



PROJECT PROTOCOL

Outcomes Framework and Measures Database

Consortium organisations	Oxford MeasurEd; The Brilliant Club; The Association for Young People's Health
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Age or status of participants	N/A
Output	<p>The following outputs will be published on Foundations' website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report describing the Foundations' Outcomes Framework and Measures Database, how they were developed, and how they will be used• Measures Database detailing measures that can be used to measure key outcomes in the Outcomes Framework in high-quality evaluations.
Contextual factors	<p>Foundations was founded in 2022 following the merger of What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) and the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF). Foundations' strategy was launched in March 2023 and includes four strategy outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children and young people are supported by their family to develop and thrive• Children and young people are safe in their homes• Children, young people, and families stay together as much as is safely possible• Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving relationships.
Funder	Foundations: What Works Centre for Children and Families



Glossary

Acronym	Definition
AYPH	The Association for Young People's Health
COSMIN	Consensus-based Standards for the selection of health Measurement Instruments
EIF	Early Intervention Foundation
ELT	Foundations' Extended Leadership Team
CYP	Children and Young People
WWCSC	What Works for Children's Social Care



INTRODUCTION

This protocol provides an overview of a project that Foundations has commissioned for a consortium of Oxford MeasurEd, Brilliant Consulting, and the Association for Young People's Health (AYPH) to complete.

The consortium has been commissioned to work with Foundations to develop an Outcomes Framework and deliver a Measures Database aligned with that Framework.

The overarching aim of the project is to ensure that Foundations' programme of work is focused on the most important outcomes for vulnerable children, and that their impact evaluations can measure positive change aligned with these priorities. The objectives of the project are to:

1. Facilitate Foundations to agree an Outcomes Framework that will be driven by Foundations' four child outcomes:
 - Children and young people are supported by their family to develop and thrive
 - Children and young people are safe in their homes
 - Children, young people, and families stay together as much as is safely possible
 - Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving relationships.
2. Develop a Measures Database that is aligned with the Outcomes Framework.
3. Ensure that the Outcomes Framework and Measures Database are informed by Foundations' strategy and priorities, Foundations' staff and stakeholders' professional expertise, lessons learned from other outcome frameworks, and the wider evidence base on outcomes for vulnerable CYP.

This protocol describes how the Outcomes Framework and Measures Database will be developed, including setting out clear aims and deliverables for each element of the project. We also provide detail on data protection, ethical approvals, and project management.

Background and context

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) and What Works for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) merged in December 2022 to form Foundations: What Works Centre for Children and Families. The merger brought together two sister organisations with a mission to use high-quality evidence to improve the lives of vulnerable children. While there was strong overlap in their focus, the work of WWCSC explicitly targeted improvements within the child protection system, while EIF focused more on outcomes that were upstream of children's social care.



Each legacy organisation had previously developed its own outcomes framework, but neither outcomes framework sufficiently organised the key child outcomes outlined in Foundations' 2023-2027 strategy (Foundations, 2023),¹ namely:

1. Children and young people are supported by their family to develop and thrive
2. Children and young people are safe in their homes
3. Children, young people, and families stay together as much as is safely possible
4. Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving relationships.

Outcomes frameworks are increasingly used by organisations with an interest in children and families to articulate their areas of focus, specify actionable goals, and measure progress towards achieving these goals. Examples of frameworks with a similar focus include the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Child Wellbeing Dashboard (OECD, 2025) the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s INSPIRE strategy (WHO, 2016) for ending violence towards children, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Essentials for Childhood' framework (CDC, 2014) for preventing child abuse and wellbeing.

Project aims and objectives

Foundations has commissioned a consortium of Oxford MeasurEd, Brilliant Consulting, and the Association for Young People's Health (AYPH) to work with Foundations to develop an Outcomes Framework and deliver a Measures Database aligned with that Framework.

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The objectives of the project are to:

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 - Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving relationships.
2. Develop a Measures Database that is aligned with the Outcomes Framework.
3. Ensure that the Outcomes Framework and Measures Database are informed by Foundations' strategy and priorities, Foundations' staff and stakeholders' professional expertise, lessons learned from other outcome frameworks, and the wider evidence base on outcomes for vulnerable CYP.

¹ The outcomes in Foundations' strategy align with the outcomes in the Department for Education's Children's social care dashboard (DfE, 2024).



This protocol describes how we will develop the Outcomes Framework and Measures Database, including setting out clear aims and deliverables for each element of the project. We also provide detail on data protection, ethical approvals, and project management.



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1. Outcomes Framework Development

Aims

The aim of this project is to build an Outcomes Framework that identifies key primary and secondary outcomes for vulnerable CYP. These will be aligned with Foundations' new strategy and supported by their primary stakeholders. In particular, these outcomes will be aligned with their four strategy outcomes:

1. Children and young people are supported by their family to develop and thrive
2. Children, young people, and families stay together as much as is safely possible
3. Children and young people are safe in their homes
4. Children in care and care leavers have stable, loving relationships.

