



Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales'
Transform: Domestic and Sexual Abuse
Programme
End of programme synthesis report

1. Introduction

1.1. The Transform programme

Lloyds Bank Foundation for England and Wales is an independent charitable foundation which makes grants to small and medium-sized charities working with individuals and communities facing acute and multiple disadvantage. In 2015 the Foundation launched a new national programme aimed at improving responses to domestic and sexual abuse and strengthening the sector in response to the challenges facing it. In 2017, the Foundation sought to broaden the reach of this programme by investing £1.6m in an open grants programme specifically aimed at strengthening policy influencing, infrastructure and innovation in the domestic and sexual abuse sectors. This Transform grants programme has had two primary objectives:

- To inform and influence responses to domestic and/or sexual abuse
- To strengthen the sectors, particularly the role of smaller specialist providers, in response to the challenges facing them in England and/or Wales.

The Transform grants programme originally funded 17 projects¹ which aimed to meet the above objectives by:

- Influencing policy at either a local, regional or national level
- Building the evidence base (through research and analysis) around needs and identification of effective interventions
- Developing and sharing models to help small and medium-sized specialist providers grow and replicate
- Developing and supporting effective partnerships within and across sectors.

Most projects commenced in May 2017 and were initially funded for two years.

¹ One of these projects dropped out in the early stages of the programme leaving 16.

1.2. The funded projects

All 16 Transform projects shared the same ultimate goal of ending interpersonal violence and all aimed to create social change by influencing others - individuals, services and systems - to do things differently. Five were concerned with both domestic and sexual abuse, four were focused on domestic abuse and seven on sexual abuse. Appendix 1 summarises the main aim, geographical coverage and amount of funding for each project.

Most of the funded organisations are small/medium sized service providers - mostly providing direct support to victims of abuse. While such organisations tend to have a broad agenda for social change, their campaigning and influencing activities are often undertaken in their 'spare time' and on top of the service provision for which they are primarily funded. For most, the Transform programme was the first time they had funding specifically earmarked for influence. The programme also funded a couple of consortiums/partnerships aiming to create system change by working together in new ways and a few organisations who already had considerable experience in the policy influencing arena but who wanted to undertake specific projects exploring new approaches to achieving influence.

The focus of several projects was on improving access to support for groups not well-served by existing services. For example, Galop sought to improve support for LGBT victims/survivors of domestic abuse while Survivors Manchester aimed to do the same for male victims of sexual violence.

Projects planned to use a variety of mechanisms to achieve change. The main ones were: conducting research, providing training, developing networks and partnerships and lobbying.

Several projects set out to increase evidence of need by conducting research that they could then use to influence policy, practice and commissioning. For example, Manchester Action on Street Health (MASH) collected evidence on the needs of women survivors in Greater Manchester; Ann Craft and Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Service (CDAS) on people with disabilities suffering domestic abuse, and Safer Wales on the adverse childhood experiences of women exploited through prostitution.

Two projects have had a national policy focus on a very specific issue: Rights of Women (ROW) on the inaccessibility to women survivors of Exceptional Case Funding and Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS) on migrant women's right to safely report abuse without their immigration status being a barrier. In two other cases the policy focus was broader: Rape Crisis England and Wales (RCEW) employed a policy officer for the first time and set up an all parliamentary group on sexual violence, while AVA/Agenda established a national commission on the topic of domestic and sexual violence and multiple disadvantage.

The development of standards and the production of toolkits was the primary approach taken by some projects. For example, Survivors Manchester developed standards to underpin best practice with male survivors and CDAS produced a toolkit for working with learning disability and domestic violence.

Developing and strengthening strategic partnerships was a priority for some projects. Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual abuse Support (SARSAS) worked across a consortium of three service providers towards establishing a single point of access for survivors of sexual violence and have implemented a common assessment tool; while the Women's Counselling and Therapy Service in Leeds (Visible) has taken a 'whole city' systems change approach to improving provision for survivors.

Some projects have focused on training as their main strategy for improving practice. For example, My Sisters Place has designed a seven module course based on their trauma informed model of empowerment (TIME), New Pathways has developed a diploma in trauma counselling and become a CPCAB validated training Centre and Re-Shape has used training to raise awareness amongst a wide range of service providers and help them work safely with sex offenders. Reducing the Risk also provided training as an integral aspect of its Champions network model.

1.3. The evaluation and learning support

In August 2017, the Foundation commissioned DMSS Research to act as an external evaluation and learning partner for the Transform grants programme. The role was not to conduct an independent evaluation of the programme as a whole, or of individual projects, but rather to support grantees with their own evaluations and provide input on research methods as well as to undertake a synthesis of the learning from the programme as a whole.

Initial input from DMSS involved a series of workshops in October/November 2017 to introduce projects to using a Theory of Change approach to project planning and evaluation. Each project was allocated a DMSS 'evaluation and research mentor' to provide individual support in developing their own theories of change and collecting and utilising evidence, and members of the DMSS team attended, or facilitated sessions at, programme learning events in March and November 2018 and April 2019.

In addition, we worked with Foundation staff to ensure that requirements for project reporting were consistent with a Theory of Change approach to planning and evaluation (i.e. that projects were asked to describe their project's journey in relation to the milestones and outcomes they had hoped to achieve). We also produced a suite of resources tailored to the needs of funded projects and covering project planning, evaluation tools, using training as an influencing strategy, commissioning an external evaluation and a rapid review of recent evidence relating to domestic and sexual abuse. These were easily accessible, web-based resources that also acted as a tool kit for DMSS learning mentors to use in 1 to 1 sessions where appropriate and helped us to be reasonably consistent in

our approach to project support. However, we don't know exactly how many projects have made use of these resources or how they've used them.

1.4. About this report

Projects have been required to provide two reports during the course of their funding – a report on their first year in Summer 2018 and a final report in August 2019. In both instances, projects were asked to summarise their progress towards the achievement of their outcomes as set out in their theories of change and specifically to report against their first and second year milestones. Projects were also asked about their main successes and challenges, their views on their involvement in the Transform programme, including the learning events, contact with other projects, support from DMSS and from the Foundation.

This report provides a synthesis of these reports (16 from year one and 15 from year two²) and summarises the progress reported by projects across the Transform programme as a whole.

We also consider the value and impact of the Transform programme as an approach and explore the extent to which funding and supporting a programme in this way adds value. We provide an analysis informed by the synthesis of project reports and other outputs (e.g. reports produced by independent evaluators), our observation of learning events, our interaction with projects as their evaluation and learning mentors and our overall knowledge and expertise in this field. However, there are limitations to our analysis, particularly in terms of identifying the overall impact of the programme. There are two main caveats. The first relates to our remit. We were not engaged to collect independent data to evaluate individual projects or the programme as a whole, nor has our role included any appraisal or quality assessment of project' outputs (such as standards, training courses, research reports etc). Our analysis is therefore informed to a large extent by projects' self-assessment of what they've done and how well they've done it. The second caveat is one that applies to almost all attempts to assess the impact of influencing activities: that the complexity of how change occurs and how long it often takes, makes it virtually impossible to confidently attribute impact. All we can do in most cases is to report what projects have done, note what seems to have happened so far and comment on the plausibility of their overall theory that by successfully delivering their milestones it is reasonable to assume that they are contributing to change in the intended direction.

