



## Parent/ Carer and Child consultation events

In January and February 2020 we completed three parent/ carer focus groups and four child consultation events in two partner-led and two family-led early years pilots. During this process we consulted with 17 adults and 38 children. Transcripts of the consultations are attached at the end of the report. All data has been anonymised, parents have given written informed consent for both their young people and themselves to take part in the events and children gave oral consent at the start of the meeting. All consultations started with a short (age-appropriate) briefing detailing the aims of the consultation and explaining that there was no requirement to take part in part or all of the consultation and that they could leave at any time. Each consultation ended with a debrief where adults and children were thanked for taking part, the aim of the consultation was reiterated and they were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Adults comprised of Mothers, Fathers and Grandparents. There was an even spread of four and five year olds, and girls and boys among the children.

### Findings

#### Programme

In both models there was a consensus among adults and young children that they preferred the outdoor, 'scouty' activities (such as den-building, lighting fires, campfire songs) in the programme compared to art and craft activities. Both adults and children expressed a wish to spend more time outdoors and taking part in team-building activities and games. A few adults reported that they felt some of the activities were too much like school, especially the art and crafts and that only one of the six themes of the programme would have been sufficient for their child.

Adults commented on how the consistent, routine structure of the meetings was important to their child settling in and in building their confidence during their time in the pilot, a consistent start and end routine was identified as most important.

Many commented that taking ownership over some of the activities such as self sign-in was really important to their child settling in and building their personal confidence and responsibility for self. All adults consulted felt their children had grown in confidence, both within and outside the meetings, and that they had built on their teamwork, turn-taking and self awareness skills since joining the pilot, which has supported their development and the settling in period at school.

#### Stickers and badges

Stickers were a contentious issue among the pilot consultations. Many adults commented on the instant reward from receiving a sticker and the importance to the children of understanding how taking part in the activities led to this reward. However a couple of adults felt that the stickers didn't have much value and receiving one each week also detracted from the stickers value. These adults in particular felt that it was important for the children to have something to work towards and that a badge system would add this value. When badges were mentioned during the adult consultations almost all felt that they would be

beneficial to the children, there were concerns that some children might not be able to follow why they earned a badge if it occurred over a number of meetings. However, some felt that this was an important skill to learn at this age. There was also a concern about the extra sewing of badges onto uniform.

### **Parental engagement in the family-led model**

Two levels of parental engagement were observed and commented on during the family-led pilot consultations:

- Adults sit and watch, and occasionally take part in some of the activities, only supporting their child
- Adults take part in the activities and games but only with their child

Adults running activities or games during meetings was not observed during the consultations.

In consultation with adults many felt they did not want to stay at the meetings and that needing an adult to stay was a barrier to many children taking part in the pilot. Some adults felt uncomfortable staying with their child and that they weren't getting the greatest benefit from the pilot with the adult being there, one adult commented on a parent with a disability being unable to attend each week so their child couldn't take part in the pilot and a number of adults with older or younger children stated that this made attending difficult due to bedtimes, or disruptive siblings.

A few adults expressed that they preferred to stay but not take an active part in the pilot, they enjoyed watching their child enjoying the programme and being on hand during the settling in period especially for the younger children.

Only a couple of adults consulted felt that they had the relevant skills to run an activity or meeting.

Understanding and knowledge of what skills were required to run a meeting or activity was a particular barrier, even for adults who had a background in the early years or scouting. One of the adults who felt they had the skills to run an activity or meeting had a scouting background, however they felt their child wouldn't benefit from the session if they ran it and would struggle with sharing their parent, may become clingy or act out.

Many parents expressed the concern that if they did take part in leading a session their child would either feel jealous at sharing the parents attention or would not listen as they did to the leaders, and would not benefit like they would if their parent wasn't running the session.

There were also concerns that if the programme was run by a group of parents it would become 'cliquey' and intimidating to outsiders of the friendship group. Adults expressed that they had built a friendship, support group within the pilot without knowing anyone before and this had supported their children to make friends outside of their school friendship group.

### **Home learning environment**

Although very few of the adults consulted carried on the meeting activities from the parent letter, general aspects of the programme made it into normal family and school life. This included singing the 'Hedgehog song' together, making s'mores and campfires, and teaching siblings some of the activities from the meetings. An example of this was one child taking their siblings outside to go on a 'leaf hunt'.

Adults and children both commented on sharing the 'at home' activities primarily with grandparents and that they enjoyed this time together.

The pilots with higher levels of children from areas of deprivation (one partner-led and one family-led) expressed the most benefit at home. They were introduced to new games, activities and conversations with their children.

