Social Return on Investment
Evaluation Report
Mencap's Supported Internship programme 2021 - 2022

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1   Acknowledgements

The researchers gratefully acknowledge the client for placing their faith in our work, for the help and support of Mencap colleagues, employers, parents, other stakeholders but especially the contribution of the Supported Internship learners for their contribution to this research.

It was privilege to have the opportunity to meet and hear the many compelling stories of the importance of dignity and independence for people with learning disabilities. It is hoped this report does justice to the trust placed in the researchers and that the report positively contributes to helping people with Learning Disabilities get more and better opportunities.

1   Acknowledgements

2   Executive Summary

This report presents an evaluation of social return, based on the 2021/2022 cohort engaged in the Mencap's Supported Internship (SI) programme. It builds on the previous work undertaken to produce a forecast of the impact of the 2020/21 cohort.

The evaluation was constructed with information from a number of processes:

- A Literature Review to identify material outcomes and stakeholders
- Engagement with a Sounding Board including ex-learners from the Mencap Supported Internship programme to guide the analysis
- Interviews with learners, parents, referral agencies and Local Authorities and employers
- Undertaking deep dives at two of Mencap's Supported Internship projects
- Development of an overall Theory of Change and a chain of outcomes for learners
- Data collection from Mencap's review documentation used with learners
- Determining valuations based on undertaking the Values Game with learners
- Creation of a value map to present the findings
- Calculation of the Social Return on Investment ratio.

This evaluation follows the previous forecast SROI process undertaken with the 2020/21 learner cohort, which yielded an SROI ratio of 2.35, with a range between £2 and £3. It was concluded that this ratio was considered to likely to be an underestimate. This was a result of the limitations imposed on delivery of the programme, the research and the stakeholder engagement due to Covid 19 measures. Secondly, there were limitations on the evidence which could be derived from Mencap's records to support some of the outcomes. Mencap undertook a revision of their paperwork on the basis of recommendations made.

Hence the second phase of the research reported here, concentrated on the 2021/22 cohort where the programme retuned to more normalised programme of delivery and as a result of which the research could also include more direct connection with stakeholders. The issues of data gaps could be largely resolved, therefore a more realistic and accurate assessment of social value could be determined. The calculations yielded an SROI ratio of 3.22, with a range between £1.61 and £4.83 returned for every £1 invested in the Supported Internship programme.

3   Mencap's Supported Internship programme overview

The Supported Internship (SI) programme is one of Mencap's 'Three Ships' skills and employability programme components, alongside Traineeships and Apprenticeships.[1] The overall aim is to help young people (16-24) with learning disabilities and young people with autism to get paid employment and to thrive in a job.

Each year, Mencap's employment support programmes help over 1,000 people with a learning disability to develop employability skills, undertake personal skills development and then gain paid employment. Mencap is the largest multi-site provider of Supported Internships and the 6th largest overall in the UK. In 2020/2021 Mencap delivered supported Internships across 11 project locations in England, with 10 locations in the following year.

In 2021/2022 the programme was further extended through the introduction of a Study Programme, in recognition of the fact that many people who had been referred to the SI programme were too far away from the labour market to benefit from a programme lasting only one year. Learners on the study programme therefore had the opportunity to engage in a programme of classroom learning for up to two years, before moving onto the SI programme to help develop their employability skills and competencies.

Mencap's SI delivery includes classroom group training, one-to-one support from tutors and job coaches, and individualised work placements with employers. The programme period is in academic years, recruiting learners each autumn. The programme gives approx. 600 hours input for each learner, normally 300 hours of classroom delivery and 300 hours on work placement (s).

Generally speaking, employer placements start towards the end of the year or early in the New Year. Mencap has access to a wide range of employers from many sectors, with a broad range of employee sizes. There were a number of national and local hospitality providers, but there were also care homes, garden centres, supermarkets, charity shops and NHS employers.

In 2021/2022, 161 young people with learning disabilities and autism were recruited to the programme and 144 completed the programme.

During the Evaluation Phase of the research in 2022, Mencap's employment programmes were inspected by OFSTED, with an overall grade of Requires Improvement.[2]

The SI programme is funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Local Authority contributions to support the implementation of Education Health and Care Plans. These Plans set out what the Local Authorities' expectations are for each learner on the SI programme, and the outcomes they expect the programme to deliver.

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[1] The latter was discontinued towards the end of this research
[2] OFSTED Inspection Aug 2022 https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50191825

4 The Social Return on Investment approach

The principles and practice of SROI are described in the Literature Review in Appendix A. The researchers have followed the various guidance documents published by Social Value International and are working to their assurance standards.

SROI consists of eight key principles and a standardised methodology, which compares the value of outcomes for stakeholders with the investment required to run the activities. The SROI Guide sets out the principles and value mapping framework. This study for Mencap was conducted in line with the Guidance and conforms to the quality assurance standards set for SROI by Social Value International.

The principles are:

- Stakeholder involvement
- Understanding change
- Valuing what matters
- Only include what is material
- Do not overclaim
- Be transparent
- Verify the result
- Be responsive – this new principle was formally introduced toward the end of this research, hence while it is referred to in this report, it was not an explicit objective as commissioned by the client.

The results of an analysis can be used to present the work of the activity to the outside world but can also be used internally to help embed understanding of how social value might be increased if activities were organised differently, or conducted through a different 'Theory of Change'.

SROI requires engagement with stakeholders and works best when the organisation seeks to understand its work and improve itself. It requires honesty, as it looks at both positive change and what might be negative impacts resulting from its activities. It also considers both intended and unintended consequences of the activity which again can be either positive or negative. The output from an SROI study is a ratio of social, economic and environmental return produced, for every £1 invested.

The new principle eight 'Be Responsive' also requires organisations to consider the implications of the data and research and consider how improvements can be made through planning and target setting which will increase the social value achieved.

4.1 Terminology used in the report

Social Return on Investment uses some terms which are specific to the approach and are defined here. These explanations were refined specifically with a learning disability audience in mind.

Activity – what the supported internship programme does for example gives one-to-one support

Attribution – other factors that influence what learners get from the programme e.g. economic and social trends, other support etc.

Baseline – what skills and abilities learners have at the beginning of the supported internship programme

Benchmarks – how does the supported internship programme compare to other programmes

Deadweight – what outcomes would have happened anyway without the SI programme

Displacement – are positive outcomes achieved at the expenses of others e.g. do people who get a job deny someone else the possibility of getting a job?

Distance travelled – the progress that learners make from their individual starting points towards their final goals

Duration – how long does change last when learners leave the supported internship programme, for example how long do people stay in a job

Drop off – for those outcomes which endure beyond a year, does their impact reduce over time

Intervention – it means the same as 'Activity'

Evaluation – a robust analysis of social return based on good quality data which looks back at what has happened on a programme

Financial proxy – a sum of money used to explain how valuable a change is to the learner

Forecast – an estimate of social return to be expected in future, where data is not complete

Impact – the broader long-term change that the supported internship programme has led to for all the people involved

Indicators - bits of information that tell us if changes have happened for example a learner will say 'I am more independent because I can travel to work myself'

Inputs - the money and other things that are needed to run the programme

Learner – the person doing the supported internship

Materiality - whether something is relevant or important enough to include in the research

Outcome – a change that happens because of the supported internship. For example, if someone finishes the supported internship and finds a job, or feels more confident, these would be outcomes.

Outputs - the results from the supported internship programme that can be counted for example how many supported interns were there last year

Social value – it means the same as 'Impact'

Stakeholder – someone who is involved with the supported internships. For example, the person doing the internship, their parents or carers, and their job coach are all stakeholders

Theory of Change – the bigger picture of what the supported internship programme does and what difference it makes to stakeholders at different stages over the year

Values Game – a way of helping learners say how valuable outcomes are to them

Value Map – the accompanying excel spreadsheet which sets out all the calculations of social return

Verification – the final report has been checked by others.

4.2   Overall methodology

Haldane Associates were commissioned in April 2021 to explore the social return of Mencap's SI programme, using the principles and practice of Social Return on Investment (SROI).

The accepted proposal was to split the work into two phases:
- Phase 1 was a forecast phase undertaken during 2021 based on the 2020/2021 learner cohort. The ongoing restrictions due to Covid 19 meant face to face engagement opportunities were limited and the programme was managed in a different manner to reflect these issues.
- Phase 2 which is the focus of this report involved an evaluation of the 2021/2022 cohort. Although some legacy issues from Covid 19 remained, the programme was delivered in a more conventional manner that allowed greater direct contact with stakeholders.

The research programme was developed with Mencap to ensure that a comprehensive and robust SROI evaluation was undertaken on the programme, with a clear determination of the social impact of the programme. The aim was also to ensure that the researchers would identify areas of improvement in both processes and outcomes that could be actioned by Mencap. From the beginning, Mencap wanted to seek independent assurance of the report, hence close adherence to the principles and standards developed by Social Value International was central to the overall approach.

4.3   Project Scope

The project was based on a detailed brief provided by Mencap prior to commissioning the project, specifically the brief outlined the following activities as being required from the researchers:

- Some pre-work to challenge thinking, check and clarify requirements
- Proposal and detailed scope of the work, and description of the outputs to delivered
- Design of the study methodology and timeline
- Design of the research activities including sampling, discussion guides, interactive tools and methods and survey tools as required
- Pre-testing of tools/methods with target audience in collaboration with Mencap
- Delivery of research activities AND/OR training and support to Mencap staff to deliver research activities
- Protocol for voluntary informed consent and data management processes to comply with GDPR and to ensure data quality, and adherence to Mencap's processes
- SROI analysis including monetary cost benefit analysis and sensitivity analysis
- Process to assure the report through Social Value International.

End of project deliverables were to be:

- Stakeholder informed theory of change

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- Final report including description of methodology, description of all findings under study activities (stakeholders; inputs; outcomes and impact), calculated cost benefit ratio and workings, calculated social return on investment ratio and workings, sensitivity analysis and conclusions[3]
- Independent verification of findings (report assurance) from Social Value UK.

The proposal accepted by the client included all these components, but as described elsewhere was based on an adapted methodology to take account of the ongoing issues relating to Covid 19. Further it was agreed to provide advice and support in respect of proposed improvements in the programme delivery and means of evidence collection re impact.

This report is an evaluation of the social return from the 2021/2022 cohort of Mencap's Supported Internship Programme between September 2021 and August 2022.

It builds upon a forecast report on the 2020/2021 cohort recruited to the Supported Internship Programme. The forecast work was undertaken between April 2021 and December 2021, and a forecast report given to Mencap in December 2021. There was a formal review with the PM Team of Phase 1, at the end of September 2021. It was difficult therefore, to implement all the changes identified by the researchers during the forecast and incorporate them into the processes for the new cohort starting in the autumn of 2021.

The evaluation research work commenced in September 2021, at recruitment of the 2021/2022 cohort, and continued over the period to January 2023.

4.4 Role of the Mencap Sounding Board

To support the research and provide an ongoing point of reference for the researchers, the Mencap Research and Evaluation Team brought together a group of 12 individuals on a 'Sounding Board' at the beginning of the project. These participants included tutors, caseworkers, project leaders and crucially four people with learning disabilities employed by Mencap, all of whom had completed a supported employment programme (two of which had completed one of Mencap's supported internships, and two of whom had completed a programme provided by another organisation). Ex-learners were accompanied by support workers to assist them where required. The researchers were significantly assisted by Mencap staff to understand how best to present the difficult concepts involved in SROI in an accessible way. The first meeting took place in May 2021 and this group were retained throughout the period of the research through phases one and two and were extremely valuable in assisting and advising the researchers.

The purpose of the Sounding Board was to ensure that the perspective of people with learning disabilities was at the heart of the research process. The Sounding Board was used

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[3] It transpired that in establishing the requirement, Mencap meant the CBA aspects to cover 'hard' data such as potential benefit savings, while the SROI would estimate the value of 'soft' outcomes. This distinction was not considered worth retaining by the researchers, but instead, the focus was on destination outcomes vs personal outcomes.

as a reference group to discuss issues and findings as they arose throughout the research programme. Due to logistics, all Sounding Board meetings were held virtually.

The Sounding Board was extremely useful in helping guide and validate the research to date. Six meetings with the Sounding Board were convened at each key stage in the development process to help answer a number of questions and at the conclusion to help develop the accessible reports, with an initial session to build capacity in relation to understanding the key concepts of SROI.

The key questions asked of the Sounding Board have included:

- identifying the important stakeholders of the SI programme and discussing who to speak to and who were not material stakeholders
- what is the SI Theory of Change
- what are the programme outcomes
- what are the best methods for surveying and interviewing stakeholders
- does the value map and report reflect members' experience
- discussing the processes to be used in the evaluation phase
- feedback on proposed changes to qualitative evaluation methods such as the Personal Skills Survey
- means of engagement with the proposed deep dive areas
- refining the Values Game to be relevant to the learners
- input to final report conclusions and preparation of accessible reports for stakeholders.

4.5 Project Management

A team was formed in May 2021 to oversee the research contract, and to facilitate internal liaison with Mencap's projects. The Head of Mencap's Research and Evaluation Team chaired the PM group, which also included the Head of Lifestyles and Work and the Supported Internship Programme Manager, Lifestyles & Work. The latter was the main contact with the Project Coordinators in each SI programme area.

The team met roughly every month, and occasionally, the team had a reflection meeting, rather than a business meeting. This allowed the researchers to share their thoughts and observations as the work progressed and helped to shape the recommendations made in the two reports.

5   Summary of the Forecast phase methods and findings

5.1   Literature review

The main research that underpinned the first phase of the analysis was produced during the forecast phase. This was reviewed and refreshed during the evaluation phase where some additional data sources were identified, however the majority of the content remained relevant. The full literature review is contained in Appendix A.

The review showed that all the SROI studies, and most of the Cost Benefit Analysis and other impact studies of employment support programmes for people with learning disabilities were quite dated. They were in the order of 10-15 years old, hence lacked currency and did not include any impact evaluation of Supported Internships, as the programme had been introduced after these studies were produced.

The Literature Review reflected that there was little recent work on the social value of employment support for people with learning disabilities. Furthermore, although the researchers tried to find such data, there appears to be no regularly available national benchmarking data on the employment progression outcomes to be expected from Supported Internships. There is uncertainty even about how individuals with different 'conditions' are categorised in the Department of Work and Pensions reports and the Office of National Statistics' figures. Since 2013, only those with more severe learning disabilities have been counted in employment statistics, and not all Local Authority areas have assessed the employment gap for people with the full range of learning disabilities, hence comparisons between years and disability characteristics are unreliable.

From an outcome and compliance perspective, the funders of Supported Internship programmes are mainly interested in data that relates to progression into jobs, attendance statistics, meeting Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) objectives and improving Maths and English standards. This is despite the evidence from the National Audit Office calling attention to the reduction in lifetime costs of support that will accrue to the Government and society if young people with learning disabilities are engaged with supported employment activity, and despite the need to explore the impact on individual learners who do not achieve a job progression. [4]

Although there is no comprehensive research to definitively suggest what personal outcomes might be expected or which should be measured, the researchers were able to derive a list of outcomes that could be potentially expected from Mencap's SI programme based on a systematic review from the literature. They found however that there was no universally agreed framework or method for measuring outcomes from employability, employment or supported employment programmes of people with disabilities.

There are a range of outcome measurement tools and frameworks that have been developed over the last 20 years to measure 'soft' outcomes, and particularly tools to

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[4] NAO, 2011, 'Oversight of special education for young people aged 16–25', National Audit Office at
https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/10121585.pdf

measure 'distance travelled' i.e. progression towards outcomes over time. However, very few of these tools are purpose made for use with people with learning disabilities and people with autism.

The SROI principles demand that all material value created for stakeholders are brought into the account, thus 'soft' or 'intangible' outcomes should be included if they have value for the different stakeholders. This is also advice given by HM Treasury in their Green and Magenta Books for project appraisals of effectiveness.

Funders evaluate the programme based on work related outcomes. The other stakeholders though, especially learners themselves and their parents, also focus on the personal outcomes as being of value. This is particularly the case for those who do not achieve an employment outcome. It is important therefore to understand the quantitative and qualitative impacts of the programme to really assess its impact, especially given the major challenges there are for people with learning disabilities securing employment in the current labour market.

In evaluating the impact of the programme, Ofsted also consider distance travelled and wider outcomes related to behaviour, and personal development, so it is important that these changes are captured and evaluated. Many of the adjustments Mencap have implemented as a result of this research evidence have also helped them demonstrate to Ofsted that learners are experiencing personal outcomes.

5.2 Research methodology

The forecast process was undertaken on the 2020/2021 cohort of learners. At the time of commencing the research, this learner cohort had already started their programme which operates based on the academic year September to July. While the research was labelled a forecast, it did utilise data from the project, but it was recognised for reasons described below that this would essentially be a pilot study to inform the full SROI evaluation to follow.

The delivery of the programme during the year was severely affected by Covid 19 restrictions. The majority of teaching was online and work placements were generally substituted for by community-based projects which Mencap was able to coordinate in each area, along with some community organisation partners. Employers were facing limitations in what they could offer. While at a national level, the impact of Covid 19 on learning outcomes is still being evaluated, there is significant evidence of it disproportionately impacting on those from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with disabilities.[5]

At the start of the project, it was recognised that due to restrictions in place due to Covid 19 the research methodology applied would need to be significantly changed especially in

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[5] T. Geraghty & F. Lyons "Insights into the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Northern Ireland", 2021, for NCB at https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/files/Impact%20of%20COVID-19%20on%20children%20and%20YP%20with%20SEND%20in%20NI%20-%20FIINAL.pdf

respect of stakeholder engagement to comply with the restrictions but to gather meaningful data on which to base the forecast.

5.2.1 Stakeholder Mapping

A Stakeholder Map was developed working with the Sounding Board in May 2021, to develop an informed understanding of the stakeholders engaged in the process. This was used in the forecast to develop the engagement approach and outcome mapping and was later also used as the basis of the stakeholder engagement process in the Evaluation Phase of the research.

The Sounding Board was involved in identifying stakeholders, once the researchers had identified a comprehensive list of possible stakeholders affected by the SI programme. The session used Jamboard to capture the thoughts and was facilitated by the researchers and Mencap staff. The stakeholders identified were:
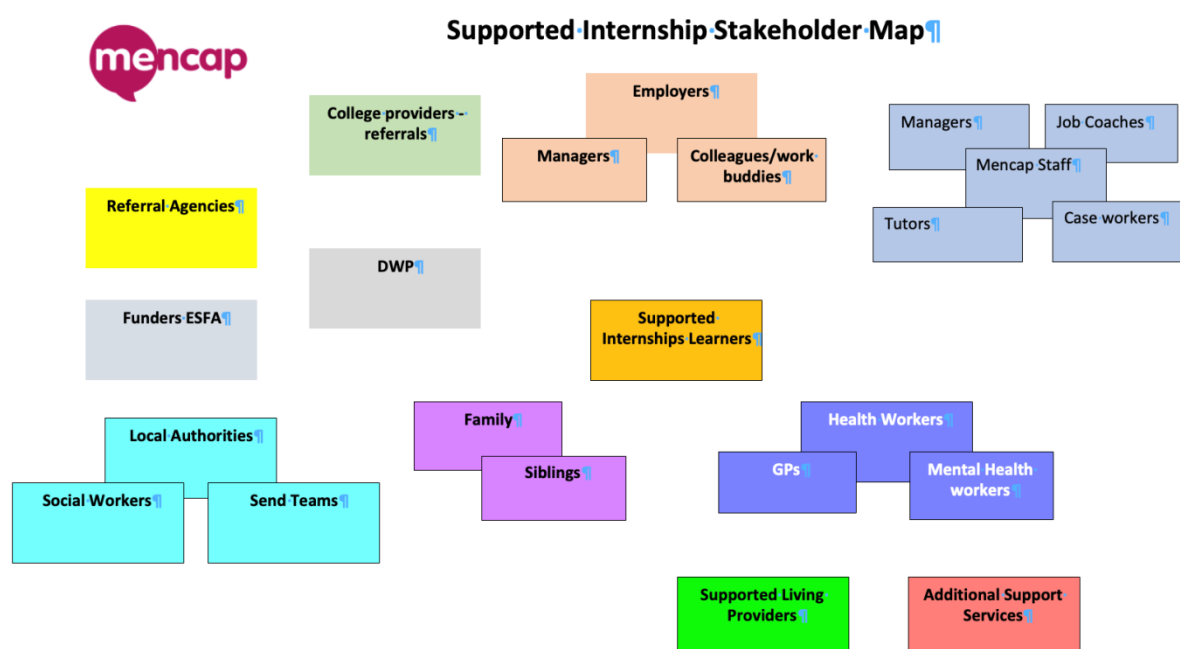
Fig 1 Stakeholder Map

It was concluded that Mencap staff are providing delivery of the SI programme and are critical to learners achieving successful outcomes. Staff however can gain outcomes by working with other learning disability organisations in an employment setting, hence deadweight for staff outcomes is very high and therefore their outcomes are not material.

DWP, health and Local Authority Education funders are relevant to the research as part of the investment in the skills and employment agenda and the impact this has on service demand and expenditure, so were considered for the purposes of the research as one group. Local Authorities SEND teams were also included as part the stakeholder group 'support agencies'.

Colleges and referral agencies were helpful from a contextual perspective but there were no clear outcomes that were identified as arising for this group.

An early consideration of the research was on the impact on supported living providers, where early evidence suggested that the programme benefitted this sector though improvements in personal skills e.g. cooking, hygiene etc. However by the conclusion of the forecast phase of the research it was concluded that these outcomes were not material, since they were not mentioned by learners or their parents, and a revised framework was developed to collect programme related data was introduced.

The ex-learners on the Sounding Board were asked about the potential impact on siblings. Some thought there could be an impact, although it didn't apply in their own family circumstances, so it was decided to include a specific question in the interview script for parents to ask about any impact on other family members. While in subsequent research some impact on siblings was discovered, there was insufficient evidence to consider it material, except where siblings were on the SI programme themselves (but then they were counted as part of the learner cohort). The impact mentioned by parents was that learners on the programme inspired their siblings to become more active in considering employment as an option. This effect was observed only where more than one child in the family was learning disabled.

There were a number of stakeholders in the stakeholder map above who could be grouped into the 'support agency/referral agency category'. FE colleagues fell into this group as well as health services and supported living providers. During the evaluation phase, there was an engagement process specifically aimed at support agencies and referral agencies.

While not directly engaged in the programme DWP set rules re eligibility for benefits and outcomes related to employment etc are material to their objectives and targets. Likewise from a social care and health perspective, outcomes from the programmes will impact on the capacity and demand for services, particularly mental health services.

A full list of and justification for the stakeholder inclusion/exclusion is attached as Appendix I.

5.2.2   Sub Groups

After analysis of the cohort and discussions with Mencap and the Sounding Board during the forecast phase, it was decided that identifying sub-groups in the analysis was not appropriate as the programme was effectively customised to the needs of the individual rather than according to any identifiable subcategories (e.g., based on age, disability or locality). Appendix G contains a statistical analysis of the learner cohort for the evaluation phase, which shows just how many characteristics and variables there are within the cohort, so that segmentation by disability etc would be rather meaningless.

The only possible sub-group differentiated on the basis of different outcomes achieved were those who were near as opposed to far from the labour market. With the introduction of

the Study Programme for learners far from the labour market in the 2021/2022 programme this sub-group was not needed in the evaluation analysis.

During the evaluation phase, researchers kept the sub-group issue in mind, but found no suggestion that the decision not to identify sub-groups was the wrong one. There was no reporting of outcomes that indicated sub-groups existed, and there was a clear consistency across the learner cohort as to what was being reported. Hence outcomes have been calculated and reported based on the whole cohort.

The subsequent data and analysis completed did not reveal any significant variation on outcomes across potential sub groups. The only significant variability found related to a difference in emphasis of outcomes across the programme areas. This led to a recommendation to Mencap in relation to standardisation and sharing of best practice across the projects and their staff.

5.2.3 Theory of Change

A Theory of Change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context, based on developing an explicit understanding of the interrelationship between inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. While not an explicit process within SROI, Theory of Change can be very useful in developing a better understanding of the intended and unintended outcomes arising from a process, hence is often used as a precursor to such evaluation projects. Mencap had not previously mapped the relationships and dependencies between the inputs and outcomes of the programme. Hence the researchers worked with the Sounding Board to develop a theory of change, as illustrated in Appendix B. The resultant Theory of Change was presented and adopted by Mencap and was also used as a basis for the development of the outcome map and chain of events in the evaluation phase of the project.

5.2.4 Outcome mapping and chain of events

Following the development of the Theory of Change, work was undertaken to confirm and understand the outcomes arising from the programme and their interdependencies linking outcomes together in chains. This involved working with the Sounding Board, and interviewing learners and staff about their views.

This process resulted in a chain of events based on the Literature Review, discussions with stakeholders, the Project Management Team and the Sounding Board, and judgements made by the researchers. This first chain of events was produced at the end of the forecast phase based on the original Theory of Change, and then carried forward into the evaluation phase.

Level 1 outcome		Level 2 outcome		Level 3 outcome		Level 4 outcome		Level 5 outcome
Learning new practical skills (budgeting, travel)		Improved problem solving		Improved resilience and coping skills		More independent		Get a job
Learning new practical skills to support better lives		Improved decision-making				Better life choices		Thrive in a job
Improved L&N		Improved qualifications		Learning new skills to find work		More aspirations and ambition to work		Get a traineeship or apprenticeship
Improved interview skills		Improved self-presentation skills		Learning new skills for particular work environments		Increased motivation to be employed		
Learning new skills for communicating with others at work		More professional standards of behaviour		Better team working		Improved communication		
Learning new skills for communicating with others outside of work		Increased personal networks				Improved relationships		
Improved, health, diet and exercise		Improved self esteem				Improved confidence		Improved mental well being

Fig 2 Outcomes and chain of events from the forecast phase

There was some concern expressed during the Sounding Board sessions re the materiality of some of the outcomes, and this was reinforced by a lack of suitable evidence found during the forecast phase, hence it was agreed that the outcomes framework and chain of events would be revisited in the evaluation phase, where more direct interaction would help confirm the material outcomes and the chain of events. Example of an outcome included in the forecast chain of events but not included in the evaluation chain of events was 'Improved health, diet and exercise'. This was material to the programme during the forecast phase, as funders had asked Mencap to deliver activities aimed at this particular outcome, however this requirement was dropped for the evaluation cohort's programme, as so was not relevant. In any case, there was limited evidence of this outcome being achieved, based on interviews and surveys.

5.2.5   Stakeholder Samples and Engagement

Given the impact of Covid 19 and the constraints this placed on stakeholder engagement, while alternative approaches were devised to include remote interviewing, overall levels of engagement were lower that would have ideally been realised

Stakeholder	Sample interviewed/engaged with	Population
Learners	24	160
Parents	3	233
Employers	3	Not known, low due to Covid
DWP/NHS	0	2
Support/referral agencies	0	25% of learner forms sampled referred to support agencies, so estimated population is 40

Table 1 Forecast Sampling Summary

The learner interviews were conducted remotely by Mencap caseworkers, and then recordings were reviewed by the researchers. The caseworkers were offered training and guidance notes and a script. Parents were contacted and interviewed by telephone and employers were sent an email survey by the project staff, with responses to be sent to the researcher.

5.2.6   Data collection

Due to the impact of COVID 19 and the implications for the programme, the majority of the data obtained during the forecast phase was either through remote interviews that were convened by Mencap staff (using a script developed between the researchers and the Sounding Board), or via analysis of the paperwork generated from the programme, looking at programme start and end forms to establish evidence of impact and relative distance travelled.[6] As there were few work placements, and access to parents and other stakeholders was limited, the degree of additional data and evidence was limited.

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[6] This was done for 24 learners

It was observed that there was both a lack of consistency in the completion of the programme paperwork and that the existing framework to collect personal outcomes, known by Mencap as 'What Matters Most' (WMM), was not best suited to employability skills and employment type projects. In addition, WMM was not consistent with the Theory of Change the sounding board had developed and those outcomes which were being identified through the forecast research.

Further, despite some guidance and staff training and provision of a script, a significant number of the digital interviews analysed by the researchers were of limited value. Learners in some circumstances appeared to find it difficult to respond to the interview questions. Hence the researchers had to apply a degree of judgement in terms of what was being described or inferred by the learner's responses. This reluctance appeared to be a consequence of the lower level of face-to-face interaction because of Covid, and lower abilities amongst some of the cohort, which validated the introduction of the study programme in 2021/2022 for those furthest from the labour market.

Based on the analysis of outcomes from the project paperwork, there were gaps and inconsistencies in the available evidence of outcomes for learners that had been identified as potentially significant, hence the full impact of the programme was being potentially under reported.

Consequently, a number of recommendations were made in respect of the collection and analysis of data to be adopted in the evaluation phase of the research, and a number of changes were made to the outcome framework. Further, it was recommended that these improvements were adopted for the general performance and evaluation of the programme of data collection and impact analysis which will be maintained by Mencap, as part of their ongoing programme evaluation in future.

5.2.7 Valuation

Due to the unavailability of the Global Value Exchange database, the lack of opportunity to deploy the Values Game and the limited relevance of other proxy values that were derived from research, the researchers relied principally upon revealed preference valuations as proxies. Some of the most problematic (from the researchers' perspective) were tested out with the Sounding Board.

5.2.8 Deductions to avoid overclaiming

Further, the researchers had to make judgements in the light of limited evidence re deadweight, attribution, duration, drop off and displacement. There were some indications of attribution and deadweight from interviews with learners and parents, but due to the issues with interviews, it was thought these could not be relied upon, however an estimate was made for the purposes of estimating the SROI ratio.

Finally, a sensitivity analysis was applied to the final valuations to produce a range relative to the SROI reported.

5.2.9 SROI calculation and ratio

The SROI ratio was found to be 2.35, that is to say, for every £1 invested in the SI programme, it returned £2.35 in value. The summary figures are;

Item	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Present value of each year	£2,325,714.07	£2,095,321.85	£534,163.91	
Total Present Value (PV) discounted by 3.5% pa				£4,955,199.82
Net Present Value (PV minus the investment)				£2,846,481.02
Social Return (Value per amount invested)				2.35

Table 2 SROI Valuation Forecast

A full report and value map was provided for the Forecast Phase of the research

5.3 Recommendations arising from the Forecast Phase

As a result of undertaking the forecast phase of the research the researchers made a number of recommendations in respect of the data collection and methodology to improve the accuracy and reliability of the outcomes evidence.

Recommendation 1: that the researchers speak to a significant proportion of staff who have completed the initial assessment, to agree a more credible baseline OR incorporate a scoring system into the initial assessment, including some form of recording what impact the level of disability of the learner is likely to have on their employment prospects, what the learner's realistic prospects of employment are, and ask for more questions to be completed, in order to complete the baseline for all outcomes.

Action – baseline data was improved in the evaluation phase through redesigned paperwork and greater guidance to staff and by introducing a new baseline assessment form for those personal outcomes that had not been included in Mencap's standard paperwork at all – for example communication outside of work, skills to support a better quality of life, self-esteem, and aspirations and ambitions to work.