2. Project achievements

2.1. Starting from a theory of change

Although most projects had been funded from May 2017 only two had already produced plans based on theories of change prior to the DMSS workshops held in Autumn 2017. Subsequently all projects developed a theory of change (ToC) setting out their overall goals,

² One of the projects (Safer Wales) had not submitted their year 2 report at the time of our synthesis

intended outcomes, the activities they planned to undertake to achieve these and the milestones they expected to reach by the end of year one. Projects varied in the amount of support they needed to think through, articulate and produce a theory of change framework for their project. In some cases, we were able to review one or two drafts and provide feedback by email while a few projects needed to work through multiple versions or required a face-to-face session with their mentor.

Projects reported against their year one milestones in Summer 2018 after which they were asked to review and adjust their ToCs in the light of their journey so far and to set appropriate and realistic milestones for year two. Most commonly this review was a 'desk-based' exercise undertaken by the project lead with some input from their evaluation mentor. However, some held a project review meeting involving staff and other stakeholders (including project partners and service users) to re-visit and collectively update their ToC.

2.2. Reaching milestones and achieving outcomes

At the end of year one it was clear that for most projects, progress had been very good. Almost all milestones had been achieved and many projects had surpassed their own expectations. It is therefore not surprising that at the end of the funding period projects have been able to report very positively on what they have delivered. However, the kinds of success identified and the distance travelled towards ultimate aims has inevitably varied according to the nature of the project being undertaken, the mechanisms utilised and, to some extent, the ambition of the original goals.

The quantity and pace of activities across many projects has been considerable and many have reached all of their year two milestones. Impressive examples include:

- **Galop**, who began by building an evidence base through analysing the case notes of 626 clients and producing a detailed overview of the nature and geography of domestic abuse of LGBT people in the London region. They have since published three reports: *'LGBT+ People's Experiences with Domestic Abuse'*, *'Recognise & Respond: Strengthening advocacy for LGBT+ victim/survivors of domestic abuse'* and *'Commissioning for inclusion: Delivering services for LGBT+ survivors of domestic abuse'*. In the course of two years they have successfully positioned themselves as the leading specialist organisation and a key source of expertise in LGBT+ domestic abuse. This has largely been achieved through effective networking including organising a cross-sector consultation, co-ordinating written evidence and giving oral evidence to the Joint Committee on the draft Domestic Abuse bill; organising a national LGBT+ domestic abuse conference and presenting at three other public policy conferences.

It should be noted that in January 2019 Galop received additional funding from the Home Office and this has enabled them to produce two reports and a national

conference in addition to the activities funded by the Foundation. Further Foundation funding is being used to fund work challenging LGBT+ hate crime.

- The **AVA/Agenda** Transform project incorporated three different strategies for achieving influence. They set up a commission on domestic violence and multiple disadvantage that was chaired by a Baroness and to which 73 organisations and individuals provided written evidence. The Commission's report was launched at Portcullis House in February 2019 with over 100 attendees.

Alongside the commission they trained and supported 13 peer researchers who interviewed other women experiencing severe and multiple disadvantage. Their '*Hand in Hand*' report – which was additional to the outputs originally included in their ToC - was launched in January 2019 and gained substantial media coverage (including three of the peer researchers being interviewed on Woman's Hour). They also established a Community of Practice with a membership of 32, selected from 61 applicants. Although specific examples are not provided, the external evaluator, Ruth Stevenson,³ reported that: '*The involvement of the Community of Practice has been key ... not only has it been a useful way of gathering evidence but its methodology has organically prompted practitioners across a variety of sectors to share ideas with colleagues, enhance their professional confidence, identify areas where change is needed, and advocate for these changes to be made*'.

This 'three-stranded' approach to achieving influence was highlighted by respondents interviewed for the evaluation as being coherent and effective and the variety of stakeholders involved was thought to have encouraged buy-in and positive change at all levels.

'So that is incredibly cleverly done to create change-makers to be taking that onto the ground. The model of having the commissioners and the women with lived experience, will make it have influence on the ground to change people's lives.' (View of Decision Maker, cited in Stevenson's evaluation)

- **Survivors Manchester** carried out a consultation, produced standards and an implementation toolkit for commissioners and service providers on working with male survivors. 27 services applied for the 10 places available on the trial programme and over a 12-month period, the project team tested and revised an

³ Ruth Stevenson (2019) Evaluating the impact of the National Commission on domestic and sexual violence and multiple disadvantage; June 2019

accreditation process with 10 service providers. The project attracted additional funding from the Home Office and the Foundation and by July 2019, there were 37 services enrolled on the Independent Accreditation Programme and 7 of the 10 service providers involved in the trial had been awarded the Quality Mark.

- In Leeds, the Women’s Counselling and Therapy Service **Visible** project established a steering group representing key organisations in the city. This attracted and maintained the involvement of committed individuals who were well positioned to influence change and has proved to be the project’s key mechanism for influence. Alongside this they have run a Survivor Leadership Reference Group which has been appropriately supported, has met regularly across the two years and has been highly involved in the development of the project. They have created and promoted an on-line resource focused on survivor support and signposting, and a series of network events in year one attracted 140 people from 25 organisations. In year two, the focus has been on developing a city-wide policy statement, with a briefing paper and action planning resource to support organisations in implementing it. Some sign up from early adopters include Leeds City Council, Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust, NHS Leeds Clinical Commissioning Group, Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust.

It is a feature of the Transform programme that project activities were not intended to be ‘set in stone’ at the outset. Where appropriate, projects were encouraged to test out strategies and reconsider their approach in the light of feedback and experience. While most projects have stuck closely to their original plan, a couple have greatly appreciated the freedom to abandon activities that did not seem to be yielding results and to try something different. As RCEW commented *‘We see this as a valuable flexibility, because the nature of your funding allows us to use our intelligence to direct resources and attention quickly to where we can make the most impact’*.

Visible is the project which made the most changes to their original plans. These included shifting from a specific focus on mental health provision to one of whole-city, multi-system change; producing a digital toolkit rather than a physical one; and abandoning training for frontline staff in the face of both the difficulty of staff being released and the recognition that training may be less effective than more sustained and strategic interventions.

In other cases, such as that of the Ann Craft Trust launching their research at Westminster, changes in approach took the form of grasping influencing opportunities that arose.

2.3. Progress towards overall goals

The Transform programme was established to support small specialist charities in the violence and abuse sector to develop their ability to influence wider change. The most important question about the programme’s effectiveness may therefore be whether, or to what extent, this occurred. In their final reports, projects were asked to make their own

assessment of the difference their work had made towards achieving the overall goal in their Theory of Change.

Obviously, those projects with the most specific goals – even where the vision was still a grand one – were best able to identify concrete differences. For instance, the goal of Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Service (SARSAS) was that *‘Survivors in Bristol have their needs appropriately met throughout their journey, accessing the right service at the right time for them’* and *‘Survivors can access a range of support via one front door, and a single assessment process.’* They were therefore able to report quite precisely where the consortium was up to in its development of a shared assessment and plans to institute a single point of access ‘Navigator Hub’.