Those with fewer children in areas of deprivation commented that they were already doing these activities at home but that the pilot had reignited their enthusiasm in these activities.

### **Understanding the wider scouting family**

In all the consultations the children who were aware of the wider family of scouting had siblings in other sections. Involvement in wider district and group events was dependent on local scouting and varied between the family-led pilots however the partner-led pilots did not take part in any wider events although there were plans to invite parents to.

The investitures were an incredibly important event for the children in the pilots. Adults expressed that their children were proud to make their promise and that it was important to them. Those who hadn't made their promise were excited to do so and all children had some understanding of what their neckerchief represented, apart from one partner-led pilot.

### **Age range of children in the pilot**

All adults felt that the age range for the pilot was the best choice. Reasons for this included there being a lack of after school activities for four year olds and the opportunities missed for this age range, concern around coping abilities if starting 'Hedgehogs' after they had started school and the confidence and teambuilding skills that the children gain as part of the pilot, being beneficial to the child when starting school.

Many parents expressed that taking part in the pilot had supported their child in settling into school. The structure and routine was particularly beneficial, a number of adults cited the building of the child's confidence, self awareness and self belief were all hugely important to them settling into school. One adult remarked that they had a child start in Beavers at the same time as starting the pilot, this child had not stayed at Beavers and they felt that if they had started at a younger age they would have been more settled when it came to attending Beavers.

### **Youth-shaped programme**

Children unanimously agreed that they enjoyed Hedgehogs. Those taking part in the family-led model all agreed that they enjoyed having their adult present with one child stating that his favourite thing about Hedgehogs was "spending time with Grandma".

When asked which activities they enjoyed there was a huge variety including playing hide and seek, craft activities and outdoor activities. Children primarily enjoyed team games, running around, meetings which took place outdoors and adventurous activities including den-building and campfires. For many of the children the pilot was the first time they had toasted a marshmallow.

The pilots appeared to tailor the meetings to the children involved, at every consultation the adult volunteers or staff members running the session discussed how they had changed the programme to fit the children, most notably one of the partner-led pilots had rearranged how they managed activities to support a number of children with additional needs, whilst not taking away from the learning of the rest of the group.

From observations during the consultation it was clear that interaction between children was as expected for the age range - children played or took part in activities in solo next to each other and communication was primarily adult to child rather than peer to peer discussion.

Almost all the young people involved enjoyed the story at the beginning and the songs at the beginning and end and had shared these with friends and family.

Children said they would tell their friends that Hedgehogs was fun, that you learn and make things that you can take home and you play fun games.

All children unanimously stated that they enjoyed Hedgehogs and wanted to come each week and didn't like going home at the end.

**Parent and child consultation event transcriptions**

**Pilot 1 – Family-led – Adult – 27/01/2020**

**8 adults**

How did you find them starting?

- They settled quickly

What have you enjoyed about being part of Hedgehogs?

- Not sewing on badges
- Don't want to get involved
- Would change the day
- Very quickly felt involved, helped seeing other parents involved
- It's nice that he knows the group and knows the leaders when he moves up, they know the structure and get to see their siblings in the other sections.

Do you do any activities or talk about the sessions at home/ or not?

- My child does the activities with my parents and shares what he's been doing with them. He also talks about it at school – likes to share the activities, he shows them what he does outside, talks about fire safety, has taken his book in to talk to the class. School has been great at sharing what they have been doing in the weekly assemblies, showing their certificates when they were invested.
- They like singing the songs at home and sharing the songs with their families and getting other siblings to be involved.

Would you feel confident about leading a meeting or an activity within a meeting?

- No, I wouldn't – pretty much all parents said this
- Children react better to someone different
- It's been tricky for parents who can't be involved because they can't come, these children have been missing out.
- Worried it would be cliqy if run by a group of parents and intimidating to anyone new joining. Having volunteers running this, stops it from feeling this way.
- We found it tough to begin with that the same parent had to come and friends couldn't look after their children so the children are missing out.
- Relaxing on this would make it feel more inclusive
- Due to personal circumstances, can't be there every week (disabled) so child misses out as husband can't bring him.
- Adults became friends now, even though didn't know each other before.

Have you seen a change in your child since starting this?

- Not outside of this, she's quite shy but her confidence has massively grown in the sessions, doing the circle first has helped the structure to make sure all children feel confident in the session before starting games and activities.
- Structured
- Independence – putting their own name on the board, looking after themselves during the session
- Making new friends – more confident
- Helped with feeling confident in school, in the same setting but also used to being in a structured group and getting used to going into new settings.
- We were desperate for this, as he has been desperate to go to Beavers since older sibling started.