Recommendation 2: that the initial assessment form was expanded to address other gaps in the baseline and to add in more of a scoring approach rather than replying fully on narrative.

Action – baseline data was improved in the evaluation phase through redesigned paperwork

Recommendation 3: the way that qualitative change is captured is revised, to give researchers the information needed to measure outcomes and take out the irrelevant questions i.e. the questions that are not relevant to outcomes (e.g. intention to vote).

Action - new Personal Skills Survey and additional baseline form introduced to replace What Matters Most

Recommendation 4: that new questions are added to the qualitative analysis to address the 5 outcomes with no baseline or follow up; new questions for the 4 outcomes with a baseline but no follow up, and also new questions for the 2 outcomes with a baseline but no follow up.

Action - new Personal Skills Survey and additional baseline form introduced to replace What Matters Most

Recommendation 5: that there be more discussion with Mencap about the lifestyles issue. The ex-learners on the sounding board suggested that Mencap's impact on lifestyles might not be material, but if they are to include specific activities in the programme to improve diet, exercise and mental health in the next cohort then the programme paperwork has to allow for measurement of impact.

Action - the evaluation research ultimately found that these health and diet outcomes were not material to the programme and were excluded in the final evaluation outcome map

Recommendation 6: researchers and Mencap investigate the use of a 'outcomes star' type of approach to measure the extent of change and replace the existing Mencap form (the Lifestyles and Work Self Assessment) with a new form for measuring distance travelled. Radar charts would be relatively easy to set up, and a sample of this is attached to the detailed evaluation plan. It uses a 10 point scale, where each second line at right angles represents broadly achievement of the next outcome in the 'chain of events' we have constructed.

Action - addressed in part – new Personal Skills Survey form introduced and completed at start and end of programme to consider relative change and a scoring system was introduced by researchers to scoring outcomes identified in the different forms used to record learner progress. Research was undertaken by the researchers and the Mencap R&E team, looking at academic research on using Likert Scales with people with learning disabilities, which concluded that a 4 point scale would work best, and should use emojis. The PSS was therefore developed on this basis.

Recommendation 7:   Researchers suggested 1 or 2 projects were identified in which to do a 'deep dive' into the data, and where the level of engagement with learners, parents, employers and support agencies could be increased, and where the staff are bought into the concepts.

Action - deep dives sites introduced in the evaluation phase in Worcester and Northampton

Recommendation 8: that a new tool is piloted in the deep dive projects, so that Mencap can evaluate their value going forward, with a view to changing distance travelled measures with future cohorts.

Action - new Personal Skills Survey introduced to replace What Matters Most, but eventually used across the 10 project locations, although the deep dive sites added in a mid-term scoring of the PPS form.

Recommendation 9: that Mencap consider using the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale and the Warwickshire and Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale for measurement of these two outcomes in the deep dive projects.

Action – not adopted in the evaluation phase. The PSS survey was used for these outcomes. It was concluded that adopting new measurement tools would further complicate the processes for Mencap staff and had the potential to introduce further inconsistency, especially in the context of the need for a simplified evaluation framework to address OFSTED concerns.

That these recommendations by and large were adopted by Mencap, and that the project management team worked hard to ensure that staff used the new paperwork, is a testament to the organisation's commitment to Principle 8.

6   Overview of the Evaluation Phase

The planning for the evaluation phase commenced shortly after the completion of the forecast analysis and in time for the induction of the 2021/2022 learner cohort. In line with the recommendations and to reflect feedback from OFSTED a number of changes were made to the programme paperwork (to encourage clearer baselines, progress and outcomes) and additional guidance provided to Mencap staff in the administration of the data. Two new forms were introduced to staff for completion at the start of the programme.

Mencap were also due to move to a new learner management system for this academic year, however delays in its implementation meant that this was not fully embedded and this factor was found to somewhat affect the quality of data collected by the researchers, e.g. the new system would integrate with other databases to collect details of prior learning and qualifications levels of all learners, but since this data was not available to researchers during the evaluation phase, distance travelled measures for qualifications and L&N outcomes were less robust than hoped.

During the year, the programme returned to a more normalised delivery model with learners again attending their Mencap centre regularly for classroom sessions and the majority of learners being able to access a work placement. Hence overall, it was a far more representative example of the Mencap SI programme compared to the exceptional issues faced the previous year.

In line with recommendations, a new approach to measuring learner qualitative feedback on progress was adopted and a Personal Skills Survey (PSS) introduced with the objective of capturing feedback at the beginning and end of the programme to determine progress. It was found however, that the initial starting scores for the PSS, which were given primarily by the individuals themselves were found to be higher than anticipated.[7] This was explored further by introducing a mid-point survey in the deep dive sites, and asking these projects to administer this.

To facilitate active stakeholder engagement and enhance the relationship and understanding with staff, it had been agreed to designate two sites as 'Deep Dive' sites, where the researchers would be able to gather additional insight by building more regular relationships. This allowed for better engagement with learners, staff, employers and parents. It was these projects that administered the PSS survey at mid-point. This development enabled closer and more direct engagement between researchers and the key stakeholders over the course of the programme, with more access to learners through direct interviews. It allowed the researchers to review outcomes assumptions and also to deliver the Values Game with learners.

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[7] This is a common finding with distance travelled measures: participants do not want to be seen to have difficulties and so tend to score themselves highly the first time.

6.1   SI programme overview and outputs

In the year under study Mencap had 10 SI programmes spread across England: a number of London boroughs, the East and West Midlands, the north of England and the South West. Most projects averaged 15 – 20 learners each. Mencap has adopted a flexible approach to maximise the potential impact of the programme across different abilities. This year coincided with the introduction of a new Study Programme for learners, directed at those likely to need additional support and where a longer duration would likely benefit them to learn and to progress positively. The assumption was that those on the Study Programme would likely move on to the SI programme after their first year.

During the year 2021/2022, 161 learners were enrolled in the programme and 144 learners completed it. The demographics of the cohort are set out in Appendix G. Of note from this analysis is the level of difficulty and the range of challenges the cohort face in entering the labour market. 74% of the cohort were recorded as having a learning difficulty. Of these, 57% had a moderate learning difficulty, 3% had a severe learning difficulty, 2 learners had profound learning difficulties and 5% had another unspecified learning difficulty. 45% were identified as having a diagnosis on the autistic spectrum and another 10% were identified as having Asperger's Syndrome.

43% of learners were identified as presenting with speech, language and communication difficulties. 38% had behavioural difficulties, such as ADHD and ADD, and a further 38% were noted to have social and emotional difficulties. 30% were recorded as having a mental health difficulty. Learners also had physical issues: over 18% had a visual impairment, 8% had epilepsy and 6% were hearing impaired.

Across the whole learner cohort, an average of 3.2 'conditions' were identified per learner.

The SI programme involves 600 hours of input for learners over the academic year from September to July, so an average of 10-12 hours per week. Generally, the split is approximately 290 – 300 hours of classroom learning and 300 hours of work experience through employer placements. In the year the programme returned to a more normalised delivery model with the majority of classroom work delivered face to face and work experience placements returning for the majority of the cohort.

122 learners had placements, provided by 120 employers. A total of 22 learners had more than one placement. Sometimes this was because learners wanted to learn different work skills, or for some reason, the learner did not thrive in their placement. Employers are highly valued by the programme, most take a small number of learners, but a small number commit to multiple placements. Mencap's approach is to attempt to find employer placements to suit the aspirations of the learners. Learners are encouraged to say what their ideal occupation is and develop a vocational profile, then staff will find an employer willing to take them on placement. Mencap also provides disability awareness training for these employers, and Mencap job coaches work closely with employers and their workplace colleagues to ensure things go smoothly, and provide employment support for learners.

Classroom work is aligned to the learners' individual EHC Plan and needs. All learners have an ECHP, but in some cases these were found to be out of date or reviewed infrequently (a consequence of Covid and Local Authority capacity restrictions). Mencap's staff spend a lot of time reviewing learners' needs, and ensuring they are making progress, but because the majority of plans are out of date, the delivery often takes learners beyond their stated EHCP outcomes in terms of what they can achieve and the progress they can evidence.

Maths and English one-to-one sessions are provided for most learners as a requirement of the programme (unless they have already achieved a Level 2 qualification). Learners undertake initial assessments based on BKSB processes,[8] so learners are learning at an appropriate level. Teaching is then focused on helping learners progress towards the next level and undertaking exams where appropriate.

The dropout rate across the cohort was approximately 11% over the year.[9]

6.2 Stakeholder mapping and engagement

The most important principle of SROI is to involve stakeholders through a process of direct engagement. In a situation where the Literature Review did not give a great deal of guidance, the results of engagement are particularly important since, this had proved difficult due to Covid restrictions during the Forecast Phase.

The stakeholder mapping undertaken in the Forecast Phase, (see fig. 1), informed the decisions with respect to stakeholder engagement. While some restrictions with respect to Covid 19 remained through the first phase of the research, as the programme had returned to face-to-face delivery in the main and employer placements were again possible, it both reflected a more representative model of the SI programme and enabled greater stakeholder engagement. Therefore, the researchers were able to plan an engagement strategy which presented a better reflection of the stakeholders and more active direct engagement, in particular with learners. The final list of included stakeholders and the rational is in Appendix I.

6.2.1   Deep Dive Sites

The two sites Deep Dive chosen were Worcester and Northampton, selected as being representative of Mencap's overall programme. Information from Nomis, Local Authority and SEND websites and other sources was used to examine their demographic profiles in terms of learning disabilities and employment. This found that these sites had relatively similar profiles to each other, but varied slightly from the average figures for the whole cohort of 10 projects:

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[8] BSKB provides IT based solutions for evaluating levels against recognised standards for both functional and GCSE Maths and English and providing diagnostics re areas for improvement. For more information see https://www.bksb.co.uk/
[9] Mencap LMS data provided to the researchers. 17 out of 161 dropped out before the end of the programme and were unable to be contacted by the Mencap staff to find out why, although their paperwork did give some clues..

Demographic criterion	Average or total across all 10 areas	Worcestershire	Northamptonshire
Population	5,118,827	601,113 (11.7%)	750,278 (14.7%)
Economic activity rate	79.7%	81.3%	84.4%
Workless households	13.1%	13.1%	9.9%
Jobs density	0.88	0.86	0.92
Median gross hourly earnings by place of residence	£15.71	£13.79	£13.87
Learning disability employment	5.3 % (8 only reported on this criterion)	5.9%	3%
% of employers who are micro businesses	90.1%	90.7%	90.7%
Number of medium to large employers	427	525	635
% of those in elementary occupations	8.8%	10.6%	10.5%

Table 3 Deep dive sites comparisons

In terms of the likelihood of people with learning disabilities getting jobs in the local labour market, many factors could have an influence. Averages wages are lower in the deep dive areas than across many of the project locations, probably reflecting the fact that three of the projects are based in London. There are however higher levels of people in elementary occupations in the deep dive sites, also possibly a consequence or indeed a cause of lower pay rates.

The disability employment rate in Northampton is much lower than the average, which could be reflected in the relatively high support spend in Northamptonshire (£23,882 per person as opposed to the UK average spend of £13,125).

Economic activity rates in Northamptonshire are higher than average, possibly reflecting the relatively low hourly pay rates there and that more people in each household have to work. The average figures for all 10 project locations are skewed by the presence of Telford in the sample. Its economic inactivity rates are much higher than the UK average, pay rates are the lowest of all the areas, the employment rate for young people is especially low and 16% of the population of Telford live in the 10% most deprived areas of the UK. Once the Telford effect is taken out, the indicators for Worcester and Northamptonshire are similar to the other 7 project locations. Telford's project had only 3 learners, so its value as a deep dive site was limited.

The decision to use Worcester and Northamptonshire as the two deep dive sites therefore did not artificially skew or affect the results of the analysis but instead gave additional insight due to the opportunity to engage more meaningfully.

6.2.2 Stakeholder engagement processes

Engagement of learners was undertaken through two processes.

To assist the engagement process and support a deeper engagement with the programme, the 'deep dive' sites would be the locations where direct interviews by the researchers with the learners could take place. The survey questions used for the forecast interviews were used again, having checked the wording again with Mencap staff, including the Empowerment Officer, herself a person with a learning disability employed by Mencap specifically to help collect feedback etc from people with learning disabilities.

Both sites (following initial introductory sessions online) were visited twice each at different stages of the programme. A mixture of group activity and individual guided interviews (with support workers attending where necessary) were undertaken during the site visits (a copy of the script used is shown at Appendix C). Visits were conducted during January and February 2022. Further, the Values Game was separately undertaken at both sites to inform the valuation process, discussed later in the report.

The remaining eight sites were asked to complete up to five interviews each with learners on their programmes, using the same semi structured format of questions as used for the deep dive sites. In this case, interviews were recorded on Microsoft Teams for analysis by the researchers. As a result, of both processes a total of 36 learner interviews were concluded, 25% of the overall cohort.

In addition to provide some wider insight, five brief case studies of learners from differing starting points and outcomes were collected and are included in the report as Appendix J. These provide some context and meaning in terms of the impact of the programme capturing some of the learners' and their work coaches' direct quotes.

In analysing the feedback, researchers listened carefully to the learners' responses, to understand what outcomes they had experienced. While it was apparent that the ability of the learners to articulate their thoughts varied, there was significant consensus of the outcomes being reported.

Contact with other stakeholders such as Local Authority, FE organisations, employers and parents was restricted in the forecast phase (due to COVID and logistical considerations), therefore these stakeholders were pursued in this phase of the research.

Parents were contacted directly by Mencap staff who worked with their sons/daughters on the programme, asking them to participate. Where volunteers were forthcoming, semi structured interviews were conducted by telephone, however limited numbers were forthcoming. Therefore, to boost participation, researchers attended events where parents had been invited, to undertake focus groups through which the same interview script was followed. As a result, 14% of this stakeholder group were directly engaged in the research.

From the referral agencies and support agencies stakeholder group, five agreed to participate. Their main focus was based on what expected outcomes they expected from learners joining the SI programme and how support needs were transferred to Mencap.

Following previous difficulties in contacting and interviewing employers, an online survey was employed as an alternative. Mencap staff emailed employers asking them to participate, and as a result 11 responses were received, across a range of sectors and employer types (both private and voluntary sector, large and SME).

6.2.3   Approach to sampling

The approach adopted, was to maximise the number of stakeholders in each group included in the analysis, but to aim for 15% of the population as a minimum. This aim was achieved for the learner cohort, but not for the other stakeholder groups.

However, while sample sizes for parents, employers and local authorities/referral agencies were lower than planned, the responses were quite consistent with each other reinforcing similar views. One approach to sampling – 'saturation sampling' – suggests that one keeps on interviewing until one is hearing nothing new, so in the view of the researchers, having conducted, witnessed and analysed the interviews, even this smaller than desired sample suggested consistency of reported outcomes.

The numbers of stakeholders engaged with during the evaluation were:

Stakeholder	Numbers engaged with	Total population size
Learners on the SI programme	37	144
Parents with learners on the SI programme	24	237
Employers	11	120
Support agencies/Referral agencies/ Local Authorities SEND teams	5	Unknown number. Estimate based on number of learners who had EHC Plans would be 140, but when asked at enrolment who else supported the learners, number were significantly lower, with only 41 being recorded out of 111 enrolment forms where this question was answered

Table 4 Stakeholders engagement in the evaluation

Over the two stages of the Forecast and Evaluation the total numbers engaged were:

Stakeholder	Numbers engaged with	Total population size
Learners on the SI programme	61	304
Parents with learners on the SI programme	27	470
Employers	14	190
Support agencies/Referral agencies/ Local Authorities SEND teams	5	See above comment. Estimate of 81 in total (40 from forecast phase)

Table 5 Stakeholder engagement totals

Stakeholders were engaged throughout the process of the research, initially through the forecast phase of the research and through the evaluation phase reported here. However

as outlined the approach had to evolve due to the impact of changing COVID restrictions over the course of the research. The table below outlines how stakeholders were engaged at the different stages of the research.

Stakeholder Group	Population	Developing theory of change	Measuring change and valuing outcomes	Verifying the results
Learners	161 including 17 who dropped out early, 144 completed the programme	12 learners interviewed in forecast phase plus 4 former learners as part of Sounding Board. However the outcomes were developed and refined during the evaluation phase	61 learners in total were interviewed. Reports of the progress of learners was analysed for all 144 learners who completed the programme, however there were still gaps in data during the evaluation	4 learners were part of the Sounding Board that reviewed results and presentation of findings, where an accessible form of the reports was developed for dissemination
Parents	237	Parents were not involved in the initial development of the ToC due to COVID and access limitations, but were interviewed during the forecast phase. Outcomes were subsequently refined in the evaluation phase of the research	27 parents participated in interviews in the evaluation phase of the research, including a focus group	As the programme had ended, it was not possible to include parents in the verification process but a specific report summary was prepared for both learners and parents
Employers	120	Employers were not involved in the initial development of the ToC due to COVID and access limitations, but outcomes were subsequently refined in the evaluation phase of the research	14 employers responded to surveys to support the research findings	It was not possible to engage employers in the verification process but a specific report summary was prepared for this cohort
Support agencies/Referral agencies/ Local Authorities SEND teams	10	A small number of support agencies (2) helped inform development of the ToC	Interviews took place with 5 support agencies or LAs to inform the findings	It was not possible to engage Support agencies/Local Authorities in the verification process but a specific summary was prepared for this cohort
National Government/ NHS/DWP/Local Government funders	1	No direct involvement was possible but policy docs and information for the Literature review were taken into account	No direct involvement was possible but policy docs and information for the Literature review were taken into account	Not possible

Table 6 Engagement with different stakeholders at key stages of SROI Analysis

Analysis of the relevant Mencap forms (such as the Enrolment Form, initial tutor assessment and Form 2 baseline learning assessment form) showed that some of the stakeholders identified by the Sounding Board such as referral and support agencies, schools and FE colleges were largely immaterial, as they did not figure at all in the reports made by learners and their parents.

GPs and health workers were only occasionally mentioned in interviews. Where learners had particular mental health issues, some services might occasionally be mentioned (e.g. Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services). Of 144 learners recruited to the programme for whom information was obtained, only 7 learners had support from agencies specialising in mental health support, but many more were reported to have issues with their mental health which impacted on their employment prospects. 30% of learners had a recognised mental health difficulty, and a further 38% had social and emotional difficulties. Some of there were reported to be quite severe, e.g. "I may shout, swear, run away or throw furniture. It is important that the staff/person who is supporting me recognises what triggers these behaviours and help me to manage my emotions" (quote from learner on enrolment). It was clear however from the interviews and paperwork analysis that mental health issues were significantly reduced in learners who had completed the SI programme and therefore there was a corresponding outcome for the NHS and other government agencies with an interest in mental health services. The health related impact on Government spend of people with learning disabilities moving into employment was therefore included in the value map, with the outcome accruing to National NHS/Local Government.

In the view of the researchers, there was nothing in any of the stakeholder engagement undertaken for the evaluation to suggest highly significant stakeholders or outcomes have been overlooked. Hence the same rationale as set out in Appendix I was retained for the Evaluation phase.

6.3   Establishing outcomes

The approach to determining outcomes had been developed during the forecast phase through a number of stages, utilising as a basis the Theory of Change, developed with Sounding Board and the subsequent development of an outcome map that was refined through the stakeholder engagement process. In particular the causal links between the outcomes were refined and clarified. This was done in meetings of the Sounding Board, using the jamboard tool to allow members to sequence the outcomes identified during the forecast phase, and discuss them as they went along. The meetings were also important in seeking the ex-learners' views on wording of outcomes, chain of events and whether the final outcomes were the 'right' ones from their perspective.

During the evaluation phase, through interviews with learners and as a result of the Sounding Board discussions it became clear that the wording of some outcomes needed to be changed somewhat, as learners expressed their priorities through more in-depth engagement with the researchers, and through involvement in the values game. Thus

'improved mental well-being' was changed to 'Improved mental health', recognising that many learners had mental health difficulties.

Some new outcomes ('Learners value difference and become more tolerant' and one parent outcome of 'Better communication with learner') were only identified late on in the process. The implication/risks of this are discussed below in section 10.3 below.

6.3.1 Theory of Change

The Theory of Change was developed during the Forecast phase of the research and was constructed from a number of sources including research evidence where it existed, Mencap's overall approach to services for people with learning disabilities (under the banner 'What Matters Most'), the organisation's existing paperwork for tracking learners' progress, as well as the interviews and discussions with the Sounding Board.

The aims of a Theory of Change are to understand the organisation's goals and how these are met by the activities of the intervention, to map out intermediate outcomes and to describe enabling factors. A Theory of Change shows the causal relationship between the activities under study and the longer-term outcomes arising from the activity. A copy of the Theory of Change developed in included as Appendix B.

The main enabler of employment identified was having the support of family. A high proportion of the learners on the programme were living with their family (93%). The Sounding Board had discussed and agreed that school was not an enabling factor, as many had negative experiences at school. The other significant factors were the general state of the economy and whether jobs were available, plus the level of employer support and awareness of learning disability issues, and consequently their level of preparedness to welcome learners into their workforce.

The Literature Review gave some pointers to the overall Theory of Change and the range of outcomes that might be expected, but it became apparent that no organisation had yet attempted to create a Theory of Change for its SI programmes (or indeed any other employment support programme for people with learning disabilities). In the evaluation phase of the research due to improved opportunities to engage with the stakeholders the outcomes were refined and some eliminated as they were considered not to be material.

6.3.2 Learners' Outcomes and Chain of Events

To help confirm the programme outcomes and find out how accurate the forecast chain of events as outlined in Figure 2 above were, engagement events were undertaken with learners at the two deep dive sites. Learners were asked to write down on post its all the outcomes they felt they had experienced on the SI programme to date. These were collected and grouped into themes to help understand those outcomes most commonly occurring, which helped validate the outcome identification from a learner perspective. The output from this exercise is shown at Appendix E.

Having determined the list of outcomes, the researchers had to reconsider the chain of events. In the light of improved data, further discussions with the Sounding Board, more access to stakeholders, especially the learners, and exercises such as the one conducted at the deep dive sites, it became clear that both the outcomes and chain of events needed to be revised, to more accurately reflect the impact of the programme, as reported by learners, and to ensure that outcomes were well-defined.

It proved to be challenging when working with individuals with learning disabilities to understand the changes that were happening in their feelings, skills, motivations and capacities and develop a chain of events. Their ability to articulate what they were feeling could sometimes be limited. The staff at the deep dive sites however were very helpful in drawing out the learners' thoughts and helping the analysts draw conclusions about chain of events. The Sounding Board was also very helpful in considering this topic.

For example in describing self confidence and self esteem learners were clear that these were two separate outcomes, but which were linked in a causal chain, where improved self esteem led to improved confidence.

At a later Sounding Board meeting, the status of 'improved mental well-being' as an outcome was discussed. It was later agreed that the wording of the outcome could be changed, as the paperwork analysis, confirmed by the Sounding Board, showed that what was really at stake for learners was a reduction in the mental ill health which had been affecting their ability to make progress with their lives and enter employment. Although improved confidence and self-esteem might lead to improved mental well being, the outcome for learners was actually an improvement in mental health which was not part of the well-being chain, and therefore improved mental health was an outcome in its own right. This mirrors the recognised public health approach that mental health/illness and mental well-being are not the same, but are two separate but linked dimensions. [10]

Uncertainty following the forecast in the causality of some personal outcomes in the chain of events led to the analysts to re-examine the chain of events, but also led to a decision to rigorously exclude counting quantities for intermediate outcomes unless that was the only outcome experienced by the individual learner.

During the evaluation work, it also became clear that the learners valued personal outcomes as highly as the job progression outcome. This meant that the personal outcomes were valuable in their own right, and were not a necessary precursor to getting a job. Thus whereas in the forecast chain of events all the outcomes led to a final outcome of getting a job, the evaluation chain of events included getting a job as a final outcome on its own, and was not the end of a chain of events. This was discussed and verified in the deep dive learner interviews, by staff at the deep dive sites and at the Sounding Board.

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[10] The World Health Organisation states that 'mental health is not simply the opposite of mental illness. It is possible for someone to have a mental disorder and high levels of wellbeing.' See https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/295474/The_relationship_between_wellbeing_and_health.pdf

There were clear relationships reported by the Sounding Board between other intermediate outcomes which were leading to the end outcome (the well-defined outcome in social value terms), for example the causal links between learning new skills to find work, leading to improved literacy and numeracy leading to improved Maths and English qualifications which then underpinned the end outcome of 'More aspiration and ambition to work'. The staff reports in the paperwork analysis about learners' progress also supported this as a chain of events, but it can be difficult sometimes to concisely explain in a chain of events diagram what outcomes mean and how they are connected.

'New skills to find work' for example can be unpacked as follows. When learners first joined the programme, they were often uncertain about what they wanted to do in terms of employment. They had little experience of the world of work, and what employers would require of them in different work environments. Thus the first step for them was to understand what employers expected, and this was developed during classroom sessions looking at job descriptions, and interpreting what these meant.

This then led people to improve their functional Maths and English, based on what they had learnt employers would need. For example, timekeeping and attendance were two core attributes that employers were looking for, but difficult for learners to achieve if they could not understand analogue or digital clocks and so they did not know what time it was. Much of the paperwork progress recorded under improved literacy and numeracy was of this nature: learning the basics which would allow learners to get to their employer placement on time and satisfy the basic needs of employers.

This had, in some cases, led to improvements in the recorded level of qualifications achieved in Maths and English. The numbers however were small, but improvements in literacy and numeracy are needed before qualifications can improve, so this intermediate outcome was kept in this place in the chain.

The evidence from the Sounding Board, the interviews at the deep dive sites and the paperwork analysis supported the well-defined outcome at the end of this chain being 'More aspiration and ambition to work'. At the beginning, many learners had little understanding of what type of work they should be aiming for, but in some cases, they had hugely unrealistic expectations of what they could aspire to. It was reported that only when learners realised what abilities they in fact possessed, did they begin to raise or change their aspirations as to the jobs they could get in future. For example, one learner was reported to have wanted to work in a car parts warehouse, but during his placement he realised that not only could he do the paperwork, but he could also read instructions in car repair manuals and led him to think he could aspire to be a mechanic. This chain is therefore about thinking about a career for the longer term and using that to inform their short- to medium-term choices.

The description of causal relationships for other chain of events identified in the forecast and evaluation phases were as follows.

- 'Improved problem-solving and improved decision-making' lead to 'Improved resilience and coping skills', which leads to 'Improved practical skills to support

independence which in turn leads to 'More Independence'. The classroom curriculum in Mencap focused a lot on developing individual learners' capacity to make their own decisions and solve problems so that they became more resilient and were better able to respond appropriately to unexpected change. An example of this would be learning what to do if a bus didn't appear as planned, and how they should text someone to explain what had happened, say they would be late to class and then look for an alternative method of getting to the project. The progress records for individual learners were full of references to learners' progress in managing this situation and not panicking if change happened, and that this then helped them put new skills into practice. The end outcome was 'More Independence', as learners could travel independently. Mencap also focused heavily on helping individual learners understand money. For many of them, their parents had always handled the money, but in a workplace environment many learners had to manage money themselves, and also had to learn how to budget. Once these new skills were embedded with learners, it was reported that many were now starting to think about moving out from the parental household and into supported living or unsupported accommodation. They reported being more mature, and wanting to take more responsibility for themselves. This sometimes was expressed very simply as helping their mum around the home – learning how to cook, taking responsibility for their own laundry for example. Thus this chain represents a journey towards adulthood.

- 'Learning new work skills' leads to 'Improved self-presentation skills', which then leads to 'Improved interview skills' and which in turn leads to 'Increased motivation to be employed'. An example of this chain would be R: 'R has gained employment at a restaurant as a waitress and was able to complete a trial shift and interview successfully, with the skills she has acquired through sessions and her work placement. R struggled with her employability skills throughout the programme but has come a long way with her progression.' (From R's exit form completed by the staff member.) Many learners were reported to have a lot of difficulty with self-presentation, linked to their speech, language and communication difficulties, and the first step was to learn the skills needed for employment through practice in an employer placement. They started off learning how to conduct themselves with customers and work colleagues at their placements, and then became able to present themselves at interviews to people they didn't know. This then led many to become more determined to get a job, as they realised they enjoyed working with other people in a work environment. The vast majority of learners had never had a job before (97%) and their view of themselves was as people who found it difficult to 'join in'. This chain therefore represents a journey to becoming more employable. This was found to be a different outcome from 'More aspiration and ambitions to work' as it influenced their determination to get a job – any job – and earn an income for themselves as opposed to having a more ambitious view of their own capacities and where they could go in a career in future.

- 'Learning new skills to communicate with others' leads to 'More professional standards of behaviour' which leads to 'Better team working' and finally 'Improved communications'. 43% of learners were reported to have speech and language and

communication problems that had impacted on their ability to work with other people: 'In less structured times such as at break times, T did seem uncomfortable to be around his colleagues and expressed that he would prefer to sit in a room on his own. As he became more familiar with them and the environment I did notice a change in this preference as he began to choose to sit in the canteen with others more frequently, this was a very positive step for T socially' (from T's exit form completed by a staff member). Mencap's programme focussed heavily on supporting learners to work together in groups, so that they could develop their communication skills. Mencap had projects that groups of learners would work on together in the classroom. This then improved their standards of behaviour, so that they learnt how to behave towards other people, and more importantly how not behave, in a working environment: 'M is a confident speaker who is polite to all staff members. Public speaking can be a challenge, however, due to her negative perception of herself. M can confuse appropriate workplace language at times and become 'frustrated with fellow learners' (from M's enrolment form completed by a staff member). By the time the programme had finished, M was reported to be very sociable, pleasant and communicative member of her work placement team. This chain is therefore a journey towards better communication with people at work.

- 'Learning new skills for communicating with others' also led to 'Increased personal networks' and in turn led to 'Improved relationships'. This was wider than just those at work, but indicated a growing ability to communicate with other people outside of work, and make better friendships. A number of learners reported how they could talk more knowledgably about a wider range of subjects, as they had more experience, and made friends initially with the others on the course, but then widened out to others in their community. In this chain, the impact of Covid was discernible, as many had reacted to Covid by becoming afraid of other people and reluctant to make friends, but the experiences at Mencap had led them to make new friends, and enjoy more their relationships with others.

- 'Improved self esteem' leads to 'Improved confidence'. The Sounding Board had discussed this and concluded that confidence was the final outcome, which arose from improved self esteem. Many learners were reported at enrolment as suffering from low self esteem, some of them so low that it permeated all aspects of their lives: 'C has very little self esteem, she believes in her abilities as a performer, but struggles to see her worth outside of this' (from C's additional baseline assessment form). At the end of the programme, her support worker wrote 'C used to be a service user of this dance company and so has had to work hard to transition from student to staff member which has been challenging. C's caseworker has been liaising regularly with the employer to discuss any concerns they may have and then work with C to overcome any barriers to her performing at her best. C has built up her skills and confidence within her role with the support of her caseworker and can now deliver/lead sessions and work alongside the teachers to deliver the care provision to the service users'. The Sounding Board did discuss the complexities of creating a chain of events, so the ex-learners on the SB were asked directly if increased self confidence was the start of a number of chains, or an end outcome in its own right. They felt strongly that confidence was a separate outcome, and a very

important one as most learners had relatively confidence in themselves when they
joined the programme.

