

Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS)

Pilot report

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About the evaluator

The pilot study was independently conducted by a team from the University of Leeds, the University of York, and the University of Sheffield that comprised of: Professor Louise Tracey, Dr Erin Dysart, and Dr Aimee Code (University of Leeds from 01 November 2023, formerly at University of York); Professor Carole Torgerson and Elizabeth Coleman (University of York); and Professor Claudine Bowyer-Crane (University of Sheffield).

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Executive summary

The project

The Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) programme, developed and delivered by Elklan Training Ltd, aims to equip childminders with knowledge and strategies to improve young children's language development. It provides training in speech, language, and communication (SLC) across two programme variants: Speech and Language Support for 3–5s (SLS3-5s); and Let's Talk With Under 5s (LTU5s).

The content of the two programme variants differs in terms of both volume and complexity. The course content of SLS3-5s provides more depth of knowledge in terms of child development and strategies to promote children's speech and language than LTU5s. This is reflected in the higher entry requirement for SLS3-5s and a longer, more intensive training provision (SLS3-5s: ten e-learning sessions; ten live one-hour online; and live follow-up seminars/webinars with an Elklan tutor. LTU5s: seven live two-hour live seminars/webinars with an Elklan tutor).

Both programme variants also involve childminders working with an Elklan tutor, during an additional three to four hours of live webinar time, to achieve CFHBS status. The childminder completes an audit checklist at the start of the programme and then uses the checklist to identify areas for improvement with the support of the tutor. The checklist covers five core components, which are central parts of the training and to achieving CFHBS status: the physical environment; adult interactions with children; modelling language; resources and opportunities; and sharing books. Elklan tutors deliver the course content to childminders who implement the strategies and practice within their home-based settings throughout the course of the programme.

This pilot study aimed to assess the feasibility of implementation, evidence of promise, and readiness for trial of the CFHBS intervention and whether or not these differed between the two programme variants. The evaluation took a mixed methods approach including surveys, observations, interviews, focus groups, and an analysis of routinely collected programme data. These methods involved both childminders and Elklan tutors.

The pilot study took place from January 2023 to January 2025 (the research activities took place September 2023 to July 2024) and was funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) as part of the Department for Education's (DfE's) Early Years Recovery Programme in which the EEF is working with Stronger Practice Hubs across England to fund Early Years settings' access to evidence-informed programmes and study the programme's influence on practice and children's outcomes. This initiative aims to support education recovery following the pandemic, whilst also developing our understanding of effective professional development in the early years. The EEF has worked with East Midlands Early Years Stronger Practice Hub to fund settings' access to CFHBS and evaluate the programme through a pilot study. Around 40 childminders participated in the pilot with approximately 436 children in their care aged from birth to five years.

Table 1: Summary of pilot findings

Research question	Findings
1. Is the CFHBS programme feasible and acceptable to childminders?	<p>The CFHBS programme was found to be feasible and acceptable to childminders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of childminders across programme variants met all levels of compliance including attending at least 80% of training sessions, completion of the learning logs, and gaining CFHBS status. • The programme content was perceived to be of value to childminders across programme variants with childminders appreciating that the programme was targeted at childminders. <p>However, while childminders saw great value in the training they received, they indicated that they would not be able to afford to pay for the programme should they have to pay for it themselves. If they were to pay, the majority indicated this would be under £200, less than the cost of either programme.</p>
2. Is there evidence of promise that the CFHBS programme may lead to the changes expected in the theories of change?	<p>There is evidence of promise that the CFHBS programme leads to changes as expected in the theories of change:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminders skills, knowledge, and confidence increased for those following both programme variants. Greater gains across all three domains were found for those following the SLS3-5s programme variant compared to those following LTU5s. • Childminders reported changes in their SLC practice, particularly around modelling language and adult-child interactions. • Childminders perceived positive impacts of the programme on children's SLC, particularly for expressive vocabulary.
3. How feasible is it to conduct an evaluation using a randomised controlled trial (RCT) design with this population (i.e. childminders and children aged two to five years)?	<p>The findings suggest that it may be feasible to conduct an evaluation using a RCT design with this population, but there are some key areas for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of research activities were completed by over 80% of participants. However, when asked to rate different possible research activities, childminders rated surveys and interviews less favourably than activities such as having a researcher administer child assessments. • Financial incentives, opportunities for professional development, and potential benefits for the children in their care were all reported by childminders as motivating factors for taking part in a RCT. • The amount of time it would take to participate in a RCT and knowing that they may be allocated to the control condition were the main reasons childminders would have reservations about taking part in a larger scale trial, although childminders' understanding of what a RCT would involve appeared limited.