Do you have any comments or advice that you would give to someone who is starting out in the role you are in?

- Strongly recommend
- Heard about it through word of mouth – leaflets ignored as just in book bags
- Formal meeting – letterhead would have been more useful in drumming up support
- It's a great opening to afterschool activities – there's great progression, starting when they start school and there's not much for this age range.

#### **Parent & child consultation**

- They get affirmations throughout the session and this really helps them feel confident in the session, especially for the ones who might not know others in the group.

**Pilot 1 –Family-led - Child – 27.01.2019**

**8 children**

What would you like to do in Hedgehogs?

- I like playing
- I like to draw
- I would like to design things – pictures – design some dresses
- I would like to run around
- I like to play

What new things have you found out in Hedgehogs?

- I found out someone had sweeties
- That I like to run
- That Hedgehogs are nocturnal
- About sounds, hear through ears
- I can do something that I couldn't do before

What is the best thing that you have done in Hedgehogs?

- Running
- Playing
- Starting hedgehogs, writing name and putting the Hedgehogs on the board
- Playing games
- I liked it when we did the s'mores
- I like seeing my Grandma (who brings him to Hedgehogs)

**Pilot 2 – Family-led– Adult – 3/2/2020**

**5 adults**

What you as parents have got from the programme and what you have enjoyed?

- First real week, watched last week
- Since sister joined has desperately wanted to be a Beaver, scouting enormously important to husband. Being able to stay with him has been really good, he gets quite nervous but knowing the leaders from beavers has really helped. Familiarity, routine, structure has been really important, start and end being the same is really important to him. Couldn't do it if older sibling wasn't able to come.
- Know others who's children couldn't come due to parents not being able to stay
- Parent who is disabled and can't drive so can't come as she can't get there but if another parent could bring her daughter to

Scout led or family led

- Want a scout-led programme – den building, marshmallows, snowball fight, obstacle course- been building them non-stop ever since. One family has left due to rainbows, she had never had a bonfire or toasted a marshmallow, my children got the chance to support her to do the activities.

If parents had access to the programme with a scout leader to mentor

- If I'm here and actively taking part my son will cling to me, if I'm around he just wants to be with me.
- Consensus of whole group
- Those whose children have been there a term don't have this so strongly, could now leave.
- Built a strong relationship and confidence with the leader, such a massive confidence boost from putting on his uniform and taking part in the group, much more than he has at school.
- Massively built confidence, don't need parents anymore
- Asks if it's hedgehogs everyday
- Very proud of stickers
- Starting off smaller has really helped

Would you be happy to lead a session or activity?

- I don't have the skill set or background and wouldn't feel confident doing it
- EY leader- nice to come with child and not be in a teacher role, happy to stay but not to lead, watching how they interact and socialise
- Nice to sit back and enjoy and help out when needed
- Taking a leadership role when own child is in the group – really hard on own child's behaviour. Not a particular fan of the booklet programme – EY background, - a lot of the stuff in the other sections is still all about making and creative, too much sitting down at a table and doing stuff and not enough about being outdoors and doing things, not why I bring my child. Want more scouty activities, extra scouty things are really important, collaborative, team working, turn taking – that they don't get at school, hoping that when weather improves will be able to go outside, they are at school so want to be outside and misses forest school from nursery. Part of a group that is a cooperative (woodcraft folk) struggling to get people to want to volunteer and lead. People don't really want to step up, stepping up in front of children and parents is daunting and don't want to
- I would love to do it from scouting point of view but not with my child in group, he'd get jealous of sharing me, wouldn't listen to me as well.
- Badges – work towards badges. Don't like the stickers, get a sticker for everything, badges much more exciting and proud, want a campfire blanket like older sibling, not too young to learn the concept of working toward a badge over a few weeks. Doing something for the community or the environment really important for building progression during the project.
- The sticker books are so dull, they don't take them home.
- To be honest they love a sticker
- I don't like that they aren't working towards something, that instant gratification is what is wrong with society and they need to be working toward something.
- Stickers after a while lose their value, they have to be a bit of effort in.

- Get a sticker for everything just wandering into a building.

Have you replicated any of the activities at home?

- We have always done obstacle courses and hiding things around the house but this has all been reignited through the programme.
- There's nothing new for us
- Introduced to smore biscuits
- Done lots of campfires but not done that

Do you think your children go home and tell other people about what they have been doing and talk about hedgehogs?