Approach

The goal is to develop an Outcomes Framework entailing a thematically organised shortlist of well-evidenced outcomes across the four strategy outcomes. To achieve this, we will first review existing frameworks and best practices to develop them, develop a longlist of outcomes, and then take steps to prioritise, finalise, and organise a shortlist of outcomes. Outcomes related to care-experienced children's relationships will be prioritised throughout the approach due to Foundations' organisational needs. The full breakdown of the steps we will take is as follows:

1. Desk review of existing frameworks
2. Rapid literature review of systematic reviews related to relevant outcomes for CYP
3. Stakeholder consultation on existing frameworks
4. Concept map creation
5. Consensus building with Foundations
6. External consultations
7. Internal alignment with Foundations
8. Ranking survey with Foundations
9. Sifting/prioritising key outcomes and finalising the Outcomes Framework.

We explain each in turn below.

Desk review of existing frameworks

We will review relevant frameworks to understand:

1. Primary and secondary outcomes for vulnerable CYP's that are relevant to Foundations' four strategy outcomes
2. The content and structure of existing wellbeing and safety frameworks for CYP
3. Methodologies used to develop the frameworks
4. Approaches used to define and thematically organise primary and secondary outcomes.

We will start with the annotated bibliography that was previously developed by Foundations and build upon this work. First, we will review in detail the 27 frameworks that Foundations listed in



that bibliography and the information that Foundations noted on them. We will extract in greater depth the key insights from these frameworks and also add any additional information that is important to note.

Where available, we will record the following information from each framework:

- Framework name
- Organisation
- Type of organisation
- Aim
- Target audience
- Method of development
- Data sources used
- Measurement level (cohort vs individual)
- Commissioned/internal
- Structural layers included
- Structural representation (e.g. list, table, diagram)
- Primary outcomes
- Secondary outcomes
- Risk factors
- Protective factors
- Jingle jangle removal tactics.

In the time remaining, we will search for and add in any additionally relevant frameworks that are important. Examples of other outcome frameworks to include are the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s Child Wellbeing Dashboard (OECD, 2025), the WHO Child and Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Framework (WHO and UNICEF, 2020), the Hackney Child Wellbeing Framework (Hackney Council, 2021), and the Supporting Families Outcomes Framework (Hertfordshire Council, 2022). We will search across different organisations, charities, and government websites to find other relevant frameworks. The inclusion criteria we will use in our search include:

- The framework was developed in the UK or US, or has a global approach (though the focus will be mostly on the UK)
- Related to either:
 - children and young people are supported by their family to develop and thrive
 - children, young people, and families stay together as much as is safely possible
 - children and young people are safe in their homes
 - children in care and care leavers have stable, loving relationships.

The search terms we will use, but are not limited to, are as follows:

- Core Outcome Sets/COS
- Outcomes framework
- Children and young people's wellbeing
- Children and young people's safety



- Family support for CYP
- Families staying together
- Safe homes for CYP
- Care Experience
- Stable relationships
- Family relationships.

Desk review of literature

We will carry out a rapid review of academic literature related to the outcomes of vulnerable CYP to better understand the evidence that underlies the existing frameworks. This will enable us to better determine which outcomes are most relevant to the four strategy outcomes and help us to distinguish between primary vs secondary outcomes.

This rapid review will solely focus on *systematic reviews* in the field that discuss relevant primary and secondary outcomes for vulnerable CYP. The search terms will be the same as those used in the desk review of existing frameworks, along with any particular areas of interest that arise from the review of existing frameworks that require deeper scientific understanding. Examples of publications we will look at include: Jacobs et al. (2024), Liming and Grube (2018), Cameron-Mathiassen et al. (2022), and Vseteckova et al. (2022). Additionally, we will review the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (MacAlister, 2022). As we review the literature, we will make note of any relevant risk or protective factors that come up.

Stakeholder consultation on existing frameworks

We will consult with experts working in similar fields to ensure that the development of Foundations' Outcomes Framework and Measures Database is informed by best practice and lessons learned from similar exercises.

We will consult with organisations about their experience of building outcomes frameworks, and specifically to:

- Confirm the information and insight we have gathered on how best to build an Outcomes Framework and Measures Database
- Receive advice on how to implement and develop such a framework and database based on their direct experience
- Inform us about any pitfalls and challenges that may arise and how best to mitigate these.

We will develop a list of questions to ask the organisations, and we will share an overview of the topics we will be discussing with Foundations. The topics are likely to include the following:

- Methodology used to develop the framework and database
- Stakeholders involved in the development process
- Strategies used to determine the key outcomes
- Structuring of the framework
- Biggest challenges during development and suggested mitigations.



The first group of organisations that we will consult are other What Works Centres in the UK focused on CYP, namely the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF), the Education Endowment Fund (EEF), the Common Outcomes for Children and Young People Collaborative, and the team working on Foundations' domestic abuse project. Foundations will advise us on who to speak to at these organisations and provide us with the relevant contact details.

If further insight is required, we will identify other organisations to speak to from our review of existing frameworks that are aligned with the outcomes framework we are developing or have used a similar methodology as the one we are proposing.

We will aim to consult with up to four more organisations during this part of the project. Therefore, in total, we anticipate that we will conduct four to six meetings, with one meeting per stakeholder/organisation.

Concept map creation

We will create a concept map to determine how best to visually and thematically organise and interconnect the primary and secondary outcomes.