Additional findings

Childminders following LTU5s received, on average, higher tutor-rated scores in the CFHBS checklist in both adult-child interaction and modelling language. In contrast, childminders following the SLS3-5s programme variant were more likely to report (in their survey responses) making wider changes to their practice and to the physical environment and to continue making changes after the end of the training. However, given the small sample sizes and non-random group allocation, comparisons across programme variants are exploratory only and should be treated with caution.

There was some evidence that childminders' skills, knowledge, and confidence, ascertained through a bespoke measure embedded in the survey, was improved over the training period. This, and childminders' self-reported implementation of programme learning, appeared to be sustained up to six months after the end of training. However, some childminders indicated that, rather than gaining new knowledge, the programme had acted as a reminder of good practice and some of their increased confidence came from the reassurance that they were supporting children's language and communication needs effectively. Childminders also reported changes in children's confidence and socio-emotional development.

Childminders' motivations for undertaking the CFHBS training were predominantly for professional development, to develop their skills, knowledge, and confidence in children's SLC, and to address the SLC needs of the children in their care. They appreciated the support offered by Elkland tutors, which along with the perceived usefulness of course content, were reported to be facilitators to completing the CFHBS programme and gaining CFHBS accreditation. Barriers to implementation included the timing of the training. Time taken to complete the preparation work was a barrier predominantly cited by childminders on the SLS3-5s programme variant.

Introduction

Early language practices are of particular interest given the importance of speech, language, and communication (SLC) development in the early years and their links with later academic attainment (Goswami, 2003; Roulstone *et al.*, 2011). High-quality early childcare (including care provided by childminders) has been shown to have positive impacts on children's emerging literacy and on their school readiness (Sylva *et al.*, 2004; Ota and Berghout Austin, 2013). This is particularly important given reported inequalities in language skills and the higher risk of preschool language difficulties in children from lower socio-economic groups (Law *et al.*, 2017). These inequalities have also been reported to have been widening since the pandemic (Powell *et al.*, 2024). Alongside this, there is growing concern about insufficient staffing within the early years workforce and an increase in unqualified staff (Hardy *et al.*, 2023; Ofsted, 2024). In particular, childminder numbers have been falling in recent years (by 7% in 2023/2024) and childminders have the lowest proportion of the early years workforce qualified to Level 3 or above (75%; DfE, 2024). However, research internationally suggests that the form of home-based care provided by childminders is more personalised (Fauth *et al.*, 2012) and is better able to support the needs of low-income families who are in need of flexible childcare (Fuller *et al.*, 2004).

As part of the Department for Education's Early Years Recovery Programme (2022–2024), Stronger Practice Hubs, and the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) have been working together to fund early years settings' access to evidence-informed programmes. The aims of this funding were to support education recovery following the pandemic, and to develop understanding of effective professional development in the early years. The Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) programme is one of those programmes, originally developed in response to demand from local authorities and the early years workforce for professional development for childminders. It is modelled on the Communication Friendly Settings (CFS) (early years) programme, the key difference being that CFS is designed for early years group-based settings while CFHBS is aimed at those caring for children in home-based settings, including childminders and foster carers. CFS has shown evidence of promise, with a small scale quasi-experimental study showing children in the intervention group made more progress on a standardised measure of language compared to a control group, after six-month implementation. However, the findings were inconclusive due to the small sample size (Clegg *et al.*, 2020). Given the current lack of knowledge relating to interventions in England with childminders, this pilot aims to contribute to increasing the knowledge-base relating to the feasibility and accessibility of childminder-based Continuing Professional Development (CPD), interventions, and evaluations. This pilot study took place alongside the first year of the two-year efficacy trial of the CFS programme (2023–2025).

