

# IMPROVING CHILDREN'S SERVICES DECISION MAKING WITH FAMILY CONTEXT

DISCOVERY PROJECT – MID-POINT FINDINGS  
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**DRAFT FOR COMMENT**

26 OCTOBER 2018



# IN JUNE SF & 12 LEADING COUNCILS DISCUSSED WORKING COLLABORATIVELY TO BETTER DATA-ENABLE DECISIONS

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## The partners



MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL



STOCKPORT  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



ISLINGTON



Essex County Council

## Background

- Earlier this year, Social Finance and 12 leading authorities met to discuss the barriers to better using data to improve decisions and give better outcomes for vulnerable people
- We identified lack of common data, tools and approaches as a key target and agreed to work collaboratively on this
- We agreed to work towards interoperable, shareable tools which focus on people not process
- To begin this we discussed major common challenges and immediate priorities
- We agreed that before building anything we should run a thorough discovery process to assess users needs, prioritise where to act and what to create, and agreed to do this jointly between two councils so what we create works can be shared



## THIS PROJECT IS LOOKING AT IMPROVING DECISIONS ON CHILDREN THROUGH BETTER VIEWS OF THE FAMILY CONTEXT

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**Problem:** Authorities have limited systematic insight into the needs and risks present in families, for example at the point of referral into statutory services, resulting in unnecessary escalations into social care



**Project description:** Identify the biggest impact use cases for bringing information on a family together to better inform decisions on the child



**Impact:** Radically improve the quality of decision making. For example through unlocking the ability to conduct risk stratification, enhancing family needs assessment and improving commissioning decisions, aligning need and risk to services available



# IMPROVING CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES IS A KEY OBJECTIVE FOR COUNCILS, PARTICULARLY UNDER CURRENT PRESSURES

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## Business objectives

- Safeguarding and supporting vulnerable children is one of a council's key statutory duties
- Every day, councils make decisions on the most vulnerable children. These decisions can have huge impacts on children's lives. The right decisions protect them from harm and ensure they and their families get the right support. The wrong decisions mean they don't get the right support to meet their needs and could even put them at risk
- With recent budget cuts and increasing demand, it is more important than ever to make the right decision the first time. We know that right early intervention can meet needs and avoid far more costly escalation. Equally councils cannot afford to provide inappropriate or unnecessary support