Using the information gained during the evidence review activities and the consultation with experts, we will develop a concept map. This concept map will include outlines of tables and/or diagrams on how to show relationships between various components, such as how the primary and secondary outcomes map onto strategy outcomes, ecological model layers (i.e. individual, family, school, community, and society), and domain themes (e.g. social and emotional, physical, cognitive, and behavioural). The concept map will be built in a flexible programme, such as PowerPoint or Miro, and will help to inform the structure of the Outcomes Framework.

Consensus building around a longlist of outcomes with Foundations

We will work with Foundations to build on the longlist of outcomes identified in the desk reviews, adding in any additional outcomes that are missing, making distinctions between primary and secondary outcomes, determining which outcomes are most relevant to Foundations' four strategy outcomes, and identifying shortlisting criteria.

To gather input across all of Foundations, we will complete the following activities:

- Insights questionnaire with Foundations' Extended Leadership Team (ELT) (written feedback)
- One two-hour workshop with the ELT (in-person)
- Insights questionnaire with the Impact and Evidence teams at Foundations (written feedback)
- Up to three two-hour workshops with key team members (online).

ELT consultation

Appendix A outlines a list of Foundations' ELT roles that will be involved in this consultation. The consultations will begin with having each of the 11 ELT members complete an Insights Questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire is to ensure that the workshops are effective, providing attendees time to process and consider the content being discussed ahead of the



meetings. The questionnaire will get each member to think about the primary and secondary outcomes that they believe are most important across the four strategy outcomes based on their knowledge and expertise. The questionnaire will also ask the ELT to consider criteria for shortlisting outcomes.

We will then analyse and synthesise the responses from the 11 respondents. Based on the responses, we will then develop a two-hour workshop that will be hosted in-person at Foundations. The aim of this workshop is to facilitate alignment across the ELT on a longlist of primary and secondary outcomes across the four strategy outcomes. Given the amount of people in the ELT, this two-hour workshop will both allow enough time for everyone to voice their opinions while also providing a collaborative format. The workshop will be a mix of a PowerPoint presentation to guide the conversation, as well as interactive activities to promote collaborative thinking (e.g. white board or sticky notes).

Team consultations

We will consult with the Impact and Evidence teams within Foundations (see [appendix A](#)). For this consultation, we will have each team collaboratively fill out an Insights Questionnaire and then deliver up to three workshops for some team members to attend.

The questionnaire will get each team to think about the primary and secondary outcomes that they believe are most important across the four strategy outcomes based on their knowledge and expertise. The questions posed on the Insights Questionnaire will be shaped by the workshop held with the ELT. Therefore we will decide after that ELT workshop if the questions should be the same or individualised across the teams. The teams will discuss these questions and formulate their responses in their regular meetings. We will then analyse and synthesise the responses from the different teams.

Using the responses provided in the questionnaire, along with input from Foundations, we will determine which teams/team members to invite to a follow-up workshop. We will run up to three two-hour online workshops to allow enough time for everyone to voice their opinions while also providing a collaborative format. The workshops will most likely be a mix of a PowerPoint presentation to guide the conversation, as well as interactive activities to promote collaborative thinking (e.g. white board or sticky notes). The aim of these workshops is to add to the list of primary and secondary outcomes and to note any overlap in the listed outcomes between the ELT and the teams.

External consultations

We will consult with Foundations' key external stakeholders to get perspectives from the sector that Foundations can draw on to shorten the list of outcomes and start to finalise the Outcomes Framework.

To gather insight from a range of stakeholders, we will consult with Foundations' project and delivery partners, mission-aligned organisations, experts by experience, and professionals working with the key population. Should policy stakeholders or other experts also need to be consulted, these will replace some of the conversations below.



We will complete the following consultations:

- Project and delivery partners: two to three 40-minute online meetings, one per organisation
- Mission-aligned organisations: two to three 40-minute online meetings, one per organisation
- Professionals: two to three 40-minute online focus groups, five to eight professionals
- Experts by experience: one 40-minute focus group, five to eight care-experienced young people/adults.

The structure of the conversations across the different stakeholders will vary, with different external stakeholder groups providing different levels of input. We provide further detail on this below.

Project delivery partners and organisations working on similar projects

We will consult with two to three project and delivery partners, and in particular will speak to those working on Foundations' Domestic Abuse Core Outcome Set project.² Foundations will determine what other project and delivery partners we should meet with.

Regarding mission-aligned organisations, we will meet with the Common Outcomes for Children and Young People Collaborative. Other mission-aligned organisations will be selected based on the desk review of existing frameworks completed in Part 1, and we will meet with two to three organisations to gather valuable insight. Foundations will also get the opportunity to inform us on any organisations to speak to given their deep knowledge of the sector.

We will meet with organisations from both of these stakeholder groups in one-to-one 40-minute interviews. The discussions will largely be guided on the output determined from the internal consensus building activities previously completed with Foundations. We will facilitate the conversations with a PowerPoint presentation and a miro board activity (or similar) should it be deemed helpful at the time.

The purpose of these meetings will be to get their input on:

- Identifying the criteria that should be used to shortlist the outcomes
- Distinguishing between primary and secondary outcomes
- Identifying key outcomes of interest to them
- Sense check the language being used.

Experts by experience and professionals

We will recruit experts by experience and professionals through Foundations' and AYPH's networks. The types of professionals we will look to recruit may include family support workers, family help and family hubs practitioners, social workers, foster carers, and kinship carers. The

² See: <https://foundations.org.uk/our-work/current-projects/developing-outcome-measures-domestic-abuse-core-outcome-set/>



professionals to be contacted will be checked with the ELT at Foundations to ensure it aligns with their strategy and focus.