Intervention

CFHBS was developed by Elklan Training Ltd and designed for childminders as opposed to group-based settings. It aims to equip childminders with knowledge and strategies to enhance their interactions and activities with children to promote language development. Research suggests that improving daily and routine interactions between children and adults and providing a communication friendly environment leads to improved language outcomes for children (Dockrell *et al.*, 2012; EEF, 2022), both of which are key facets of the programme. While similar to the CFS programme, the CFHBS programme acknowledges:

- childminder-led settings are likely to have different physical environments to other early years providers;
- childminders are less likely than other early years staff to work as part of a team, and therefore, a cascade model (which is used in the CFS programme) is not appropriate;
- childminders are more likely than other early years practitioners to fund their own training—the pricing of a programme for childminders must ensure it is accessible;
- childminders can often only access training in their own time either late in the evenings or at the weekend and so the volume of content and how it is delivered needs to be carefully considered; and
- there is variability in the prior training and qualifications of childminders.

There are two variants of the programme trialled in this pilot study in order to better understand the acceptability and feasibility of each version for childminders, which may have impacts for future rollouts of the programme. The two variants are as follows:

- Speech and Language Support for 3–5s (SLS3-5s); and
- Let's Talk With Under 5s (LTU5s).

Both variants involve training to achieve an externally accredited award, and all childminders work with an Elklan tutor towards achieving CFHBS status, both of which are discussed separately below. A detailed breakdown of each programme and the differences between them can be found in Appendix A.

Training to achieve an externally accredited award

The content of the two training versions differs in terms of both volume and complexity. This is reflected in the course components (see Table 2), their differing entry requirements, and the approximate number of hours anticipated to complete the training.

SLS3-5s

SLS3-5s is the same course as is delivered to lead communication practitioners as part of the CFS programme (which is the focus of the corresponding efficacy trial). Childminders should have A levels, a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 3, or a National Diploma (or equivalent level of prior attainment) in order to access the course content. The course includes ten modules of e-learning sessions, ten live one-hour follow-up seminars/webinars, practical activities, and completion of a learning log. Successful completion of the training leads to a Level 3 accreditation through an Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) approved national awarding organisation (i.e. Open College Network London Region [OCN London]). It is estimated that the training takes approximately 45 hours to complete as a stand-alone course.

LTU5s

LTU5s was designed for parents, childminders, and others caring for children in their own homes. This course is less intensive than SLS3-5s (taking approximately 28 hours to complete), is a stand-alone course, and is aimed at childminders with lower levels of academic qualifications (minimum entry requirement of Level 3 or General Certificate of Secondary Education [GCSE] grades 3 to 1/D–G). The course includes seven live two-hour seminars/webinars, practical activities, and completion of a learning log. Successful completion of the training leads to a Level 1 accreditation through an Ofqual approved national awarding organisation (OCN London).

Table 2: Course content

SLS3-5s	LTU5s
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is communication? 2. Adult-child interaction 3. Learning to listen and supporting understanding through non-verbal communication and visual strategies 4. Promoting vocabulary development 5. Understanding spoken language and information carrying words 6. The Blank Language Scheme 7. Developing early language skills 8. Developing play for language 9. Supporting children with unclear speech and phonological awareness 10. Stammering and course reflection 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is communication? 2. Adult-child interaction 3. Play 4. Understanding language 5. Helping young children use words and sentences 6. Asking questions and sharing books 7. Helping children with unclear speech

Both courses aim to increase childminder knowledge and skills about:

- utilising the indoor and outdoor physical environment in a home-based setting to encourage communication such as labelling areas;
- how childminders interact with children to encourage communication, for example, using comments rather than questions, waiting ten seconds for a response;

- how to model language to encourage the development of children's talking, for example, modelling language correctly and not correcting the child;
- the resources and opportunities that are provided by childminders such as quiet corners; and
- how to share books with children, for example, using books to encourage further conversation.