The goal of the AVA/Agenda project was to develop clear recommendations for how to create holistic responses for women experiencing sexual and domestic violence and multiple disadvantage. This has been achieved and the influence of their work is evidenced by their reports being referenced in a number of publications, including an internal treasury document on multiple disadvantage to inform the spending review, and in papers produced for the joint committee scrutinizing the Domestic Abuse Bill.

Where goals were very aspirational, the gap between a project’s activities and their ultimate aim was understandably quite considerable. In the case of MASH, for example, the goal was: *‘Female survivors of sexual violence in Greater Manchester are able to access the support they need.’* In the two years available, what they were able to achieve with their research was an increase in awareness of the issue: *[Our research] has enabled us to highlight the prevalence of sexual violence in Greater Manchester, the devastating impact it has on the lives of victims alongside the lack of specialist support available. The research has given us an authoritative voice as well as enabling the often unheard voices of survivors themselves to be heard’.*

However, MASH is also an example of how greater influence may come about in time. They have been given encouraging indications from the Deputy Police and Crime commissioner that their recommendations will be included in the city region’s VAWG strategy. This is an illustration of how difficult it can be to tie influencing objectives to a specific timescale: sometimes issues take a long time to get on the agenda.

Similarly, the goal of Survivors Manchester was ensuring ‘better services for male victims/survivors of sexual violence’ and their theory of change was that the introduction of quality standards would be an effective mechanism for this purpose. They were justifiably pleased with the development process and early adoption by a number of services. However, actual evidence of male survivors’ needs being better met is not likely to be available in the short-term.

All projects were able to report that steps towards their ultimate goal had been achieved. For example, Carmarthen Domestic Abuse Service (CDAS) had an overall goal of people with

learning disabilities being safer in their communities and seamless service provision meeting their needs. They concluded that *'Whilst a long way off reaching our aspirational outcome, we have made significant inroads into raising awareness, gaining commitment and a plan to move forward with the issue.'*

2.4. So what can we conclude about the impact of Transform projects?

The essence of a theory of change approach is that it encourages projects to be clear about how and why their planned activities will lead to desired change – even when it is not possible to measure that change, either because it is too soon to do so or because it is too complex to evaluate. Attribution (i.e. proving that any change is the result of project activities) is the major challenge in evaluating anything. Attributing policy, practice or attitudinal change to any set of influencing activities is virtually impossible not least because of the myriad of factors and players involved. However, having a clearly expressed theory of change allows projects' plausibility to be assessed: it enables interested parties to judge the merits of a project's argument that by delivering their stated milestones it is reasonable to assume they will contribute to their desired change.

Milestones in the early stages of projects, are generally activity rather than outcome focussed. Consequently, what we know about project progress in the two years of this programme is almost entirely related to their delivery of planned activities and in some cases, how these have been received by their audiences. To judge the likely impact of projects we have to apply a 'plausibility test' to assess to what extent these activities are likely to contribute (or have already contributed) to change. We suggest there are five factors which increase plausibility of project influence:

1. The logic of the argument i.e. is there a clear connection between what the project is delivering and what it intends to achieve?
2. The effectiveness and fidelity of the project's delivery i.e. have they done what they said they would do and done it well?
3. The strength of existing evidence i.e. is there pre-existing evidence that a project's approach has worked before in similar contexts?
4. The perceptions of key informants/target audiences i.e. do important stakeholders such as decision-makers say that they have been influenced by a project?
5. Tangible occurrences related to the project's goals i.e. are there policy or practice developments which appear to follow closely from project's activities? Is there evidence that a project helped to influence these e.g. are projects cited in policy documents etc?

So, if we apply this kind of plausibility to test to projects in the Transform programme, what conclusions might we draw?

In terms of factor 1 (logical argument), most projects were able to use the theory of change process to explicate the connections between what they planned to do and the

changes they wanted to influence. This is not an easy process and the more complex and multi-layered the hoped-for change, the harder it is to pin down a logic chain. But as we've already noted most projects were able to articulate and review a theory of change. In our experience of evaluating multi-project programmes this is a fairly rare and represents a considerable achievement across 16 projects.

The evidence for projects' delivering what they said they would do is also strong. A few projects struggled for a variety of reasons (see challenges section below), but most have delivered their milestones, and some have achieved an exceptional level of successful delivery in the time available. Most have also maintained fidelity to their plans and where they've made changes, they have been able to justify them. There have been no obvious examples of 'mission drift'.

Projects' knowledge and use of existing evidence of 'what works' has been more variable. There is not a huge evidence base on how to effectively influence social and organisational change from without. There is plenty of writing on the subject, but as we have noted it's a very difficult area to evaluate so solid evidence is thin on the ground. We do know some things, however. For example, we know from evaluations of public education campaigns (stop smoking etc), that the impact tends to be on awareness rather than behaviour (people know more about why smoking is bad for them but they don't actually stop doing it) and even the awareness effects are often short-lived. We also know from evaluations of training programmes that people generally like them but that on their own they tend to have a limited effect on actual practice. And we know from the extensive literature on the use of research in decision-making, that it has a depressingly limited impact on its own and, like lamp posts, it is often used for support rather than illumination. Hence in applying the plausibility test to the projects in the Transform programme, we would be quite sceptical about claims from projects which were relying heavily on a training programme or a research study to achieve their change, unless they provided evidence that they were also doing other things e.g. offering support and consultancy in conjunction with the training or using their research as the basis for targeted lobbying.

The projects that do best in a plausibility test are those that can produce testimony from key people that they have been influenced by project outputs/activities. Even more convincing are those projects which can point to things that have happened and demonstrate a link between them and their activities. As we report above, several projects have indeed been able to do this.

3. Successes and challenges

There were a number of common themes among the successes and challenges reported.

3.1. Successes – common themes

Some of the successes commonly identified were:

- **Involvement of those with lived experience**

Some projects have used the Transform project to significantly increase the involvement of people with lived experience of sexual and domestic violence in influencing change and to do so in ways that have been innovative and sometimes challenging. For example, Rights of Women were hugely positive about having undertaken casework for the first time. Their theory was that this would be the most effective way of evidencing the shortcomings of the Exceptional Case Funding (ECF) scheme. In practice, the casework enabled them to submit a very detailed report to the review of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act (LASPO review) which could answer the specific appeal for data rather than just provide anecdotal evidence. They believe this influenced the subsequent commitment to simplify the ECF scheme and ensure a more timely response.

ROW was one of the projects that observed that the involvement of survivors had unintended, but very positive, consequences for them as an organisation as well as for the women concerned.

It is clear that through their Transform projects, some campaigning organisations came much closer to those whose interests they aimed to represent, while some service providing organisations travelled further in the direction of genuinely ‘working with’ rather than ‘doing for’ those using their services. For example, New Pathways noted: *‘For us as an organisation, embedding service user involvement into our development is still in its infancy. Having the research project has enabled us to engage counsellors more fully in this process and begin to change the organisational culture in terms of service user engagement. It is also helping us to learn how to do this more effectively and how to promote the benefits of this engagement to service users and staff.’* New Pathways also described how *‘One of the biggest successes of this project overall has been the engagement of service users and the learning from their lived experience. From having limited and sporadic service user engagement at the beginning of the project NP now has a vibrant and influential service user group. This group have contributed to the content and materials for the Diploma; interviewed for the first cohort; interviewed for new staff positions and have contributed to events, consultations and campaigns across Wales, including consulting on Welsh Government communication campaigns and sharing their experience of abuse and recovery with the Duchess of Sussex’*.