The SROI Guide states that the analyst should 'only count one outcome in the chain of
events'. The Supplementary Guidance for Principle 2 suggests that the well-defined
outcome is the point at which there is an opportunity to maximise value, and that changes
before this point will be managed only as part of the process to manage change in well-
being.

It was very clear from the learners' statements in interviews and at the deep dive sites, that
every outcome in the personal outcomes chains specified below in Figure 3 was valuable to
them, and so although the intermediate outcomes appeared to be causally linked and
leading to one outcome, each outcome in the chain was in fact a 'well-defined outcome' as
they had value for the stakeholder.

The learners reported that even modest changes are important to them, so for example
changes at the beginning of the chain of events were 'life changing'. For example, learning
new skills to travel independently could make a huge contribution to the learners' well-
being. Those individuals who experience this outcome, but who do not achieve a full
measure of independence are still gaining something very valuable to them for the future
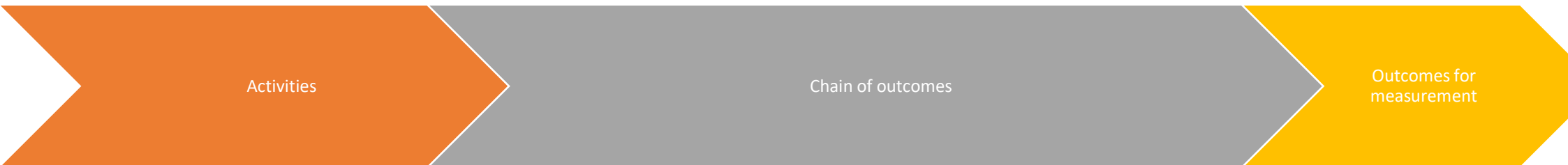and so their intermediate achievements should be counted.

In determining quantities therefore, the focus was on inspecting each individual learners'
records of progress, to find how far they had progressed along each of the 8 chain of events
outlined below. If the learner was found to have achieved the end outcome, then that alone
was counted in the quantities and none of the intermediate outcomes in the chain were
counted. If however someone had improved their qualifications but there was no evidence
that they had raised their aspirations or ambition, then only the achievement of the
qualifications outcome was counted, but not the two preceding ones of improved literacy
and numeracy and new skills to find work, and not the end outcome of 'More ambitions and
aspirations to work'. In that way, some of the uncertainties around causal relationships in
the chain of events and the risk of double counting were removed.

These considerations, along with learning from the forecast phase informed the revised
Chain of Events outlined below. Similar chains could exist for parents, employers and
support agencies, but the numbers engaged with in each group were too small to reliably
create outcome chains, and anyway the interviews that had been conducted did not suggest
a chain before the reported outcomes.

The one new outcome that was identified during the evaluation was Learners 'value
difference and become more tolerant'. This outcome was only discovered during the
Values Game, and therefore fairly late on in the analysis and unfortunately the evaluation
framework had no means of determining a quantity for this outcome. Thus it remains in the
chain of events (as the starting outcome for chain 3 above), and listed in the value map, but
has no quantity or value attached to it.

The revised chain of events was therefore as below.

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Activities	Chain of outcomes	Outcomes for measurement

Activities
- One to one support
- Learning new practical skills (money, IT, travel)
- Learning new skills for work
- Improved diet, health and exercise
- One to one job coaching
- Employer placements
- Classroom learning
- Community projects

Chain of outcomes

Improved problem-solving →
Improved decision-making skills → Improved resilience and coping skills → Improved practical skills to support independence (money, IT, travel) → **More independent**

Learning new skills to find work → Improved literacy and numeracy → Improved qualifications → **More aspirations and ambition to work**

Learning new skills for work → Improved interview skills → Improved self presentation skills → **Increased motivation to be employed**

Value difference and become more tolerant → Learning new skills for communicating with others → More professional standards of behaviour → Better team working → **Improved communication**

Learning new skills for communicating with others → Increased personal networks → **Improved relationships**

Improved self-esteem → **Improved confidence**
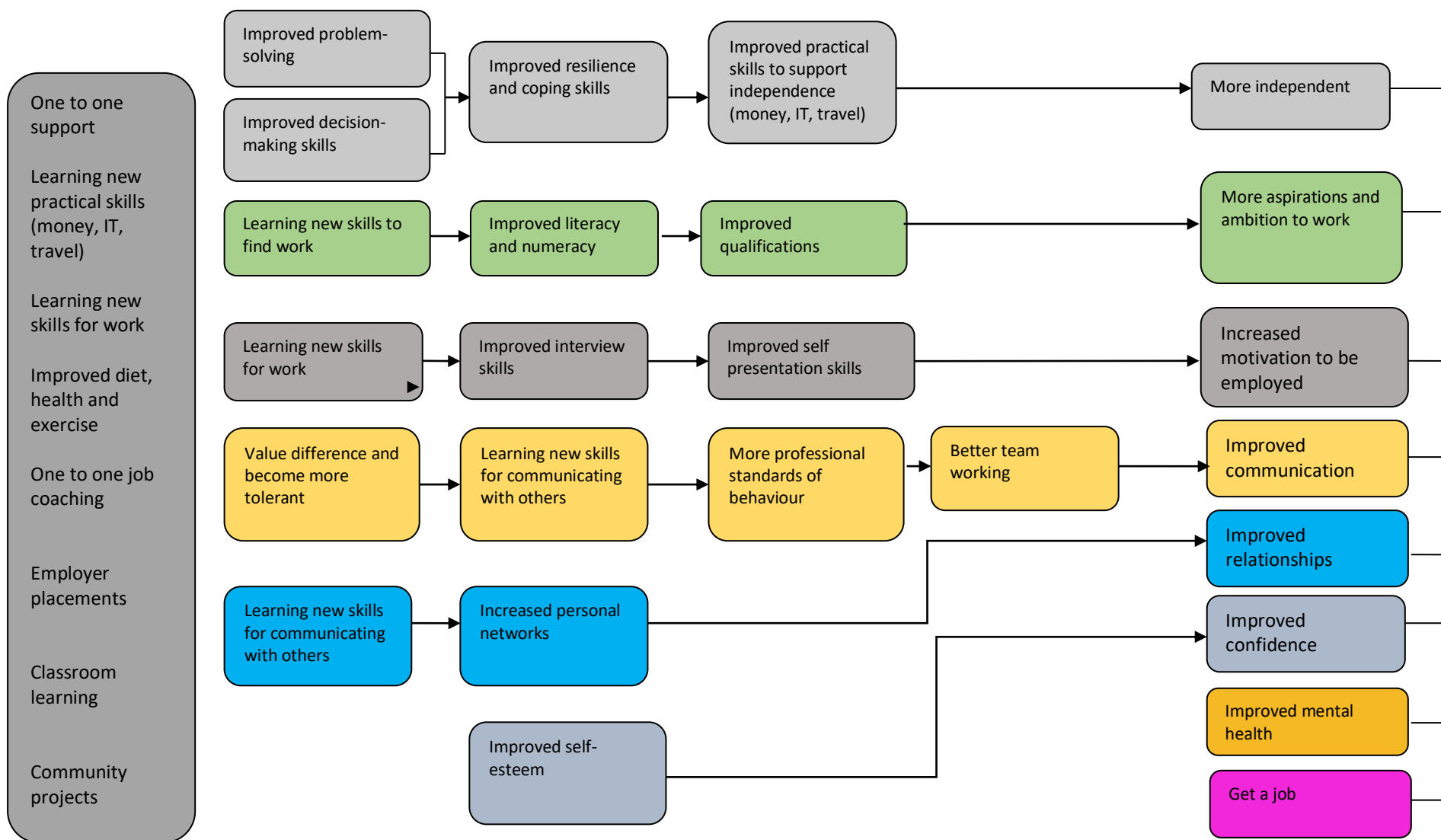
Improved mental health

Get a job

Fig 3 Chain of Events – Evaluation

7   Data collection and findings on quantities

The researchers used a number of different processes to obtain data related to the impact of the programme. These included:

- Analysis of the paperwork generated by the programme, comparing the relative changes in achievement of outcomes from the beginning to the end of the programme. This was similar to the approach adopted in the forecast phase but was improved by changes to the paperwork to more clearly identify change relative to the outcomes identified from the programme (as in Figure 3 above). This involved assigning a score to the baseline for each individual against all the outcomes in the framework (as in Fig 3 above) where it was possible to do so, and then assigning a score as recorded in the exit forms against these same outcomes for the same individual. The paperwork for each individual was scrutinised for evidence in the narrative contained in each form that outcomes in the framework could be said to have been achieved, and the scores were based primarily on the narrative contained in the forms. An example of this would be where a caseworker reported that the learner was independently searching for jobs and attending interviews themselves without the support of case workers, or that the learner had been able to travel independently to their work placement. Where an outcome was not mentioned in the narrative, no score was assigned. This is a more subjective process, so one of the researchers undertook all this work, to cut down the likelihood of bias in the numbers of outcomes counted. The whole cohort (for which forms existed) was analysed by these methods.

- Interviews with a sample of the respective stakeholders and subsequent analysis of the feedback to identify changes made as a result of the programme. Interviews followed a semi structured format using a non judgemental and open approach to understanding the impact of the programme and the intended and unintended (positive and negative) outcomes experienced.

- Completion of the Personal Skills Survey by learners at the beginning, middle and end of the programme to evaluate relative change in qualitative outcomes as 'distance travelled' by each individual. This was used in the Value Map to weight outcomes.

- Four 'in the room' sessions with learners in the deep dive sites, to map and understand outcomes and then to run the Values Game.

- Interviews with a selection of parents following the same script as in Appendix C.

- Email survey with employers that followed the same script.

- Analysis of learner progression data and follow ups after the end of the programme.

7.1   Learners

The approach taken to data analysis was to compare number of learner outcomes derived from a number of sources, in order to get a more rounded and triangulated view of whether outcomes were being experienced. The sources used were those described above. This allowed the researchers to look for evidence across the whole cohort, not just those interviewed or involved in the Values Game, and to triangulate staff views of learners progress with the learners own views. During the Sounding Board meetings and in discussions with staff in the deep dive sites, staff reported that learners were less certain and confident in their progress during the programme, and tended to underreport change, whereas the staff could see from their day-to-day interaction with learners that they were making significant progress.

The Mencap forms used in the paperwork analysis were:

- Baseline learning assessment
- Enrolment form
- Additional baseline assessment form (drawn up by the analysts to address outcomes not used in Mencap's baseline)
- About Me report
- Final assessment/exit form.

All these forms (apart from the About Me profile) were completed by staff only, but the information in them was based on regular monthly assessments about each learner's progress. This intermediate assessment involved dialogue between case worker/job coach and the learner. The analyst went through all of the above forms for the 144 learners who completed the programme, in the order listed, so that the exit forms were scored last. Statements and the narrative recorded in the forms about each of the outcomes in the chain of events was scrutinised, and a score assigned against each outcome – if that outcome was mentioned at all. The scoring system used was:

1. Consistent problems, needs a lot of support
2. Variable problems, needs support
3. More progress could be made, needs support
4. Minor issues, no specific support required
5. No issues identified

Thus the scores gave a measure of the impact of the individual's disability on their day-to-day functioning, and a measure of how much support they needed to engage with the class curriculum, the general activities that made up the programme and their employer placement. A shift in scores therefore represented a reduction in the amount of support the individual needed, and hence was likely to indicate their ability to successfully secure and maintain the outcome in future.

Examples of the evidence on which scores were based, can be seen in a typical baseline form for LB. Her aims on joining the programme were:

1. I want to try different work experiences to develop my employability skills and to help me to get a paid job.
2. I want to develop my English skills so that I can understand and complete job application forms and to help me in the workplace.
3. I want to practice using money and develop my budgeting skills to help me to be more independent.
4. I want to take part in Community Impact Projects and meet new people to develop my confidence and communication skills.
5. I want to learn new routes and travel on them on my own to help me to get a job and be independent
6. I want to develop my skills doing things at home so that I can be more independent.

Her main support needs as recorded by staff were:

- Extra thinking time
- Help remembering things I have been taught
- Someone to help / tell me what to do. I can't always read instructions
- Do not like other people listening when I read instructions out loud
- Do not like going to the board and getting things wrong in front of class
- Difficulty copying off the board- too many words

By the time LB had finished the SI programme, she had gained her entry level 2 Maths and English, and had decided to go back into FE to study childcare. She had tried out two settings in her employer placements, and decided that what she really wanted to do was work with children. Her score on ambition to work had therefore increased. Her ability to travel independently had improved – demonstrated by being able to learn new travel routes and travel on her own. Her progress throughout the year in other areas, such as communication, team working, expression, confidence was modest, but attested to by the support worker in the exit form. She still required help in some areas after leaving, and so her scores were generally 3 at the highest.

Another example was J-L. Her aim on joining were

1. I would like to get a part time job working in a Café as a Waitress or Cleaner.
2. I would like to get better at spelling so I can write better.
3. I want to learn about money and be able to add coins and notes to find out how much money I have.
4. I want to be able to tell the time more so I can be independent with organising my time.

By the time she finished the programme, she had developed her ability to speak appropriately to customers, and gained practical skills such as on a bar serving drinks, taking food and drink orders to people's tables, and how to clear and lay tables. She had received very positive feedback from both placements, and now required no support to do these, being independent at both places for a while. J-L was well prepared for progressing into a paid job in café or cleaning as the working hours suit her, and at the time of completing the programme was very actively looking for work. J-L had made clear progress on writing skills since the start of the course and was more independent with spellings; getting her to write on the whiteboard and try before asking for support had helped her realise how much she could spell on her own. J-L was much more confident with addition. She had been consistent with this for a while, helped by worksheets, and practising with 'fake' money. J-L had progressed to focussing on subtraction and working out change which she found a lot

tricker, as she used the till at the employer placement, it is good for her to keep practising this skill as this is a barrier for her.

Her scores increased by 160% over the programme, with scores of 5 for 'Motivation to become employed' and 4's for 'Learning new skills for work', 'Aspirations and ambitions to work' and 'Improved confidence'.

The robustness of this scoring rests on the analyst's ability to be consistent in scoring the forms. It was clear from doing this however that the changes for this group would be small, but that small changes could make a big difference to the individual. There was probably more error introduced into the scoring because paperwork was incomplete, and staff had not recorded everything that was relevant, rather than the scorer was inconsistent.

The paperwork analysis threw up some gaps in the form completion, as had been found in the forecast phase. The number of learners for whom evidence of outcomes was missing from the paperwork was found to be:

Item	Baseline assessment	Additional baseline	Enrolment form	Form 6/final assessment form
Number missing	33	37	14	21
	3 empty forms			
Percentage of forms missing	23.6%	25.7%	9.7%	15%

Table 7 Missing learner data

In undertaking this paperwork analysis, the analyst was looking for any evidence of negative outcomes. It was striking that in the exit forms, there were no people who had not recorded progress of some sort against at least some outcomes. These could be small changes – e.g. there was one young woman who recorded little progress except small changes in practical skills of independent travel, some improvements in communication skills but negative changes in motivation and ambitions to work. She had been affected by recurrent epilepsy and mental health problems throughout the year, but Mencap had secured agreement to roll her over onto the next year of the Supported Internship programme so she could catch up. Even with such a history, she still recorded a 15% increase in scores. She was the only person in the whole cohort for whom any of the scores showed a reduction from the baseline.

Some scores changed remarkably e.g. the young woman whose score on general independence at the baseline was 1, but by the end of the programme she was planning a move into semi-independent housing and scored a 4 on this outcome.

For those learners where a complete set of scores at baseline and exit were reported, the average increase in scores per individual was 88.6%. That is to say, across all 23 outcomes in the chain of events, scores increased by an average of 20 points.

Given the level of missing paperwork it is possible that negative outcomes have not been uncovered. There were only 4 learners however for whom there was no baseline

assessment form nor an exit form, and so no change could be evidenced, either positive or negative. These 4 individuals however completed the programme and did not drop out early, and three were included in interviews at the follow up after 2 months on leaving the programme, so there is nothing to suggest they had negative experiences of being on the SI programme.

Based on the forecast phase and agreed amendments to the programme documentation, analysis of the new PSS paperwork was undertaken to assess the impact and distance travelled relative to individual personal outcomes. One of the recommendations of the forecast phase of the research was to move away from the previous evaluation framework based on 'What Matters Most' to one that better reflected the outcomes that were considered material within the employment support programme. Feedback from the OFSTED inspection combined with this recommendation from the forecast phase led to the development of a new Personal Skills Survey (PSS) for learners. A copy of the PSS is included as Appendix D),

The PSS questions were developed by the researchers and Mencap's Research and Evaluation Team. They had previously considered how to improve their existing Life and Work Self Assessment questionnaire, and the piloting of it during the 2020/2021 year of the forecast threw up challenges once the researchers had produced the Theory of Change and found that the outcomes arising from the LWS questions did not map on to the agreed outcomes that learners reported during the forecast phase.

During autumn of 2021, the researchers developed questions to measure each outcome. It was agreed to use a four point Likert Scale approach, but to use emojis rather than numbers to reflect whether learners had experienced positive or negative change:

Outcome	Statement				

Fig 4 EMOJIs used in the PSS

Mencap had previously researched the viability of this approach when asking people with learning disabilities to comment on their experiences. They preferred a three point scale, but there was also a suggestion from research that a four point scale might prevent learners always opting for the middle option. The PSS was tested out with the Sounding Board in November 2021. Feedback from the project staff during its use was on the whole positive. A neutral emoji in the middle was suggested by a number of staff, together with some re-wording of questions. These amendments will be implemented for the 2023/2024 cohort.

The PSS was completed at the beginning, midpoint and end of the learner programme to assess distance travelled. Hence with one exception, in the evaluation phase of the research the researchers were able to capture data for each of the outcomes identified. [11]

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[11] The one exception was the outcome not identified until too late in the analysis to include quantities for it

All learners were invited to complete the surveys (with the exception of the mid point that was only administered to the Deep Dive sites.

Response rates for the PSS surveys
Programme commencement –   80.6% forms completed
Programme End -   56.3% forms completed

It had been assumed in the construction of the forecast chain of events that achievement of all the personal outcomes would be necessary in order for learners to get a job, and so to include personal outcomes as well as job outcomes in the valuation would be double counting. During the evaluation phase however, it became clear that learners really valued the personal outcomes in their own right, separate from getting a job, and learners considered personal progress was not a prerequisite for getting a job.

With the personal outcomes however only one outcome per chain for each learner was included, in order to avoid overclaiming by counting quantities of intermediate outcomes. The aim overall was to eliminate the potential for overclaiming in the data collection for the evaluation phase. While some judgement was necessary to decide which intermediate outcome should be counted, it proved more reliable in this phase of the research due to the improvements in forms. There is however some opportunity for Mencap to improve the consistency of how staff record information in both initial and final assessments to fully quantify improvements in personal outcomes. The comparison of absolute quantities found in the analysis compared to the quantities that resulted after only 1 outcome per chain was counted for each individual learner was as follows.

Personal Outcome	Quantity from paperwork analysis	Quantity after adjustment for counting only one intermediate outcome
Learners improve their problem-solving skills	84	3
Learners improve their decision-making skills	69	2
Learners learn improved resilience and coping skills	85	5
Learners learn new practical skills of money management to support better life choices	82	8
Learners become more generally independent	83	83
Learners improve their skills to find work	85	6
learners improve their literacy and numeracy	90	22
Learners improve their qualifications	22	5
Learners acquire more aspirations and ambitions to work	71	71
Improved employability skills	86	3
Learners improve their interview skills	91	31
Learners improve their self presentation skills	77	23
Learners have increased motivation to become employed	73	73

Value difference and become more tolerant	N/A	N/A
Learners learn new skills for communicating with others at work	94	3
Learners adopt more professional standards of behaviour	75	2
Learners are better at team working	92	11
Learners improve their communication skills	88	88
Leaners learn new skills for communicating with others outside of work	65	5
Learners increase their personal networks	64	4
Learners improve their relationships	60	60
Learners improve their self esteem	67	3
Learners improve their confidence	79	79
Learners improve their mental health	62	62

Table 8 Chain of events quantities data[12]

Interviews were conducted with all the learners available at the two deep dive sites by the researchers face to face (occasionally with a staff member present for learner reassurance). In addition programme leads at all other non-deep dive sites were asked to undertake similar interviews with five learners per site, in this case interviews were recorded on MS Teams and subsequently analysed in a similar manner to the deep dive sites by the researchers. This yielded 27 interviews from deep dive sites and 10 interviews from other sites.

The data from learner interviews was analysed according to the list of outcomes as set out in the chain of events and again only one outcome per chain was recorded to reduce the chance of double counting. Based on the interview scripts notes were taken from each of the interviewees, these were subsequently reviewed and summarised into tables to allow overall analysis of responses. From this the interview data was analysed using the outcomes framework and chain of events to identify outcomes that were highlighted by learners, in a similar manner to that used for the review of forms.

Interviews sought to gather information on deadweight (what would they be doing if not on programme), in many cases learners reported this was their only option other than being at home, or they may attend college, these responses helped estimate deadweight allocation. Similarly learners were asked about attribution (who else was involved in delivering the outcomes and what influence they had had). However if proved difficult to discuss issues of duration, drop off and displacement, so other sources were used to support estimates.

The actual scripts and prompts used are contained in Appendix C.

Based on the sample and cohort sizes these were converted to percentages, based on the actual number of learners responding to the questions, or forms provided by Mencap.

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[12] Colours in the table refer to the chain of outcomes identified in Figure 3

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To identify evidence of outcomes, the scores from all the paperwork analysis were individually scored against the outcomes framework for the baseline then the exit form, to explore distance travelled. A 1 assigned was assigned to each outcome as to whether there was evidence from the paperwork analysis of an increase in scores between the baseline and the exit form. Where there was no evidence of change, or where forms were missing, the score assigned was 0. The figures in Table 6 below therefore reflect percentages of learners where forms actually contained the relevant information, rather than percentages based on the 144 learners who completed the programme. This means that the evaluation SROI ratio will be lower than it might otherwise be if all forms had been provided.

Finally, to establish quantities of the outcomes experienced, the numbers obtained through the paperwork and interview data were averaged.

The survey and evaluation of the feedback from the PSS is shown at appendix D, and the quantities of personal outcomes recorded from the paperwork analysis is shown in Appendix F. The PSS supported the overall findings from the paperwork and learner interviews but also helped recognise that while with one exception positive outcomes were being achieved across all the criteria based on their starting points, some outcomes had greater relative increases. These related to work preparation and associated skills in particular. Given the focus on this as a core programme aim and the learners' general lack of previous experience with employment this was to be expected. There were also some differences in the scale of change across the programme with some areas achieving greater relative improvements in outcomes than others. When presented with these findings staff colleagues in the Sounding Board and in the Project Management Team confirmed there were some inconsistencies in delivery across the programme and some had suffered from staff turnover during the programme.

All quantities were then mapped onto the final outcome framework and chain of events. The PSS data, interview analysis and paperwork analysis scores was then used to triangulate the evidence of outcomes, and prioritise the respective impact of the outcomes.

 The findings were as follows.

Outcome	%age from paperwork analysis, based on number of completed forms	%age from learner interviews	Average %age of learners experiencing outcomes	Final number of learners experiencing outcomes	%age distance travelled reported in PSS survey
Learners improve their problem-solving skills	2.7%	14%	8%	12	2.00%
Learners improve their decision-making skills	2.0%	16%	9%	13	5.75%
Learners learn improved resilience and coping skills	5.0%	19%	12%	17	5.25%
Learners learn new practical skills of money management to support better life choices	7.9%	22%	15%	21	8.50%
Learners become more generally independent	82.2%	27%	55%	79	4.25%
Learners improve their skills to find work	5.8%	32%	19%	27	12.50%

Outcome	%age from paperwork analysis, based on number of completed forms	%age from learner interviews	Average %age of learners experiencing outcomes	Final number of learners experiencing outcomes	%age distance travelled reported in PSS survey
learners improve their literacy and numeracy	21.2%	46%	34%	48	8.13%
Learners improve their qualifications	4.8%		4%	5	N/A
Learners acquire more aspirations and ambitions to work	68.3%	22%	45%	65	8.13%
Improved employability skills	2.3%	27%	15%	21	15.25%
Learners improve their interview skills	23.9%	24%	24%	35	13.75%
Learners improve their self presentation skills	17.7%	24%	21%	30	4.00%
Learners have increased motivation to become employed	56.2%	22%	39%	56	3.75%
Value difference and become more tolerant	0.0%	8%	0%	0	N/A
Learners learn new skills for communicating with others at work	2.9%	24%	14%	20	11.75%
Learners adopt more professional standards of behaviour	1.9%	16%	9%	13	5.75%
Learners are better at team working	10.6%	14%	12%	17	12.00%
Learners improve their communication skills	84.6%	38%	61%	88	8.25%
Leaners learn new skills for communicating with others outside of work	7.3%	32%	20%	29	8.50%
Learners increase their personal networks	5.8%	22%	14%	20	3.75%
Learners improve their relationships	87.0%	16%	52%	74	1.50%
Learners improve their self esteem	3.7%	41%	22%	32	2.75%
Learners improve their confidence	96.3%	38%	67%	97	6.00%
Learners improve their mental health	75.6%	16%	46%	66	2.75%

Table 9 Learner outcome data[13]

In the PSS survey analysis overall most of the criteria saw an improvement in the relative scores from the start to the end of the programme with one exception (Keeping calm when things go wrong). The largest changes were seen in criteria associated with job readiness and independence outcomes. As expected however, the scope for measurement in the PSS scores was limited because of the small number of options (4 emojis). It is also restricted because of the ability of learners to accurately reflect their progress, and it was noted by staff that answers to the PSS could be heavily influenced by mood on the day. This is an issue for all evaluation tools if they have not been robustly validated, as the PSS has not. Thus the PSS scores have not been used to determine quantities, but to indicate the weighting that learners put on the outcomes and hence to influence the assignation of financial values to the outcomes.

The paperwork analysis showed the relatively low level of achievement of qualifications within the learner group. Out of 144 learners who completed the programme, only 22

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[13] Colours in the table refer to the chain of outcomes identified in Figure 3

achieved an increase the level in their English and Maths qualifications. By contrast, 90 learners were reported as having improved their functional Maths and English i.e. they learned skills to help them move forward with their lives. Examples of this were learning to read bus timetables to help them travel independently and learning to read analogue clocks to get to their destination on time. This finding illustrates the need for more realism from Government when it suggests that qualifications at level 2 and below should be reformed, and effectively de-funded. Many of the learners in this SI cohort are at or below level 2 in their qualifications, but their experiences and that of their employers show that employers value the functional skills they can offer. [14]

The analysis of the 2021/2022 progression outcomes showed the following destinations of learners on the Si programme.

Progression outcome	Number	%age
Number who dropped out early	4	2.7%
Number with no Form 6	21	14.4%
Returners to SI programme 2022/2023	6	4.1%
Referred to Study programme for 2022/2023	1	0.7%
Employed full-time	13	8.9%
Employed part-time	24	16.4%
Paid employment but hours not specified	10	6.8%
Paid apprenticeship	10	6.8%
Traineeship	3	2.1%
Vol work at employer placement pending other destination	6	4.1%
Vol work while LFW	15	10.3%
Vol work	5	3.4%
LFW	10	6.8%
FE	5	3.4%
Moving to another employability programme	7	4.8%
Trial work placement	2	1.4%
NLFW but moving to social support	2	1.4%
Unknown - may have moved abroad to be with father	1	0.7%
Destination unknown - left SI when moved into supported living - will be LFW or volunteering opportunities	1	0.7%

Table 10 Progression outcomes for 2021/2022 cohort

Overall therefore, 32% of learners were able to move into paid employment, with a further 7% progressing to a paid apprenticeship, far higher than the levels of movement into employment for people with learning disabilities recorded by the Department of Work and Pensions, which is around 5%.

While this means that 61% of learners did not achieve the programme's primary aim of getting a job, all learners (with the exception of the 17 who left the programme early made

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[14] See C. Kobayashi and P. Warner "Access to the future: the value and worth of qualifications at or below Level 2", 2022, for AELP, NOCN Group and Skills and Education group at https://www.aelp.org.uk/media/4744/access-to-the-future-final.pdf

some progress based on the revised outcome framework that was developed for the research.

Based on the profile of the learner group, there were no discernible variations in outcomes across the learner cohort, other than that described above, which related to the variation in delivery at different projects

While the duration of employment was not possible to fully determine, Mencap followed up on learner progression after 2 months from completing the programme, and had also presented some data from the previous year's cohort who had been followed up for a year. While not all learners were included in the follow ups, it was found that 5% of those employed had left their employment, but 5% of those who left without a job had found employment and a further 7% moved to positive destinations such as FE. Given the first few months is often the most vulnerable time in settling into a new job, it is positive that overall similar numbers remained in employment.

Parental interviews confirmed the profound changes in their young people with the expectation that this would last and support their future opportunities.

A summary of sources for the determination of evidence to support the deductions made is shown in appendix K.

7.2 Other stakeholder outcomes

Parents

While parental interviews proved difficult to schedule, to supplement the numbers engaged, two workshops with parents were arranged to discuss the impact on the programme from their perspective. In general, parents were very grateful for the opportunities that the programme had provided for their children and spoke passionately about the challenges they faced in getting appropriate support and attention from public agencies. Specifically, parents identified four particular outcomes related to them:

Outcome	% respondents confirming impact	Total parents experiencing outcome based on sample
More hope/confidence in the future	45.1%	107
Improved atmosphere at home	24.9%	59
Young person more self-reliant so more time for others/self	21.9%	52
Improved communication with the learner	11.8	28

Table 11 Outcomes for Parents

Interviews sought to gather information on deadweight (what would have happened without the programme), in many cases parents said this was the only option other than non engagement, these responses helped estimate deadweight allocation. Similarly parents were asked about attribution (who else was involved in delivering the outcomes). However it proved difficult to discuss issues of duration and drop off due to the fact that the learners

were still on the programme, and they had no evidence of displacement. For these impact factors, the assignment of a percentage was based on the literature review or prudent judgements.

While numbers of stakeholders was relatively small, the researchers were able to make judgements in terms of the proportions of parents experiencing these outcomes, as there was saturation sampling at play: there was no significant difference between individual parents in the outcomes they reported for themselves. Examples of comments that supported the first outcome were:

One parent said:

'Its been a constant battle with the authorities for X to find a placement, we're so thankful to Mencap and now have real confidence that X can find a job and build a life for himself'.

Another said:

'We never really thought Y could be independent and as we get older how she'd cope, but we're much more hopeful now for the future'.