Gaining CFHBS status

In addition to undertaking either SLS3-5s or LTU5s, all childminders work with an Elklan tutor to achieve CFHBS status. This component is the same across the two variants of the programme and runs concurrent to the LTU5s and SLS3-5s courses, involving an additional three to four hours of live webinars and the compilation of evidence against a checklist. The focus of CFHBS is applying the knowledge and skills gained through either SLS3-5s or LTU5s within a home-based setting.

The childminder completes an audit checklist at the start of the programme, then uses the checklist to identify areas for improvement with the support of the tutor. The checklist covers five areas:

- the physical environment;
- interactions with children;
- modelling language;
- resources and opportunities; and
- sharing books.

At the end of the programme, an Elklan tutor then reviews the childminder's checklist and evidence and conducts a 'virtual home visit' of the home-based setting. The tutor completes the aforementioned checklist against the setting and practice that they observe. If all criteria are rated 'good' or 'outstanding' then the childminder's setting is awarded CFHBS status. If the childminder does not initially meet all criteria, feedback is given and a further 'virtual' visit from an Elklan tutor is provided.¹

In total, in order to achieve CFHBS status a childminder must have:

- attended 80% of live webinars/online training;
- completed all self-directed learning modules (SLS3-5s-only);
- successfully completed their learning logs to the level required by the programme;²
- been awarded either a Level 1 or Level 3 externally accredited award (dependent on programme variant); and
- successfully completed a CFHBS checklist and virtual home visit.

This criteria has also been used to measure 'compliance' for the pilot study (see 'Methods' section below).

The programme training was delivered at two timepoints to two cohorts of childminders. This was to allow the evaluation team to take an iterative approach to the pilot with a midpoint review built in (January 2024). Cohort 1 underwent training in either SLS3-5s or LTU5s starting in September 2023. Cohort 2 started the training of either variant of the programme

¹ CFHBS status is awarded for three years. At the end of this time period childminders can apply for a further three years accreditation at a cost of £100.

² The learning logs are marked by the Elklan tutor against a set of pre-specified criteria. All learning log marking is checked. OCN London conducts external verification checks on a sample of those submitted.

starting in January 2024. Childminders were expected to begin to embed the programme in their practice throughout the training period and beyond. Further details of the CFHBS programme and the two variants as evaluated in this pilot study are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Aspect of TIDieR (Template for Intervention Description and Replication)