AVA described how supporting a group of multiply disadvantaged women to undertake research with their peers had been immensely satisfying as well as resource intensive. They

emphasised three outcomes from the process: the deeper understanding it had brought to the organisation; the impact of lived experience in bringing issues alive and winning hearts and minds, and the empowerment of the women themselves. In terms of the biggest successes of the project one of the things they reported was that:

‘Working with the peer researchers was as transformational for us as individuals and a charity as it was for the women. All of the researchers who attended the initial training stayed with the project until the end, and it was a privilege to walk by their side on their journey....As a result of this project we have continued to develop projects which enable us to develop our work with survivors - one of our projects involves training experts by experience to co-train with AVA trainers. Some of the peer researchers have become involved in this, as well as some of the women they interviewed.’

And their external evaluator wrote: *‘The authentic integration of those with lived experience [via the peer research project] had a profound effect both on the women involved and on readers of the report who considered the evidence to be more impactful and have greater validity as a result.’ (Stevenson, 2019:4)*

The Latin American Women’s Rights project reported the very real ownership of their campaign by the women most affected: *‘Migrant survivors with insecure immigration status have produced and led on the digital and communication work throughout the campaign, with a total of 60 women participating in media and campaign training and around 8 migrant women sharing their testimonies with mainstream press. By this goal, as mentioned by migrant women themselves, it is not only about sharing their experiences of VAWG but rather include recommendations of change and mutual solidarity with other migrant survivors writing articles. As a migrant survivor brilliantly put it for [Metro news](#) in June 2019: “I tell my story to show solidarity to other migrant survivors, and I want my experience to be a tool for change”.*

- **Engagement of other key stakeholders**

The engagement of a wide range of stakeholders was often described as both a success in its own right and an essential mechanism in achieving the project’s outcomes. The Ann Craft Trust commented on the former: *‘Bringing together and putting into direct contact with each other so many different practitioners and organisations across the country. The extent of collaboration and skills sharing across sectors which has characterised the project throughout has been significant.’*

Visible was one of the projects that established multi-agency advisory or reference groups. They identified the *‘Strong commitment of Strategic Steering Group members to be ‘change agents’ and see a difference in practice in their organisations’* as a key success. Survivors Manchester described the ways in which engagement of professional stakeholders had shaped and improved their work through a *‘critical friends’ panel which included academics,*

journalists, campaigners and researchers from the UK and abroad. The knowledge and expertise of those advising the project team ensured the final quality standards document incorporated the latest research and understanding of male sexual violence, masculinity and gender. In addition to their expertise, all those involved helped to raise awareness of the quality standards at the highest levels, which was a defining contributor to the success of the project.'

For those projects for whom training has been the primary mechanism for influencing change, engagement of external 'customers' has been crucial. All have reported good take up of their training offers: 150 practitioners have so far attended TIME courses provided by My Sister's Place and the detailed feedback on the integration of learning into practice that has been collected is very positive. New Pathways Diploma in Trauma Counselling will be taught for the first time this year and at the time of reporting had 8 trainees registered.

In their year one report Re:shape noted that *'The uptake of organisations wanting the training has been the biggest success of the Transform project in the last year. Due to the subject matter, we were unsure if organisations would put barriers up when we approached with the training opportunity...The aim of the training is to break down barriers, and work together to prevent sexual harm, and with each professional that is being worked with and organisation that comes on board to work with us, we are noticing people's perceptions of the organisation change, and an understanding is developing from people, that we are all working towards no more victims, and where they as an individual and as a professional fit into this.'* In their final report they reported having delivered a total of 47 training and consultancy packages. Of these 19 had been paid for – thus suggesting actual 'buy in' as well as a positive indication that a training role may be sustainable beyond the funding period.

- **Growing networks and alliances**

Some projects particularly commented on the opportunities gained through Transform to extend their strategic engagement with others. For example, Galop noted in their year one report: *'We have forged strong links and have been working closely with national VAWG and DVA services and policy influencers such as the Women's Aid, AVA and SafeLives. The grant enabled us to consult with and learn from these and other relevant actors and networks, build on existing achievements and define our own unique approach and contributions to combating domestic abuse. The grant also enabled our continuous and strong presence in processes that shape national VAWG or domestic abuse strategies and legislation, which has among other led to Galop organising an LGBT thematic event, hosted by the HO to support the consultation on the Domestic Abuse Bill.'*

In some cases, these new networks had been directly facilitated by the Transform programme itself. Rights of Women reported that: *'In particular, the contact with AVA was useful as we understood that their work would have an impact on our sector later on and were grateful to be aware of this as it helped us to be plugged in.'*

Similarly, CDAS commented on the value of having developed a partnership with Carmarthen People First through the Transform programme, noting that: *'This project has enabled us to truly understand the complexities of working in partnership with another organisation and we have learnt a great deal from this process such as building trust and relationships in order to work together effectively.'*

- **New service provision and organisational development**

New service provision was not an intended outcome of Transform but in some instances the funded activities supporting an external influencing agenda have influenced internal decisions or highlighted new opportunities. New Pathways reported that *'a direct consequence of the research findings been the employment of two full time members of staff in NP to provide support, needs and risk assessments and engagement in group-work for people on NP counselling waiting list. Consequently, service users will have access to support at an earlier stage'*.

Re:shape reported that an additional benefit for them has been that some of those attending their training have become interested in volunteering: *'In year 2 of the project we have noted volunteering interest from 67 delegates (the equivalent of 14 Circles' worth, if all those interested joined us as volunteers), with many having since had Re:shape volunteer training and some of those having already been placed in an intervention'*.

In the case of Reducing the Risk, the successes they highlighted were all related to the overall development of the organisation. These included the research they commissioned on the effectiveness of their Champions network model promoting renewed confidence and enthusiasm in the context of a funding crisis; a new communications strategy, a 'digital trustee' and promotional materials, and a business plan and restructure including a new post of business manager.

3.2. Challenges – common themes

There were also some common themes in the challenges identified. Some of these exist for small charities undertaking any piece of work, some relate particularly to work in the violence and abuse field and others to the new challenge of influencing others and working out how best to do so.

- **Time and capacity**

In their year one reports several projects commented on the challenge of getting their projects off the ground because of slow processes beyond their control. Obtaining ethical approval for their research was an issue for a few projects. For example, CDAS noted that the delay had implications for what they wanted to do next: *'It was hoped that our research work would be near completion upon year one and this delay has had a knock-on effect on the subsequent development of a toolkit'*.

A similar problem was experienced by LAWRS: *'Despite having designed the surveys and questions with researchers, the University's ethics committee took a long time to approve it, as it involved vulnerable adults in the research'*.