The discussion with these stakeholder groups will be limited to getting their input on the criteria to be used for prioritising the outcomes. The focus groups will last 40 minutes and we will develop a question guide that will be specifically catered to each group where necessary. These will be reviewed by Foundations prior to use. The focus group format will allow participants to elaborate on their responses with the help of probing and asking follow-up questions for clarification. Participants will be able to share experiences and build on each other's ideas. We will use activities to make the focus groups engaging and to ensure all participants can contribute, such as using Post-it notes and virtual whiteboards to capture what was discussed. AYPH will co-deliver the experts by experience workshop with us as they have extensive experience of working with care-experienced young people and other vulnerable groups of children and young people.

Information sheets and consent forms will be made for both stakeholder groups, and AYPH will advise on ensuring these are sensitive to each group and the topic being discussed. We will send out the consent forms ahead of the focus groups via a link and will make sure these are completed ahead of the focus group. While the focus groups with professionals will take place online, it is likely that the focus group with experts by experience will take place in person. AYPH will lead on making this decision and organise accordingly.

Internal alignment with Foundations

We will share with Foundations the key outcomes derived from the external consultations, and work with the ELT to determine:

- Whether to add any new outcomes to the longlist of outcomes
- The criteria to use to prioritise from that longlist.

After completing our external consultations, we will meet again with the ELT to realign with Foundations. We will conduct a two-hour workshop to share the insights gained from the external consultations and determine how these findings fit with the internal consensus previously reached by Foundations. In particular, we will discuss the key primary and secondary outcomes that arose during external consultations, how these map onto those from the internal consensus building activities, and how they align with Foundations' four strategy outcomes. We will additionally determine the prioritisation criteria to be used in the ranking survey.

Ranking survey

We will carry out a ranking survey to get quantitative insights into priorities for stakeholders across Foundations to inform the final prioritisation of outcomes and development of the Outcomes Framework. We will develop an online outcomes ranking survey that will be sent to stakeholders within Foundations to help prioritise the outcomes that are most important. The list of people this will be sent to will be collaboratively determined with Foundations at the time.

The survey will ask respondents to prioritise the longlist of outcomes based on three to five criteria agreed with Foundations. Examples of possible criteria include, "are you undertaking any activities to address this outcome" and "does this outcome come up in discussions regarding



[named strategy outcome]”. A composite score will then be calculated to rank the outcomes by level of priority.

The survey will be structured in a way that is effective for organising the questions, for example, showing a list of outcomes to be prioritised for each of Foundations’ strategy outcomes. Foundations will have the opportunity to provide one round of feedback on the survey before it is sent out.

Sifting/prioritising key outcomes and finalising the Outcomes Framework

To determine the shortlist of outcomes to be included in the Outcomes Framework, we will use the information gathered from the following streams:

1. Desk review
2. Internal consultations
3. External consultations
4. Ranking survey.

We propose a maximum of 12 to 20 outcomes, with three to five outcomes per strategy outcome to ensure an equal coverage across the strategy outcomes.

Building on the concept map, we will match up similar outcomes across the different information streams to remove duplication. We will then remove any outcomes that are contextual factors, not part of a major discussion theme, or not relevant to Foundations’ strategy outcomes.

We will use lessons learned from the desk reviews, internal and external stakeholder consultations to guide our organisation, and structure of a draft Outcomes Framework, ensuring its complexity is well encompassed but also easily interpretable.

Lastly, we will consult with Foundations to finalise the shortlist of outcomes and their thematic organisation within the Outcomes Framework.



Deliverables

Table 1 sets out the deliverables to be produced through the activities described above.

Table 1. Outcomes Framework development deliverables

Deliverable	Detail
Existing frameworks overview	Table of the frameworks reviewed and the key insights gained.
Summary of the literature	Word document of key lessons learned from the systematic reviews reviewed.
Concept map	A concept map of how to structure and interconnect components of the framework.
Longlist of outcomes	Excel spreadsheet of the longlist of outcomes, their definitions, whether it's a primary or secondary outcome, its thematic grouping, and which stakeholders mentioned the outcome.
Survey ranking responses	Short document summarising the ranking of the outcomes.
Shortlist of outcomes	Excel spreadsheet of the final list of outcomes along with their definitions and thematic groupings. This will be accompanied by a graphic or table.
Report on the Outcomes Framework	A short report (c. 6 pages) describing the Framework and the methodology used to develop it. This report will be incorporated into the final published report delivered at the end of the project. We will agree the content and structure of the reports with Foundations. Given the diversity of the intended readers, which includes Foundations' team, Foundations' evaluation and delivery partners and Foundations' primary audiences, the reports will be written accessibly. For example, we will avoid jargon and provide clear explanations of any technical terminology.
Report for young people consulted during the project	A short report (max. 4 pages) for the young people that took part in the external consultation, explaining how their insights were used. This report will either be shared with young people at this time, or at the end of the whole project. AYPH will advise on best practice and we will decide in collaboration with Foundations what is most appropriate nearer the time.



