peer support groups across Essex, but not everybody can or wants to access these. There are missed opportunities in terms of connecting carers with each other and helping them to manage their own wellbeing.

We developed two interventions to help tackle each of these challenges.



Identifying Carers

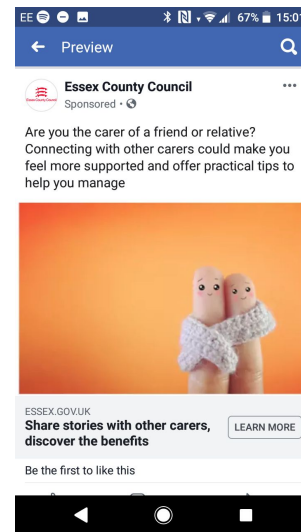


In order to **identify new carers** and connect them to light touch support we ran a **campaign on Facebook**, asking them to sign up to our online peer-to-peer support intervention (see next slide). We ran the campaign as an **A/B test** where we **tested the effectiveness of four behavioural framings** on carers' likelihood to click through to find out what support was available. We sought to answer two questions:

1. Is it more effective to address carers as '**carers**' or **someone who helps/supports** a friend or relative?
2. Is it more effective to use a **social norm** or emphasise the possible **benefits** of accessing peer support?

We found **no evidence for a difference in the click rates** between the 'carer' and 'someone who helps' messages or between the 'social norms' and 'benefits' messages.

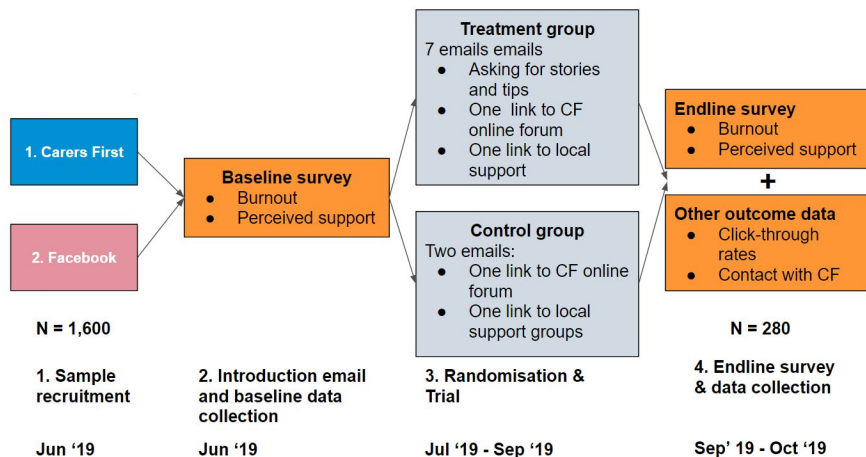
We reached an estimated 30,464 unique users of which **504 (1.7%) clicked through** to read more information. Of these, unfortunately only **18 people (3.6%) entered their contact details** to be connected to other carers. Based on previous Facebook trials we have run in other policy areas we expected the conversion rate to be higher at around 10-15%.





Supporting Carers to Live Well

The academic literature suggests that social support can help attenuate the negative effects of caring on the mental and physical health of carers. We developed a **light-touch** and **easily scalable** interactive email **intervention** to help carers **feel more supported** and part of a valued community. We will ask carers to submit stories from their lives and tips on a fortnightly basis, which we will then share back.



As such, we also hope to be able to give carers **practical tips** on how to manage their wellbeing. We ask carers to reflect on topics such as how they deal with difficult emotions, times when they have felt really supported by others or things that are important to them in their lives.

We will **evaluate** the effect of this intervention through a **randomised controlled trial** (RCT) and measure whether it reduces carer burnout. We have designed all relevant materials and will start implementing the intervention in July.



Improving Written Communications

The objective of this workstream was to identify the best opportunities to use behavioural science to improve the effectiveness of written communications in ECC. Key projects were:



Recovery of adult social care (ASC) debt

Redesigning invoices and payment reminders to improve debt recovery



Letter to families of deceased service-users

Advising on the redesign of the letter to encourage payment in a sensitive way



Increasing foster carer recruitment

Testing behaviourally informed messaging to encourage people to be foster carers and improving the customer journey



Adults' leadership team (ALT) management information

Redesigning the monthly ALT performance pack to aid interpretation



Supporting decision-making around personalised budgets

Designing a tool to help people decide whether to take up personalised budgeting



School appeals

Edits to the school appeals form to discourage parents from lodging an appeal



Capacity Building

The objective of this smaller workstream was to develop a greater understanding of behavioural insights and evaluation methods amongst ECC officers. As part of this, we:

- Delivered three half-day behavioural insights workshops to ~60 people across the council;
- Trained the Research and Citizen Insight team in light-touch evaluation; and
- Co-delivered three data science projects with the Data and Analytics team





Data Sciences in Adult's and Children's Social Care



We conducted statistical analysis on data for children, older people, and people with a learning disability or autism. We found that:

- We can predict the risk that a child coming off a child protection plan will need another plan within a year with 74% accuracy and a 37% false positive rate, improving on the 65% accuracy and 64% false positive rate of the original model.
- We cannot replicate the finding that Mid Essex has the highest average costs. Instead, we find that North Essex does. There is no single strong factor explaining regional variation in costs.
- Loneliness does not feature very much in adult social care case notes, suggesting that alternative data collection methods need to be employed instead.