Some projects identified the challenge of completing year one milestones. For example, MASH realised how large a task they had taken on in researching women's needs across the whole of Greater Manchester. And Rape Crisis also commented on how long it takes to influence policy change: *'The biggest challenge we face is knowing that achieving effective systemic change is a long and slow process and a two-year project might not be enough time to ensure the kind of far-reaching cultural shift we would ideally like'*. In year two, although they were pleased with the success of the APPG, they noted that running it had been *'very resource intensive in logistical terms...additional support from parliamentary staff that was promised did not materialise.'*

- **Staffing issues**

A major logistical challenge for some projects was staffing. Staff recruitment was slower than anticipated for some, and for others retaining staff was a further difficulty. This observation from AVA illustrates this: *'During the two years of the project, the secretary to the Commission, the lead on the Community of Practice and the CEO of Agenda all went on maternity leave. The maternity locum for the project lead then left at a crucial point in the project.'*

- **Engagement of other agencies**

At the end of year one, some projects noted that there was a lack of external networks for them to engage with and they had needed to spend time building them. For example, Galop noted a lack of existing strategic networks in the DVA/VAWG and LGBT sectors and limited specialist services, particularly outside London.

In year one, Re:shape particularly identified the engagement of victim services as a challenge for them: *'One of the biggest challenges over the year has been engaging victim services, and it has been acknowledged that the time period when engaging with victim services is longer by approximately 6 months in comparison to other organisations that are being worked with.'*

Attitudinal challenges were highlighted by the Ann Craft Trust, including some agencies *'failing to recognise disabled young people as potentially in need of their services or not 'seeing' disabled young people because of a narrow medical model of disability.'*

Maintaining strategic engagement within a changing landscape is also a challenge. For example, Rights of Women referred to the impact of key postholders moving on: *'The changes to key position holders in government, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) and to civil servants over the past year has been challenging to deal with, particularly as we had*

developed a strong relationship with one of the leading civil servants who was then repositioned elsewhere.’ In year two, Brexit was particularly identified as a factor: ‘The political landscape has been as difficult as we have ever known it. Brexit continues to absorb the time and attention of almost all the political machine.’ (Rape Crisis)

- **Involving service users**

Again, although the involvement of service users or people with lived experience was identified as a success by many projects, it was also identified as a challenge. For example, in their year one reports, the projects doing research almost all highlighted the challenges of accessing people for interviews and focus groups: *‘Locating young people to interview highlights the daily stresses faced by young disabled people who experience harm; planned sessions have needed to be postponed because young people are unwell or having difficult times. (Ann Craft)*

Building in sufficient capacity to take account of people’s support needs was also identified as a challenge. For example, *‘Supporting the peer researchers, who are brilliant but, in some cases, very vulnerable- e.g. some of them are anxious travelling on their own. We have had to support one peer researcher whose abusive ex-partner has re-entered her life’.* (AVA)

The challenge has been to maintain a balance between recognising traumatic experiences of survivors and adapting to survivors in their transition into activists, ensuring that they feel safe enough to speak out.’ (LAWRS)

- **The emotional impact of the topics**

Several projects highlighted the importance of taking account of the emotional impact of working with violence and abuse. *‘Care and sensitivity has been needed about this in every meeting. This has been particularly significant for those with personal experience of child sexual abuse themselves for whom exposure to others’ experience may trigger difficult feelings of their own, but also others such as those formerly unfamiliar with the realities of abuse who can be shocked even traumatised by hearing about them.’ (Visible)*

- **Developing new skills and capacity**

A challenge for several projects which has emerged in year two, is the need for them to develop their skills, particularly around marketing and influencing. In year one, many projects were product-focused – doing their research, developing their training materials, standards, toolkits etc. By year two, the priority task was getting other people to take notice of these products and to adopt their recommendations. For projects who were quite training focused this has meant developing marketing strategies, something they did not all feel well-equipped to do.

4. Experience of being involved in the Transform programme

From the start, Transform was set up to be different to other funding programmes. It was never intended to be just about funding. Key features of Transform are:

- it has brought together projects with a core common objective (i.e. to address interpersonal violence and abuse),
- it has funded projects to be agents of change rather than service providers
- it has encouraged the sharing of learning across the programme

The Lloyds Bank Foundation has sought to promote these features in a number of ways, notably via regular learning events, the appointment of a learning and evaluation partner to the programme and the active encouragement of networking and collaboration across the programme. The end of year reports asked projects to comment on each of these.

4.1. Transform learning events

Projects were asked about their attendance at learning events and whether they have used anything from them.

Attendance at the learning events has been extremely good over both years of the programme. All the projects attended at least one and the majority attended more than one. Several came to them all and often had more than one person participating. This level of participation is a good indicator of the enthusiasm people have for networking and learning.

Networking opportunities were cited as one of the most useful aspects of these events: *It was invaluable to have networking opportunities at the very start of the funding and be able to get a national picture of projects and learn from the work going on in other regions. This was useful in sending out our call for evidence and being able to get a national spread of responses. AVA*

The informal learning and networking time afforded by the Transform Learning events was valuable, in addition to the scheduled programme of workshops and speakers. This was particularly the case because all the Transform projects were in the domestic and sexual violence sector, so there was a lot of relevant expertise and experience in the room. SARSAS

As well as networking with each other, projects valued the opportunity to engage with the Lloyds Bank Foundation's grant officers and senior staff. They viewed this as an example of LBF's commitment to them and the programme.

Projects also valued the learning content, especially the specific 'tips and tools' they were able to take away from events: *Overall, we found all of them useful and gained useful take-aways each time. The events earlier in the project were some of the most useful in giving us*

structure for different elements of the project, for example around how to approach research and present project findings. Rights of Women

The fact that many of the projects gave specific examples and explained how they had used them is a good indicator that they really did benefit from the learning. Several mentioned the usefulness of the theory of change workshops which they clearly viewed as part of the learning events programme: *The formulating of a theory of change was a challenge but it developed into a useful tool to keep the project on track. Learning how to develop a theory of change is a transferable skill that I have been able to pass on to other members of our team to use for different projects. New Pathways*

Other examples cited from the learning events were the sessions on using the media, presentation skills, extending influence and models of service user engagement:

At the most recent event there was a presentation on “Extending your influence”. This encouraged us to undertake political stakeholder mapping - it consolidated the importance of it, as political influence and visibility, and support for our members to secure sustainable funding, are the core of our project. Rape Crisis England & Wales

Some of the most interesting certainly was the event when we looked at exploring our project and being able to pitch this succinctly so that ‘it does what it says on the tin’. The session on creating a legacy also enabled us to reflect and look at how we can sustain the momentum of the project, to consolidate and ensure that we have capacity to sustain the training moving forward. My Sisters Place

The event held in Autumn 2018 included a speaker from Safe Lives on involving survivors with Lived Experience. This gave us insight which fed into the development of lived experience groups in the Consortium. SARSAS

We have used the power analysis to map out key decision makers from the GLA to national police and crime commissioners, and Westminster key decision makers. We have also used the planning structure of events when we organised the conference on our research ‘The Right to be believed’. Moreover, as part of the media training workshop at Transform learning, we had the chance to speak to the Victoria Derbyshire producer on best practice when interviewing migrant survivors as well as the opportunity to work together on safe reporting. Latin American Women’s Rights Service

The event organised in November 2018 on media and survivor’s voice was directly relevant to our strategic objectives aiming to strengthen the survivor’s voice in our advocacy and work with media and connected us to key actors to rely on as we develop our media communication objectives and strategy. Galop

As well as the content, people were appreciative of the style of the events, finding them to be helpful in reflecting and sharing with others. A couple of people mentioned the round-

table format as being particularly helpful: *I felt the format of round table discussions which included someone from Transform and tackling a shared theme to be very effective. It enabled individuals both to contribute to and apply the learning in the discussion to their specific projects whilst also hearing from others and networking.* Reducing the Risk

There were no critical comments about the events, although a few projects noted that it was sometimes difficult to commit the time given the number of competing priorities: *The reality for most small charities is that we are hugely over-stretched in terms of our capacity all the time and even though we always wanted to attend events, very often it was actually difficult and stressful to be out of the office for a full day because of all the other demands on our time.* Rights of Women

For example, one project (Re:Shape) noted that because they only had one worker, if they were booked to deliver training on the day of a learning event, they were not able to attend.

