Project: Early Help Data Discovery

Date: December 2019

**Interview discussion guide for Senior data analysts**

*The following script has been developed by Social Finance, as the partner organisation responsible for user research.*

**Research questions** that we’re aiming to answer through these interviews:

* How do EH Leadership currently make decisions? Do they use data?
* Are there unmet data needs for EH leadership? In other words, do EH Leads and Data analysts consider that the data they currently get is insufficient to take good decisions and/or evidence EH’s impact?
* If there are unmet data needs/data gaps, why?

**Moderator introduction**

Hello, I’m (Name) and this is (Name). We both work for Social Finance on this Early Help data discovery project in 3 Councils (Wandsworth, West Berkshire, Croydon). How much do you know about Social Finance and about this project?

About Social Finance: We are a non-profit organisation based in London, and we work with many local governments across the country to support them in finding innovative ways to fund and deliver social programmes. We are in the Data & Digital team that works mainly on data solutions and analysis for Children’s Services.

About this project: This project is in line with previous projects we’ve been doing with Newcastle, Leeds and Wandsworth to support them in collecting the right data on Early Help services. This project is a five-month discovery project funded by Local Digital at MHCLG. It aims at understanding what the data needs are for Early Help Service Leads within the different Councilsthat would enable them to assess service performance and to build the evidenced case to protect their budgets from cuts. The long-term objective is to see whether a common approach can be taken at national level.

As part of that, we have a series of interviews planned with Early Help leadership, senior data analysts, and commissioners.

This interview will take between 45 minutes and 1 hour and will mostly be me asking you questions about your role, the challenges that you face, and changes that you’d like to see.

Please be as open and honest with me as possible, you can’t offend us. We’re not waiting for any specific answer and there are no right or wrong answers. The idea is really for us to better understand what you do.

We’d like to make notes of our conversation, these notes will be available to our team to look at later. Is that OK?

You should have received the research information form. We have a copy here for you to keep; it has my details on it. This is a consent form we’d like you to read and sign. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Do you have any questions for us before we start?

## **Introductory questions**

* Let’s start with you telling me a bit about your role and what you do? How long have you been in your job?
* Who’s your main audience? Who do you share your work with?
* What is your main objective?
* What are the biggest challenges in your job?

**Current data-related practices**

***Within the Council***

* How do you support Service leads to assess service performance?
* In your opinion, how well does the EH Leadership understand data?
  + Would you say they use data to inform their decisions?
  + What are they interested in?
* What information do you share to help support decision making? And how do you present that information?

*Prompt: Do you create any report or dashboard, etc.?*

* + What is the aim of this(these) report(s)?

***External commissioners***

* Do you report to commissioners?
  + If so, to whom? How often? In what format?
  + How would you describe their approach to data?
  + What are they interested in?

**Data needs and challenges**

* Do you feel that you have the data you need to meet the needs of your audience?
* If not, what are the obstacles? *Prompt: e.g. data not collected? Data split across different systems? Data cannot be aggregated as a narrative?*

**Case study: creating a report**

* Can you remember the last time you built a report or analysed data on Early Help services?
* What was it for?
* How did it feel? *Prompt: Was it easy/complicated/good/frustrating…?*
  + Can you explain why?
* Was there any important data missing?

**Future-looking questions**

* In an ideal world where you could access all the data you wanted, what data would you like to have on Early Help, to evidence what works and help Leads take data-informed decisions?

## **Wrap up interview**

Thank you so much for your time today. Is there anything else you’d like to share with us before we wrap up?

We will share the findings of this research in April next year. Before that, we might have some additional questions for you. Are you ok with us contacting you again to ask you further questions either by email, phone or in person? On your side, please feel free to share with us any relevant documents and any additional comment or ideas.

Is there anyone else in the Council whom we could interview? Could you mention 3 people?