2. Developing the Measures Database

Aim

The purpose of this part of the project is to develop a database of robust and user-friendly measures of the key outcomes set out in the Outcomes Framework that can be used in high-quality evaluations. This will help Foundations, its commissioned evaluators, and services in the sector to build the evidence base on what works in strengthening services so that children have the family or other close relationships that they need to thrive. The database will also support other evaluations that aim to measure these outcomes.

Approach

The steps we will take will be:

1. Source a longlist of outcome measures aligned to the Outcomes Framework
2. Screen the longlist for inclusion, based on pre-agreed criteria
3. Prioritise a shortlist if necessary
4. Appraise the shortlisted outcome measures using the COSMIN criteria
5. Document additional information about the outcome measures
6. Present the information in a database with a dashboard summarising key information.

Sourcing a longlist of outcome measures aligned to the Outcomes Framework

We will source a longlist of outcome measures for each of the outcomes in the Outcomes Framework. We will source this list from legacy frameworks, and the frameworks and systematic reviews reviewed during the development of the Outcomes Framework, evaluations carried out for Foundations and its predecessors, and from relevant research databases agreed with Foundations (e.g. PsycINFO, MEDLINE, EMBASE). We will also include relevant measures used by the evaluation team in previous evaluations.

Screening the longlist for inclusion

We will screen the longlist of measures based on criteria agreed with Foundations. These criteria could include, for example, the cost of purchasing/accessing the measure, expertise needed to administer the measure, duration of completion, extent of validation or use, calibration in the UK, and use with children in care/care-experienced people. To ensure the criteria are appropriate, the final criteria will be established after the Outcomes Framework is developed. AYPH's young trainers will review and advise on these criteria to ensure that they reflect young people's experience of taking part in research.

Prioritising a shortlist if necessary

If necessary, we will prioritise measures for inclusion in the Measures Database in consultation with Foundations. For example, if the Outcomes Framework is extensive, Foundations may wish to prioritise identifying measures for the primary outcomes. Alternatively, if a large number of



measures are identified for all outcomes, it might make sense to refine the inclusion criteria above to shortlist those measures that are likely to be most relevant and most feasible for use in Foundations' evaluations.

We envisage that more measures may be identified for some outcomes relative to others, and estimate that we will be able to include up to around 112 measures in the database. We note that the Measures Database will be a live document and that other measures (and perhaps outcomes) will be added by Foundations in the future.

Appraising the shortlisted outcome measures

We will review the properties of the shortlisted measures using the COSMIN criteria (Mokkink et al., 2024).

Our review of content validity will evaluate the relevance of items (and response options where applicable) to the outcome definition in the outcome framework. We will also record other relevant information that evaluators can use in the future to assess the measure's content validity for particular evaluations – for example relevance to different target populations and contexts for use.

We will evaluate the structural validity, internal consistency, reliability, responsiveness, and measurement error of the measures based on reported psychometric properties. We propose to use the established cut-offs outlined in Mokkink et al. (2024, see [appendix B](#)).

Where psychometric properties have been reported for more than one study/validation exercise, we will document this and base our appraisal on the most recent or most relevant instance (e.g. administration in the UK context).

Our review of cross-cultural validity/measurement invariance will look for evidence of differences between groups by age, gender, ethnicity, care experience, and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We note that it is likely that many measures will not have been validated with care-experienced children and young people, but will report where this is the case. We will also report any available information on the appropriateness of tools for CYP with SEND. We will include a separate 'flag' in the database for measures that have been validated or used in at least a certain number of instances (number to be agreed with Foundations) with care-experienced children or adults.

While the COSMIN criteria include criterion validity and hypotheses testing, we believe these criteria will be less relevant for this project and do not intend to include this in the review. This is because these criteria will need to be considered by evaluators based on the relevance to the specific context of the intervention they are evaluating.

If there are outcomes in the final Outcomes Framework that are not individual-level outcomes – for example service quality or relationship quality – we will agree with Foundations' protocols for appraising these measures. The principles of the COSMIN criteria are expected to still apply, but may be presented or interpreted differently.

We will document the justification for our COSMIN criteria ratings, as well as additional information such as references for the studies the measure has been used in, sampling information, cost information and information on the mode and logistics of administration.



Deliverables

Table 2. Measures Database deliverables

Deliverable	Detail
Final output (to be made publicly available): Measures Database	Excel database of measures, COSMIN appraisal results and additional information. Filterable by key information – for example the outcome (ensuring results are not excluded where this is due to different terminology), relevant age group, or whether the measure has been validated with care-experienced people. In a standardised format that is compatible with PowerBi so that Foundations can produce a dashboard that feeds on the information in the measures database. A live document that will be updated in the future.
Final output (to be made publicly available): Report on Outcomes Framework and Measures Database	A short report (max. 10 pages) introducing and explaining the Outcomes Framework and Measures Database, how they were developed and how they should be used. Incorporating the report on the Outcomes Framework produced earlier in the project (see table 1).
Guidance on using the Measures Database	A short guidance document to accompany the database that can be used by Foundations, evaluators, and services in the sector to allow them to use the Measures Database effectively. This guidance will be included in the published report and presented in the Introductions to the Measures Database for Foundations staff.
Report for young people consulted during the project	A short report (max 4. pages) for the young people that took part in the external consultation, explaining how their insights were used and signposting to more information about the Outcomes and Framework and Measures Database (i.e. the final report). Incorporating the report for young people produced earlier in the project (see table 1).
Introductions to Measures Database for Foundations staff	Presentations to relevant individuals and teams within Foundations on how to use the Measures Database and how it will be updated in the future.