4.2. Contact with other Transform programme projects

All the projects mentioned valuing the contact with other Transform projects at the learning events. In year one, several projects had already developed these connections further and by the end of year two there were even more examples of projects making use of their connections across the programme. For example:

- The projects focused on people with learning disabilities have forged a strong connection with each other: *CDAS has been a vitally useful colleague organisation throughout; their CEO has been a key colleague and part of the advisory group; their colleagues have been part of the training which we produced... We have met colleagues from different jurisdictions, backgrounds and knowledge bases; it has been invaluable; thank you; this is a networking process that we will continue to develop and will be a lasting project legacy.* Ann Craft Trust
- The Ann Craft Trust has also worked with Galop: *Contact with Galop and the LGBTQ+ perspectives has been very significant and we have in turn put LGBTQ disability colleagues into contact with Galop; two way networking has been invaluable; for example we discussed and liaised about findings related to disability in the Galop reports on LGBTQ+ experiences of domestic abuse in a lot of training and have publicised the report throughout our networks and the National Working Group on Safeguarding Disabled Children.* Ann Craft Trust
- AVA were able to use their contacts within the Transform programme to extend their call for evidence for their Inquiry. They have also forged a partnership with MASH: *They supported our application for extended funding to the Transform programme, and are now important partners in our work in Manchester to develop local and regional solutions to the issues raised in "Breaking down the Barriers"* AVA

- My Sister's Place were commissioned by another Transform project to provide them with 4 days of TIME training
- Rights of Women and Latin American Women's Rights Service are based in the same building but prior to Transform had little to do with each other. They now have a strong connection: *The most useful contact was with LAWRS Step-Up migrant women campaign. Although we work in the same building it is hard to stay on top of what each organisation is doing. The early introduction to their work in this area meant we were able to build links with it. As a result, we became official supporters of their campaign as an organisation and also provided some legal expertise/advice to them in relation to immigration law.* Rights of Women
- The Latin American Women's Rights Service not only connected with Rights of Women, but other projects also: *We worked closely with Galop on ways in which specific LGBTQ migrant survivors were impacted by intersectional discrimination and the hostile environment. Additionally, Rape Crisis, also part of our coalition, included safe reporting as part of their briefings on the Domestic Abuse Bill. Finally, we were also invited us to speak at a meeting of the APPG on Sexual Violence, about the impact of current funding landscape and commissioning models on specialist services.* Latin American Women's Rights Service
- Galop also referred to their close working with Reducing the Risk, AVA and LAWRS: *This strengthened our referral pathways and also informed our knowledge on existing interventions supporting DVA survivors. At the start of the project it also provided us with the necessary understanding of the dynamics and relationships between actors in the VAWG sector. In turn, we supported LAWRS with LGBT DVA awareness raising training and consultancy and have joined their national campaign Step Up Migrant Women attempting to influence the rights of migrant women under the draft Domestic Abuse Bill. We also submitted evidence to AVA's call for evidence for National Commission into women facing domestic and/or sexual violence and multiple disadvantage.* Galop

Even where projects had less contact with each other, they still appreciated the opportunity to share information and ideas through the learning events and many had then had 'one off' contact with each other over a specific issue. For example: *While we have not directly worked with them in our training and consultancy capacity, we have made links with a number of other Transform programme projects in our cohort. Of particular note is Rape Crisis, whose Policy Officer we have since been in contact with regarding the importance of 'dual status' (both victim and perpetrator) training for victim support organisations and sexual assault referral centres. We have also had contact with AVA and My Sister's Place since the learning event we attended in April and discussed our organisations' respective roles in preventing sexual harm.* Re:shape

Visible has greatly benefitted from contact with other Transform programme projects mostly during the learning events. It has been fantastic to be able to discuss challenges in the same field and explore solutions together. E.g. I talked with the Project Lead from My Sisters Place about engagement in training courses and developing training modules and opportunities. I also learnt a great deal from Stephanie Rawdon, LimeCulture CIC Survivor Manchester project about developing shared standards and how to maximise opportunities to influence people and not be afraid to push on doors. Leeds Women's Counselling and Therapy Service

When we were researching a database solution from the Consortium, we were able to get feedback and experience from a Transform project in Wales who was already using the OASIS database in their Domestic Violence support service. SARSAS

4.3. Project use of the support from the external evaluation and learning partner

Projects were asked what use they had made of support from DMSS and whether they had benefitted from this.

Feedback from most projects on DMSS support was very positive. Several reflected back on the value of the theory of change workshops and the ongoing support in developing and reviewing project theories of change. For example: *DMSS were invaluable in helping us finesse our theory of change, in particular in creating a clear and simple overall goal. AVA*

DMSS were supportive in the development of our Theory of Change and found them very approachable, accessible and available when needed. We were able to discuss with them changes and amendments to our original theory of change and guidance meant we were able to clearly evidence the need to make the necessary amendments. My Sister's Place

Several projects expressed appreciation of the ongoing support of their evaluation mentor from DMSS with the approach of the mentors in providing an opportunity for reflection valued as much as their specific expertise (e.g. in research) and relevant topic knowledge: *DMSS in many ways exceeded our expectation. Their representative was very proactive, resourceful and approachable with a strong background and understanding of how small charities work and the challenges we deal with daily. She also had good knowledge of domestic and sexual abuse and a very strong research background, both directly relevant to the project. Galop*

The support has been fantastic for us, particularly considering that monitoring progress of policy work can be quite challenging. The sessions have been also very timely, as they allowed us to review our tools while preparing the campaign action plan, ensuring that everything was in place right from the start. LAWRS

Great to have critical thinking and be challenged about why we were approaching things in the way that we were and gave confidence and shared concerns and anxieties when it was difficult getting people to respond. Our mentor recognised the issues because she has

worked on similar projects and made time to help me make sense of it. Helping us to value and present what we had delivered and encouraging when it felt challenging was an invaluable asset to the work. ACT

[Our mentor] was an exceptional source of support throughout the project - to have an evaluator and consultant with that level of experience and background in the rape crisis sector is amazing and certainly benefitted our project. For example, when supporting us with the development of our theory of change and our Shared Assessment, she drew from an immense knowledge of different services and models across the sector. SARSAS

A few people commented that the input from DMSS would have been more helpful had it come earlier: DMSS were key in helping us to develop the Theory of Change. Although it would have been even more useful slightly earlier (3 months in rather than 6 months in, the full day workshop on developing our Theory of Change was invaluable. WCTS

I think at the time DMSS came on board we were already several months into our project and had a fairly clear vision regarding our progress. This was partly due to the decision we made to engage an external evaluator upon commencement of the project. My Sister's Place

Two projects felt they had not benefitted from the support offer from DMSS because they had already got their plans in place and knew what they were doing. One was being developed with a team of consultants and felt that they had all the expertise they required: As our progress was significant against our stated milestones within the first Year of the project, DMSS supported us to retrofit a Theory of Change which was required for the Year 1 report. We have not requested support from DMSS in Year Two of the project, although it was offered. For projects with goals that were harder to define, we can see the benefit of being supported by an external organisation such as DMSS. In this case however, given the breadth of experience of the project team, we cannot say we benefitted from their support. Survivors Manchester

We did not find this aspect of the support offered to be useful to us. However, we believe this is because we had approached the project from the outset in terms of Theory of Change rather than it being a criticism of the support offered. Rights of Women

4.4. The organisational impact of being part of the Transform programme

Projects were asked whether being part of the Transform programme had made any difference to their organisation as a whole.

