QUALITATIVE EVIDENCE REVIEW PROTOCOL: INTERVENTIONS FOR PARENTS EXPERIENCING COMPLEX & MULTIPLE NEEDS

A rapid qualitative evidence synthesis of perceptions, experiences, and barriers and enablers to successful implementation

Summary

There is a consensus within the literature that parenting interventions can improve outcomes of children supported by early help and children's social care services. However, further research is required to fully understand how interventions can fully support parents experiencing multiple or complex needs.

The purpose of this qualitative synthesis is to explore enablers and barriers to intervention engagement and understand user perspectives on intervention delivery and effectiveness.

The research questions for this review are:

1. What are the barriers and enablers to successful implementation and fidelity of parenting interventions targeted at families with multiple and complex needs?
2. What are the views, experiences and preferences of parents experiencing complex and multiple needs regarding the acceptability and usefulness of parenting interventions?

To meet the inclusion criteria, studies must have a qualitative component, be based in the UK, with a population considered as having multiple or complex needs, with children aged 0-10.

The reporting of this review will be consistent with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) standards. We will also incorporate a focus on equity by adhering to the equity extension for PRISMA. The critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP Qualitative Checklist) will used as a risk of bias tool for the identified studies, while GRADE CERQual will be used to assess the confidence of findings identified in the synthesis.

The review will aim to be published in early 2025.

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Background, rationale and research questions

Background and overview

Parenting interventions serve as a vital support mechanism in keeping children safe within a child welfare context. Foundations have commissioned a team of methodological experts and academics[1], led by the Centre for Evidence and Implementation (CEI), to conduct a systematic review on understanding how effective parenting interventions are in improving outcomes for parents with complex and multiple needs (protocol found here).

As a population, parents with complex and multiple needs may require specific and more nuanced intervention features to ensure engagement and take-up. Previous literature indicates that vulnerable parents face emotional and logistical barriers **inhibiting engagement**. These can include lack of time, money or resource for travel or a lack of knowledge of the availability of support available.[2] Moreover, factors associated with the delivery of the intervention itself have been shown to be important. For example, ensuring that a facilitator demonstrates a supportive and non-judgemental approach (and with it, a strong therapeutic alliance) is often perceived to be vital in engaging vulnerable parents.[3]

Rationale and question formulation

The purpose of the review is to synthesise available qualitative evidence pertaining to the implementation and feasibility of parenting interventions, designed to support parents with complex and multiple needs. This review complements the systematic review commissioned to CEI by providing qualitative insights not feasible within the parameters of the aforementioned review. While the CEI review takes a wholly quantitative approach, conducting meta-analyses to answer research questions pertaining to effectiveness and mechanisms underpinning change; this review aims to provide qualitative insights to better understand user and practitioner insights about parenting interventions. This review will also synthesise evidence on the barriers and enablers to successful implementation of parenting interventions. CEI's work on feasibility is focused on drawing out intervention components around workforce, delivery components and implementation features, providing descriptive overview of how likely implementation of parenting intervention are within a UK context. As noted, this review aims to build on this work, considering factors around intervention engagement, acceptability and accessibility.

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[1] the Centre for Evaluation and Implementation (CEI), University of Oxford, the University of Amsterdam and the University of Monash
[2] Pote, I., Doubell, L., Brims, L., Larbie, J., Stock, L., & Lewing, B. (2019). Engaging disadvantaged and vulnerable parents: An evidence review. *Early Intervention Foundation*, 1-93.
[3] Butler, J., Gregg, L., Calam, R., & Wittkowski, A. (2020). Parents' perceptions and experiences of parenting programmes: A systematic review and metasynthesis of the qualitative literature. *Clinical child and family psychology review*, *23*(2), 176-204.

Research questions

The research questions for this review are:

1. What are the barriers and enablers to successful implementation and fidelity of parenting interventions targeted at families with multiple and complex needs?
2. What are the views, experiences and preferences of parents experiencing complex and multiple needs regarding the acceptability and usefulness of parenting interventions?

SPIDER for qualitative research questions

The SPIDER (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research type) tool will be used to define key elements of the research questions, as well as inform and standardise the search strategy for this review. This is because, in contrast to the PICO framework, the SPIDER tool is more suitable for use in qualitative evidence synthesis, and thus will allow for an exploration of parents' views and experiences, and barriers and enablers to successful implementation of parenting interventions. The inclusion criteria for this review are as follows.

Sample

Parents and other caregivers who have undertaken a parenting intervention, or professionals working in delivering parenting interventions in the United Kingdom. Parents and caregivers must be considered as having complex or multiple needs, with children aged 0 to 10.