Data protection

All data collected for this project will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 and only used for research purposes. Our legal basis for data processing will be 'legitimate interest'.

Oxford MeasurEd will be the data controller throughout the project, with The Brilliant Club and AYPH being data processors.

The project will not include large-scale data collection or processing. We will collect and process personal data in the form of names, contact details, background information, and discussion content. Data subjects include Foundations staff (members of the Extended Leadership Team and members of Foundations' five teams) and external stakeholders (individuals working for other What Works Centres; Foundations' project and delivery partners; mission-aligned organisations; professionals, e.g. social workers or foster carers; and young people, including members of AYPH's Youth Advisory Panel and Young Trainers). We will not collect or process any special categories of personal data. No personal information will be transferred outside of the European Economic Area (EEA).

We will treat all data with the strictest confidence – participant contact details, recordings, and transcripts will only be accessible to named members of the project team. All personal data will be transferred securely using secure servers and/or encrypted spreadsheets, and we will securely delete personal data six months after the project end.

We will remove names and contact details from this research data before analysing it and will not identify any individuals in outputs.

We will set out our basis for data processing, the details of how personal data will be processed and the data protection protocols that we put in place in a privacy notice on Oxford MeasurEd's website. The project will be subject to Foundations' DPIA process and approvals.

Ethical approval

The project will be approved through Oxford MeasurEd's ethical review process.

The process covers key research ethics principles including recruitment and consent, protection from harm, incentives and recognising participation, confidentiality and data sharing, as well as safeguarding, and draws on the Social Research Association's ethics guidance. (SRA, 2021). It also addresses considerations around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), including accessibility and anti-racism. Project teams are required to:

1. Outline the steps they will take to ensure that all relevant stakeholders can take part in the project
2. Outline the power dynamics that they have anticipated being at play in this project, steps they will take to mitigate their impact, and how they will account for them in analysis and reporting



3. Outline any other steps they have taken/will take to conduct the project in a way that is anti-racist.³

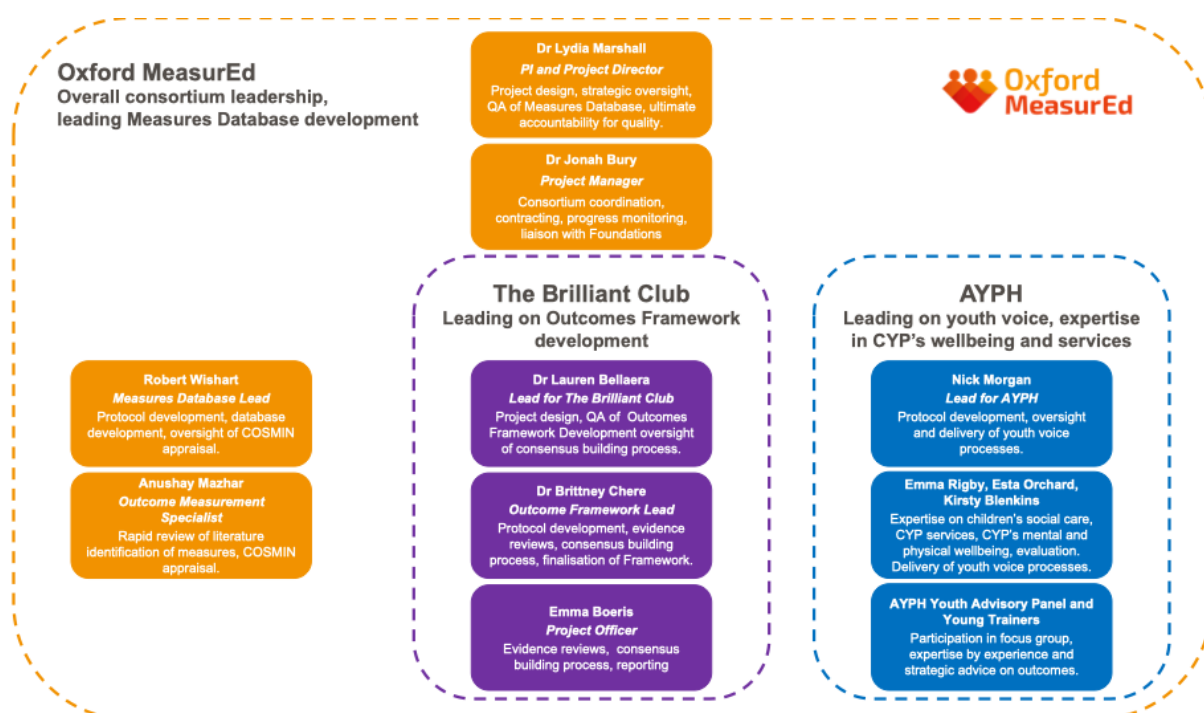
Following a submission of the ethics application in February 2025, the ethics chair (Director not involved in project delivery) decided that a review from an independent panel was not needed; instead, the application will be reviewed and signed off by the Project Director.

Project management

Consortium management and team roles and responsibilities

Figure 1 shows the roles and responsibilities of the three organisations and individual team members.