Some projects responded to this question primarily by referring back to their achievements and clearly for many, the fact that they had successfully delivered their project had been important for their organisation.

Others were more specific about the difference being part of Transform had made. Examples included using the experience to:

- **Inform future priorities:** *MASH are using the recommendations of the report which Lloyds have funded to inform our service delivery, make positive changes and the recommendations are also informing our future funding priorities. MASH*
- **Extend connections and partnerships:** *Participation in the Transform programme has enabled us to explore and make new connections on a significant level at strategic, management and practitioner level with a wide range of organisations. In some cases, we built on the Ann Craft Trust's already broad and numerous connections, in others we made completely new links and learned a great deal of new information about practice. ACT*

This project has enabled us to truly understand the complexities of working in partnership with another organisation and we have learnt a great deal from this process such as building trust and relationships in order to work together effectively. CDAS

- **Develop organisational policies, procedures and new ways of working:** *As a result of the peer research element of this project, we have reviewed and made changes to both our volunteering policy and our adult safeguarding policy... Our experience with the peer researchers has led us to develop new ways of working with survivors and we already have made a successful bid which will enable us to provide them with training and experience as AVA co trainers. AVA*

We had not provided casework before and only provided one-off telephone advice. As a result of providing it successfully through this project, we have decided to explore casework delivery within our overall advice delivery model going forward. Rights of Women

- **Build capacity for influence:** *The programme has given us the stability of full-time in-house capacity on policy. We know from the regular feedback we seek that our members especially value our ability to raise the profile of the movement politically and with the media, as this underpins their local work, particularly for smaller or emerging groups that lack the resources to do this work themselves. Rape Crisis England and Wales*

The Transform programme has helped us create a better communication strategy on policy and campaign work as a specialist organisation. In kind support has increased our sustainability and strengthened our strategic planning. LAWRS

- **Strengthen service user engagement:** *The culture of service user engagement has now been firmly established and service users are now far more active in influencing our service provision, staffing, training, policies and procedures. Our service users now have far more of a voice outside of the organisation regularly taking part in consultations on*

local, regional and national policy. The establishment of the Advisory Group for the Diploma has directly contributed to this and, with the development of the Diploma now complete, this group has evolved into a vibrant and active monthly service user engagement group. New Pathways

- **Generate new work and new sources of funding:** *Being part of Transform has radically transformed the landscape of our organisation. The increase in referrals that has come from promoting our interventions in training sessions has highlighted the level of demand for the intervention services we offer. This has allowed Reshape to make a stronger case for seeking further funding to deliver more interventions: with more organisations now aware of how we can support their service users, the level of demand for interventions is very clear. Re:shape*

We are now delivering on new contracts. We had £250,000 worth of contracted delivery in place together already. During the project, we have secured another collaborative counselling contract, value of £600,000, and are looking for funding to develop the Navigator Hub, which would amount to approx. £700,000. SARSAS

- **Increase profile and visibility:** *The delivery of Recognise & Respond considerably lifted the profile of our organisation and increased visibility on a national level. It positioned us as one of the key national actors competent to support stakeholders with credible, up-to-date, strategic as well as practical advice and information. Galop*

4.5. Views on the Foundation's grant management processes

Projects were asked about their experience of being a recipient of a grant, including the application process, communications and grants management.

Most projects responded to this question by complimenting the Foundation on its approach. For example: *The feedback for LBF is that it has been a hugely positive experience and one which does make a difference because of the help the foundation has given. ACT*

The Foundation have been a solid and dependable support from the inception of the project through to completing this final report. The benefit of the Learning Events helped to maintain purpose and focus. Communication has been clear and timely. CDAS

Several people reiterated their views about the value of the learning events: *The learning events are helpful and promote a feeling of inclusion, interest and excitement at what projects are developing – you feel valued for the contributions you are making. My Sister's Place*

People were positive both about the application process and the ongoing communication: *We found the application process to be well-structured, clear and welcomed the support and contact with the Foundation. The communications from the Foundation have always been clear and have given us plenty of notice when they contain a request. Rights of Women*

The support of grants managers was appreciated: *Communication from the Foundation has always been brilliant: grant managers are genuinely interested in the projects they manage and are always looking for potential networking opportunities for the projects they work with.* Re:shape

Similarly, positive views were expressed about the monitoring and reporting processes. Some commented on the value of having coherence between their theory of change and reporting expectations.

A few people particularly valued the flexibility of the Foundation in allowing them to make adaptations to their plans and project delivery. Others were appreciative of the extended funding they had received.

There were few suggestions for improvements. A few expressed a wish for further funding for their area of work: *Continued funding; topic like ours is very under-researched and this is an exploratory study and needs far more attention. The study has not only highlighted the issues but has tried to be solution-focussed and we now need funding to implement the solutions identified; next stage processes to continue practice development in areas that are not funded or recognised would be welcome.* ACT

One project commented that: *It would have been useful to have been informed of changes in staffing as they occurred to prevent confusion around communication.* WCTS

Another reiterated the difficulties they had experienced in attending all the learning events and made a couple of suggestions: *We were often unable to attend the Transform events when invited as the details often came through quite close to the planned date. We doubt that this is an issue specific to our organisation, so perhaps a confirmed calendar of events at the start of the year would allow us to plan for these more effectively...The events were held in locations that meant it was easy for everyone to attend. It might be useful in the future to hold local events for different areas, so grant managers could hold shorter sessions for their projects. This would mean less travel for organisations, and potentially a better turnout.* Reshape

A couple of people expressed interest in a final event to showcase the achievements of the Transform programme and there was also some interest in hearing from the Foundation what it felt it had learned from the experience and whether they were planning a similar approach for other themes.

4.6. Any other feedback

Almost all the projects used the space for any other feedback to reiterate their appreciation of the programme and to say thank you. Here are just a couple of examples:

The Foundation is a real partner of the project, which is unusual amongst grant funders. There is clear communication and an understanding of the challenges a charity like ourselves face. The foundation encourages us to be realistic with our work. The Enhance support has enabled us to grow and learn as an organisation and the mix of funding and support is excellent. CDAS

We wish to extend our gratitude for funding this project and giving us this opportunity to proactively approach a niche policy area that is critical to survivors of domestic abuse and sexual violence. It is rare to have adequate resourcing to work on issues like this and we cannot thank you enough for supporting us to do so. It has also been a pleasure to work with your team and we wanted to acknowledge this. Rights of Women

4.7. Lessons from the Transform programme experience

The programme has been based on the following implicit theory of change:

‘By bringing projects together that belong to the same broad field and have a common focus; providing them with support to tackle a new area of work, articulate their individual theories of change and ensure their planning and evaluation is rooted in these and providing opportunities for them to network and share their experience; projects will be able to achieve more and have greater impact than would otherwise be the case.’