Eligible for inclusion in this review are studies with parents and other caregivers:

- Who were referred by agencies (e.g., social services) to receive an intervention based on their levels of maltreatment (treated)
- Who were offered an intervention based on scoring highly on child maltreatment instruments (indicated)
- With higher level needs who were offered an intervention based on selected risk factors for maltreatment (selective).

Factors also within scope of this review are:

- Parental substance abuse
- Parental incarceration
- Parental mental health
- Parental intellectual disability
- Past or current experience of intimate partner violence
- Parental childhood experience of maltreatment or other adverse childhood experiences
- Children with severe child socio-emotional and conduct problems
- Highly deprived socio-economic status
- Teenage / adolescent parenthood
- Traveller, refugee, asylum seeking or undocumented migrant status.

Phenomenon of interest

Enablers and barriers to successful implementation of parenting interventions, for parents with complex and multiple needs and the perceived acceptability and usefulness of different interventions to support parents.

Design

Studies that use any methods to capture the experiences, perceptions of interventions and caregivers, and the barriers and enablers to implementation including implementation and process evaluations, surveys, interviews, and/or focus group discussions. Data collection may be conducted either in-person or online.

Evaluation

Experiences and perceptions of the usefulness and acceptability of interventions for parents and caregivers with multiple and complex needs; and barriers and enablers to successful implementation of parenting interventions.

Research type

Any type that assesses perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon of interest. This will include studies that employ qualitative methods (e.g., surveys, focus groups and other qualitative evaluations) to understand service user's experiences of the programme, and the barriers and enablers to successful implementation.

Identifying relevant work

Search strategy and search terms

We will search PubMed, PsycINFO, CINAHL, Web of Science, Cochrane and the Campbell Collaborations systematic review database, and Google Scholar for primary studies and published from 2014 to today. This is a date range which will allow for comprehensive coverage of literature, and of literature which still holds meaning in the context of todays' society. Anything earlier may no longer be generalisable due to advances in technology and delivery methods. Given the strictness around geographical location (UK), the number of records identified should still be manageable within timeframes using such a date-range.

In addition to the databases above, a grey literature search will also be undertaken using Google, as well as the websites listed below:

- UK Government: https://www.gov.uk/search/research-and-statistics (with a focus on evaluations of key Government initiatives – Supporting Families, Children Centres and Family Hubs).
- Joseph Roundtree Foundation: https://www.jrf.org.uk/publications
- National Foundation for Educational Research: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/?page=1

- Rees Centre: https://www.education.ox.ac.uk/rees-centre/publications-resources/reports-briefings/
- CASCADE: Children's Social Care Research and Development Centre: https://cascadewales.org/our-research/
- NSPCC: https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources
- Action for Children: https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/our-work-and-impact/policy-work-campaigns-and-research/
- CORAM: https://www.coram.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work-and-impact/coram-impact-and-evaluation/
- Children's Society: https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk
- What Works For Children Social Care: https://whatworks-csc.org.uk/research/
- Early Intervention Foundation: https://www.eif.org.uk/reports

The reference lists of relevant grey literature and systematic reviews will also be screened for relevant literature.

Search terms

The following search terms will be used to identify literature

Domain	Search terms
Search terms related to parenting interventions	"Parent* intervention" "parent* programme" "parent* training" "parent skill training" "parent* therap*" "parent* support" "parent education"
Search terms related to population	- Vulnerab* - Disadvantage* - Depriv* "hard-to-reach" - workless "high conflict" "substance misuse" "mental health"
Search terms related to literature type	- Qualitative - Survey - Interview "Focus Group" "Process Evaluation"

Domain	Search terms
Search terms related to study location	- United Kingdom - UK - Great Britain - British Isles - England - Scotland - Wales

Study selection criteria

All identified literature will be screened using an inclusion and exclusion criteria:

Domain	Inclusion	Exclusion
Sample	Parents with children aged 0–10, considered as having complex and multiple needs (or mean age children in the study is 10 or younger)	Parents with children 11 years or older OR parents which would not be considered as having multiple or complex needs.
Phenomenon of Interest	- Outcomes associated with user/practitioner perspectives of parenting interventions - Intervention engagement - Implementation features of interventions.	Non parenting interventions or studies which focus on outcomes outside the parameters of user perspectives or intervention acceptability.
Study design	Any methodology pertaining to understanding perspectives (e.g., surveys, focus groups and other qualitative evaluations).	Any study with no qualitative component
Evaluation	Experiences and perceptions of the usefulness and acceptability of interventions for parents and caregivers with multiple and complex needs; and barriers and enablers to successful	Efficacy evaluations, any evaluation not pertaining to experiences and perceptions.