Another parent said:

It's been so stressful trying to find opportunities for Z to continue his education, we were so relieved to find the supported internship, which has given him the opportunities he needed plus the skills and confidence he needs to make the next step'.

In the interviews, comments were also made:

'We're not worried about the future now and his dependence on us is reducing'
'She's got a job and that's a huge weight off our minds and we feel much more hopeful for her future'
'We have more peace of mind - we are less fearful about what will happen to our child where we're not here'
'We are thinking about retiring so if she gets a job then we can plan for retirement cos she will be independent'.

Support for the other outcomes was seen in further comments:

'He's out of the house!'
'There's less pressure on us'
'He's in a good place, he's much happier so we all are happier'
'Helps me manage home schooling my daughter, so more time for other thing's
'Had a lot of anger and frustration because of lockdown but that's all changed now'.

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Employers

Employers proved difficult to access even when a variety of means of engagement were offered, however with one exception (where a telephone interview was arranged) they completed the online survey, which proved helpful in understanding employer perspectives. In general, employers mentioned about giving young people a chance and put this in the context of other altruistic activity, but specifically two outcomes were identified that related to the employers in the context of the research:

Outcome	% respondents confirming impact	Total Employers experiencing outcome based on sample
Better public image of organisation with clients	36.4%	44
Recognition that people with learning disabilities do have something to offer their organisation and they have a positive effect on workplace culture	45.5%	55

Table 12 Outcomes for Employers

Interviews sought to gather information on deadweight (what would have happened without the programme), employers struggled to answer this question as most would not be otherwise engaged with an equivalent activity, hence estimates of deadweight were less clear. Similarly employers were asked about attribution (who else was involved in delivering the outcomes). However if proved difficult to discuss issues of duration, drop off and displacement and so other sources were used to support estimates.

Again, while sample sizes were small, the researchers were able to estimate the impact of these outcomes based saturation sampling and the fact that there were no significant differences between individual employers in what outcomes they reported.

Referral/Support Agencies/ Local Authority SEND Teams and National NHS/DWP and Local Government funders

Interviews were arranged with five referral agencies and local authorities. Despite repeated attempts, this was all that responded to the researchers and the Mencap staff's requests for interviews. The Local Authority responses focused on their investment in Education, Health and Care Plans and their expectations in meeting the plans as a result of learners undertaking the programme, which is not considered an outcome.

Referral agencies talked positively about the differences between Mencap's and other providers in providing more flexible and learner centred work placements and being flexible in enrolling learners with more complex needs. As a result of this, as in the forecast phase, the outcome the researchers identified was 'Reduced amount of resources spent on learners who are supported by Mencap'. This reduction in support time was a direct consequence of referral to Mencap's SI programme (reinforced through the interviews) and hence is a reasonable judgment to include.

The Department of Work and Pensions was the final specific stakeholder, whose outcomes were connected to the employment outcomes for learners and the consequential reduction in welfare spend.

In addition, through Government research, the researchers were also able to quantify the benefit to the NHS and Government from improvements in mental health as a result of people gaining employment from the programme. [15] As will be seen from the revised chain of events in Figure 3 above, the mental health outcome for learners was not considered to be part of any chain of events, but a final and important outcome in its own right. This decision was endorsed by the Sounding Board, when it had been discussed, and came across strongly during the discussions and interviews in the deep dive sites.

The stakeholder mapping did highlight the NHS as a material stakeholder, but it was impossible to find anyone from the NHS in any of the project locations who would speak to the researchers. Other potential stakeholders identified in the stakeholder mapping exercise were similarly not included as there was no evidence from learners, parents, staff or employers of them being involved in supporting the learners on the SI programme e.g. FE Colleges, . 63% of learners had no support other than their parents, and other recorded supports were mainly Local Authority SEND teams, some NHS services such as CAMH teams and referral partners.

The outcomes identified and included were:

National NHS, DWP and Local Government funders: 'Accrued benefits to the NHS and Local Government through reduced demand for mental health services'
Support and referral agencies and Local Authority SEND teams: Reduced amount of resources spent on learners who are supported by Mencap

7.3   Negative outcomes and completeness of the information

The learners, parents and employers were asked if there were any negative outcomes. For learners who were interviewed, this was phrased as 'was there anything about the programme you didn't like?', or similar wording used by the staff interviewers to elicit a response.

A small number of learners remained anxious about their prospects and having undertaken some work experience questioned how they would be able to meet the requirements of employers. A very small percentage reported that the programme was not what they had anticipated and didn't feel they had progressed, but these numbers for both reported issues were low, so this finding was not considered material.

In the forecast phase, a small number of parents said that they were 'disappointed' that their young person hadn't yet got a job, but then said they were going to help them keep looking and overall felt they were in a better position to secure an opportunity. This

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[15] 'Movement into Employment', 2017, Public Health England at
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772596/Movement_into_employment_report_v1.2.pdf

reflected the impact of Covid on the SI programme in 2020/21, as no employer placements were possible and the delivery of the programme was significantly affected. A very small minority of parents felt that more emotional support and better behaviour standards would have helped their child to thrive, but these had been largely resolved through direct one to one engagement between parents and staff during the programme. Since all but 4 of the learners achieved a positive destination in the evaluation phase, it is unlikely that a material number of parents would have experienced any negative outcomes.

Thus, there were no material negative outcomes for parents, and since saturation sampling approach had been used, the analysts were confident that there were no material negative outcomes in the whole parent cohort.

In the Personal Skills Survey analysis improvements were seen in all areas apart from a small increase in anxiety levels. In discussions it appeared this related to learners coming towards the end of the programme and reflected an understandable concern regarding their next steps.

Where there were examples of negative feedback from the interviews undertaken, these were largely individual comments and generally related to specific issues, which in many cases had been resolved. It was not possible to triangulate and validate any material negative expressions from the interviews and overall, it was judged that there were no negative outcomes that could be identified as material.

As reported above, in undertaking this paperwork analysis, the analyst was looking for any evidence of negative outcomes. It was striking that in the exit forms, there were no people who had not recorded progress of some sort against at least some outcomes. These could be small changes – e.g. there was one young woman who recorded little progress except small changes in practical skills of independent travel, some improvements in communication skills but negative changes in motivation and ambitions to work. Even with such a history, she still recorded a 15% increase in scores. She was the only person in the whole cohort for whom any of the outcome scores showed a reduction from the baseline.

Thus across the whole cohort, all individuals experienced some positive change. Not all learners experienced change across all outcomes, but the whole cohort was accounted for.

The 17 who dropped out of the programme early could not be contacted. Analysis of the enrolment and other paperwork for these individuals however showed a lack of engagement right from the start, and an indication that it was the wrong programme for them at this point in their lives.

Although it is debateable whether they would definitely have experienced negative outcomes, this decision is discussed further under 10.3 below in the sensitivity analysis as an area of risk, when the base case quantities have been reduced, which would take account of negative outcomes for this group.

Given the low levels of parent and employer surveys, it is not possible to categorically say there would be no negative outcomes experienced by the stakeholders that were not interviewed. Evidence from the interviews however showed the following:

- With both parents and employers, saturation sampling was used to ensure all outcomes were identified.
- All parents involved in the interviews and focus group reported positive outcomes, so it is reasonable that all parents experience at least one positive outcome.
- Negative outcomes were reported in the interviews (conducted mid way through the programme) around the ending of the programme and disappointment that their child had not got a job, however, by the time of the focus group towards the end of the programme, this was not reported. This reflected the high level of positive destinations recorded for the project as a whole.
- Employers recorded no negative outcomes at all.
- Employers provide work placements year on year, so there are unlikely to be material negative outcomes otherwise employers would not participate.
- Staff agreed with the overall outcomes for parents and employers, and they are in a position to have more consistent contact with these stakeholders throughout the programme.

7.4   Indicators

All the indicators used to measure progress are subjective indicators, based on self reports of learners and/or staff stating that something had changed for the individual learners.

The statements contained within the Personal Skills Survey and the scores assigned by learners are indicators of distance travelled towards outcomes, which were derived from the engagement phase with learners. According to staff feedback, the PSS survey questions appeared to broadly measure distance travelled for each outcome, but some of the questions could be worded slightly better. The researchers agreed to recommend changes to the wording before the next cohort starts.

It had been considered by the researchers that thresholds should be set below which outcomes would not be counted, either in terms of scores, or in terms of distance travelled measures. Thresholds were not used for the following reasons.

The ability of people with learning disabilities to discriminate change was shown to be limited, both in the research literature and in practice. People with learning difficulties are very susceptible to suggestion, and the Mencap staff could easily influence the results of the study if thresholds were known to be in use.

The challenges faced in all aspects of their lives shows that for people with learning difficulties and autism, even small changes are highly significant, and small changes are therefore relevant to what the SI Programme is trying to achieve.

In reality, the scoring of outcomes based on the statements in the paperwork was done independently of the staff, and was based on an actual report of something relevant to the outcome having changed.

During the forecast phase, the researchers had suggested using validated tools for measuring some of the outcomes identified e.g. WEMWBS and the Rosenberg Self esteem Scale. This may give some added robustness to the scoring process, but these tools still rely on self reports, and so their indicators are subjective.

The only area where more objective indicators could be available in future is with the Maths and English qualifications, as assessment of progress will be recorded in a more systematic manner in the YETI learner management system that should be fully implemented in 2023/2024 year.

Thus the approach to using indicators in the evaluation is to use subjective ones, but to triangulate different sources of evidence from learners and staff, and across interviews combined with a systematic review of the project paperwork.

8   Valuation

8.1   Approach to valuing outcomes

In SROI, outcomes are valued using 'financial proxies'. There is a wide range of types of financial proxies with varying degrees of robustness.   During the entirety of the research, the Global Value Exchange was offline and a timescale in terms of its reinstatement remains unclear. This is an online database of financial proxies that have been used in work undertaken by SROI practitioners, which includes work that has not been part of an assured report.

As outlined in the literature review, identification of suitable financial proxies used in other SROI reports identified few relevant and current resources upon which to value the outcomes that were identified through the research.

Where no other alternative was available the researchers reviewed the previously revealed preference financial proxies developed in the Forecast Phase. This is a well-known method of valuing intangibles but is a variable technique subject to more judgment than other methods. It rests on finding an equivalence between a product/service for which we know there is a commercial market value or price and applying them to represent the outcomes from projects. For example, for learners improving their problem-solving skills, the value of an online problem-solving course was identified. Similarly in respect of learners improving their interview skills an equivalent cost of a programme to develop personal skills were sourced.

In some other SROI studies, valuations have been derived from academically robust work on the 'Subjective Well-Being Valuation' method, using as benchmarking the Life Satisfaction

Scores derived from the British Household Panel Survey dataset[16] as a benchmark. This approach has been included in recent HMT Green Books, etc., as a recommended process for valuing intangibles. Unfortunately, the Well-Being Valuation method has not been applied to all areas of activity, but where it has, the financial proxies derived from this work have been used in the SI value map.[17]

The research found some sources of reliable cost benefit valuation related to the impact of employment and again these sources were used and referenced accordingly, these were used for example to cost saving to the state of an individual becoming employed was used to reflect the accrued benefit to National Government, LAs and the NHS from a Government publication - Movement into Employment: Return on Investment Tool[18]

For the learner cohort the researchers had the benefit of engaging with both the sounding board and critically the Deep Dive sites to develop and agree financial proxies, particularly through the values game, but also by sharing and discussing the sources. Unfortunately due to limited access this was not possible with other stakeholders, so financial proxies were selected that most accurately portrayed the impact and outcomes described by the participants.

8.2   The Values Game

Given the lack of suitable proxies and to improve on the relevance of the proxies used in the forecast phase and to gain practical and first-hand feedback on the relative value of the outcomes, it was decided to run the Values Game:

The Value Game is a simple, flexible method for valuation. It is a way of working with service users to find a (financial) proxy for the value of the outcomes they experience from activities, or even the value of the whole service to them. It is a mixture of techniques like participatory impact assessment, choice modelling (or discrete choice experiments) and contingent valuation. Social Value UK[19]

The Values Game has been successfully deployed in many circumstances where no reliable financial proxies exist and has the benefit of the insight and involvement of the actual participants in developing valuations that are meaningful to them

The guidance outlined above was used to develop the approach and methodology adopted by the researchers in undertaking the Values Game with the learners. However, given the potential methodological challenges of undertaking this process with people with learning disabilities, a pilot exercise was undertaken with the Sounding Board in December 2021 to

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[16] For more information see HMT/DWP, 2011 'Valuation techniques for Social Cost Benefit Analysis' at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/209107/greenbook_valuationtechniques.pdf

[17] See for example the HACT UK Social Value Bank database at https://www.hact.org.uk/hact-value which is cited as a reference in the accompanying Value Map to this report.

[18] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772596/Movement_into_employment_report_v1.2.pdf

[19] Value Game A method for involving customers in valuing outcomes Peter Scholten, February 2019

gain feedback on how the Values Game could be delivered and ensure that the learners could engage with the process effectively. The ex-learners on the group were able to discuss and agree values for different outcomes, and they agreed the values game was a good way to encourage learners to give valuations. Following this pilot, the learning was used to develop a suitable methodology and the Values Game was undertaken at the two deep dive sites (Worcester and Northampton) in March 2022.

A detailed summary of the activity is shown in Appendix F. Following some initial introductions (it was helpful conducting the activity at the two deep dive sites as some familiarity between learners and researchers had already been made) and ice breakers undertaken then the outline of the process was explained. Firstly, learners were asked to write down outcomes they'd experienced as a result of the programme, post it notes were used for each learner with help and guidance where needed. When complete, the pot it notes were discussed and grouped to provide common themes and a consolidated list of outcomes established. Learners were then asked to develop pictures to represent these outcomes, a set of resources were provided (magazines, pictures and art materials) and learner worked in small groups to develop their pictures. Once complete learners were given several self-adhesive stars and asked to attach them to the pictures in terms of the importance of the outcomes to them Learners were told they could place as many stars as they wished on any outcome), at the conclusion of this, a set of prioritised outcomes was established. Following this, learners were asked as a group to develop a birthday wish list with a range of gifts and relative financial values, once a set of around 8-10 had been agreed again learners were asked to find or develop pictures to represent these items and find and agree current pricing for their gift items. Finally, the birthday wish list pictures were arranged in a line in ascending price, learners were then asked to please their outcome pictures relative to their perceived value compared to their birthday wish list, this created considerable debate re the relative value of the outcomes but following this, a consensus was reached. Hence the perceived outcome values were anchored against commercial values of the selected commodities and were then used to develop new proxies. The two groups came up with varying outcomes – where they were the same, values were averaged, or used independently where they differed. The outcome of this process was very helpful with learners fully and enthusiastically engaging with the process – a record of the Values Game is shown at Appendix F.

Values established from the Values Game exercise were:

Outcome	Value Worcester	Value Northampton	Final Adopted Value
Improving mathematics skills	£25		£25
Improving English skills	£160		£160
Increased Customer service skills		£120	£120
Improving personal resilience	£250		£250
Improving prioritisation/ planning	£375		£375
Co-operation and teamwork skills	£600	£160	£380
Improving self confidence	£750	£2125	£1438
Improving work skills	£1050	£1167	£1109
Developing friendships		£675	£675
Developing online safety		£1333	£1333

Outcome	Value Worcester	Value Northampton	Final Adopted Value
Increasing independence	£1650	£3375	£2513
Improving communication skills	£2100		£2100
Tolerance and inclusivity	£2550		£2550
Having more fun in their life		£2750	£2750

Table 15 Proxies from Values Game

By looking at the relative value of outcomes to learners based on the debate and consideration by the learners in placing and ranking these outcomes, it helped the researchers understand how the learners made judgements re the importance and value they placed on the outcomes being considered and helped in applying a relative weighting to the outcomes.

While the values game exercise provided very useful insight into outcomes experienced by the learners it was not possible to include all the framework outcomes given the constraints of time and capacity - mainly the learners' capacity to focus and concentrate for long periods of time. Hence as outlined other sources were used to provide the valuation for outcomes not included within the Values Game activity.

8.3   Anchoring values

To understand the relationships between value and outcomes in relation to learners' personal outcomes, the researchers undertook a process of anchoring[20]. This approach utilises an established monitory value upon which other outcomes can have monitory values assigned based on their relative rank. To undertake this the outcomes from the PSS survey were used and the established valuation based on a Subjective Well-Being valuation from the HACT Social Value Bank for the outcome 'Being Active in Social Group' which has a valuation of £1728 in the latest version of the value bank. This was used as it was a midway ranked outcome, but was judged to be the same as the framework outcome of 'Learners increase their personal networks'.

Outcome	Percentage change from PSS scores	Anchor Value	Ratio relative to anchor	Monitory valuation based on anchor	Rank	Financial proxies used in the Value Map	Rank
Learners improve their problem-solving skills	2.00%		0.53	£966.46	21	£155	20
Learners improve their decision-making skills	5.75%		1.53	£2726.46	11	£375	18
Learners learn improved resilience and coping skills	5.25%		1.4	£2494.80	12	£250	19
Learners learn new practical skills of budgeting and travelling to support independence	8.50%		2.27	£4045.14	5	£1040	13
Learners become more generally independent	4.25%		1.13	£2013.67	12	£2513	3
Learners improve their skills to find work	12.50%		3.33	£5940.00	2	£1109	14

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[20] Standard on applying Principle 3: Value the things that matter Social Value International

Outcome	Percentage change from PSS scores	Anchor Value	Ratio relative to anchor	Monitory valuation based on anchor	Rank	Financial proxies used in the Value Map	Rank
learners improve their literacy and numeracy	8.13%		2.168	£3866.94	8	£1440	10
Learners improve their qualifications	N/A				13	£1996.80	5
Learners acquire more aspirations and ambitions to work	8.13%		2.168	£3866.94	8	£3360	1
Improved employability skills	15.25%		4.06	£7234.92	1	£1150	12
Learners improve their interview skills	13.75%		1.0	£1782	15	£50	21
Learners improve their self presentation skills	4.00%		1.07	1906.74	14	£50	21
Learners have increased motivation to become employed	3.75%		1.0	£1782	15	£1250	11
Value difference and become more tolerant	N/A						
Learners learn new skills for communicating with others at work	11.75%		3.13	£5577.66	4	£1920	6
Learners adopt more professional standards of behaviour	5.75%		1.53	£2726.46	10	£946	15
Learners are better at team working	12.00%		3.2	£5702.40	3	£380	17
Learners improve their communication skills	8.25%		2.2	£3920.40	7	£2100	4
Leaners learn new skills for communicating with others outside of work	8.50%		2.27	£4045.14	5	£1920	6
Learners increase their personal networks	3.75%	£1782	1.0	£1782	15	£1782	7
Learners improve their relationships	1.50%		0.4	£712.8	20	£675	16
Learners improve their self esteem	2.75%		0.73	£1300.86	19	£1560	8
Learners improve their confidence	6.00%		1.6	£2851.20	8	£2851.20	9
Learners improve their mental health	2.75%		0.79	£1306.80	18	£2750	2

Table 13 Valuation weighting using Anchors

The values determined through the Values Game are highlighted in red in the above rankings.

The researchers also considered the correlation of the rankings based on the two approaches and specifically between the anchoring based on the PSS and the outcomes of valuation based on the values game exercise. Unfortunately, there was little correlation seen in the relative order of ranking of valuations between the two approaches. The PSS reflects perceptions of confidence or capability rather than relative value and while using the relative change in these perception scores makes this more relevant to the programme's impact, the issue that they don't directly reflect prioritisation remains. In the values game however learners were asked directly to rank the relative outcomes in terms of the importance to them. Further as outlined previously the initial PSS scores were higher than anticipated and hence the level of change between the initial and final scores was often small.

The process of anchoring against the perceptions of learners based on an anchored value from the HACT social value bank in most cases (with one exception) provided higher valuations that those chosen via revealed preference or from the Values Game exercises, which were higher (and in some cases significantly higher). The conservative approach therefore was to use the revealed preference proxies as they were lower and would reduce the risk over claiming.

Using these revealed preference proxies led to some lower values of intermediate outcomes in the chain of events, especially ones in the chains which end in 'Learners have increased motivation to become employed' and 'Learners improve their communication skills'. These outcomes were not specifically covered in the Values Game, but were mentioned by learners in the interviews.

The final choice was made to use the values reported during the Values Game, and so reflect the relative importance of the outcome to the stakeholder, where these outcomes were valued in the Values Game. If the outcome was not highlighted in the Values Game, the values from original revealed preference sources were used. The value from the anchoring exercise however was used for one of the outcomes: 'Learners improve their confidence'. The reason for this is that in all but one case, [21] the financial proxy for the outcomes at the end of each chain of events (outcomes) has the highest value as they are generally ranked as being the most important to the learners, so it was felt that the outcome of improved self confidence was under valued, particularly since it came across very strongly in the paperwork analysis, the interviews and at Sounding Board meetings that this was an important outcome.

8.4   Parents' values

Anchoring was also used for parent's outcomes. Parents were not involved in a Values Game, primarily because it was difficult to get them involved in the research at all, and the focus in interviews was more on getting them to discuss their outcomes and give views on deductions to avoid overclaiming. Some of the interviews however did try to establish some ranking of the importance of outcomes in order to guide valuation choices. This showed that the most important outcome was 'More hope for the future'.

During the interviews with parents, they reported how important the Supported Employment programme had been for them and how much confidence and hope for the future it had given them. They reported being worried about what would happen to their child if they were unable to support them as they grew older, and how lack of external support options for their child had drained their optimism and confidence in the future.

In the focus group, parents discussed at length the impact the programme had had on their optimism and hopes for the future or their child. Many shared stories of previous frustration and anxiety trying to find suitable opportunities for their child to build their skills and

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[21] This was the value of the outcome 'Learners improve their relationships'. This had been confirmed as the end outcome in the chain, but the overall number of learners reporting this outcome was a lot lower than the other end outcomes, and since the outcome had been valued in the Values Game at a lower level, it was decided that this outcome was less important than others, and its value should be lower.

independence within a supportive environment and were worried about what the future might bring as they mature into adulthood. The overall majority of parents were far more confident in their child's future as a result of their engagement with the SI programme. This represented a great relief from their previous worry and concerns about their child's future and them developing an independent lifestyle.

In view of the high importance placed on this outcome, and the relatively low valuations considered during the forecast phase, which were based on revealed preference proxies, a proxy from the HACT database was used. The parent's outcomes were anchored by the value in the HACT database for 'high level of confidence for the future', which was judged to be equivalent to the parents' outcome expressed as 'More hope for the future'. The HACT valuaion captures the value of an adult not having issues with their confidence levels. The key variable of interest uses a general health survey question from Understanding Society, where respondents must answer a question about their change in confidence levels.

This value was considered equivalent to the level of hope increase expressed by parents during interviews and the focus groups. Because it was a high value proxy, it was varied in the sensitivity analysis by reducing the proxy value by 50%. This was found not to be a sensitive assumption, so the full value of the HACT proxy remained in the value map calculation to reflect the importance parents placed on this outcome.

8.5   Other stakeholders' values

Value to the support agencies, referral agencies and LA SEND teams was calculated as the notional salary cost savings as a result of Mencap support, which was indicated in the interviews as being the most appropriate way to value the reduction in support needed from their agency because learners were on the Mencap programme.

The proxy used to value the National DWP, NHS and Local Government stakeholder was derived from a report examining the accrued value in mental health improvement from the transition between unemployment and employment. [22] This was considered relevant as the mental health improvement outcome for learners was reported to be important and an outcome in its own right.

The value accrues to:

DWP	£11,410
Local Authority	£535
NHS	£85
Total	£12,030 reduced to £12,000 in the value map.

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[22] 'Moving into employment: Return on Investment Tool', 2017, Public Health England at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/772596/ Movement_into_employment_report_v1.2.pdf

Thus the vast amount of the gain is in reduced benefit costs to the exchequer from a movement into employment, and for the duration of one year in employment. Only a small proportion relates to mental health service reduction.

This raises the question of displacement. However, the movement of people with moderate learning disabilities into employment is so low that they are unlikely to be a material factor in job displacement for other job seekers. As the economy continues to grow following Covid restrictions then displacement becomes even less of an issue.

The financial proxies, amounts and sources/references are shown in the accompanying Excel spreadsheet, which contains the Value Map of the evaluation SROI.

9   Adjustments to establish impact

Not all the value created by the SI programme has been generated by Mencap alone, so SROI uses adjustments to take account of the key sources of influence on the value that comes from outside Mencap. These are:

- **Deadweight**: what would have happened anyway without the intervention of Mencap's SI programme.
- **Attribution**: who else or what trends are there that influence the achievement of outcomes
- **Displacement**: are outcomes for the target group achieved at the expense of other stakeholders.

The above are expressed in the Value Map as a percentage to be deducted from the value of each outcome. Where possible, the percentage applied should come from research, but in many cases the only research evidence that can be found is generally about deadweight. Even here, as reported in the Literature Review in Appendix A, few statistics are available to help inform values for these items.

A summary of the deductions percentages are set out in Appendix K.

9.1   Deadweight

Through the interviews with stakeholders, we sought estimates from each person of deadweight to help determine what may have happened without the programme. This helped support the choices of deadweight values applied to the impact valuations.

- For learners 5.1% was used for deadweight. This reflects the general level of employment for people with learning disabilities according to latest data.[23] The same figure was used for employers on the basis this could be their baseline relative to employment of people with learning disabilities.

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[23] https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/research-and-statistics/employment-research-and-statistics

- It was assumed that people with a learning disability would not experience personal development either unless they engaged with the Supported Internship programme, hence the same deadweight figure was used for personal and employment outcomes. Parents had reported the huge struggles they have had in order to get their child onto this programme, and how other programme options were severely restricted.
- For parents the research interview scripts contained a question about deadweight, and parents were asked what other options the learner could have pursued. The individual responses were reviewed and as a result an estimate of 4% deadweight was adopted.
- The level general employment of people with learning disabilities was taken to reflect what might have happened anyway for employers i.e. their likelihood of taking someone on work placement.
- Similarly for the National DWP, NHS and Local Government funder stakeholder, the bulk of the impact is on employment benefits accruing to the exchequer/DWP, so the general level of employment for people with learning disabilities is a relevant deadweight figure.
- For support agencies/referral partners/Local Authority SEND teams, the percentage of learners who reported receiving continuing help from support agencies was used to estimate deadweight as 7%, based on feedback in the interviews in respect of the relative role of support agencies.

9.2   Displacement

The researchers considered if through the delivery of the programme other outcomes might be displaced e.g. as a result of learners entering employment, others might not get the opportunities afforded to the learners. It was concluded that given the significant barriers to progress that people with learning disabilities face, the impact on the employment market as a whole was minimal, hence it was concluded that there was no displacement as a result of the programme.

9.3   Attribution

In terms of attribution, in undertaking interviews, stakeholders were asked who else had contributed to the outcomes they had experienced:

- In the case of learners taking the feedback from learners into account based on the interviews and information contributed by parents and staff, it was estimated that 9% of outcomes could be attributed to other sources.
- For parents again based on the estimates given during interviews, this was put higher at 15% which could reflect their wider support networks than their children. Using 15% for learners made no material difference to the ratio, so the percentage used for both parents and learners was kept as that reported in the interviews.
- For employers they did not report attribution to anyone, apart from directly as a result of the programme e.g. Mencap caseworkers were quoted as a significant contribution, but they are part of the programme so not counted.
- For the National DWP, NHS and Local Government funder stakeholder
- For support agencies/referral partners/Local Authority SEND teams, no attribution was reported during the interviews.

- Attribution was varied in the sensitivity analysis and was not found to be a sensitive assumption.

The adjustments to avoid overclaiming and how the percentages were derived are shown in the accompanying excel spreadsheet, which contains the Value Map of the forecast SROI.

9.4 Summary table of adjustments

Stakeholder	Deadweight	Displacement	Attribution
Learners	5.1%	0%	9%
Parents	4%	0%	15%
Employers	5.1%	0%	0%
National/Local Government	5.1%	0%	0%
Support agencies	7%	0%	0%

Table 15 Summary Table Adjustments

9.5 Duration and drop off of outcomes

Some outcomes are only experienced while the activity is on-going, while some endure well into the future. This is based on a common sense understanding of how change is created in people, but unfortunately little research evidence has been brought forward to establish how long personal outcomes could be expected to endure. Where evidence from longitudinal tracking by Mencap was not available, a maximum duration of three years was adopted (which included the year of the activity). In some cases (e.g. in the case of HACT Value Bank valuations) where values are expressed as a total impact value, a one year duration was adopted, to avoid over claiming.

Likewise, drop off is an estimate, as research evidence does not provide specific guidance. It is common sense that as time goes on, without the benefit of on-going activity, the level of effectiveness of the outcome will be reduced.

The estimates for duration were made by the learners, in response to the specific question about duration.

Outcome for learners	Duration in years	Justification
Learners improve their problem-solving skills	3	Learner and parental feedback from interview question 'What do you think you will do next'
Learners improve their decision-making skills	3	Learner and parental feedback from interview question 'What do you think you will do next'
Learners learn improved resilience and coping skills	3	Learner and parental feedback from interview question 'What do you think you will do next'
Learners learn new practical skills of money management to support better life choices	3	Feedback from former learners
Learners become more generally independent	3	Learner and parental feedback from interview question 'What do you think you will do next'

Learners improve their skills to find work	2	Staff experience of learners and progression
learners improve their literacy and numeracy	3	Prior evidence, https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/math/cresource/q2/p04/
Learners improve their qualifications	3	Prior evidence, https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/math/cresource/q2/p04/
Learners acquire more aspirations and ambitions to work	1	HACT source duration included
Improved employability skills	2	Staff experience of learners and progression
Learners improve their interview skills	2	Staff experience of learners and progression
Learners improve their self presentation skills	3	Learner and parental feedback from interview question 'What do you think you will do next'
Learners have increased motivation to become employed	2	Staff experience of learners and progression
Value difference and become more tolerant	N/A	No evidence
Learners learn new skills for communicating with others at work	3	Employer feedback
Learners adopt more professional standards of behaviour	3	Employer feedback
Learners are better at team working	3	Employer feedback
Learners improve their communication skills	3	Employer feedback
Learners learn new skills for communicating with others outside of work	3	Learner and parental feedback from interview question 'What do you think you will do next'
Learners increase their personal networks	3	Learner and parental feedback from interview question 'What do you think you will do next'
Learners improve their relationships	1	HACT source duration included
Learners improve their self esteem	3	Feedback from former and current learners from interview question 'What do you think you will do next'
Learners improve their confidence	3	Feedback from former and current learners from interview question 'What do you think you will do next'
Learners improve their mental health	3	Feedback from former and current learners from interview question 'What do you think you will do next'

Table 16 Duration of learner outcomes

For parents and employers, their average estimates of duration were reported to be 2 years for all outcomes except the one for parents of 'More hope for the future'. It was felt that this outcome possibly might not last beyond the programme, although parents reported a huge increase in their level of hope for the future.