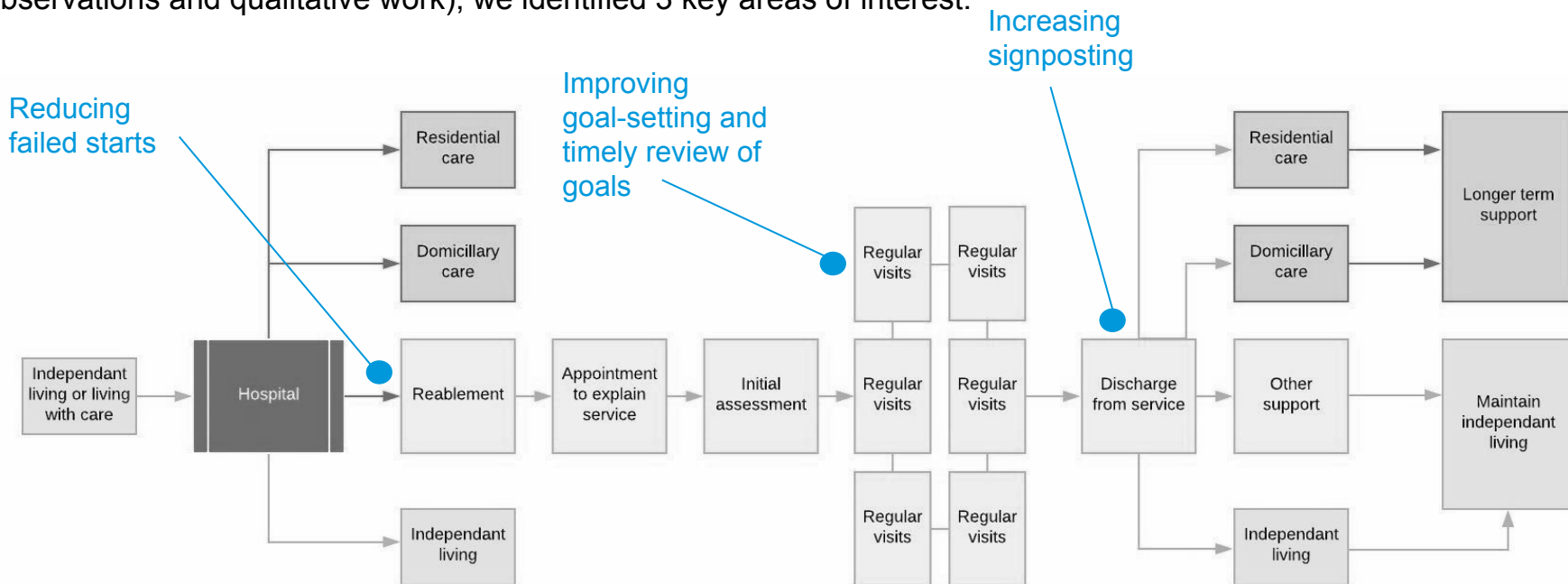
We recommend: 1) for the children's social care case, further modelling be done to improve on our accuracy gains once IT problems have been fixed; 2) further research be conducted into regional variation by manually reading through cases, and 3) psychometric scales be implemented as part of the assessment process to assess loneliness.



Applying Behavioural Insights to Reablement



We aimed to better understand how behavioural insights could be applied to Reablement services in Essex. Through our Target and Explore work (which comprised data analyses, academic and policy literature reviews, and observations and qualitative work), we identified 3 key areas of interest:





Applying Behavioural Insights to Reablement



For each objective, we've identified immediate adjustments to the service, and made recommendations for future work.

1. Reducing failed starts

- Suggested that partners generate best practice guidelines, and a comprehensive checklist for hospital discharge
- Recommended a pilot intervention to reduce failed starts at the point of first appointment (including, for example, use of text messages, improving conversations)

2. Improving goal-setting and the timely review of goals

- Completed revisions to existing Essex Carers Ltd (ECL) goal-setting materials
- Recommended training (and additional resources e.g. CACI system amendments) for Trusted Assessors to support effective goal-setting

3. Increasing signposting to early intervention and prevention services

- Suggested minor revisions to existing ECL closing materials
- Recommended collaborative work with Trusted Assessors to give them the 'permission' and tools to signpost people to preventative services

Links to individual slide decks



Links to individual slide decks

The full reports for each of the individual work streams can be accessed using the following links:

- Identifying and Supporting Carers [here](#)
- Capacity Building and Improving Written Communications [here](#)
- Data Science Approaches to Children's and Adult's Social Care [here](#)
- Applying Behavioural Insights to Reablement [here](#)