Figure 1. Project team



Oxford MeasurEd will be the overall consortium lead and accountable for project delivery. Oxford MeasurEd's Project Manager (PM), Jonah Bury, will be responsible for day-to-day project management including work planning, monitoring progress and risk, managing the project team, and reporting to the client. As Principal Investigator (PI) and Project Director (PD), Lydia Marshall will hold ultimate accountability for the quality of the project, and will provide strategic oversight and direction and quality assurance.

³ For further explanation and examples see <https://libguides.umn.edu/antiracism/lens>



Risk management

Our approach is to proactively anticipate and manage risks and our PD and PM will be responsible for monitoring and managing risk in collaboration with Foundations.

Table 3 outlines key risks for this project and mitigation/contingency strategies to address them. We will revisit the risk register throughout the project, using it to anticipate and monitor risks and agree any necessary actions with Foundations.

Table 3. Risk register

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation/contingency
Project outputs do not meet Foundations' needs	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meetings at outset to refine project aims, methodology, approaches, and timelines.• Decisions documented in project protocol. QA against protocol and agreed quality indicators (e.g. style guide).• Agree with Foundations at outset who will have ultimate sign-off for which elements of the project.• Agree with Foundations at outset the scope of the Outcomes Framework, based on Foundations' organisational remit and strategic priorities.
Misalignment with Government priorities	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation with Foundations at outset to understand Foundations' strategy and how it has been informed by government, as well as any other relevant government priorities.
Duplication of other efforts	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of existing frameworks and databases before developing the Outcomes Framework and Measures Database.• In-depth consultation with Foundations to understand work done by the organisation and its predecessors to date to ensure this project builds on that work.• Team with good knowledge and experience of existing frameworks and outcome measures.
Foundations cannot reach a consensus on Outcomes Framework within resources available	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tried and tested process for building consensus over stages.• Agree with Foundations at outset who will be consulted and who will hold decision-making power.• Clear communication to all consulted groups about what is and what is not up for discussion.• Clear budget and timeline so that consortium and Foundations can work together to ensure we are on track.



Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation/contingency
We cannot appraise all longlisted measures within resources available	Medium	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for prioritisation of measures if needed agreed with Foundations. Measures only longlisted once Outcomes Framework is finalised. Limited upstream outcomes included in Outcomes Framework. Clear budget and timeline so that consortium and Foundations can work together to ensure we are on track. Measures Database to be a live document that Foundations can continue to update.
Delays due to resourcing gaps	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use of established tools and processes to allocate, protect, and adjust staff resource as needed. Wider pool of consultants with relevant skills and expertise within Oxford MeasurEd and The Brilliant Club to draw on if timelines or availability shift.
Stakeholders do not engage	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing equal weight to all voices, understanding power dynamics and creating safe spaces for discussions. Using known network to reduce cold contact. Meeting with an array of stakeholders.
Discussions with vulnerable people poorly managed, leading to harm	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-depth consideration will be made to how we communicate. AYPH to liaise and advise and make accommodations for their needs.
Jingle-jangle fallacy leads to duplication or omission	High	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concept mapping to spot these instances. Decide on terminology and definition to use. Report other known terminologies and definitions. Mapping to feed into identification of measures as well as discussions around Outcomes Framework.
COSMIN appraisal not suitable for all outcome measures	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree protocols at outset with Foundations – for example not including criterion validity and hypotheses testing for non-health outcomes. Considering parallel criteria/cut-offs for organisational-level outcomes.
Measures in database are not acceptable to CYP or feasible to administer	Medium	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with AYPH's Youth Advisory Group and Young Trainers on factors to consider when selecting outcome measures. Agree exclusion criteria with Foundations around these factors, time, and duration. Include information in database about administration and factors raised by CYP.



Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation/contingency
Information for COSMIN appraisal not publicly available about measures	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Timeline to allow for contacting research teams who have used measures.• Agree protocols at the outset with Foundations about in/exclusion of measures with information missing.
Ineffective or inefficient working as a consortium	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Project Director and Project Manager experienced in managing consortia.• Partnership built on shared values and ways of working.• Organisations having clear roles and responsibilities, with oversight provided centrally while avoiding duplication.• Communication and reporting mechanisms agreed at outset and monitored to ensure they are effective.• Additional academic expertise only brought in if needed.



Timeline

Table 4. Project timeline

Dates (week beginning)	Activity	Ownership
Inception period: January–March 2025		
20/01/25 – 03/02/25	Kick-off meetings	OM
03/02/25 – 10/03/25	Protocol drafting and finalisation	OM
17/02/25 – 10/03/25	DPIA	OM
17/02/25 – 10/03/25	Ethics	OM
Outcomes Framework Development: March–November 2025		
03/03/25 – 31/03/25	Desk review of existing frameworks	TBC
03/03/25 – 31/03/25	Rapid literature review	OM
10/03/25 – 31/03/25	Stakeholder consultation on existing frameworks	TBC
07/04/25 – 21/04/25	Concept map creation	TBC
21/04/25 – 09/06/25	Consensus building around a longlist of outcomes with Foundations	TBC
02/06/25 – 14/07/25	External consultations	TBC
21/07/25	Internal alignment with Foundations	TBC
21/07/25 – 15/09/25	Outcomes ranking survey	TBC
22/09/25 – 13/10/25	Sifting/prioritisation of key outcomes and finalising Outcomes Framework	TBC
20/10/25 – 03/11/25	Draft internal report on the Outcomes Framework	TBC
10/11/25 – 17/11/25	Draft report for young people on the Outcomes Framework	TBC
Developing the Measures Database: November 2025–February 2026		
17/11/25	Source a longlist of outcome measures aligned to the Outcomes Framework	OM
24/11/25 – 01/12/25	Screen the longlist for inclusion	OM
08/12/25 – 15/12/25	Prioritise a shortlist if necessary	OM