National data is not routinely published on learner retention, however following publication of limited data in FE Week,[24] the researchers undertook follow up queries with the authors to understand their conclusions. This was based on a freedom of information request to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Comparing numbers of learners who left programmes to go into positive destinations and numbers in employment 12 months later, it was

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[24] https://feweek.co.uk/just-1-in-4-send-students-in-work-a-year-after-supported-internship-ends/

apparent in this study that only 25% were in employment a year later.   Hence 25% was adopted as a prudent rate for drop off from employment outcomes

Mencap undertake follow ups with learners at two-, six- and nine-month durations. The researchers had access during the forecast to the results from month follow ups with 21 learners but this data was insufficiently detailed to be relied upon and was given anonymously, so could not be compared with the forecast data on individuals. It did however support the proposition that duration of outcomes was beyond one year.

The assignment of 3 years' duration to many of the outcomes is supported by a number of sources:

- Research that shows having a job as an adult with a learning disability is linked to improved socio-economic status 6-7 years later. [25] This appears to be a unique piece of research, as it suggests an answer to the question of duration of employment outcomes. Despite an extensive trawl of literature, there is nothing else that has addressed this issue, which one researcher attributed to the short follow up evaluation practices of funders/government et al. [26]

- The Mencap SI programme uses the techniques of systematic instruction, based on the principles of applied behavioural analysis. The effectiveness of this approach to teaching new skills, particularly in Maths and in communications has a significant evidence base, suggesting that once skills are learnt through this process, they are much more likely to be retained. [27]

- The results of the interviews and the collection of narrative quotes from the paperwork analysis shows that the outcomes highlighted in this study are significant for learners and their parents. Parents reported in the interviews and the focus group that the impact of the programme on their son or daughter had been highly significant, and in some cases, remarkable, and they expected their progress to be maintained in future. Parents are obviously a source of help to learners in maintaining the progress they made on the project once they have left.

- The researchers were given data from the two month follow ups from the evaluation cohort. Of the total of 144 learners who completed the programme, 59 were followed up, making 41% of the total cohort. Of these, 3 individuals had dropped out of their positive destination, but another 3 had found work in the 2 months since leaving. The drop off rate at the 2-month stage was calculated to be 5%. This appears to be a significantly lower drop off rate than reported elsewhere in the literature, suggesting that Mencap's SI programme has made a long-term difference.

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[25] Honey et al 2014 reported at https://www.everyonecanwork.org.au/resources/evidence/1-what-are-the-outcomes-of-open-employment-for-people-with-intellectual-disability/
[26] Thomas et al, 2021, 'Evidence-based job retention interventions for people with disabilities: A narrative literature review', at https://content.iospress.com/articles/journal-of-vocational-rehabilitation/jvr201122
[27] https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/math/cresource/q2/p04/

- Information was provided for the 2020/2021 cohort at the 6 month stage follow up. This was limited, covering only 21 learners, or 16% of the cohort. Of these, 18 ex-learners, or 85%, were still in a positive destination including in employment.

- The ex-learners on the Sounding Board gave their own stories of how they had been able to retain their outcomes from the SI programme. All of them had been away from the SI programme for more than 3 years.

- The Mencap project staff were asked to give their views about retention of personal and employment outcomes. They agreed that 3 years was a reasonable judgement for duration of outcomes. The employer placements in each project tended to be long term, and relationships had built up with placement providers over the years. A number of the employers offered multiple placements, and therefore staff had regular contact with many employers and kept up to date anecdotally with how ex-learners were doing.

161 learners were recruited to the 2021/2022 cohort but 17 dropped out before the end of the programme. As these learners could be expected not to experience personal outcomes, the resulting percentage of 11% was used for the drop off for personal outcomes. The same value was used for parents, employers and referral agencies in the absence of any research or leads from the interviews, and given the relationship between learners and the other stakeholders.

Since the duration was an assumption based on judgement from all the available evidence and engagement processes, it was varied in the sensitivity analysis. This showed that reducing all outcome durations to one year, i.e. restricting duration to the period of the activity, was a sensitive assumption as it reduced the ratio by 38%. However, reducing outcomes durations to 2 years was not sensitive. The judgement was that there was sufficient evidence from the learners, staff and parents that personal outcomes would last far beyond the programme and there is some evidence that employment outcomes will last for 3 years, at a drop off rate of 25% as per the evidence.

10   Results

10.1   Inputs

Mencap's management accountant provided the actual costs applied to different cost centres for the SI programme in the 2021/2022 year. The management overheads were apportioned on the basis of the staffing relative to all Mencap programmes. The input figure was:

Item	Cost
Management overheads	£654,392.27
Project staffing	£1,355,104.26
Non-payroll overheads	£152,819.45
Total costs	£2,162,316

Table 17 Inputs for 2021/2022

The researchers considered any additional input values which contributed to the programme. For example, employers provide support and guidance to learners, however there was no evidence to suggest this was an additional direct costs hence was provided at marginal cost to the employer, plus similarly no account was taken of any economic activity contributed by the learner on behalf of the employer, as these are not evaluated, taken together it was considered these costs were negligible. Similarly, the researcher considered the contribution of the costs to the programme of the Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP). In this case, these costs would have applied irrespective of their assignment to the SI programme

The unit cost per learner of £15,016 is significantly higher than the preceding year (2020/2021 of £12,780). If the Project SEARCH unit cost quoted in 2012 of £10,500 per learner was uprated to today's value, it would be £13,755.[28] The Project SEARCH model however is not directly comparable in terms of the structure of the two programmes. For example, it delivers programmes through recruiting one employer to offer a whole cohort of work placements, so delivery is on one site only, not spread across individual employers, thus keeping staff, travel and training costs down.

The funding formula for Mencap's Supported Interns is complex and varies from individual to individual given their differing needs and relative support costs, so the more reliable figure is to use the actual costs of delivering the SI programme. The ESFA provide a core allowance per learner, which takes into account the area deprivation and other factors, then there is a sum for the additional needs of the learner plus there are top up allowances contributed by each Local Authority. This latter sum varies greatly between areas.

In comparison to the forecast due to the changes made in the data collection and increased access to stakeholders, both sample sizes and evidence were more consistently captured in the evaluation phases of the research. This provided better evidence on which to base the SROI calculation and greater precision with respect to the impact generated

The completion of the values game with learners gave greater insight with respect to their own perceptions of value with respect to the outcomes generated by the programme. However due to the absence of assured proxy data care was necessary to ensure valuations were realistic.

10.2 SROI Ratio result

The SROI ratio was found to be 3.06, that is to say, for every £1 invested in the SI programme, it returned £3.08 in value. The summary figures are;

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[28] Using the Bank of England inflation calculator at https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator

Item	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Total
Present value of each year	4,262,156	1,893,772	929,375	7,085,303
Total Present Value (PV) discounted by 3.5% pa		1,829,732	867,581	6,959,469
Net Present Value (PV minus the investment)				4,797,153
Social Return (Value per amount invested)				3.22

Table 18 Valuation of the SI programme for 2020/2021

The accompanying Excel spreadsheet of the Value Map is too big to be usefully inserted into this report, so the file should be read separately.

10.3   Sensitivity analysis and areas of risk

The ratio above has been produced through making a wide range of assumptions and estimates, so the main assumptions need to be varied, and the impact on the ratio assessed:

Scenarios	SROI Ratio	Percentage change	Sensitive?
Base case	3.22		
Increase quantities by 20%	3.86	19.88%	Yes
Increase quantities by 50%	4.83	50.00%	Yes
Reduce quantities by 20%	2.57	-20.19%	Yes
Reduce quantities by 50%	1.61	-50.00%	Yes
Increase attribution to 15% for all outcomes	3.11	-3.42%	No
Increase duration to 3 years for all	4.94	53.42%	Yes
Change duration to 2 years for all outcomes	2.82	-12.42%	No
Reduce employment outcomes to 2 years	3.15	-2.17%	No
Decrease duration to 1 year for all	1.97	-38.82%	Yes
Increase drop off for all outcomes to 20%	3.10	-3.73%	No
Reduce proxy values by 30%	2.30	-28.57%	Yes
Reduce the parent hope for the future outcomes by 50%	2.97	-7.76%	No
Increase deadweight to 15%	2.88	-10.56%	No
Remove the National Government/NHS/LA outcome	2.92	-9.32%	No
Adopt different valuation approach for learner personal outcomes – anchoring as outlined previously	4.28	32.92%	Yes

Table 19 Results of the sensitivity analysis

On the basis of this, the most sensitive assumptions are duration of the outcome, proxy values and quantities. Drop off has a relatively small impact on the ratio as does attribution and deadweight. A significant variation would be 15% or more beyond the base case in the judgement of the researchers.

Parent and employers' outcomes have generally been given a duration of 2 years, most of the learners outcomes have been assumed to last 3 years, apart from a few which are clearly dependent on engagement with the SI Programme. Until Mencap has secured better

data through its longer term follow up of learners, it is not possible to be certain about duration. The learners' views however, expressed through interviews, backed up by parental and staff interviews and the parent focus group, provide evidence of long lasting impact in terms of personal outcomes.

Impact of changes of quantities of outcomes are also sensitive, and these were tested at the 20% and 50% level, the latter significantly affecting the resultant ratio. Given the greater engagement and sample sizes of learners in this phase of the research, the risks associated with this factor are less than the forecast. The ratio however is still likely to be an underestimate of actual value, rather than an overestimate, due to the continued effect of missing forms on which some of the analysis rests. It is likely that if all forms were complete, more personal outcomes would be found, and hence value would be higher.

This is notwithstanding the decision not to use thresholds in measuring achievement of personal outcomes. The judgement, supported by the experience of the Mencap staff and the Sounding Board, is that even small changes are important to people with learning disabilities, and in the context of learners' challenges, small changes are highly significant, far more so than for a cohort that does not have a learning disability. The researchers spent a lot of time looking at the individual Mencap forms for evidence that learner behaviour had changed, and using this as evidence of personal outcomes.

Proxy values were mainly determined by the values game and so generated by learners, benchmarked against the PSS scores so that the financial proxies used corresponded broadly to the PSS weightings. The two high financial proxies, for National NHS/Government and parent's more hope for the future were varied. The first comes directly from credible research, but if this proxy is removed altogether, then the resulting ratio is only reduced to 2.92, so does not significantly affect the result. If the second parent proxy is halved in vale, the impact on the ratio is slight, reducing it to 2.92.

The other area of risk is the relatively small sample size of parents, employers and support agencies. The interviews showed quite clearly that many parents were under great stress in managing their daily lives, especially if their son or daughter was not an independent traveller, so it is not surprising that they failed to respond to direct approaches by the researchers. Staff in the deep dive projects made contact with parents to participate, and most were willing to be interviewed, but it proved very difficult to get them to follow through, despite repeated efforts. The focus group however, held during the end of term celebration event, was well attended, and stimulated a lot of discussion, so in the view of the researcher holding the focus group, this more than made up for lack of individual interviews. The saturation sampling approach also suggested that outcomes were not overlooked. Mencap has been recommended to engage more with parents in future.

The interesting finding is the share of value accrued by parents. This does fit however with the findings from the parent interviews and focus group, and the extent of parent's support for Mencap's programme. It also reflects the fact that there is very little in the way of alternative employment support for this group.

The small sample size of employers was anticipated at the start of the research, as it is common to find it difficult to engage employers in this type of discussion. Many attempts were made to interview employers, but despite direct contact from staff, only small numbers responded. This is an area of risk, but the mitigation adopted was to only include the 2 employer outcomes mentioned by half the employers surveyed. Again, Mencap has been recommended to engage more with employers in future, to discuss their outcomes.

Support agencies appear still to be suffering the effects of the Covid pandemic, and the researcher found it difficult to contact individual staff who had knowledge of the Mencap SI learners. Again, Mencap staff helped to facilitate this, but this was not enough to gain enough of the stakeholder group to interview or survey. Again however, those who did respond reported very similar issues and outcomes, so in the judgement of the researcher, saturation had been reached.

Some care is necessary however where there were relatively small sample sizes in terms of engagement and hence potential for inaccuracy. This was particularly the case for Employers and Support Agencies, and there is a greater risk of the quantities being overestimated. If these quantities are varied downwards by 25%, then the ratio changes to 3.11, so lack of sample size for these two stakeholder groups might not be so material. It is recommended that Mencap do more survey work in future with these stakeholders, to establish a more robust view.

Thus the range of social return ratios varies between 1.61 and 4.83. This is quite a high range, but the lower figure reflects a huge reduction in quantities for learner outcomes, which is not considered a credible scenario.

Easy Read reports have been prepared for learners, parents, employers and support agencies as a follow up method to support future engagement of these stakeholders.

The ratio results presented here are consistent with the much earlier SROI studies of supported employment, as discussed in the Literature Review (see page 75).

10.4   Stakeholders' share of value
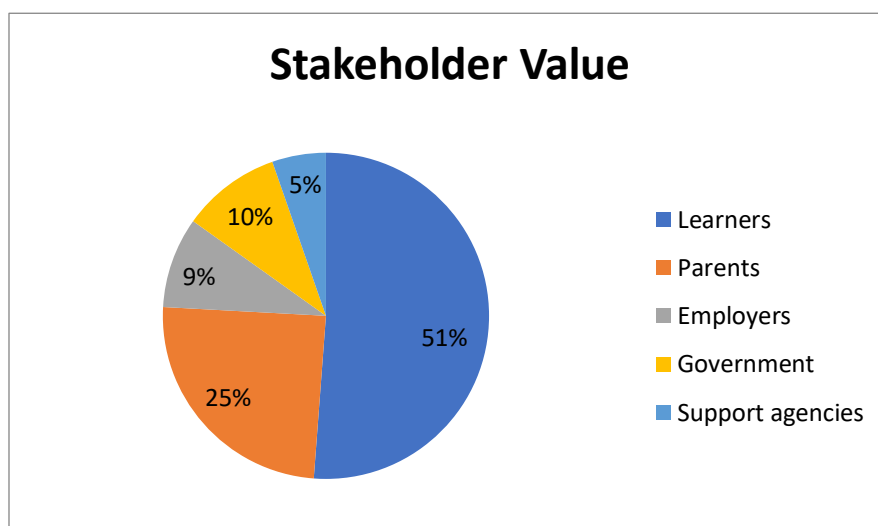
Fig 5 Share of value by stakeholder

10.5   Materiality considerations

The fourth Social Value Principle is 'Only include what is material'. Materiality decisions focus the analysis on the most important things. Materiality needs to be considered so that the organisation can work towards optimising their social value and allocating resources into outcomes that are the most important (i.e. those that are material).

'Materiality' is a concept used in SROI to help make judgements about what is important and relevant enough to be valued and included in the account. Materiality is based on two 'filters':

- Relevance i.e. is the activity intended to create the outcomes that are found, and
- Significance i.e. are the outcomes reported to be important for the stakeholder.

During the deep dive visits learners were asked to rank the outcomes via use of post it notes to help inform the relative importance of these outcomes to them (see Appendix E). From this it was clear that the ranking reflected the order of the chain of events with higher level outcomes seen as more important, this was also reflected in the values game exercise

Due to the changes made in the date collection process for the evaluation phase of the research data for all but one outcome could be captured (Value Difference and become more tolerant). For some outcomes identified in the forecast sufficient evidence for their impact could not be identified (e.g. related to diet and lifestyle), therefore they were judged to be not material for this programme.

In some (but not all) SROI studies, employment outcomes are considered as being 100% displaced, and the DWP are not included as a stakeholder as the impact on them of a relatively small proportion of claimants reducing their benefit claims is immaterial.

However, the employment outcomes are material for Mencap's SI programme. It is the organisation's goal to help learners achieve employment outcomes therefore these outcomes are relevant. The evidence collected shows that the gaining of employment is very important for both learners and their parents.

Secondly, the apparent low national rates of employment outcomes for people with moderate to severe learning disabilities, and the clear policy significance placed on SI as a method [29] for helping this client group into employment, all suggest that SI outcomes are material for the DWP. On this basis, benefits reduction outcomes for the DWP were included in the valuation.

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[29] And at time of writing, almost the only programme available for this group

11   Verification

Verification of the results of this analysis has been undertaken using a number of approaches.

The Sounding Board has been engaged at each stage of the research to review assumptions and get guidance on the process and interim findings. This has been an active and recursive processes throughout the research process and hence has helped provide assurance in respect of the internal understanding and judgements made.

It was not possible to feedback to each parent and learner directly as they had disengaged from the programme by the completion of the research. However, the researchers undertook feedback and verification sessions with the Sounding Board (including 4 former learners and 6 project staff) and the commissioners to discuss and review the findings and underlying assumptions.

A verification focus group was also held with 13 parents at the 'end of term' celebration event. Parents went to a separate room in the hotel where the event was being held and went through again what their outcomes had been, and agreed the learner's chain of events put forward by the researcher. Being parents, they had a good handle on their children's outcomes, and were able to verify their outcomes as well as their own.

The researchers committed to providing a range of reports to the stakeholders to ensure each receive relevant feedback contextualised to their needs. Importantly this included the production of an Easy Read report guided by feedback from the Sounding Board for learners and people with learning disabilities, their parents and employers. These have been held back from external circulation until the assurance process has been completed, but an update will be made to this report if any further verification becomes available. These reports were however shared widely throughout the staff group, and some feedback was given, which was all confirmatory.

Finally, the report is to be submitted Social Value international to seek external assurance relative to the findings.

12   Conclusions

This research has afforded the opportunity to undertake a detailed impact evaluation of the Supported Internship programme delivered by Mencap. Given the many challenges faced by people with learning disabilities to gain employment and the many benefits that affords with respect to health and independence, the programme is an important contribution to support this cohort.

As outlined the research covered two phases to take account of the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, but also gave the researchers a longer period to work with the organisation and together implement improvements as a result of the Forecast phase that helped improve the accuracy of the judgements made in the evaluation phase.

The result of the analysis gave a social return investment ration of 3.08 i.e. for £1 invested the programme returns £3.08 of social value, with a range of £1.53 to £4.76. While the research has relied on a significant range of source information and the approach has been applied with best endeavours, the researchers did have to apply judgement in a number of cases where data was incomplete or for example in selecting appropriate financial proxies, hence the need to always qualify a result of this nature

The case studies in Appendix J and the feedback from stakeholders generally, gives a strong message of a programme that is highly valued for the impact it is making, on a cohort generally deserving of better opportunities and outcomes.

13   Recommendations

The researchers have two types of recommendations for Mencap and a set for its funders.

1.   Increasing the social value generated by the programme

- Increase cross learning between different programmes
- User prior learners to act as mentors/advocates for new learners
- Set up parent support groups/advice/coffee mornings with staff to support parent outcomes
- Expand the range of employers to ensure everyone has a work placement
- Increase the level of aftercare provided to ensure sustainability in employment, and support those still looking for work e.g. via supporting employers through using Access to Work Grants

2.   Measuring and demonstrating social value in future

- Improve the recording of L&N levels at the start and use prior learning information from YETI to measure progress
- Researchers to undertake a more systematic review of the paperwork to reduce the amount but improve consistency of reporting and harmonise distance travelled reporting (in hand)
- Introduce surveys for non-learner stakeholder groups at beginning and end of the programme
- PSS improvements – 5 scale emojis with an extra neutral one plus some re-wording to simplify questions
- Secure more engagement and feedback from employers
- Run the Values Game with parents and employers.

Other recommendations

3.   Funders

- In evaluating impact consider social impact as well as progression outcomes as measures of success for learners
- Consider funding to support learners post completion to improve retention rates

Appendix A
Literature Review
Introduction

The aim of this review was to provide information that could be used to underpin the Social return on Investment (SROI) analysis of Mencap's Supported Internship programme.

Good practice in SROI suggests that analysts should seek our published research that illuminates areas where judgments have to be made, and so research is used to inform these judgements. Areas where research can provide useful guidance include:

- Outcomes that may be reported by Mencap's client groups as found in supported employment projects in the widest sense
- Examining evidence of outcomes, stakeholders and in this case, evidence of progression into employment for people with learning disabilities in similar Supported Internship programmes
- Identification of good practice in service provision
- Exploration of the policy environment and context within which the service is provided
- Identifying other assured SROI studies of similar programmes and looking at SROI reports that have not been assured
- Seeking evidence to support the percentages used in the value map to avoid overclaiming and looking for research that has examined the question of duration of outcomes
- Collecting financial proxies that have been used, as well as any studies published, that have taken a cost benefit analysis approach to support employment of supported internships
- Measurement methods, particularly for distance travelled
- Any other general research that can help with benchmarking.

The approach taken was to start with the latest UK Government policy documents that included literature reviews and to work out from there, looking at the primary published sources. Statistics were sourced as far as possible from the Office of National Statistics (ONS). SROI reports were sourced from the Social Value UK report database providing assured sources of reports.

Internet searches using key words were also used to identify other published reports.

In terms of examining the range of measurement methods and measurement of intangible outcomes through distance travelled methods, the approach taken was similar. The starting point, however, was the body of work produced by New Philanthropy Capital and the New Economics Foundation which have both developed a track record in social impact measurement, particularly in the employability field, over the last few years[30]. In addition, a

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[30] For example, NPC's 'Journey to Employment JET Framework',2013, at https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/the-journey-to-employment-jet-framework/ and NEF's 'Prove and Improve' Toolkit (not dated)at https://www.nefconsulting.com/training-capacity-building/resources-and-tools/

database produced for the Scottish Government's SROI project on measurement tools was inspected, backed up by further internet research on individual tools mentioned in this database[31].

Introduction to issues around learning disabilities and employment

The COVID pandemic has had a major disruptive impact on society, and that impact is likely to be felt for some time. The immediate consequence has been the tragic loss of life and livelihoods, and the negative effect on employment and the economy due to lockdowns. While many jobs have been protected in the short term through the UK's Job Retention Scheme and other interventions, the longer-term effects will be a significantly weakened economy, record levels of peacetime borrowing and some sectors such as hospitality, retail etc. having to radically alter their business models.

The COVID pandemic has had a significant impact on employment for young people. 70% of employee job losses between March 2020 and May 2021 were among under 25s. Unemployment has increased by 4% amongst the 16-24 age group between February 2020 and July 2021 and the employment rate has fallen by 7%[32]. Overall, of the 736,000 people who lost their jobs during the pandemic three fifths were under 25s. While there has been stabilisation in the rate of increase, where unemployment rose rapidly at the start of the pandemic, the outlook remains uncertain and as the furlough scheme ends in September 2021, the Bank of England forecast overall unemployment will rise to 5.2% in the second quarter of 2021 before it begins to fall[33].

The House of Commons briefing 'Coronavirus: the Impact on the labour market' also noted that there was a disproportionate impact of the COVID pandemic on the employment of people with disabilities. 71% of disabled people in employment in March 2020 were affected by the pandemic, through a loss of income, being furloughed, or being made redundant. This increased to 84% among 18-24 year olds[34].

There are approximately 869,000 adults of working age in the UK with a learning disability with numbers of adults with learning disabilities predicted to rise over the next 10 – 20

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[31] The database referred to was based on one developed by Toynbee Hall in the East End of London and added to by research funded by the Scottish Government through the SROI Project in Scotland. The database was eventually incorporated into Social Value UK's database of indicators for use in SROI studies, but not published separately. Apart from NPC's JET Framework, no other recent systematic review of research methods for measuring employability intangible outcomes was found. One document however has also been used in framing this Literature Review: Dewson et al, 2000, 'Guide to Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled', The Institute for Employment Studies at
http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/media/83581/guide-to-measuring-soft-outcomes-distance-travelled.pdf. This was a practical guide as to how to develop tools, and how to avoid research bias.

[32] Francis-Devine B., February 2021, 'Youth Unemployment Statistics', House of Commons Library at https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05871/

[33] This is the latest estimate from the Bank Of England in May 2021 at https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/monetary-policy-report/2021/may/monetary-policy-report-may-2021

[34] People Management, Disabled workers facing coronavirus 'jobs crisis', survey, 27 October 2020 quoted in 'Coronavirus: the Impact on the labour market', 2021 at https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8898/CBP-8898.pdf

years[35]. This is due to an overall increase in population size, rather than a change in the prevalence rate for learning disabilities.

We already know that people with learning disabilities face some of the greatest challenges in gaining employment. Statistics are not currently kept about all people with learning disabilities and employment, as since 2013/14 only those with a primary support reason of learning disability who are receiving long term support known to Adult Social Services have been counted in the national statistics. Published figures therefore relate predominantly to people with more significant support needs[36].

According to NHS Digital data for 2019/20, only 5.6% of people with a learning disability (known to Social Services) were in employment in England[37]. More males than females with a learning disability are employed (6.2% versus 4.8% respectively), and there are regional variations (e.g. from 7% in London to 3.6% in the East Midlands) which may reflect local labour markets and the level of support programmes available[38].

Mencap reports that of those with mild to moderate learning disabilities (around 80% of all people with learning disabilities), only around 20% are in employment[39]. For autistic people, the figure is similar at 22%. In contrast, 52% of all adults with any disability are in employment and 76% of all working age adults are in paid employment[40].

In 2008, a study found that of those who were employed at all, only 17% of people with mild to moderate disabilities were employed for 16 hours per week or more. For those with severe learning disabilities, figures were even lower. Of those who were in employment with a mild to moderate disability only 17% earned more than £100, which reduced to 4% for those with a severe learning disability[41].

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[35] ONS, 2020, 'Outcomes for disabled people in the UK: 2020', Office for National Statistics at https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/outcomesfordisabledpeopleintheuk/2020

[36] Department of Health and Social Care 2018 The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework 2018/19 Handbook of Definitions
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/687208/Final_ASCOF_handbook_of_definitions_2018-19_2.pdf

[37] https://www.base-uk.org/employment-rates

[38] Wilson R., 2020, 'Measures from the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) England 2019-20', Health and Social Care Information Centre at https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/adult-social-care-outcomes-framework-ascof/measures-from-the-adult-social-care-outcomes-framework-england-2019-20#:~:text=Related%20links-,Summary,and%20strengthen%20transparency%20and%20accountability.

[39] Mencap 2016 website at https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-09/2019.093%20Employment%20vision%20statement.pdf

[40] ONS, 2020, ibid

[41] Emerson E. and Hatton C., 2008, 'People with Learning Disabilities in England' CeDR, University of Lancaster at https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/staff/emersone/FASSWeb/Emerson_08_PWLDinEngland.pdf\

People with disabilities in general are over-represented in elementary occupations and are more likely to be employed in caring, leisure, sales or customer service occupations than non-disabled people[42].

So, not only do people with learning disabilities find it more difficult to access employment in the first place, they are less likely to be working full-time and their earnings are significantly lower than average.

Government Policy

Current UK Government policy with respect to employment relevant to health and disability is set out in the 2017 document, 'Improving Lives: the Future of Work, Health and Disability'[43]. The document addresses the situation of all those with health and disability issues, and not specifically learning disabilities[44].

The strategy sets out a 10-year vision to increase the numbers of disabled people in the workplace by 1 million. This includes actions to:

- Help disabled people get into and stay in employment
- Join up services across the health, care, workplace and welfare environments
- Support for those who need it – whatever their health condition – including for those with the lowest levels of employment including people with learning disabilities or autistic people
- Change perceptions and attitudes within society to the potential capabilities and contribution of disabled people
- Support the approach with assistive technologies.

Proposed actions to address these challenges include:

- Developing a comprehensive programme of activity across Departments of State – an initial list is included in the strategy
- Building an evidence base to work with research partner and academics though which policy will be developed and assessed
- Continue to work with employers and the voluntary and community sectors and others to develop provision and opportunity
- Given the scale of ambition, a key part of the programme is to achieve transformational change by addressing three key questions:

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[42] ONS, 2020, ibid

[43] DWP DoH Improving Lives The Future of Work, Health and Disability at
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/663399/improving-lives-the-future-of-work-health-and-disability.PDF

[44] This is still the main UK Government policy for disability and employment. The only additions have been tangential ones e.g. where a provider's on-site facilities can be used by SEND students for up to 105 hours pa where it is occupationally relevant to the student's field of study. In 2019, the Prime Minister committed his government to producing a new Strategy for Disabled People, which came out in July 2021. The only change of significance regarding employment was to be the introduction of an Access to Work 'passport'.

- How to personalise and tailor employment support in the welfare system, with improved assessments for financial support;
- How to achieve the appropriate balance of incentives and expectations of employers of all sizes to recruit and retain disabled people and people with long-term health conditions, and create healthy workplaces where people can thrive;
- How to shape, fund and deliver effective occupational health services that can support all in work; and options for fit note reform.

In summary the Government advocates for systemic change in the manner that enables disabled people to fulfil their potential

> *"Many of the policies and delivery models we are developing will need support from key partners, as well as local action. …To achieve enduring reform we also need to change attitudes and behaviours, as well as services, so that the prevailing culture across society supports disabled people and people with long-term health conditions in realising their aspirations."*
> DWP & DoH 2017

Supported Employment approaches

Mencap identify several barriers to employment faced by people with a learning disability. [45] These include:

- a lack of high-quality support meaning it is difficult to both gain and sustain employment.
- employers' attitudes and lack of understanding about what people with a learning disability can achieve with the right support.

For many years, supported employment has been designed as a way to overcome these particular barriers and supporting people with a learning disability, or autistic people, to get and keep paid jobs.

Originally developed in the USA, this approach has gained application in many areas of the world including the UK. Supported Employment has sometimes been called the "place, train and maintain" model of vocational rehabilitation [46].

Supported employment is based on the following principles:

- Everyone who wants to work, can providing they are in the right job with the right support
- Everyone can make a positive contribution in the workplace

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[45] Mencap 2016 website ibid
[46] Learning and Skills Development Agency, 2006, 'Support into employment for young people and adults with learning difficulties and disabilities' at https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/7810/1/062450.pdf

- The jobs should be real jobs, where wages are paid at the going rate with the same terms and conditions as other employees.

The social demands of real workplaces can often be as important as the jobs themselves. They can differ between jobs, and are difficult to replicate in day or training centres. This makes the transition to employment potentially more difficult for people with a learning disability[47]. Hence, placement in the mainstream employment market is seen not as an end-point in itself, but a necessary first step in successful training, where the supported employee is taught a specific job, in a specific work place, usually by a skilled job trainer or job coach. The following success factors with respect to supported employment for people with a learning disability have been recognised:[48]

- There are anti-discriminatory policies and practices in place in the workplace, ensuring that supported employees can participate fully at work.
- There is on-going support from the supported employment agencies particularly at critical points, such as during changes in the workplace environment
- There is accessible two-way communication ensuring that positive feedback can be given to supported employees and their concerns can be raised with management. This includes efforts by employers to understand how different people with learning disabilities communicate, including non-verbally.
- Supported employees and their employers recognise the importance of punctuality, reliability, enthusiasm, friendliness and social awareness at work.
- There is support for employees to acquire social skills, and colleagues understand some of the difficulties faced by supported employees, especially those who have not worked before.
- A mentor or an assigned senior person is appointed to provide support, rather than relying on natural support from colleagues, which can be unreliable.
- There is a means of supported employees learning about office rules, either through training or by informally learning from colleagues.

Research generally suggests that severity of learning disability is inversely correlated with success in achieving employment and associated outcomes such as wage levels and integration in the workplace[49].