It is of course not possible to state that such a hypothesis is proven. However, our experience of evaluating numerous programmes combined with the feedback from projects does indicate that the Transform programme has indeed made a difference to the journeys travelled and the places reached.

So what can be learned from the way this particular funding programme has been structured and delivered?

- References to the framework provided by a theory of change and how it helped keep projects ‘on track’ suggest that this is a sensible and acceptable approach to project planning and evaluation.
- The evidence of meaningful contact and support across projects outwith actual learning events suggest that a funding programme that is field-specific may bring real advantages – this may be particularly the case in less well networked fields or where projects are in a similar position re tackling new challenges or developing new approaches.
- Mentoring and support that is provided by people who ‘get’ the projects and know the topic (in this case violence and abuse) as well as having relevant expertise may be particularly palatable and enable projects to apply new learning more readily.
- Taken together the above aspects of the programme appear to have increased the confidence of many projects. Projects seem to have been buoyed up by their participation in the programme - their sense of being ‘backed’ by Lloyds, of having expertise in influencing, research and systems change to draw on and of being one of

many initiatives driving in a similar direction – have together led to a greater faith in their own abilities to ferment change.

5. Analysis and discussion from DMSS

It is clear from the information summarised in the previous sections that the Transform programme has been experienced very positively by the projects involved. From our observations of projects' progress and from the evidence presented in their reports over the past two years, we conclude that the programme has also been successful in achieving its twin objectives of increasing influence and strengthening organisations in the sector.

The majority of individual projects have been very successful in achieving what they set out to do in the timeframe of the programme. The projects have varied in their size, focus of influence and their means of achieving their goals, but nearly all of them have delivered their intended milestones. This makes Transform a successful programme on most measures, although there are two main caveats to this. First, we don't know to what extent projects have achieved actual influence or will do over time. They have done what they said they would do and there are theories of change which seem plausible – but it is too soon and, in most cases, too complex to assert that actual change has or will occur. Second, projects have in most cases produced tools for influence (such as standards, training courses, research reports etc. Our work has not included any appraisal or quality assessment of these. Although the relationship between quality of product and extent of influence is not a simple one, it is reasonable to suggest that projects which develop good quality and credible tools are more likely to be able to use them for more effective influence.

Nevertheless, the delivery of project milestones across the programme is impressive. And these have not just been asserted by projects in their reports but evidenced by tangible examples.

What can be learned from this is that there appear to be important features of projects which have been more successful:

- **Clarity of purpose:** It's an obvious observation but an important one. Many of the projects which have delivered most successfully are those which were clear what they intended to do from the beginning. For some, the theory of change process helped but as a few pointed out, it came a little late in the process – so projects which already had clarity arguably had a head start. A learning point for LBF here may be that such a process should be built in earlier.
- **Flexibility:** This may seem to contradict the above, but for some projects the facility to change or adapt their approach (rather than to bat on with something that wasn't working) was an important feature.
- **Project size and infrastructure:** Transform had projects of varying sizes and infrastructure including many consisting of a single worker. They mostly delivered their milestones, but our observation is that single workers were more likely to be successful if they were part of supportive organisations – i.e. if there were other staff around who understood what they were doing and how their work fitted with the overall organisation or where there was a committed and engaged manager/CEO.
- **Capacity and skills:** Several projects were embarking on a type of work they hadn't done before e.g. a service delivery organisation planning to conduct research. Not all had the in-

house capacity to carry out their plans and didn't always know what they didn't know (an obvious example being how long it can take to get ethical approval). Two years isn't long if a project loses a lot of time in the first few months. Some overcame this by commissioning the skills they needed – but arguably gained less in-house learning and capacity for the future than those who continued with the work themselves. A learning point for LBF may be to consider how to assess the skills and capacities of organisations doing these different activities.

So, the projects themselves have been largely successful. But what difference has being part of a Transform programme made? Projects' reports and our observations suggest that Transform has been more than just a sum of its projects. It has added value in some important ways as illustrated in section 4 above. We would pick out two features in particular. First, the programme has succeeded in enabling projects to think and do differently. It is common for projects in this sector, and in these beleaguered times, to be overly focused on 'doing' and 'keeping going'. This was particularly evident to us in our early months of working with projects who frequently responded to questions about achievement with lengthy recitations of activities. The Transform programme provided welcomed opportunities to reflect, record, and share. Second, the programme has helped several projects to move user participation on to another level. The programme minimised the risk of such participation to be tokenistic, projects were supported to be as clear as possible about what they were trying to do and this provided the basis for informed service user collaboration and for their role in shaping and achieving change to be documented and acknowledged.

What have been the ingredients of Transform's success as a programme? The following factors seem to have been significant:

- **Having a programme specially focused on influence rather than service delivery** has been enabling (even liberating) for many projects. It has given them the space and capacity to address issues in different ways and do things that normally get squeezed out because of pressures of the 'day job.' Having said that, thinking in terms of influence rather than delivery has been a new challenge for many, and it has not always been easy. However, in some ways that also has been a positive aspect of the programme – it has taken projects a little outside their comfort zone and perhaps made them more open to learning from each other.
- **Providing a structure of support made up of several components** has been effective. Having the combination of learning events, support from a learning and evaluation mentor and direct support from LBF grants officers and managers seems to have been important. We can't know for sure whether any of these on their own would still have worked (and some components were used/valued more by some projects than others) – but the feedback suggests that it is the support structure as a whole that has made a difference to many.
- **Bringing together a modest number of projects with some sense of shared purpose** also seems to have been important. Overall, most projects spoke a similar language, were dealing with similar issues and could see value in making the connections with each other. Many were also in a similar place in relation to this new endeavour and were therefore appreciative of the opportunity to learn together and share notes. The fact that there were 15 of them meant that there were enough for almost every project to find at least one other

to connect with, but within a programme small enough for people to feel they could get to know and trust each other.

- **An empowering culture** made a difference. Being part of a smallish programme doing something differently (perhaps also as a lone worker) can be a very exposing experience. Feedback strongly suggests that LBF's approach - supportive, flexible, non-judgmental as well as offering practical support when needed – was a key ingredient of success.
- **Taking a theory of change approach and sticking with it:** Of course, we would say this wouldn't we, but the feedback from projects supports our view that helping projects to be clear about what they are trying to change, how they're going to do it and how they'll know they're achieving anything, is a really good idea. These days, lots of programmes start with a ToC approach then let it drift. They do not routinely ask projects to review their ToC and report their progress against it. Because Transform has made the ToC a live process it has made planning and reporting part of a coherent whole. We also think that it has encouraged some projects to move beyond thinking about evaluation as a necessary evil to satisfy commissioners to thinking of it as a process useful to project development.