Domain	Inclusion	Exclusion
	implementation of parenting interventions.	
Research Type	Any type that assesses perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon of interest.	Any type of research which does not assess perceptions.
Context	Studies conducted in the UK (England, Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland	Studies outside the UK
Publication Status	No restriction on publication	NA
Language	English	Any other language
Publication date	2014–2024	Pre 2014

Study selection process

All identified literature will be imported from databases into Covidence for deduplication and screening. All records will first be screened on title and abstract, and then on full texts. Screening will be conducted by two reviewers, and any disagreements will be resolved through discussion or in consultation with a third reviewer.

Data extraction

A data extraction template will be created in the Covidence software to extract data on a pre-determined set of domains including population characteristics (type of need or complexity, age, gender, ethnicity), setting, sample size, methodology, intervention (type, description, component, duration), outcome assessed (experiences, perceptions, barriers and enablers) and summary of findings. The developed extraction template will be pilot tested on 10% of included studies and amended where needed, before commencing data extraction. Data extraction will be conducted by one reviewer and checked for completeness by another.

Quality assessment

We will assess the quality of each included primary study using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist for qualitative studies. The CASP checklist offers a structured

framework for critically assessing the methodological quality of studies included in a systematic review. This allows researchers to make decisions about the methodological rigour, validity and relevance of study findings. More information on the CASP checklist for qualitative studies can be found here.

Summarising the evidence

Evidence will first be mapped in tables pertaining to number of studies, study type and further study characteristics. This pertains to Cochrane's[4] advice regarding mapping studies before deciding which synthesis approach to take. Approaches to synthesis include thematic synthesis, meta-ethnography or grounded theory.[5]

We will undertake thematic analysis using the approach recommended by Braun and Clarke[6]. This type of analysis allows to identify patterns and themes within qualitative data and has the benefit of not being tied to any pre-existing framework, offering greater flexibility in its application.[7] The thematic analysis will involve three stages:

- Line by line inductive coding
- Development of descriptive themes
- Development of analytical themes.

Once data has been mapped, we will decide on the best approach to take given the breadth and depth of studies.

To assess the confidence in findings, the GRADE-CERQual[8] will be used.

EDIE commitment

At Foundations, we have a commitment to ensure that racial disparities identified in the social care system are explored within our work (our statement can be found here). In answering our research questions, we will pay specific attention to understand how different characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, type of vulnerability, social group) can influence how interventions are delivered, the outcomes of intervention delivery, and the enablers/barriers to intervention usage.

Personnel

- Dr Aoife O'Higgins: Director of Evidence at Foundations
- Johnathon Blackburn: Head of Synthesis at Foundations

[4] https://training.cochrane.org/sites/training.cochrane.org/files/public/uploads/resources/downloadable_resources/Training%20workshop%20Cochrane%20Global%20Health%20.pdf

[5] Barnett-Page, E., & Thomas, J. (2009). Methods for the synthesis of qualitative research: a critical review. *BMC medical research methodology*, *9*, 1-11.

[6] Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

[7] Ibid

[8] Lewin, S., Booth, A., Glenton, C., Munthe-Kaas, H., Rashidian, A., Wainwright, M., ... & Noyes, J. (2018). Applying GRADE-CERQual to qualitative evidence synthesis findings: introduction to the series. *Implementation Science*, *13*, 1-10.

- Dr Ian Moore: Senior Evidence Officer at Foundations
- Dr Elizabeth Kumah: Senior Evidence Officer at Foundations
- Vita Bax: Research Officer at Foundations
- Alyssa Eden: Research Officer at Foundations
- Steph Fletcher: Research Officer at Foundations.

Timeline

Completion date	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
21 June 2024 (5 days)	Protocol Finalised and registration on OSF	Ian Moore
28 June (5 days)	Completion of database and grey literature searching	Ian Moore Elizabeth Kumah Vita Bax
12 July (10 days)	Completion of title and abstract screening & full text screening	Alyssa Eden Vita Bax Ian Moore
26 July (10 days)	Studies which meet inclusion criteria are fully extracted and mapping finalised.	Ian Moore Elizabeth Kumah Vita Bax Alyssa Eden Steph Fletcher
2 August (5 days)	Risk of Bias on included studies complete	Elizabeth Kumah Vita Bax Alyssa Eden Steph Fletcher
16 August (10 days)	Full synthesis of results with findings section complete	Ian Moore Elizabeth Kumah Vita Bax Alyssa Eden
21 August (5 days)	Full review is shared for feedback	Jonathon Backburn Aoife O'Higgins

Completion date	Activity	Staff responsible/ leading
28 August (5 days)	Feedback received	
30 August 2024 (2 days)	Responding to reviewer comments & final draft of review ready	Ian Moore Vita Bax Alyssa Eden