Studies suggest that those clients trained within a supported employment setting had higher self-esteem and higher job satisfaction than those trained within a sheltered

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[47] Melling K. And Turner S., 2018, 'An Employers Guide to Supported Employment', Valuing People Alliance, https://www.ndti.org.uk/assets/files/HWA_Report_Final.pdf

[48] Jones S. and Morgan J., 2018, 'Success in supported employment for people with learning difficulties', Joseph Rowntree Foundation at https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/success-supported-employment-people-learning-difficulties

[49] Mank et al 1997 quoted in Beyer S and Robinson C., 2019, 'A Review of the Research Literature on Supported Employment', report for the cross-Government learning disability employment strategy team, at https://www.base-uk.org/sites/default/files/%5Buser-raw%5D/11-06/research_literature_review.pdf

employment setting[50]. However, there is limited information in terms of job retention data, and where this does exist in the USA (where schemes have been longer established) retention has not generally been good[51].

Impact and value of Supported Employment – evidence from Cost Benefit Analysis studies

In terms of the relative value of supported employment, research suggests that over a period beyond the initial 2 years, positive costs to benefit ratios are realised. A national study of Supported Employment agencies in 1996, quoted in a 2019 refresh on the topic, showed that workers with learning disabilities gained £2.47 for every £1 they lost in taking up employment, and taxpayers received 43p back in savings for each £1 invested[52].

A study of a supported employment programme in North Lanarkshire suggested a potential saving to government of around £6,894 per person per annum compared to an alternative day service place. Clients were some 113% financially better off as a result, with a further saving to social services due to a 25% reduction in day care services used by the supported employment group[53].

Kent County Council undertook a review of its supported employment programmes, albeit the planned follow up with other studies did not happen. This study included people with learning disabilities as well as physical disabilities and mental health conditions. At that time, the Supported Employment Service had 37 front line staff, supporting 118 paid jobs across the agency, 57 of which were employees with learning disabilities. The study identified net savings to the taxpayer of £3,564 compared to day services, with a smaller saving to the local authority of £1,290 per client due to lower day services costs. Individual outcomes were also encouraging, with employees experiencing a 55% increase in their income following work[54].

The National Audit Office issued a report in 2011, outlining the value of special education for young people aged 16-25, specifically people with a moderate learning disability. They found that by equipping a young person with the skills to live semi-independently and supporting quality of life improvements, the lifetime support costs were reduced by between 33% to 50%. Their modelling suggests that supporting one person with a learning disability into employment could, in addition to improving their independence and self-esteem, reduce lifetime costs to the public purse by around £170,000 (at 2009 prices, or £80,000 Net Present Value) and increase the person's income by between 55% and 95%. They concluded that:

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[50] Griffin, D. K., Rosenberg, H. Et al, 1996, 'A Comparison of Self-Esteem and Job Satisfaction of Adults with Mild Mental Retardation in Sheltered Workshops and Supported Employment', Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 31 (2), 142-150.

[51] Quoted in Bayer and Robinson 2019 ibid

[52] Quoted in Bayer and Robinson 2019 ibid

[53] Beyer S., 2007, 'An evaluation of the outcomes of supported employment in North Lanarkshire', Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities Cardiff University, at http://www.viascotland.org.uk/webfm_send/9/lanarkshirepdf

[54] Kilsby M. and Beyer S, 2010, 'A Financial Cost:Benefit Analysis of Kent Supported Employment', Kent County Council at https://www.base-uk.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/kentcba_-_final_sept2011.pdf

> *"These results illustrate the potential for improving the life chances of young people with special educational needs through employability and independence skills"*[55]

Bayer and Robinson 2019 conclude their extensive literature review of supported employment for people with learning disabilities by stating:

> *"Overall, the literature supports the view that supported employment is both worthwhile at an individual and societal level and that there is much that can be done to improve employment rates for people with learning disabilities. "*[56]

Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) studies and derivations of cost savings to be expected from programmes rely, just as much as SROI does, on the exercise of judgement. The exact sums 'saved' therefore can vary between studies and should be treated with caution. As the NAO report points out, local authorities do not currently have sufficiently complete or comparable information to fully understand the relationship between costs and outcomes[57].

None of these studies include appraisal of social value, particularly those other outcomes which could lead to improved quality of life. This is discussed further below.

Impact and value of Supported Employment – evidence from Social Return on Investment studies

SROI is an approach to understanding social value creation, based on measuring and valuing the outcomes from activities. The initial concept of SROI was designed for and applied by social purpose organisations financing social programmes in order to measure and demonstrate their impact. In the late 1990s, the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) together with Harvard University developed a first version of SROI as a tool to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of the projects they funded. Since then, the concept of SROI has undergone several revisions, attracting special attention, particularly in the UK[58]. The SROI Network (now Social Value UK and Social Value International) contributed significantly to its development to give a more comprehensive overview of the social impact of a programme by accounting for a wider range of outcomes relevant to different stakeholders. SROI is still being developed and refined in both the organisational and academic field.

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[55] NAO, 2011, 'Oversight of special education for young people aged 16–25', National Audit Office at https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/10121585.pdf
[56] Beyer and Robinson, ibid
[57] NAO 2011 ibid
[58] WHO, 2017, Social return on investment Accounting for value in the context of implementing Health 2020 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, WHO, https://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/347976/20170828-h0930-SROI-report-final-web.pdf

The Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012, brought social value to the wider attention of many due to its relationship with public procurement in England. Although the requirements of the Act were relatively modest, requiring procuring agencies only to take account of social value in public service contracts over a threshold value, it was a catalyst for the consideration of social value and wider adoption of social value measurement techniques. This Act has been followed by similar measures in Scotland and Wales respectively.

Most recently the UK Government introduced a new Procurement Policy Note 06/20, which requires the social value within contracts to be considered and a minimum threshold of at least 10% of evaluation scores to be allocated to social value.

Further in recognition of the growing adoption of Social Value as a concept, the British Standards Institute consulted on and published BS 8950:2010- the 'Social Value — Understanding and enhancing - Guide'[59].

Approaches to SROI are based on 8 key principles and a standardised methodology, which compares the value of outcomes for stakeholders with the investment required to run the activities. The SROI Guide sets out the principles and value mapping framework, and this study for Mencap will be conducted in line with the Guide, and will conform to the quality assurance standards set for SROI by Social Value International[60].

The principles are:

- Stakeholder involvement
- Understanding change
- Valuing what matters
- Only include what is material
- Do not overclaim
- Be transparent
- Verify the result
- Be responsive.

The results of an analysis can be used to present the work of the activity to the outside world, but can also be used internally to help embed understanding of how social value might be increased if activities were organised differently or worked to a different 'Theory of Change'.

SROI requires engagement with stakeholders and works best when the organisation seeks to understand its work and improve itself. It requires honesty, as it looks at both positive

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[59] BSI, 2010, BS8950 'Social Value — Understanding and enhancing — Guide', BSI, https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/blog/Environmental-Blog/introducing-the-new-british-standard-on-social-value/bs-8950---guide/
[60] The SROI Guide 2012 and associated methodology guidance documents are available at www.socialvalueuk.org

change and what might be negative impacts resulting from its activities. The output from an SROI study is a ratio of social, economic and environmental return produced for every £1 invested.

Very few SROI studies of supported employment have been published.

A social return on investment report on the North Lanarkshire Project SEARCH programme reviewed their supported employment service. This was a relatively small programme based on 8 learners at 2 sites per year. This report gave a SROI ratio of £3.96 returned for every £1 invested[61].

There is only one assured SROI analysis of a supported employment programme. The Action Group is a voluntary sector organisation providing services for people with a range of support needs across central Scotland, but mainly those with learning disabilities, mental health issues and autistic people. Its 'Real Jobs' service supports individuals to gain and sustain supported employment. This detailed study found an SROI ratio of £4.86 for every £1 invested[62].

An SROI report considered the impact of a supported employment programme for people with learning disabilities in Hungary. The programme designed and launched by the Salva Vita Foundation in 1996, was a complex preparatory programme for the employment of young people with learning disabilities[63]attending special secondary schools. During the programme students worked at various regular workplaces once a week as part of the curriculum, besides schoolwork. The report found a SROI ratio of 4.77 to 1 over the programme period of 5 years[64].

These SROI studies are relatively old, and have not been informed by recent advances in valuation and measurement methods, such as the Subjective Well-Being Valuation method, the Values Game method and more recent guidance from Social Value International on 'well-defined outcomes' and measuring distance travelled. All these developments are considered in the context of this SROI study for Mencap and are reported on it the relevant sections of this report.

Supported Internships

What is a supported internship?

Supported Internships were first flagged up in Government policy in 2011 as providing a potential model for improving the employment outcomes of people with disabilities:

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[61] Social Value Lab, 2013, SROI Evaluation Project Search, North Lanarkshire Council at
http://www.socialvaluelab.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/SROI-Report-Project-Search-Final.pdf
[62] Coutts P. and Durie S., 2010, 'An evaluation of social added value for Real Jobs,' The Action Group, Edinburgh, The Scottish Government, Employability and Tackling Poverty Division at https://www.base-uk.org/sites/default/files/%5Buser-raw%5D/12-03/the_social_return_of_real_jobs.pdf
[63] This study uses the term 'intellectual disabilities'
[64] Leathem K. and Vegh K., 2007, 'Salva Vita Foundation – An SROI Analysis', Salva Vita reported in Salva Vita's 2006 Public Benefit Report at https://salvavita.hu/rolunk/jelentesek/ (untranslated)

'Supported internships are structured study programmes based primarily at an employer. They are intended to enable young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve sustainable, paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work through learning in the workplace. Internships normally last for a year and include unpaid work placements of at least six months. Wherever possible, they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme. Students complete a personalised study programme which includes the chance to study for relevant substantial qualifications, if suitable, and English and Maths to an appropriate level.' [65]

The programme is based on the assumption that young people with special educational needs are capable of paid employment with the right preparation and support. The aim of supported internships is to prepare young people for paid employment by:

- supporting them to develop the skills valued by employers
- enabling them to demonstrate their value in the workplace
- developing confidence in their own abilities to perform successfully at work.

Programmes are typically one year in duration however providing a minimal period of six months has elapsed providers are not penalised for positive progressions. Providers have some latitude in terms of the manner in which schemes are developed (although they must abide by the Education and Skills Funding Agency rules), but they are built on the following principles:

- A significant majority of the intern's time must be spent at the employer's premises. Whilst at the employer, the young person will be expected to comply with real job conditions, such as time keeping or dress code
- Learners must do some form of learning alongside their time at the employer, including relevant aspects of English and Maths. It will typically include employability skills and, following study programme principles, those students who haven't already achieved GCSEs at grade C in English and Maths should be working towards achieving them
- Jobs must work for both the young person and the employer
- Central to the programme is the provision of support to the young person and to the employer, including job coaching support.

Providers must also work with the respective local authority to ensure that the learner's Education and Health Care (EHC) Plan is taken account of in the individual learner's plan and that appropriate targets are set, monitored and reported. Whilst the preferred outcome from a supported internship would be the offer of a paid job from an employer (and at commencement this is the reasonable expectation), other outcomes can include:

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[65] DFE, 2017, Supported internships Guidance DFE,
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/620920/Supported_Learnership_Guidance_updated_with_EFA_funding_advice_May_2017_2.pdf

- building up experience for a CV, demonstrating that the young person has the skills and willingness to work
- changing the perception of employers about employing people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- changing the perception of the young person's family regarding the young person's ability to work
- improving skills in English and Maths that enable the young person to be better prepared for work, including handling money, interacting with the public, and practising interview skills
- becoming independent travellers.

In January 2020, there were 2,231 young people nationally with Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or EHC Plans taking part in Supported Internships. This was an increase from 1,646 in January 2019 and from 1,186 in January 2018[66].

What evidence is there that supported internships work?

An evaluation of 15 pilot supported internship sites in Further Education (FE) colleges was commissioned to establish a scalable model that could be introduced as a mainstream programme. These pilots were completed in 2013. Programmes included a blended programme of work placements and one day per week in college. Learners were engaged with a variety of work roles mainly consisting of routine tasks, but some progressed to higher level skills. Learning was focused on employability skills, Maths and English with some offering skills-based certification (e.g. food hygiene certificates). A job coach was provided for in work support and guidance[67].

The evaluation found considerable variation in how supported internships were set up and managed. 36% of participants found full time work, 5% of which were apprenticeships, 26% went into volunteering, 14% progressed to other further education opportunities and 25% were unemployed. Colleges were generally found to have developed no clear route or support for learners' progression into employment.

Challenges arose from a lack of awareness of supported internships amongst employers and parents/carers, learners' lack of confidence and limited knowledge of employment options, and issues associated with setting-up new provision including unanticipated costs for travel, competition in the local areas for work placements and working within the current economic climate where jobs were scarce.

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[66] Quoted at https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/permalink/a593da25-49f1-45fb-b6bb-ac6b48cf27cd

[67] Cooper Gibson Research, 2013, 'Supported internship trial for 16 to 24 year old learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities: An evaluation', Disability Rights UK, at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/263205/DFE-RR314.pdf

The evaluation was not able to conclude the value for money of the pilot programme given the limited numbers and variety of approaches. However the evaluation notes the improved rates of progression to employment over alternate schemes as an indicator of potentially greater value added.

There were a number of key success factors identified from the trial sites. These included:

- supported internships need to be distinctive from other forms of college provision with a clear focus on achieving sustainable employment
- job coaches, with broad skill sets, are critical to the success of supported internships
- to succeed, learners need to want to work and have families supportive of this ambition
- personalised, tapered support is necessary during the internship with further support available post-programme, as needed
- on-going partnerships between employers, learners, college staff, and where appropriate, parents and carers should underpin the programme
- achieving an appropriate realistic job match for an intern is key to their success
- college-based learning needs to be personalised, clearly linked to the workplace and to be a source of peer group support
- colleges need to plan from the outset how to secure employment for learners at the end of the internship, especially for those who are not offered paid work by their internship employer.

Finally, the report provided a series of key recommendations to inform the commissioning of a longer term Supported Internship programme for the respective stakeholders i.e. Department of Further Education and colleges and support staff.

The current scope of Supported Internships within the UK

In their follow up evaluation study of Supported Internship delivery models in 2020, Cooper Gibson provided a further update on approaches to delivery[68]. While qualitative in nature, the report reemphasised the importance of employer commitment, the role of the job coach, parental/carer support and levels of motivation of learners as critical success factors to the programme. Concerns related to levels of awareness of key stakeholders of the programme, perverse incentives linked to benefit payments, programme funding structures, a shortage of trained job coaches and sharing of practice between providers. The report also outlined concerns of making supported internships a default programme for this cohort due to the expectations of positive outcomes, especially where learners were not yet ready to take up opportunities due to maturity, personal development etc.[69].

In this study, most providers estimated that at least 50% of young people on their programmes achieved paid employment, with some suggesting figures in excess of 75%,

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[68] Cooper Gibson, 2020, 'Approaches to Supported Learnership Delivery', Department for Education at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/868461/Supported_Internships_Research_Report_February_2020.pdf
[69] Cooper Gibson, 2020 ibid

other providers (proportion not stated) estimated employment rates below 50%. A small number reported employment outcomes between zero and 25%.

Other estimates have varied. In 2019, the CEO of the British Association for Supported Employment said there is a lack of data to detail the numbers of people with learning disabilities who complete supported internships and stay in jobs on a long-term basis[70].

Project SEARCH was a highly influential supported employment programme which began at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in Ohio USA and was brought into the UK in 2008. At the time, Project SEARCH represented a new approach to developing sustainable employment opportunities and extended the Supported Internship model.

An evaluation study of Project SEARCH found that against an ambitious target of 60% full-time employment, outcome rates between the years 2009 and 2013 showed an average progression into employment of 51%, with 36% of graduates moving into full-time employment, although rates varied widely across different sites[71]. Interviews with parents also noted that the programme consistently increased the self esteem and skills of participants.

There are now 56 Project SEARCH sites across the UK. Their programmes take place primarily in a healthcare or business setting. During the year, each student is offered three different placements within the host employer's premises. Individualised job development and placement were then made after the rotations were completed. In 2018/2019, 60% of Project SEARCH learners were reported as having moved into full-time employment, and 55% had sustained employment, even during the COVID pandemic[72].

The downsides of the Project SEARCH approach could be that not all people's job aspirations will be met within a large corporation such as a hospital or bank and it cannot be the complete solution to transition from school to employment. Also, at present, we do not know the exact breakdown of people with a learning disability going through the scheme, and there has been no benchmarking of the level of disability their learners experience and how it impacts on their ability to learn at work[73].

The cost and lack of flexibility of Project SEARCH however had been noted. In 2012 researchers found a unit cost per participant per year of £10,500[74]. This Government

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[70] Quoted in an article for Learning Disability today from 2019 at https://www.learningdisabilitytoday.co.uk/2019/do-supported-internships-deliver-the-jobs-and-improved-life-chances-that-they-promise. No sources were quoted in the article. Prepare for Adulthood, a provider of supported learnership was quoted in the same article as saying they had a progression rate of 50%

[71] Kaehne A., 2014, 'Final Report: Evaluation of Employment Outcomes of Project Search UK', South West Employment Institute, at https://www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/SiteAssets/Downloads/lzhgtlyl636383028274050873.pdf

[72] DFN Project SEARCH data presentation 2016-2019 published on the British Association of Supported Employment website at https://www.base-uk.org/knowledge/project-search-dataset-2016-19

[73] Quoted in the BASE article for Learning Disability today from 2019, ibid

[74] Purvis et al, 2012, 'Project SEARCH Evaluation Final report', Office for Disabilities HM Government at https://www.base-uk.org/sites/default/files/project-search-report.pdf

initiated evaluation report recommended taking on board the fidelity model for Project SEARCH but allowing more flexibility in implementation.

The Mencap Supported Internship programme

Mencap is the largest national multi-site provider of Supported Internships. Approx. 140 learners were enrolled across 10 project locations in the forecast year 2020/2021[75]. The programme supports 18-25 year olds for 12 months through classroom-based learning, work placements and one-to-one support from job coaches as long as it is needed. Learning disability awareness training is available to employers. The Supported Internship programme is one of 4 that Mencap deliver to over 1,000 people who are seeking employment support, across the UK. These 4 programmes can stand alone, or can work together, based on the needs of the individual.

The overarching aim of the Supported Internship programme is to help people with learning disabilities secure paid employment and then thrive in that employment. Mencap is classed as a Specialist Post 16 Institution and is regulated by OFSTED.

Mencap has developed an evaluation framework. The system tracks progress on:

- job outcomes
- development outcomes (e.g. further education or volunteering)
- self-assessment of personal outcomes such as confidence and being able to travel independently.

Some parts of the evaluation framework track progress against Education, Health and Care Plans, as contained in individual support plans. The EHC Plans are produced by the referring Local Authority. In addition, the funding body (the Education Funding and Skills Agency) asks for evidence of changes in learners' appreciation of British values and citizenship.

Mencap staff follow up with learners for 12 months after leaving the programme.

Mencap's programmes have been affected by the COVID pandemic. The cohorts recruited for the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic years have all been affected. There was a significant impact on learner hours, work placements, and consequently progression outcomes, for the 2019/2020 cohort. Work placements are generally planned to be delivered from Jan/Feb to June each year.

In 2019/2020, 170 learners were enrolled on the programme. 42 learners are continuing into the 2020/2021, so 25% of those recruited have had to have their year extended due to the COVID pandemic. 102 have completed their programme (60%) and 26 (15%) of learners withdrew during the year.

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[75] Mencap uses the term 'learner' for participants on the Supported Internship programme and cohorts follow the academic year

Of those who completed, 5% entered paid employment over 16 hours per week, 13% were working less than 16 hours per week and 6% had started an apprenticeship. 42% have another positive destination, such as another employment programme, FE or volunteering.

In comparison, two thirds of learners who completed the supported internship programme in 2017/18 progressed to full- or part-time employment, and a quarter into further training[76].

For the programmes for the 2020/2021 cohort currently still on the programme, the lessons from the first lockdown were incorporated into the delivery plans, so more use has been made of digital learning and community-based projects.

On the basis of the analysis done for this forecast of social return, 10.8% of learners went into full-time paid employment and 7.9% into part-time paid employment.

In 2019, Mencap were inspected by OFSTED, with an overall judgement of 'Requires Improvement'. Improvements required were:

- EHC Plan outcomes needed more focus
- Learners' attendance need to be improved
- Some learners need to spend more time in their work placement
- Accredited English and mathematics qualifications need more focus
- Learners needed more impartial careers advice to help them plan their futures.

However, Ofsted also found:

- Job coaches provide well-planned, high-quality support in the workplace and in off-the-job learning sessions
- Staff review and record learners' progress and achievement well
- Learners gain a good understanding of using the internet, staying healthy and how to stay safe
- Learners demonstrate good behaviour, positive attitudes to their learning, and professional conduct in the workplace
- Over 90% of learners went into a positive destination (2017/2018 figures).

The above points remain as 'Requiring Improvement' until the next formal inspection, but by the 2020 monitoring visit, OFSTED commented positively about how Mencap had adapted its provision in the light of COVID, with respect to work experience and information advice and guidance. Improvements in pedagogy were helping learners retain knowledge and Cognassist had been introduced to support learning strategies. It was reported that learners were now making expected progress. However, some supported internship learners had (due to restrictions imposed by COVID) not sufficiently developed their employability skills, e.g. team working. There was some additional anxiety reported by learners about attending work experience and placements and there had been an increase in safeguarding referrals since face-to-face teaching had resumed. Leaders believe this is

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[76] Ofsted report at https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/39/144786

because learners had experienced disruption in their education before joining their programmes, which unsettled them.

A further monitoring visit in January 2021 reported 'Reasonable progress in addressing the improvement actions from the full inspection'. Leaders and managers had taken positive action to address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Most tutors were reported as providing effective support that met the individual needs and career aspirations of learners. While the majority of learners had not been able to undertake on-site work placements with employers due to COVID, they had instead participated in thoughtfully planned community projects. The report highlighted that this change to the curriculum enabled tutors to teach skills that will support learners to gain employment. Most tutors were using good resources that made remote lessons interactive and accessible to learners and tutors. Learners benefited from high levels of support from staff that enabled them to make progress. Teachers made good use of guest speakers, and most learners had opportunities to attend virtual careers fairs. Finally, learners were safe and knew who to go to if they need help. However, the review highlighted the need to ensure that the curriculum for all learners included their individual outcomes in EHC Plans and that staff used these to monitor learners' progress more closely[77].

Progression pathways from Supported Internships

The fundamental purpose of Supported Internships is to assist people with disabilities to move closer towards employment. However, the starting and end points for learners embarking on these programmes are different and therefore the ESFA designates a number of outcomes as positive destinations from the programme.

These outcomes include:

- Further Education
- Apprenticeships
- Volunteering
- Employment
- Other employment programmes.

Unfortunately, as the ESFA do not publish outcome data it is not possible to determine overall levels of positive progression or destinations for Supported Internship programmes as a whole.

If the learner is still 25 or under and remains in receipt of an EHC Plan, they will remain eligible for ESFA funding for further education programmes. Hence learners could progress into further academic, technical or vocational education, depending on their occupational

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[77] Mencap staff have reported to us that one of the effects of the COVID pandemic has been to drastically reduce the creation and review of EHC Plans by Local Authority staff, with considerable delay in updating plans. Thus many tutors and coaches knew many EHC Plan outcomes had been superceded by progress made by learners and the Plans were very out of date and therefore were only being used as a guide to support learners.

preferences. This can give learners additional time to gain experience and skills that would help support their ultimate progression towards employment.

Apprenticeships remain a popular means of progression for young people into employment and an opportunity to gain practical experience within an occupational environment. Apprenticeships have undergone significant reform in recent years. Previous frameworks have been replaced by occupational standards intended to increase the value and relevance of the apprenticeships to employers. Apprenticeships exist for entry level occupations at Level 2 all the way to post graduate level occupations at Level 7. While conceived primarily for young people apprenticeships can be taken by people of any working age, enabling them to progress or change occupation over their working lives. Similarly, the models of funding for apprenticeships have also changed with the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy, with larger employers paying a hypothecated tax to support the costs of apprenticeships and smaller employer's making a financial contribution towards the costs but the Government investing the majority of the costs associated with training. Importantly in the context of learners with additional needs, there is specific funding available to help address their needs as identified through their EHCP and initial assessment. Further, there is a dispensation in terms of apprenticeship completion requirements[78] for learners with learning disabilities relative to the English and Maths requirements. Supported internships provide a good potential pathway for progression towards an apprenticeship as it provides the opportunity to build a relationship with the learner and opportunity to assess longer terms suitability for a role. As a result of the COVID pandemic, Government increased the incentives for employers to engage apprentices on a time limited basis.

Even if the learner is not recruited into an apprenticeship, there are a range of funded training opportunities that the former learner may be entitled to from programmes such as the Adult Education Budget, where people with less than a Level 2 qualification are eligible for funding, alongside the recently introduced Lifetime Skills Guarantee[79]. Employers can also secure funding to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled learners to take up work opportunities.

Support through the European Social Fund (ESF) has supported a range of devolved employability programmes to help improve skills and address inequalities in opportunity related to employment. Following Brexit, these programmes are now time limited, and the UK Government has announced they will be replaced by the Shared Prosperity Fund, however details of this are currently awaited.

Volunteering is not a long-term employment option but remains a means of supporting progression toward employment, and for those with limited prospects volunteering provides a means of enrichment, social engagement and personal wellbeing as well as providing valued services. Volunteers can receive expenses for their activity, and generally, if reported and in compliance with the relevant rules, will not impact on benefit provision

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[78] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/specification-of-apprenticeship-standards-for-england
Sections 18-26
[79] Lifetime skills guarantee www.gov.uk/government/news/hundreds-of-free-qualifications-on-offer-to-boost-skills-and-jobs

As outlined previous, there are risk that disabled people may be further disadvantaged in the employment market as a result of the economic impact on jobs caused by the pandemic. To counter the overall impact of this, the Government introduced its Plan for Jobs[80] which recognised the additional risks for young people and those with disabilities. In addition, there are a range of employment programmes funded by DWP and increasingly by devolved administrations, however eligibility is often based on taking people off benefits. Under this programme a range of measures were introduced to mitigate the potential impact on employment from the COVID pandemic.

The Kickstart Scheme provides opportunities for paid work experience for young unemployed people for up to 6 months. Applicants can be aged 16-25 but must be claiming universal credit to participate. This scheme however is due to finish in December 2021.

The Restart programme is a government-administered employment support scheme, which will give Universal Credit claimants who have been out of work for between 12 to 18 months enhanced support to find jobs.

The Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) programme is another new scheme launched in the wake of the COVID pandemic, and is targeted at providing employment support for those jobseekers who have been out of work for at least three months (13 weeks).

Sector Based Work Academies are similar to a short-term focused traineeship model. They include pre-employment training, a work experience placement, and a guarantee of a job interview for participants. They run for up to 6 weeks, with a work experience placement usually a business, with pre-employment training off site or online. Participants are not paid but can retain their benefits for the duration of the programme.

Intensive Personalised Employment Support is a one-to-one support and training programme for those with a disability or health condition. Through the programme clients receive a dedicated support worker for 15 months, (plus an additional 6 months of on-the-job support if the client finds employment).

The Work and Health programme is a voluntary programme targeted at a range of people generally on longer term benefits or disadvantaged in the employment market including people with disabilities. Clients receive up to 12 months from a specialist job coach

Conclusions on the outcomes from supported employment/internships identified in research

The national performance indicators for the outcomes set for supported internships by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) are mainly output-based: participation rates (attendance and qualifications achieved) and success rates (jobs). For this study, the researchers engaged in correspondence with the funding agency to determine if any other information apart from the output data was held e.g. outcomes/progression rates for all

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[80] UK Government Plan for Jobs
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/898421/A_Plan_for_Jobs__Web_.pdf

Supported Internship programmes. ESFA were unable to give up to date statistics on progression into employment and dropout rates across Supported Internship programmes.

There is therefore a paucity of performance data available in terms of outcomes. Likewise there has been relatively little focus on understanding the personal outcomes achieved by learners which may underlie success e.g. increased confidence and self-esteem, and no one has as yet published a Theory of Change for supported employment or Supported Internships[81].

The SROI principles demand that all material value created for stakeholders is brought into the account, thus 'soft' or 'intangible' outcomes should be included if they have value for the different stakeholders. This is also advice given by HM Treasury in their Green and Magenta Books for project appraisals of effectiveness: such effects should be quantified if it is meaningful and possible to measure them[82] and maximising the value delivered from public spending and improving outcomes for citizens is important[83].

With very few studies of supported employment or Supported Internships having been conducted however, and with the lack of national data on employment progression outcomes, there is no comprehensive research to definitively suggest what outcomes might be expected or which should best be measured.

There are, however, a range of outcome measurement tools and frameworks that have been developed over the last 20 years to measure such 'soft' outcomes, and particularly tools to measure 'distance travelled' i.e. progression towards outcomes over time. Very few of these have suggested tools for use with people with learning disabilities and autistic people[84].

This is an important area to stress: if not all learners achieve a job outcome, which could be particularly difficult in the post-COVID labour market, then more emphasis is needed on measuring the likely impact on the lifetime costs of support which could be accrued from the Supported Internship programme through measuring more intangible or 'soft' outcomes.

We found limited commonality, and significant variations in language used to talk about employability and employment outcomes. The most common outcome areas identified are as follows, with a comparison of what Mencap can currently measure:

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[81] For an introduction to Theory of Change, see New Philanthropy Capital's 2014 Guide 'Creating your Theory of Change' at https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/creating-your-theory-of-change-npcs-practical-guide/
[82] The Green Book Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation at
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/938046/The_Green_Book_2020.pdf
[83] The Magenta Book Central Government Guidance on Evaluation at
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879438/HMT_Magenta_Book.pdf
[84] See footnote 2 above

Higher level dimensions	Example outcomes within each area	Included in Mencap's evaluation framework
Interpersonal skills	Improved communication	Yes
Social skills for work	Improved teamworking	No
Organisational skills	Improved problem-solving	Yes
	Improved decision-making skills	Yes
	Increased personal networks	Yes
	Improved personal hygiene	No
Skills for finding and sustaining work	Improved literacy and numeracy	Yes
	Achievement of better qualifications	Yes
	Improved CV writing skills	Yes
	Improved interview skills	No
	Improved self-presentation skills	Yes
Personal attributes	Improved self esteem	No
	Improved confidence	Yes
	Improved resilience and coping skills	No
	Improved attitudes to work	Yes
	Improved motivation	Yes
	Improved aspirations and ambition	Yes
	Improved independence	Partially (travel independence
Employment and retention outcomes	Get a job	Yes
	Sustain a job	Yes
	Feel satisfied in the job	Yes
Enabling factors	Access to money, transport, internet	Yes
	Reduced substance misuse	Unsure

Measuring distance travelled

Guidance on SROI states that it is insufficient to just count the number of people who experience an intangible outcome, but that the extent of change per individual should also be calculated. This therefore requires measuring distance travelled.