- Yes they definitely do
- They are proud that they are doing something for themselves and not something that their siblings have done
- Not the kind of child that will go and share stuff with other people, if asked will talk about it
- Does ask when going, he's enjoyed being part of it, nothing new or stretching for him, it's not stuck in his mind, it's seeing his friends and leaders, children in other schools. Important that they mix with other kids.
- Children from all three of the local schools, conversations at all the three schools
- Socialising with other children is really important as they have a small group of friends

Have you seen any other changes in your child since joining?

- No
- Helped with learning about winning and losing and watching how other children react to this
- Talked at school about how they are going to hedgehogs even though they're not strong friends at school
- Do talk about it at school

Did they take anything from investitures

- Very proud of doing promise
- Really important to them
- Took it very seriously
- Feeling like they belonged
- Reverence and respect for those who had done their promise
- Joining
- Really proud of getting their own necker and their uniforms

Do they understand that they are part of something bigger

- Kudos for having friends in Beavers and Cubs
- Remembers scout experiences of older siblings
- Two people's first experience of scouting
- Tends to recognise it's a bigger family if have older siblings

Taken part in local scouting events

- Leader feels these events aren't suitable to this age range
- Parents feel they would really value being part of something

If there was a group starting and you could give them some advice what would you say?

- Really enjoyed it, nothing else that they have been interested in, tired after school so it must be keeping her interest, if they weren't enjoying it they would tell us
- The reason that this is working so well is that the leaders enjoy it, have a passion for it and understand four and five year olds
- Don't normally get male teachers and leaders of groups, his passion comes through, this has made them comfortable
- Having a male leader has been really important to parents attending the group
- Nothing else matters apart from having a leader who is passionate
- He's good at managing them without it being too schooly, when started very different needs, abilities, challenging personalities.
- Child-led and guided child-led, approaches it in a way that suits the children



- When den-making older child read stories in the den and the kids all enjoyed it and shared stories together, leader let them get on with it.
- Leader who has initiative to change and build on activities.

Is there anything else I need to know

- Please don't rename it
- Please don't let it finish
- Opportunity to have some of the beavers come into hedgehogs and run some activities and support them. Mentoring from the older sections. Leading helps support them.

Dropping Beavers to 5:

- Mainly four year olds in the pilot
- Bringing it in line with school entry has been a positive thing, lots of changes in school has made it difficult for him settling in, the constant of hedgehogs has been really important, has given him the social skills and confidence to manage at school.
- Starting beavers after having started school is a huge undertaking and quite difficult
- For those who aren't at school yet has been a gentle start before starting school and a gentle introduction into beavers, it has grown at a really nice organic rate.
- Unlikely to have stayed at Beavers if had gone straight in and by the time they get to beavers they will have got the confidence and a friendship to move onto Beavers with.
- One older sibling has gone straight into beavers and is unlikely to stay and possibility that if they had, had hedgehogs they may have stayed in scouting and been confident when moving up to beavers.
- The difference between rainbows and beavers is markedly different and there are thoughts as to whether this is because rainbows is an introduction to guiding and so they don't do as much adventurous activities. Lowering the age range wouldn't have worked.
- Beavers is the right age range and wouldn't be right if lowered.
- Differentiating a three year age gap.
- Many who are five will only still be in reception, so the age and experience for the children in that period is going to be hugely different to others and not a benefit to the group.
- Hedgehogs will act as a time period for starting school and supporting young people during that starting school period.

**Pilot 2 – Family-led - Child – 3/2/2020**

**5 children**

What does your voice say, what do you like?

- I like sweets
- I like sweets and chocolate
- I like trains
- Games – all
- Making things – all

“I try to not go when it’s home time”

“I like decorations” – art

Whilst colouring Hedgehogs:-

What do you like doing at Hedgehogs?

- I like the jelly worms
- I like the dens, it was enormous, we put two together, I liked it because I helped! I was giving the pegs
- I liked the snowball fight, we threw them on each side of the room and at the end we went and got them, they were wool, I like throwing them at you (Leader).
- Sometimes we get draws at that game

Who goes to school?

- I go to forest school
- I am in Reception
- I go to (name of nursery)

When did you get your neckerchief?

- You wear them when you come to Hedgehogs

“I like playing games”

What is the best thing you have done in Hedgehogs?

- Playing games x2
- Playing games inside
- Running around games
- Playing football x3
- Playing hide and seek
- Playing catch
- Running around

Have you learned to do anything new at Hedgehogs?