Dates (week beginning)	Activity	Ownership
22/12/25 – 12/02/26	Appraise the shortlisted outcome measures using the COSMIN criteria	OM
22/12/25 – 12/02/26	Document additional information about the outcome measures	OM
19/01/26 – 16/02/26	Present the information in a database with a dashboard summarising key information	OM
Final reporting and handover to Foundations: February–April 2026		
02/02/26 – 23/02/26	First draft report for publication and guidance on Measures Database	OM
30/03/26 – 06/04/26	First draft report for YP	OM
20/04/26 – 27/04/26	Finalise report for YP	OM
27/04/26	Introductions to Measures Database for Foundations staff	OM
27/04/26	Final report, guidance, and Measures Database finalised for publication	OM



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APPENDIX A

Foundations' Extended Leadership Team and teams overview

The ELT is made up of the CEO, Directors, and Heads of across Foundations. After removing certain roles that are not relevant to the project (e.g. finance and HR), the number of ELT members we will work with is likely to be around 11.

These are the roles within Foundations that will be involved in the project from the ELT, though this will be confirmed with Foundations:

- CEO
- Deputy Chief Executive
- Director of Evidence
- Director of Strategic Planning
- Head of Evidence Synthesis – Toolkit
- Head of Evidence Synthesis – Practice Guides
- Head of Practice Guides
- Head of Programmes
- Head of Communications & Public Affairs
- Acting Head of Policy
- Head of Evaluation.

This project will involve consultation with Foundations' Evidence and Synthesis teams which are broken down into the further subteams: Evidence (Synthesis, Evaluation, Programmes) and Impact (Policy, Local Development).



APPENDIX B

COSMIN criteria outlined in Mokkink et al. (2024)

Measurement	Rating	Criteria
Content validity	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included items are relevant for the construct, target population, and the context of response options and recall period that are appropriate No key concepts are missing Items and response options are appropriately worded, and instructions and response options are understood by the population of interest as intended.
	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information reported to establish the above criteria.
	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included items are not relevant for the construct or target population Key concepts are missing Items and response options are not appropriately worded or not understood by the population of interest as intended.
Structural validity	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classical test theory: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factor loadings of each item on its factor is ≥ 0.30 Maximum of 10% of the item have factor loadings of ≥ 0.30 on multiple factors Explained variance $\geq 50\%$ and structure is in line with the theory about the construct measured, OR results on scree plot or Kaiser criterion (Eigenvalues > 1) are in line with theory about the construct to be measured. IRT/Rasch: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No violations or unidimensionality: CFI or TLI or comparable measure > 0.95 OR RMSEA < 0.06 OR SRMR < 0.08 No violation of local independence: residual correlations among the items after controlling for dominant factor < 0.20 or Q3s < 0.37 No violation of monotonicity: adequate looking graphs OR item scalability > 0.30 Adequate model fit: IRT $\chi^2 > 0.01$ Rasch: infit and outfit mean squares ≥ 0.05 and ≤ 1.5 OR Z-standardised values > -2 and < 2.
	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information reported.
	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for “+” not met.
Internal consistency	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least low evidence for sufficient unidimensionality Cronbach’s alpha ≥ 0.70



Measurement	Rating	Criteria
	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criteria for “at least low evidence for sufficient unidimensionality” not met, OR Evidence for insufficient unidimensionality, OR Insufficient evidence reported.
	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least low quality evidence for sufficient unidimensionality Cronbach’s alpha <0.70.
Cross-cultural validity/measurement invariance	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No important differences found between group factors (such as age, gender, language) in multiple group factor analysis OR no importing DIF for group factors (McFadden’s $R^2 < 0.02$.
	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information reported.
	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Important differences between group factors OR DIF was found.
Reliability	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICC or (weighted) kappa or Pearson/Spearman correlation ≥ 0.70.
	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information reported.
	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICC or (weighted) kappa or Pearson/Spearman correlation < 0.70.
Measurement error	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDC or LoA $< MIC$.
	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MIC not defined OR not enough information reported.
	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SDC or LoA $> MIC$.
Criterion validity	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correlation with gold standard ≥ 0.70 OR AUC ≥ 0.70.
	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough information reported.
	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Correlation with gold standard < 0.70 OR AUC < 0.70.
Hypothesis testing for construct validity	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> $\geq 75\%$ of the results is in accordance with predefined hypotheses.
	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No relevant results were found.
	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> $\geq 75\%$ of the results deviates from predefined hypotheses.
Responsiveness	+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> $\geq 75\%$ of the results is in accordance with predefined hypotheses or AUC ≥ 0.70.
	?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No relevant results were found.
	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> $\geq 75\%$ of the results deviates from predefined hypotheses OR AUC < 0.70.