The researchers looked in detail at the tools and frameworks developed over the last 20 years, to see what common agreement existed as to the methods of measuring distance travelled that would be relevant to this SROI study of the Supported Internship programme

run by Mencap. We found very few tools that had been adapted for use specifically for use with people with learning disabilities or autistic people[85].

Almost all distance travelled methods rely on Likert Scales, or graphic representations of a Likert Scale. Essentially, participants are asked to score themselves (with or without the help of a support worker) on a scale. Normally, scales used have either been 1 to 5 or 1 to 7. We have not found a commonly used tool that only has three scores (as used by Mencap).

Likert Scales rely on plotting the change in scores at the beginning, middle and end of an intervention, and calculating a percentage shift in scores. Some methods then go on to calculate mean scores across a group to give a quantity (used in the calculation of the value of an outcome). Tools such as the Outcome Star have been widely adopted in a number of sectors to provide some basis and pictorial representation of qualitative change, but these are again based on use of surveys and establishing impact based on Likert scales.

There are a number of risks of relying on just one method to understand outcomes and distance travelled:

- Scores can vary according to how individuals feel on a particular day, unless the tool or survey used has been validated (very few have)
- This type of analysis relies heavily on there being a Theory of Change in place that links intermediate outcomes to the final outcomes, so that individuals who do not complete the final step (for example do not get a job) can still have the value of their intangible outcomes recognised
- The focus on numerical scoring and calculations can mask the importance of stories and observation and lead to outcomes being ignored.

We understand Mencap's decision to limit the Likert Scales to 3 scores was due to accessibility considerations. Additionally research has suggested Likert Scales could contain considerable response bias, and pictorial methods were needed[86].

Therefore, approaches that engage and involve learners actively through ethnographic approaches which share power and build on traditional Likert Scales are potentially helpful in recognising and understanding changes of a qualitative nature.

Conclusions from the literature review

The funders of Supported Internship programmes are mainly interested in progression into jobs, attendance stats, meeting EHCP objectives and improving Maths and English standards. This is despite the evidence from the National Audit Office calling attention to the reduction in lifetime costs of support that can accrue to the Government and society if

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[85] See footnote 2 above. These sources can be made available, although not published apart from the ones referred to in the footnote

[86] Hartley S and MacLean WE, 2006, 'A review of the reliability and validity of Likert-type scales for people with intellectual disability', Journal of Intellectual Disability Research at
https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1365-2788.2006.00844.x

young people with learning disabilities are engaged with supported employment activity, and despite the need to explore the impact on individual learners who do not achieve a job progression.

Measuring distance travelled

There is still no agreed framework or method for measuring outcomes from employability, employment or supported employment programmes, and limited numbers of tools that could be used with Mencap's learners to measure distance travelled. There are however some graphical methods that have been suggested by this literature review that are worth considering (for example relationship/network maps, evaluation wheels and spider diagrams are all possible graphical representations that don't rely on completing forms)[87].

It is recommended that we pilot a new version of the Lifestyles and Work self-assessment form used by Mencap, to provide a tool that can be used to give a greater understanding of distance travelled for skills and personal attributes, and one that relies more heavily on graphics. This would be developed with the proposed Sounding Board, staff and learners and piloted during the evaluation phase from September 2021 onwards.

Measuring more outcomes

There are some outcomes indicated by research which Mencap currently does not have an explicit set of questions to capture. These mainly comprise outcomes around 'softer' skills for work and personal attributes that would contribute to successful retention of employment. These are:

- Improved team working
- Improved personal hygiene
- Improved interview skills
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved resilience and coping skills
- Improved independence separate form independent travel
- Reduced substance misuse.

Evidence for some of these outcomes is probably contained in the narrative answers that Mencap staff record in learner reviews, but analysis will be time-consuming, so we would look to see if these outcomes can be measured alongside the existing system (the Lifestyles and Work self-assessment form).

During the forecasting phase for the SROI analysis therefore, we will test out whether these outcomes are material, through the process of stakeholder engagement, and how different outcomes relate to each other in a 'chain of events'[88].

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[87] See footnote 44 above

[88] This is part of developing the Theory of Change, where some outcomes are not end outcomes but part of a chain of outcomes. This then leads to guidance on measurement, as intermediate outcomes should not be measured in order to avoid double counting. As this literature review shows however, there is limited research evidence to draw on in developing these chains.

We will look to test out some methods that might help Mencap demonstrate the less tangible but material outcomes that learners could be experiencing, in a time effective way. We are very conscious of the need to try and reduce paperwork completed by Mencap's tutors and case workers, not add to it.

Benchmarking

The other conclusion is that there is a lack of robust benchmarking data. Finding statistics to use for deadweight, attribution, duration, displacement and drop off is part of the point of the SROI literature review, but the only statistics that could be found relate to deadweight i.e. the number of learners who could have made it into employment without the Supported Internship programme's support.

There is uncertainty even here about how individuals with different 'conditions' are categorised in the Department of Work and Pensions and ONS's statistical figures. Since 2013, only those with more severe learning disabilities have been counted in employment statistics, and not all areas have assessed the employment gap for people with the full range of learning disabilities[89].
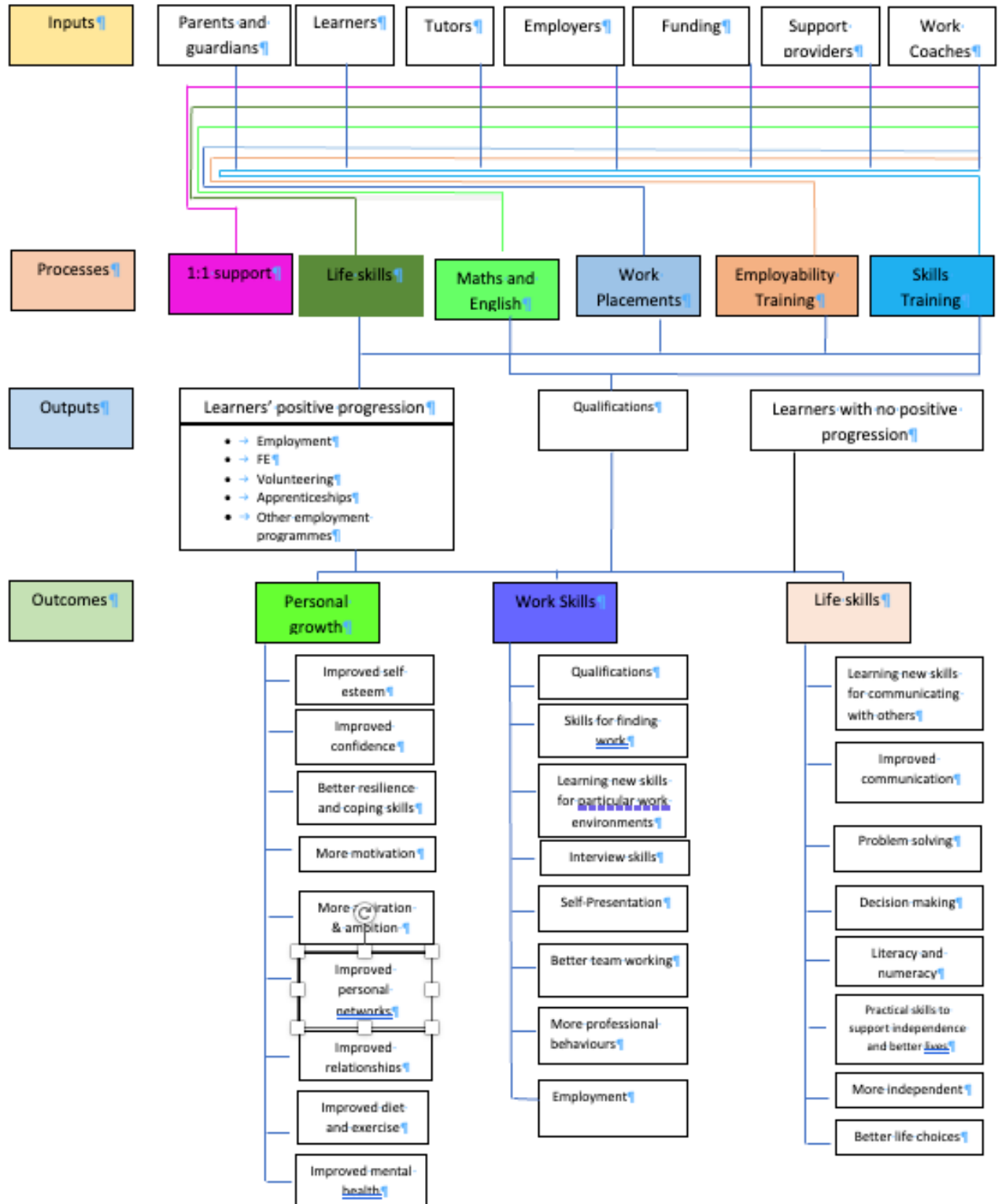
Theory of Change

No evaluation report appears to have presented a Theory of Change for a Supported Internship or employment programme, and we consider this an area in which Mencap could innovate. This is particularly relevant to measuring intangible outcomes, to agree what are final outcomes and what are intermediate outcomes, and what is the optimum point to measure progress, in order to avoid double counting of outcomes.

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[89] The variability in local statistics is evident from the parallel research into the local labour market which will be reported on elsewhere in the SROI report.

Appendix B
Supported Internship Theory of Change

Inputs	Parents and guardians	Learners	Tutors	Employers	Funding	Support providers	Work Coaches

Processes	1:1 support	Life skills	Maths and English	Work Placements	Employability Training	Skills Training

Outputs	Learners' positive progression	Qualifications	Learners with no positive progression

Learners' positive progression
- → Employment
- → FE
- → Volunteering
- → Apprenticeships
- → Other employment programmes

Outcomes	Personal growth	Work Skills	Life skills

Personal growth
- Improved self esteem
- Improved confidence
- Better resilience and coping skills
- More motivation
- More aspiration & ambition
- Improved personal networks
- Improved relationships
- Improved diet and exercise
- Improved mental health

Work Skills
- Qualifications
- Skills for finding work
- Learning new skills for particular work environments
- Interview skills
- Self-Presentation
- Better team working
- More professional behaviours
- Employment

Life skills
- Learning new skills for communicating with others
- Improved communication
- Problem solving
- Decision-making
- Literacy and numeracy
- Practical skills to support independence and better lives
- More independent
- Better life choices

Appendix C
Interview script for learners, Parents and Employers

Learners

Introduction
Explain that Mencap is looking into the difference the Supported Internship programme has made to learners.

Explain that you are going to ask the learner some questions about the difference the programme has made to them. They have agreed that you can record this conversation. The only other people who will hear what you talk about are the two researchers Tim and Sheila. Give learners the option of having a break, but the interview should only take about 40 minutes. Also give people the option to draw their answers if that's easier for them – if they do this then hold their drawings up to the camera so they can be recorded.

Remember to start recording!

1.   Tell me what kinds of things you have done on the Supported Internship programme.
Prompt learners to talk about all aspects of the programme: work placements, one-to-one support, Maths and English, any qualifications/classroom learning they have done

2.   What did you hope to learn when you joined the programme?
Prompts: new skills, how to get a job, feeling better about yourself

3.   Think back to what things were like when you started on the programme. Take a few minutes to talk about what your life was like then
Prompts: living situation, feelings about yourself, ability to travel independently, money worries, qualifications

4.   What has changed since the beginning?
Prompts could be:
Do you feel different about working?
Do you think differently about yourself?
Have you learnt new skills and what are they?
Have your relationships with other people changed?
Can you do more things?
What new things do you do?
Ask the learner to tell you what the most important changes have been for them and see if they can rank them in order of importance. To do this, you could write down the changes on postits and ask the learner to put them in order of importance. If they use post its then make sure the results are recorded – you could list them yourself in order starting with the most important change.

5.   Ask learners to tell you what they do differently because of these changes
They may have answered this question in question number 4, in which case move onto question number 6.
Prompts would be about what they said E.g. 'you said you are more confident now – what do you do differently because you are more confident?'

6.   Who else helped you make these changes?

Prompts could be:

What about the people you work with?
Your friends?
You could ask the learner to draw a circle of support with them at the centre
7.   **Who helped the most?**
Prompts could be:
Was it your family
Your employer or the people I work with
Your tutor/caseworker
8.   **Is there anything you miss about your life before the Supported Internship programme? Is there anything about the Supported Internship that wasn't so good or could have been better?**
Prompts could be:
Anything you stopped doing because of the programme?
Was there anything that made you feel bad?
9.   **If you hadn't joined the Supported Internship programme what would you have been doing instead?**
Prompts could be:
Would you be on another programme or at college?
Would you be sitting at home doing nothing?
Would you have been able to get a job by yourself without support?
10.   **What will you do next when the supported internship ends?**

Parents

Parents focus group at reflection events – questions to promote discussion
Mencap is looking into the difference the Supported Internship programme has made to all the people involved in it. We are speaking to you as you have had a son or daughter who has gone through the programme, and we are interested in your experiences of what has changed for them, and the impact this has had on you.
Only use prompts if the discussion stalls and you haven't had a useful answer to the question.

1. **What did you hope would happen when your son/daughter joined the programme?**
Prompts: they would learn new skills, how to get a job, feeling better about themselves, travel by themselves, become more independent

2. **What has changed about your son/daughter since the beginning of the Supported Internship programme.**
Prompts could be:
Do they feel different about working?
Have they learnt new skills and what are they?
Have their relationships changed?
Can they do more things now?
What new things do they do?

3. **What has changed for you personally since the Supported Internship programme.**
Prompts: Do you yourself do anything differently now, do you have any more time to oneself, less stressed, feeling more positive. Ask them to rank their changes.

4. **Apart from Mencap and the staff there, who else helped your son/daughter make progress?**

Prompts could be:
Our family
Their friends
The employer
The people they work alongside

5. **Has there been anything negative about your son/daughter being on the Supported Internship programme?**
Prompts could be:

The benefit/moneys situation
More worry about them travelling alone
How tired they have been, so they're doing less outside of work

6. **If your son/daughter hadn't joined the Supported Internship programme what would they have been doing instead?**
Prompts could be:
Would they be on another programme or at college?
Would they be sitting at home doing nothing?
Would they have been able to get a job by themselves without Mencap support?

7. **What would you like to see your son/daughter do next when the supported internship ends?**

Employers

1.   **Have you had interns before this current year?   Yes/No**

    If so, how many?
    How many years have you been involved with the internship programme?

2.   **What were your reasons for agreeing to join the Supported Internship programme?**

3.   **What did you hope would happen when you agreed to take interns?**

4.   **What differences have you and you colleagues noticed in the interns over the period of the programme?**

5.   **What impact have the interns had on your customers – if applicable?**

6.   **What impact have the interns had on your other employees?**

7.   **Are there any negative impacts on your business from having interns?**

8.   **What amount of time do you spend managing/supporting or organising interns - is it more than you would normally spend for any other average employee?**

9.   **On a scale of 1 to 10 with 1 being 'very low value' how much of an asset have the intern(s) been to you?**

10.   **Are you likely to keep any of the interns at the end of the Supported Internship?**

    If so, will this be Full or part time?
                       Paid or volunteering?
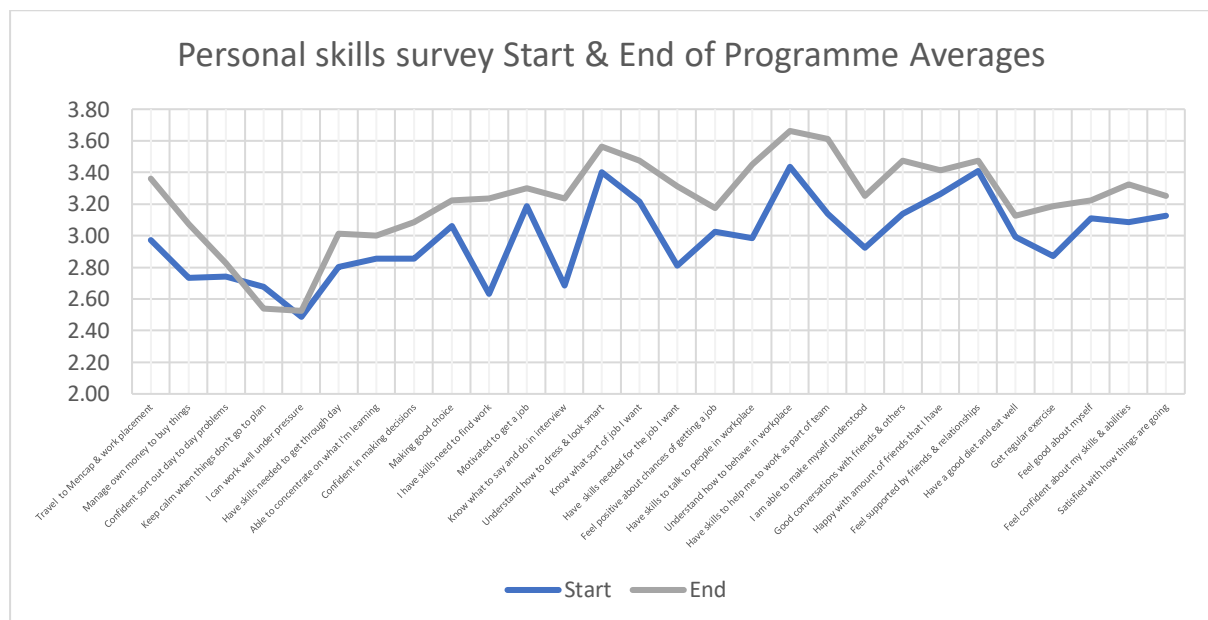
Appendix D Personal Skills Survey

Learner - Personal Skills Survey

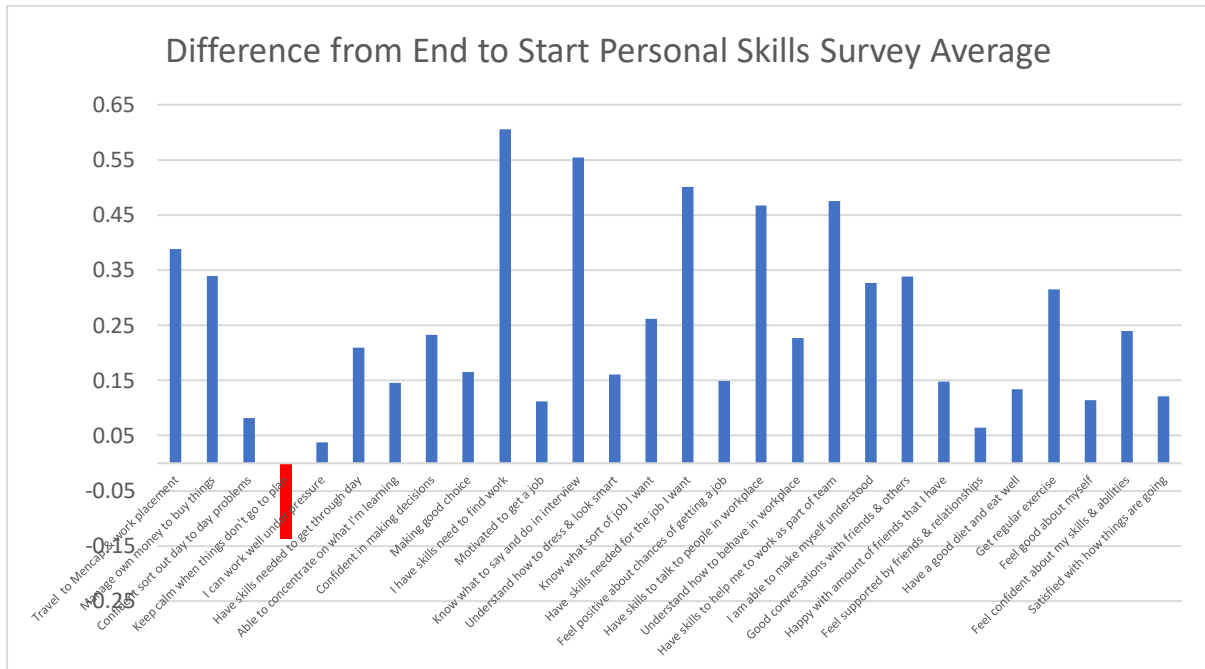| Outcome	Statement	😠 1	😟 2	🙂 3	😀 4
Learners learn new practical skills of budgeting and travelling to support independence	I can travel on my own to Mencap and my work placement				
	I can manage my own money to buy things I need				
Learners improve their problem-solving skills	I am confident I can sort out day to day problems myself				
Learners learn improved resilience and coping skills	I can keep calm when things don't go to plan				
	I can work well under pressure				
Learners become more generally independent	I have the skills I need to get through the day without too much help from others				
Learners learn new practical skills to support better life choices	I am able to concentrate on what I am learning				
Learners improve their decision-making skills	I am confident in making decisions for myself				
Learners make better life choices	I am making choices which are good for me				
Learners improve their skills to find work	I have the skills I need to help me find work				
Leaners acquire more aspirations and ambitions to work	I feel motivated to get a job				
Learners improve their interview skills	I know what to say and do in a job interview				
Learners improve their self presentation skills	I understand how to dress and look smart in the workplace				
Learners acquire new skills for particular work environments	I know what sort of job I want				
	I have the skills I need for the job I want				
Learners have increased motivation to become employed	I feel positive about my chances of getting a job				
Learners learn new skills for communicating with others at work	I have the skills to talk to people in the workplace				
Learners adopt more professional standards of behaviour	I understand how to behave in the workplace				
Learners are better at team working	I have the skills to help me to work as part of a team				
Learners improve their communication skills	I am more able to make myself understood				
Leaners learn new skills for communicating with others outside of work	I can have good conversations with friends and others in my community and share my thoughts with them				
Learners increase their personal networks	I am happy with the amount of friends that I have				

Outcome	Statement	😠 1	😠 2	🙂 3	😀 4
Learners improve their relationships	I feel supported by the friends and relationships in my life				
Learners improve their health and diet and exercise more	I have a good diet and eat well				
	I get regular exercise				
Learners improve their self esteem	I feel good about myself				
Learners improve their confidence	I feel confident about my skills and abilities				
Learners improve their Mental Health	I am satisfied with how things are going for me				

PSS Summary of Results

Personal skills survey Start & End of Programme Averages

Difference from End to Start Personal Skills Survey Average

Appendix E Learner Outcome Exercise

- Communication Skills x 5
- Listening skills x 3
- Presentation skills
- Group Conversations
- Talking and listening
- Functional skills
- Speaking
- Appropriate language
- Sending e-mail

- Self Confidence x 12
- Changed attitude & mood
- Self-motivation
- Fine motor skills
- Being yourself x 2
- Understand risk behaviour
- Feeling accepted
- Improved mental health
- Being positive
- Trusted as an adult
- Self-aware
- More open with people

- Customer service skills
- Work skills x 2
- Self-Discipline
- Being polite
- Getting work qual - care
- Working independently x 3
- Workplace expectations x 2
- Running an event
- IT Skills
- Leadership skills
- Professionalism x 2
- Till training

- Assertiveness x 4

- Budgeting skills x 7
- Money Management x 4
- Prioritise spending
- Pensions x 4
- Handling money

- Independence x 8
- Options re future living x 2
- Travel training x 6
- Learning to cook x 3
- Shopping
- Travel alone

- Organisational Skills x 4
- Being tidier
- Focus on tasks
- Time tabling skills
- Managing time
- Time keeping x 4
- Telling time
- Spatial awareness

- Eating Healthily
- Being healthier – food exercise

- Building relationships x 2
- Interactivity x 2
- Making friends x 4
- Interacting with new people x 5

- Work experience x 2
- CV writing x 7
- Get a job x 4

Learner comment: "Working with kids has been my dream and joining Mencap helped me make the next step towards getting a work placement

- Maths x 4
- Times table x 2s
- Functional skills

- British values x 2
- Understanding stereotypes
- Healthy relationships & boundaries
- Politics & radicalisation

Appendix F Summary of Paperwork & Interview Analysis of Personal Outcomes

Outcome	%age from paperwork analysis, based on number of completed forms	Numbers from paperwork	%age from learner interviews	Average %age of learners experiencing outcomes	Final number of learners experiencing outcomes
Learners improve their problem-solving skills	2.7%	3	14%	8%	12
Learners improve their decision-making skills	2.0%	2	16%	9%	13
Learners learn improved resilience and coping skills	5.0%	5	19%	12%	17
Learners learn new practical skills of money management to support better life choices	7.9%	8	22%	15%	21
Learners become more generally independent	82.2%	83	27%	55%	79
Learners improve their skills to find work	5.8%	6	32%	19%	27
learners improve their literacy and numeracy	21.2%	22	46%	34%	48
Learners improve their qualifications	4.8%	5		4%	5
Leaners acquire more aspirations and ambitions to work	68.3%	71	22%	45%	65
Improved employability skills	2.3%	3	27%	15%	21
Learners improve their interview skills	23.9%	31	24%	24%	35
Learners improve their self presentation skills	17.7%	23	24%	21%	30

Learners have increased motivation to become employed	56.2%	73	22%	39%	56
Value difference and become more tolerant	0.0%	0	8%	0%	0
Learners learn new skills for communicating with others at work	2.9%	3	24%	14%	20
Learners adopt more professional standards of behaviour	1.9%	2	16%	9%	13
Learners are better at team working	10.6%	11	14%	12%	17
Learners improve their communication skills	84.6%	88	38%	61%	88
Leaners learn new skills for communicating with others outside of work	7.3%	5	32%	20%	29
Learners increase their personal networks	5.8%	4	22%	14%	20
Learners improve their relationships	87.0%	60	16%	52%	74
Learners improve their self esteem	3.7%	3	41%	22%	32
Learners improve their confidence	96.3%	79	38%	67%	97
Learners improve their mental health	75.6%	62	16%	46%	66

Appendix G

Demographics of the 2021/2022 cohort of Supported Internship learners

161 learners were recruited to the SI programme in August 2021. Of these, 144 learners completed the programme. 17 dropped out early and 4 learners left early for employment. One third of the learners were female, two thirds were male.

Just over 65% were of White British origin. Just over 10% were of Asian or mixed Asian origin and just over 14% were of African/Caribbean or mixed origin. The remaining 9% were of Turkish, Arab, Persian or Cypriot origins.

57% of learners were living with mum and dad. 37% were living in a single parent family. Only 4% were living in supported accommodation or with foster carers.

74% were recorded as having a learning difficulty. Of these, 57% had a moderate learning difficulty, 3% had a severe learning difficulty, 2 learners had profound learning difficulties and 5% had another learning difficulty.

45% were identified as having a diagnosis on the autistic spectrum and another 10% were identified as having Asperger's Syndrome.

43% of learners were identified as presenting with speech, language and communication difficulties. 38% had behavioural difficulties, such as ADHD and ADD, and a further 38% were noted to have social and emotional difficulties. Learners also had physical issues: over 18% had a visual impairment, 8% had epilepsy and 6% were hearing impaired.

Across the whole learner cohort, an average of 3.2 'conditions' were identified per learner, thus illustrating the level of learners' challenges in achieving employment.

3% of learners were in employment – on a very part-time basis – when they joined the SI programme. Over 56% had been at college at some point since leaving school, but 33% were doing nothing. A small proportion (7%) were volunteering.

11% of learners had no Maths or English qualifications at all, and another 15% had no English or no Maths qualification. The vast majority only had entry level Maths and English – only 7% had qualifications at Level 3 or above.

Other qualifications were held, mainly in creative arts/media, ICT, science, food and hospitality and health and social care. Most of these vocational qualifications were at Level 1 or 2.

All but one learner had an EHC Plan. 25% had received a Work Capability Assessment from the Department of Work and Pensions. 18% only had a personal budget. The majority of learners were receiving PIP's at different levels, but 7% were receiving no benefits at all. There were references in the baseline assessment or enrolment forms to helping individuals claim different benefits that they were entitled to.

Almost two thirds of learners had no contact with a support agency, and no other form of support apart from their family.

Some of the quotes given by learners as to how their difficulties impacted on them were:

"I have low confidence, difficulty in expressing myself, need people to show me what to do and explain slowly. Can get confused in conversations."

"I struggle with my mental health."

"I find communicating is really challenging. I will need to get to know you before I speak to you."

"I think I have anger issues, I find it hard to calm down and I do swear when I'm angry but try not to. When I don't understand something or when I'm finding something difficult I get angry. I find it hard to ask for help, I feel really nervous and my anxiety kicks in. I have tried lots of techniques to calm down but it doesn't help. I walk away to calm down sometimes and that helps. I need space to calm down."

"Some people think I am being rude or bullying by joking around with my friends. I am quite colourful with my words. Sometimes this is if I feel anxious. I also have a fear of being sick when colds/flus are around and because of COVID my mental health has suffered."

Appendix H Values Game

The Values Game in Worcester and Northampton – event planner

Timing	Activity	Who	Resources
10am – 10.15am	Introductions and welcome. Ask for permission to take photos during the sessions	Tim and Sheila	
10.15am – 11.15am	**Step 1**: discuss what has changed for learners in general because of the SI programme. Then ask learners to list these changes (Tim and Sheila/project staff in attendance to help individuals). Discuss them as a group and agree a common list - include them all even if only 1 person reports it Ask the group to agree how best to represent the changes. Draw/paste on photos/paste on clip art onto one card for each change. Add wording to describe each change onto the A4 sheets	Tim to facilitate Sheila to help and to record outcomes and take photos	A4 paper, post its (Sheila to bring), coloured pens, pencils, Pritt sticks, clip art, magazines (Sheila to bring), scissors, laptop/PC's with access to printer
	Step 2: lay out these 'outcome cards' and all learners put sticky stars onto the ones that are important for them.	Tim/Sheila/staff to ensure learners doing it themselves and are not influenced by others	Tables big enough to take all the cards in one line Sticky stars (Sheila to bring)
BREAK – 11.15am – 11.30am			
11.30am – 1pm	**Step 3**: Ask each learner to give a list of 5 or 6 things they would like to be given – their birthday present list – and discuss them in the group Agree a list of 8/9 things they would **ALL** like. Make up 'product' cards for each of these things using the resources. Put an image of the thing on A4 card and a description. Arrange the cards from high to low value.	Tim and Sheila to ensure the cards are very specific, that the time period matches (e.g. over one year) and that there is a range of values	As above
LUNCH 1pm – 2pm		1 HOUR	

Timing	Activity	Who	Resources
2pm – approx. 3pm	**Step 4:** Lay out the product cards in order. Taking each of the outcome cards in turn, as a group discuss where to put them – ideally in between 2 product cards	Tim and Sheila to ensure the discussion is in depth enough. Sheila will make up new product cards if more are needed and take photos	As above
3pm	Wrap up and what happens next	Tim Sheila to ensure all photos are taken	

The following are summaries of the two sessions run at the Deep Dive Sites of the Values Game to support the development of suitable financial proxies through engagement of the key stakeholders

Values Game Northampton 24 May 22

Objective – to inform the outcome valuation process through engagement with Mencap Supported Internship Learners

Participants

6 Learners from SI programme

Mencap Colleagues

Facilitator
Tim Edwards

The methodology adopted is as outlined in appendix A

This was a more mixed groups of learners, some of which Tim had worked with previously. However the group was also joined by a number of learners on the first year study programme for periods during the day. This resulted in a much wider range of abilities in the group and prior knowledge and engagement with the process. Further the session had to work around a number of timetabling constraints on the day. While overall the methodology was still effective, it did create some challenges in terms of engagement.