- To make jelly worms
- Obstacle course
- Made a giant obstacle course, that we put altogether with their one and ours and (another child) just watched
- Toasted a marshmallow 3 out of 5
- Building a fire 4 out of 5
- Building a den – hadn’t put a peg in before

What new thing have you found out in Hedgehogs?

- Learned about different countries – I bought in my cuddly bird (Kiwi)

What would you like to do more often in Hedgehogs?

- Do jelly worms again
- More things with food
- More snakes and ladders games (start meetings with these)
- We made some biscuits, made some marshmallows and toasted them and ate them
- Cooking on a fire
- Another fire
- Making things

Do you do anything from hedgehogs at home?

- No
- We always forget and don't do it

Do you talk to your friends and family about Hedgehogs?

- I tell my brother

What do you tell your friends about hedgehogs?

- I love it
- I love it aswell
- Me too
- Me too
- And me

Parachute game

Who wants to play with the parachute?

- I do, I do, I do
- If you have a parachute you can go down to the ground safely

\*I put hedgehog sticker in my book

\*I like stickers

Do you normally get a sticker for coming to Hedgehogs?

- Yes!

What did we do today?

- We went underneath the parachute
- Harold repeated all the sounds I the city
- Harold found his voice
- We run to the faces, the feelings

**Pilot 3 - Partner-led – Child - 6/2/2020**

**8 children**

What new thing have you found out in Hedgehogs?

- Found a blue egg

What would you tell your friends about Hedgehogs?

- Show them my Hedgehog
- We hide ourselves

What is the best thing you've done in Hedgehogs?

- I hid the eggs
- Making crabs

Have you learned to do anything new?

- Learnt to sit on my bottom

Do you take anything home from Hedgehogs?

- Yes, my puppet
- I made Megan (leader)

When you're at hedgehogs do you sing a song?

- Yes
- I like singing the song

\*Five out of six liked singing song at Hedgehogs

**Pilot 4 – Partner-led– Adult – 11/02/2020**

**4 adults**

Do your children talk about Hedgehogs at home?

- Yea they do, they talk about the stories they've read and the things they've made, my little one does. What they've created, if they've been outdoors,
- When prompted and asked she does, I think she's very overwhelmed about everything that has happened in the actual session, but mainly when she's made something, I find that she likes to talk more. Like the little crab that they made, she really enjoyed that and the very first session when they went on a Hedgehog hunt, absolutely loved that, but yea she does talk but you have to sort of engage
- you have to actually ask

Do you think they've picked up anything new from taking part in Hedgehogs?

- I've noticed that she has developed more confidence, and self-awareness to be completely honest, because she was quite a shy child to start off with but now she has opened up and now she's talking to different people and she's extended her friendship group and broadened her horizons.
- I know (child) has tried to get (siblings) to do what she did in Hedgehogs-"let's go out and collect some leaves"
- (child) is more interested in the outdoors, she's even more interested in the outdoors now
- (child) was phoning my Mum and Dad asking them to look for Hedgehogs in their garden

Do you think they enjoy it

- Unanimous yes definitely
- This scheme is really good because it's given them an opportunity and I think they have thrived and grown, and it's given them a self-belief in where they fit in because it is hard for them to understand where they transfer from nursery to reception, because they're having to mingle with different children, not all of them go with children they have been with before and are learning different attributes from other children. Language develops and their understanding and knowledge and wellbeing all develop in these little sessions, (child) has really progressed and her appetite after these sessions is unbelievable.
- Really, really good pilot scheme to go for a full term, I've enjoyed her enjoying it, and they don't get the opportunity that age to get after-school clubs for their age groups, it's nice to do something that gets them away from their brothers and sisters at that time and gives them that time with the other children.
- It definitely gives them their own individuality, instead of "Oh Mum's dragging me around again"

**Pilot 4- Partner-led - Child – 11/02/2020**

**17 children**

Do you like getting stickers?

- I like getting stickers, putting stickers in our books and on our clothes.

What games do you like playing?

- I like playing hide and seek
- I love playing football
- I like playing

What is the best thing you have done in Hedgehogs?

- Made jelly
- Made a crab
- Making people (puppets)
- Playing with parachute & making parachutes
- Making parachute
- Making Hedgehog
- Making a shiny Hedgehog
- Making a rainbow Hedgehog

Have you learned to do anything new?

- Not sure
- Learned to tie a knot - 3
- I can tie knots anyway

What would you like to do more in Hedgehogs?

- Playing with the parachute - 3
- Playing with puppets
- Making crabs
- Making Hedgehogs
- Flying the parachute

What would you tell your friends about Hedgehogs?

- I would tell them I'm having a birthday
- You make new things
- Making crabs