Following introductions and a reminder of the purpose of the session and the work undertaken to date learners were asked to complete post it notes summarising the most important outcomes from the programme for them.

Developing Outcomes

These were then placed on the Board and grouped by themes and common areas:

Following a discussion, amongst the group to determine a consensus of outcomes to develop further the following were selected by the group

Customer service skills
Developing Teamwork skills
Developing friendships
Increased Work skills
Developing online safety
Improving self confidence
Having more fun in their life
Increased Personal Independence

Learners were then asked to use their creative skills to represent these outcomes

Teamwork	Customer Service	Work skills
Having more Fun	Confidence	Online Safety
Independence	Friendships	

Prioritising Outcomes

Following completion of this process, learners were given 5 stars to place on the outcomes that were most important to them, with the instruction to use all their stars but they could place as many as they wished on any particular outcome.

This resulted in the following in terms of a prioritised list of outcomes:

Online Safety	⭐⭐
Customer Service	⭐⭐⭐
Friendships	⭐⭐⭐
Having more fun	⭐⭐⭐⭐
Work Skills	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐
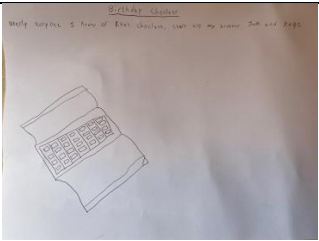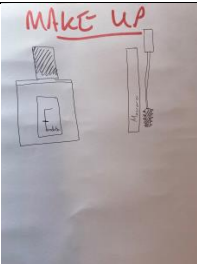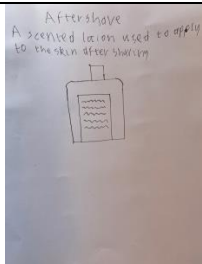
Confidence	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐
Independence	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐
Teamwork	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

Development of 'Birthday Wishlist'

Following the work on outcome, learners were asked to develop their own and then collective birthday present list to give a range of products that they've like and value.

Learners were then asked to draw or find suitable pictures to represent these items – this was a fun exercise and there were some licence take for some of the pictures!

After developing their own lists, the learners came up with a consolidated list of:

1- A block of chocolate	2- Make up	3 – Bottle of aftershave CK
4 – North Face Hoodie	5 – Festival tickets	6 -Latest I Phone
7 – A personalised number plate – around £ 400	8 – Foreign holiday – to New York	

Finally, learners were asked to place their outcomes in respect of their birthday wish list in terms of how they valued these outcomes compared to the amount they valued their birthday wish list. While this took some time to explain and rationalise for the learner's
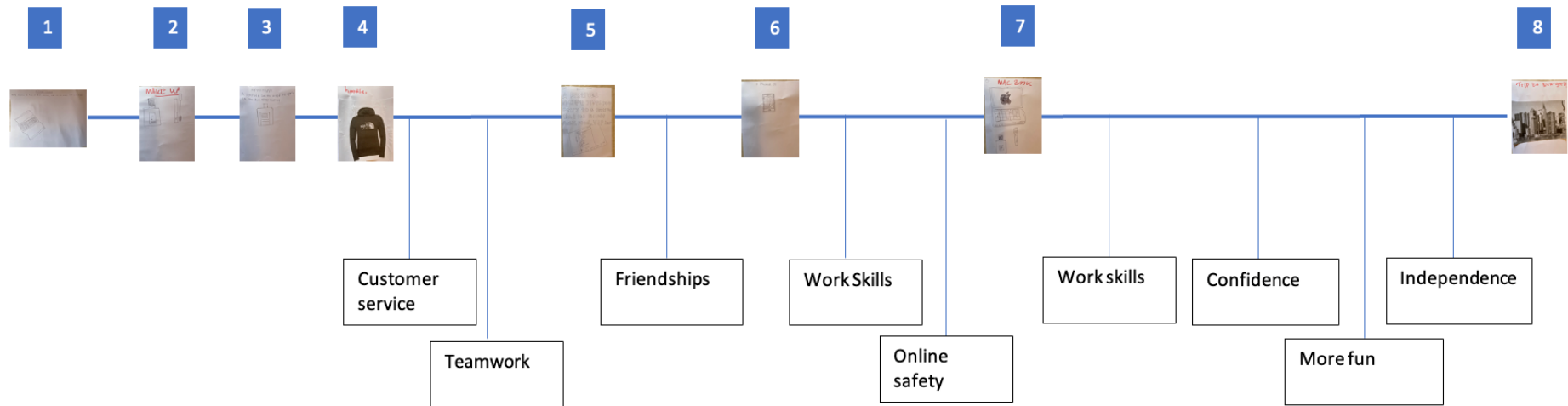
they engaged well with the task placing discussing and replacing outcomes till they had a list they were happy with

Learners with their value chain

This resulted following discussion and debate with an agreed ranking of prioritisation as follows

Valuation Map based on Learner Rankings

1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8

Customer service

Teamwork

Friendships

Work Skills

Online safety

Work skills

Confidence

More fun

Independence

Approximate proxy values based on learner evaluation

Outcome	Value range	Adopted Value
Increased Customer service skills	£80 - 200	£120
Developing Teamwork skills	£80 - 200	£160
Developing friendships	£350 - 1000	£165
Improved Work skills	£1000 - 1500	£1167
Developing online safety	£1000 - 1500	£1333
Improving self confidence	£1500 - 4000	£2125
Having more fun in their life	£1500 - 4000	£2750
Increased Personal Independence	£1500 - 4000	£3375

Conclusion

This session was a larger and more mixed ability group and included a significant number of learners who had been joined from a first year Study Programme Group without prior notice to the facilitators, who came and went during the day. Further the session had to accommodate a last-minute session undertaken by the Red Cross. Despite these issues, learners engaged effectively, although the Study Programme learners were understandably less clear on the process or the intention behind the research.

An incident required the intervention with a staff member and therefore there was not the same degree of support available to learners as had been possible in Worcester, but where possible staff were supportive and assisted the learners.

Overall, despite the somewhat complex circumstances, the learners were helpful and worked well to generate a value map and were considered in their choices and options made.

Values Game Worcester 23 May 2022

Objective – to inform the outcome valuation process through engagement with Mencap Supported Internship Learners

Participants

10 learners

Mencap Colleagues

Diane Hughes
Charlotte Maund-Ruff

Facilitator

Tim Edwards

The methodology adopted is as outlined in appendix A

The group were a mix of two working groups who had been asked to join the session, all had some previous experience of the work through engagement with the first phase of interviews and outcomes work.

Following introductions and a reminder of the purpose of the session and the work undertaken to date learners were asked to complete post it notes summarising the most important outcomes from the programme for them.

Developing Outcomes

These were then placed on the Board and grouped by themes and common areas:

Following a discussion, amongst the group to determine a consensus of outcomes to develop further the following were selected by the group

- Improving mathematics skills
- Improving English skills
- Improving personal resilience
- Improving prioritisation/ planning
- Co-operation and teamwork skills
- Improving self confidence
- Improving work skills
- Increasing independence
- Improving communication skills
- Tolerance and inclusivity

Learners were then asked to use their creative skills to represent these outcomes

Mathematics skills	Cooperation	English skills
Resilience	Prioritisation	Tolerance and being inclusive
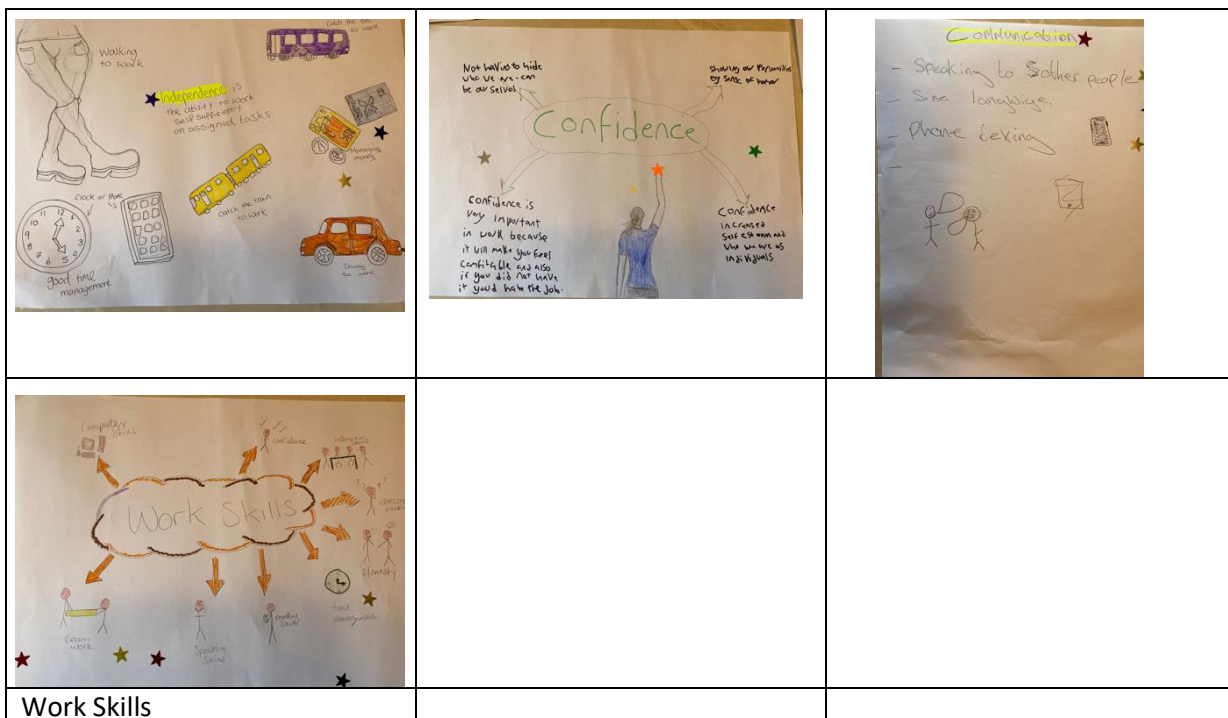
Work Skills		

Learners working on their outcome pictures

Prioritising Outcomes

Following completion of this process, learners were given 5 stars to place on the outcomes that were most important to them, with the instruction to use all their stars but they could place as many as they wished on any particular outcome.

This resulted in the following in terms of a prioritised list of outcomes:

Improving English skills	⭐
Improving personal resilience	⭐
Increasing independence	⭐
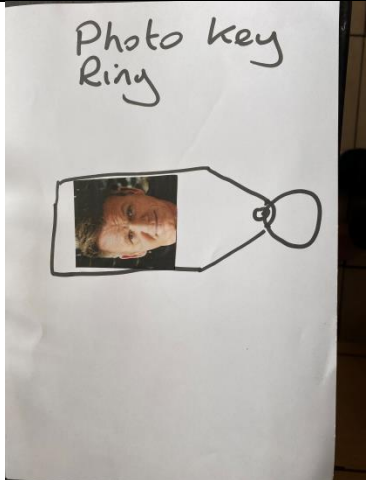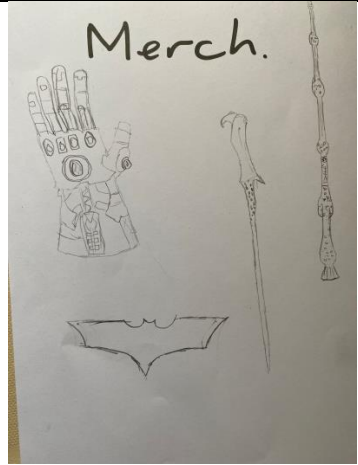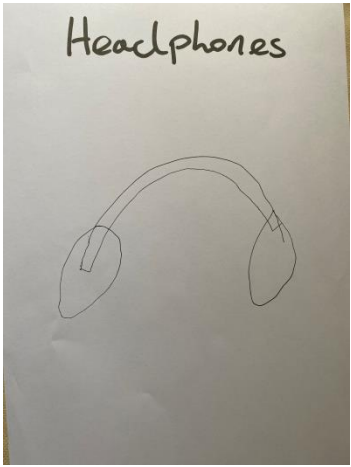
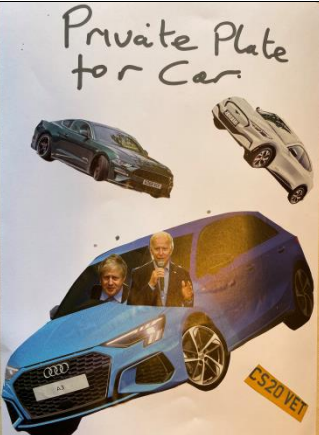|	
Improving mathematics skills	⭐⭐
Tolerance and inclusivity	⭐⭐
Improving self confidence	⭐⭐⭐
Improving communication skills=	⭐⭐⭐⭐
Improving work skills	⭐⭐⭐⭐
Improving prioritisation/planning	⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐
Co-operation and teamwork skills	⭐⭐⭐⭐ ⭐⭐
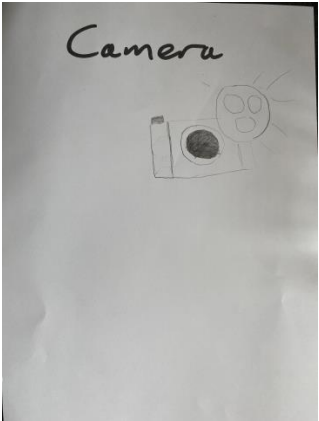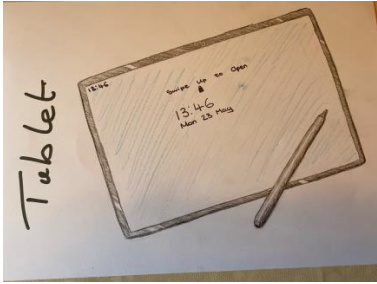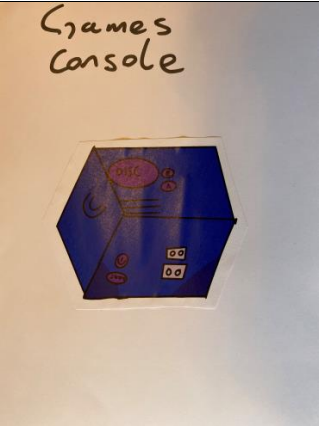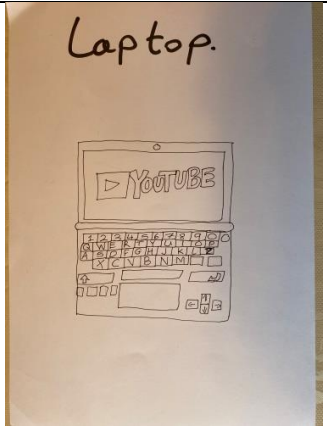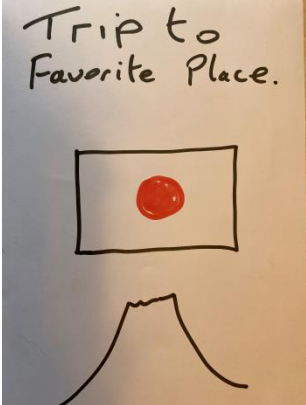
Development of 'Birthday Wishlist'

Following the work on outcome, learners were asked to develop their own and then collective birthday present list to give a range of products that they've like and value.

Learners were then asked to draw or find suitable pictures to represent these items – this was a fun exercise and there were some licence take for some of the pictures!

After developing their own lists, the learners came up with a consolidated list of:

1 A photo key ring	2 Merchandise – a Harry potter wand	3 - Headphones – around £80
4 - A Camera	5 - An IT Tablet – around £200	6 - A family day out

7 - A personalised number plate – around £ 400	8 - A Games Console	9 - A Mac Book
10 - Foreign holiday – to Japan		

Finally, learners were asked to place their outcomes in respect of their birthday wish list in terms of how they valued these outcomes compared to the amount they valued their birthday wish list. While this took some time to explain and rationalise for the learners, they engaged well with the task placing discussing and replacing outcomes till they had a list they were happy with

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This resulted following discussion and debate with an agreed ranking of prioritisation as follows

Valuation Map based on Learner Rankings

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Maths skills

English skills

Resilience

Prioritisation /planning

Cooperation /Teamwork

Confidence

Work skills

Independence

Communication

Tolerance & Inclusion

Approximate proxy values based on learner evaluation

Outcome	Value range	Adopted Value
Improving mathematics skills	£10-50	£25
Improving English skills	£120-200	£160
Improving personal resilience	£200 - 300	£250
Improving prioritisation/ planning	£300-450	£375
Co-operation and teamwork skills	£450-900	£600
Improving self confidence	£450-900	£750
Improving work skills	£900 - 1200	£1050
Increasing independence	£1200 - £3000	£1800
Improving communication skills	£1200 - £3000	£2400
Tolerance and inclusivity	£1200 - £3000	£3000

Conclusions

This was a good group to work with, supported by Mencap staff who were very helpful in ensuring learners could engage effectively. In general, they were generally a higher ability group who worked together effectively and were articulate and had high expectations regarding their future.

One learner did have some issues during the day that required some intervention from a safeguarding perspective, but this was handled professionally and overall did not unduly impact on the progress made and the issues were being resolved.

It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to work with the group and interact the feedback generally was positive, and learners and the staff enjoyed the interactivity of the session.

Appendix I – Stakeholder Justification

Stakeholder	Commentary	Included/Excluded for research
Learners	Fundamental focus of the programme and key stakeholder	Included
Mencap Staff	While essential to the success of the programme as they can gain outcomes by working with other LD organisations in an employment setting, hence deadweight is high and therefore their outcomes are not material.	Excluded
Employers	Employers have significant impact on programme and outcomes and gain through interaction with the programme	Included
College Providers Referrals	Colleges were included only in as far as they supply learners to the programme as referral agencies. Learners and parents frequently stated that 'they had moved on from college' and only 3.4% of learners went back to FE at the end of the SI programme	Included
Local Authorities	Provide Education Health Care Plans for learners establishing intended outcomes and provide funding for the SI programme in some areas. Normally, the Local Authority department involved was the local Special Educational Needs or SEND, and so these two groups are collapsed into one	Included under 'National DWP, NHS and Local Government' for savings in support costs but also under Support Agencies for staff time savings
Funders ESFA	Set the parameters, structure and rules of SI programmes	Included under 'National DWP, NHS and Local Government'
DWP	While not directly engaged in the programme DWP set rules re eligibility for benefits and outcomes related to employment etc are material to their objectives and targets	Included under 'National DWP, NHS and Local Government'
Health workers, GP's etc working in the national NHS	They provide important support services, but are not directly engaged in the programme. Improvements in health especially mental health as a result of the programme however are relevant to future service demand in NHS services, as mental health improvements amongst learners was reported to be significant. The health impact from learners on the NHS in general was therefore considered material, but the contribution of the local health services was only mentioned occasionally in interviews, hence was considered immaterial.	Included under 'National DWP, NHS and Local Government'
Family/parents	Families provide vital support and are affected by the changes made as a result of the programme	Included
Support agencies/Referral agencies/ Local Authorities SEND teams	36% of learners had support from other agencies and referral agencies, many of which were LA SEND teams and third sector organisations	Included

Stakeholder	Commentary	Included/Excluded for research
Supported Living Providers	For learners in supported accommodation, the interaction with the programme and the accommodation provider is important and interconnected, but no particular outcomes belonged to this stakeholder and so their outcomes were included within the outcomes for support agencies in general.	Excluded
Other additional Support Services	These were found to be limited in scope and only relevant to small numbers of people on the programme hence immaterial	Excluded

Appendix J

Materiality of Outcomes

Outcomes	Relevant	Significant	Materiality
Communication skills	✓	✓	Learner considered this to be very important to support their progress towards employment and personal independence – considered material for SROI
Listening skills	✓	x	Agreed to be a subset of communication skills
Presentation skills	✓	x	Subset of learning new skills for communicating with others
Group Conversations	✓	x	Subset of learning new skills for communicating with others
Talking and listening	✓	x	Subset of learning new skills for communicating with others
Functional skills	✓	✓	Defined as improved qualifications
Speaking	✓	x	Subset of learning new skills for communicating with others
Appropriate language	✓	x	Included within 'More professional standards of behaviour'
Sending an e-mail	✓	x	Subset of learning new skills for communicating with others
Self confidence	✓	✓	
Changed attitude and mood	✓	✓	Included in Improved mental health
Self motivation	✓	✓	
Fine motor skills	x	x	No evidence
Assertiveness	✓	✓	Included as part of coping and resilience
Being yourself	✓	✓	Included as part of Self esteem
Understanding risk behaviour	✓	x	Included as sub set of independence
Feeling accepted	✓	x	Included as sub set of self esteem
Improved mental health	✓	✓	Widespread feeling that the programme positively supported improvements in their mental health
Being positive	✓	x	Included in Improved mental health
Trusted as an adult	x	x	
Self aware	✓	x	Included in Improved mental health
More open with people	✓	x	Subset of learning new skills for communicating with others
Customer service skills	✓	✓	Sub set of learning new skills for work
Work skills	✓	✓	Sub set of learning new skills for work
Self discipline	✓	x	Included as part of coping and resilience
Being polite	x	x	No direct evidence of impact of programme
Getting work in care	✓	x	Sub set of learning new skills for work
Working independently	✓	✓	Independence strongly correlated across research
Workplace expectations	✓	✓	Included as part of Professional standards of behaviour
Running an event	x	x	Little corroborating evidence of impact
IT skills	✓	✓	Included as part of Learning new skills to find

			work
Leadership skills	✓	x	Limited evidence of impact
Professionalism	✓	✓	Included as part of Professional standards of behaviour
Till Training	✓	✓	Sub set of learning new skills for work
Budgeting skills	✓	✓	Included in Independence skills
Money Management	✓	✓	Included in Independence skills
Prioritise spending	✓	✓	Included in Independence skills
Pensions	✓	✓	Included in Independence skills
Handling money	✓	✓	Included in Independence skills
Independence	✓	✓	Strong corelation with increased independence across the research
Options re future living	✓	✓	Included in Independence skills
Travel training/travel alone	✓	✓	Included in Independence skills
Learning to cook	✓	✓	Included in Independence skills
Shopping	✓	✓	Included in Independence skills
Organisational skills	✓	✓	Improved decision making skills – research showed strong corelation with leaners confidence in decision making
Being tidier	✓	x	Limited evidence to corroborate
Focus on tasks	✓	✓	Included as sub set of coping and resilience
Timetabling skills	✓	✓	Included as part of coping and resilience
Managing time	✓	✓	Included as parent of improved decision making
Time keeping	✓	✓	Included as part of Professional standards of behaviour
Telling time	✓	✓	Included in Independence skills
Spatial awareness	✓	x	Limited evidence of impact
Healthy eating	✓	x	Limited evidence of impact
Being healthier – food exercise	✓	x	Limited evidence of impact
Building relationships	✓	✓	Increased personal networks strongly confirmed through research and triangulated across stakeholders
Interactivity/interacting with new people	✓	✓	Included in Personal networks
Making friend's	✓	✓	Included in Personal networks
Work experience	✓	✓	Included in increased motivation to work
CV skills	✓	✓	Included in learning new skills for work – strongly supported through interviews and PSS
Get a job	✓	✓	Included in increased motivation to work
Maths/Times tables/Functional skills	✓	✓	Improved literacy and numeracy – clear focus of programme and evidence of progress and impact
British values	✓	x	Value difference and being more tolerant – limited evidence available to assess impact
Understanding stereotypes	✓	x	Value difference and being more tolerant – limited evidence available to assess impact
Healthy relationships	✓	x	Value difference and being more tolerant – limited evidence available to assess impact

Appendix K
Evidence of deductions to establish impact

Outcome		Source			
		Deadweight	Attribution	Displacement	Drop Off
Learners	Learners improve their problem-solving skills Learners improve their decision-making skills Learners learn improved resilience and coping skills Learners learn new practical skills of budgeting and travelling to support independence Learners become more generally independent Learners improve their skills to find work learners improve their literacy and numeracy Learners improve their qualifications Learners acquire more aspirations and ambitions to work Improved employability skills Learners improve their interview skills Learners improve their self presentation skills Learners have increased motivation to become employed Value difference and become more tolerant Learners learn new skills for communicating with others at work Learners adopt more professional standards of behaviour Learners are better at team working Learners improve their communication skills Learners learn new skills for communicating with others outside of work Learners increase their personal networks Learners improve their relationships Learners improve their self esteem Learners improve their confidence Learners improve their mental health Learners get a full-time paid job Learners get a part-time paid job Learners get an apprenticeship	5.1% - percentage of learners who would have achieved a job outcome without the programme. DWP statistic reported at https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/research-and-statistics/employment-research-and-statistics	9% - based on learner interviews and feedback related to other contributions to their outcomes	0% concluded that there was no displacing effect given the low numbers overall compared to the scale of wider employment market and investment in skills	For employment based outcomes a drop off of 25% was applied based on data provided via FE Week [90] 11% for personal outcomes drop off was based on the attrition rate of learners on the programme

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Parents	More hope for the future Better atmosphere at home and family is less stressed Better balance between work, looking after the family and own needs Better communication with learner	4% - based on specific reports by parents in the interviews as to how much change might have happened for them without the programme	15% - based on parental interviews and feedback related to other contributions to their outcomes	0% concluded that there was no displacement effect given the low numbers overall compared to the scale of wider employment market and investment in skills	11% - based on the programme attrition rates outlined for learners
Employers	Better public image of company with clients Recognition that people with learning disabilities do have something to offer their organisation and they have a positive effect on workplace culture	5.1% - there was no direct evidence to support the level of deadweight for employers, hence the same figure was adopted as for learners and parents based on employment rates of people with LD	0% it was concluded there was no attribution in the case of employers as these outcomes would not have been delivered without the programme	0% it was concluded that there was no displacement effect given the low numbers overall compared to the scale of wider employment market and investment in skills	11% based on the programme attrition rates outlined for learners
National NHS and Local Government	Accrued benefits to the NHS and Local Government through reduced demand for services	5.1% - Percentage of learner who would have achieved a job outcome without the programme	0% it was concluded there was no attribution in the case of public agencies as these outcomes would not have been delivered without the programme	0% concluded that there was no displacement effect given the low numbers overall compared to the scale of wider employment market and investment in skills	For employment based outcomes a drop off of 25% based on data provided via FE Week [91]
Support agencies/ Referral agencies/ Local Authorities SEND teams	Reduced amount of resources spent on learners who are supported by Mencap	Based on information from learner interviews with re role of support – 7% of learners report having external support so they may have been expected	0% it was concluded there was no attribution in the case of employers as these outcomes would not have been delivered without the	0% concluded that there was no displacement effect given the low numbers overall compared to the scale of wider employment market and	11% based on the programme attrition rates outlined for learners

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[91] https://feweek.co.uk/just-1-in-4-send-students-in-work-a-year-after-supported-internship-ends/

		to gain personal outcomes anyway	programme	investment in skills	

Appendix L

Case Studies

Mencap Supported Internship case study - A

Before joining the SI programme, A. did not travel independently. He had never worked, but he wasn't looking for work when he joined Mencap.

A. had mental health issues as well as a learning disability, social and emotional issues and speech and language challenges. He needed a lot of help from his family to get up and out the door in time for his Mencap classes.

When A. left the SI programme, he moved into paid employment as a kitchen assistant in a pizza chain. He started on 16 hours a week and was still with the employer two months later.

A has massively improved his skills for independent living. He is now punctual, having learnt to tell the time while with Mencap. He has improved his employability skills greatly, improved his communication with colleagues and is more confident. He can share his emotions more readily when he is upset or frustrated, and this has improved his relationships with other people.

Mencap Supported Internship case study - B

When B started on the SI programme he was employed three evenings a week, but in a job he didn't like. His aim when he joined the programme was to find a better job that he would actually enjoy doing. His main issue was dyslexia, but he also was hearing impaired and had a diagnosis of ASD.

He really improved his independent travelling, problem-solving and coping strategies. His confidence, self-esteem and mental health also really improved.

When he left, he had found a paid job in a care home and two months later he was still working there.

B has this to say about the difference the Supported Internship programme had made to him:

'I am rubbish with the internet and Indeed was quite alien to me, so being taught useful stuff like interview skills and help with searching for jobs was great as there is no way I would have been able to do it on my own. The staff on the course were really lovely, I highly respected that they treated us like adults, they helped me a lot and I made some good friends. I am enjoying my new jobs, 110% more than my old hospitality role that I had when I started the course. At work I can be goofy, be myself and can show my true colours. Work experience showed me it's not easy and days in a care home are never the same, you do get the regulars but it taught me and helped me with moving into my new role."

Mencap Supported Internship case study - C

When C started on the SI programme his main issues over and above his learning disability were social, emotional and behavioural issues. He also had to overcome some phobias and the impact of his epilepsy. He had never worked since leaving school, but at college he had achieved a L2 qualification in vehicle maintenance, and he was keen to get a paid job in the motor trade. He also wanted to be living independently.

During the programme, C learnt new strategies to manage his emotions and work well with other people. He made more friends, and learnt how to manage money. He found he had personal strengths in caring for other people and leading a team.

He left the programme for a paid job at a car manufacturer, in the parts warehouse working 16 hours a week, and two months later he was still working there. He had also moved into independent living.

Mencap Supported Internship case study - D

When D started on the SI programme his main challenges were social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, as well as his learning disability. He also had mental health issues. He had been to college but had never worked. He wanted to get a job that would make him happy, but he also wanted to live independently. He was living with his grandparents when he joined the programme.

As a result of the programme, D really improved his independence skills such as problem-solving and coping skills. He improved his budgeting skills, his communication skills with colleagues at work, he made more friends and learnt new strategies for managing his mental health issues.

When he left the programme, he moved into independent living. He didn't find a job, but he continued as a volunteer in the charity shop where he did his work placement, and is continuing to look for work. He is regularly attending the Job centre.

His case worker commented on the difference in D:

"An almost unrecognisable young man compared to the one who came to us in the beginning." "His appearance and demeanour have improved, his positive outlook is very prominent and he feels more ready to go out and become independent and self-sufficient."

Mencap Supported Internship case study - E

When E started on the SI programme her main challenges were ADHD, dyslexia, and visual impairment. She had been to college but had never worked. She had not achieved a maths qualification but had achieved Entry Level 3 in English.

The Mencap staff worked really hard with E to improve her employability skills – helping her understand what employers needed in the way of dress standards, and how to communicate with work colleagues appropriately as part of a team.

As a result of the programme, E was able to make better decisions and got better at problem-solving. She improved her confidence, became better at independent travel and learnt new employability skills, such as applying for jobs online. Her maths improved so she was able to manage her money better.

E continued to work as a volunteer in the cafe where she did her work placement, and continues to look for work.