Aspect of TIDieR	Exemplification relating to the evaluation
Brief name	CFHBS two variants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLS3-5s. • LTU5s.
Why: Rationale, theory and/or goal of essential elements of the intervention	Improve childminder knowledge and confidence in supporting children's communication and language skills through daily and routine interactions between children (aged two to five years) and adults and the provision of an appropriate environment at the childminding setting level in order to accelerate children's oral language development, including that of children in areas of social deprivation and children with SLC needs.
Who: Intervention providers/implementers	Elklan tutors/childminders delivered the intervention (both variants) to 40 childminders in total.
What: Procedures, activities, and/or processes used in the intervention	<p>Training activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLS3-5s: E-learning sessions, webinars, completion of Level 3 e-learning logs. • LTU5s: Webinars, completion of Level 1 e-learning logs. • CFHBS status (SLS3-5s and LTU5s): CFHBS checklist and virtual home visits.^a <p>Both programme variants aim to increase childminder skills, knowledge, and confidence about children's SLC, although SLS3-5s does so in greater depth. For more detail on the course content of the two different variants see Table 2.</p> <p>Strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • childminders using comments rather than questions when talking with a child; • childminders waiting ten seconds for a child's response to a question or comment; • not correcting a child's incorrect speech and language; and • modelling language correctly. <p>Implementation in settings, improvements across five core components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adult-child interactions; • childminders modelling language; • the physical environment; • resources and opportunities for children's language development; and • sharing books.
How: Mode of delivery	Online training via Microsoft Teams accompanied by Let's Talk workbook for LTU5s and Early Language Builders folder for SLS3-5s.
Where: Location of the intervention	<p>Implementation with two- to five-year-olds in childminder's home-based settings.</p> <p>Training delivered online via Microsoft Teams; virtual home visits conducted via Zoom or WhatsApp (dependent on childminder and tutor preference).</p> <p>Programme implementation occurs within the home-based setting.</p> <p>Participants recruited from local authorities within the East Midlands Stronger Practice Hub region: Leicester; Leicestershire; North Northamptonshire; and West Northamptonshire.</p>
When and how much: Duration and dosage of the intervention	<p>The programme training was delivered at two timepoints to two cohorts for each programme variant:</p> <p><u>SLS3-5s CFHBS</u></p> <p>Weekly: ten (one-hour) e-learning sessions, 11 (30 minutes to 90 minutes) webinars, completion of online learning logs (ten in total)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort 1: Training September 2023 – December 2023, completion of learning logs January 2024. • Cohort 2: Training January 2024 – March 2024, completion of learning logs April 2024. <p>CFHBS self-rating at the beginning and end of the programme. Self-rating is corroborated by an Elklan tutor following a virtual home visit at the end of the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort 1: September 2023 and January 2024. • Cohort 2: January 2024 and May 2024.

	<p>Estimated 51.5 hours to complete—expected five months overall completion of all course requirements.</p> <p>LTU5s CFHBS Weekly: seven (two-hour) live webinar sessions, eight (30 minutes to 150 minutes) CFHBS webinars, completion of learning logs (seven in total).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort 1: Training September 2023 – November 2023, completion of learning logs January 2024. • Cohort 2: Training January 2024 – March 2024, completion of learning logs April 2024. <p>CFHBS self-rating at the beginning and end of the programme (via CFHBS checklist). Self-rating is corroborated by an Elklan tutor following a virtual home visit at the end of the programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cohort 1: September 2023 and January 2024. • Cohort 2: January 2024 and April 2024. <p>Estimated 39.5 hours to complete—expected three months overall completion of all course requirements.</p>
<p>Tailoring: Adaptation of the intervention How well (planned): Strategies to maximise effective implementation</p>	<p>No adaptations although the changes made to the setting to achieve CFHBS status was expected to vary given pre-existing differences in home-based settings e.g. space, resources.</p> <p>In order to facilitate programme completion and maximise effective implementation, the following strategies were put in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deadlines for, and monitoring of, completion of programme elements (e-learning modules, learning logs, CFHBS checklist, virtual home visits); • webinars held at times convenient to childminders (i.e. outside of normal expected working hours, no sessions during half-term breaks) and recordings were made available subsequently for childminders unable to attend sessions; • online support from an Elklan tutor throughout the duration of the programme; and • external accreditation (Level 3, SLS3-5s; Level 1, LTU5s) through an Ofqual approved national awarding organisation (OCN London).

^a Virtual home visits are conducted for CFHBS as opposed to the virtual audits conducted for the CFS programme. Although the purpose and conduct of the two activities is the same, this is to distinguish the two programmes, particularly in terms of types of setting and recognises that for CFHBS this audit generally takes place in the childminders own home.

The theories of change underpinning the two variants of the CFHBS programme can be found in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below. These theories of change reflect the different inputs of the two variants. However, the posited outputs are very similar with the exception of childminders knowledge and skills gained through the programme. In LTU5s, childminders are expected to gain an increased awareness of SLC and improved skills to interact with and model for the children as a result of their training, whereas those childminders undertaking SLS3-5s are expected to attain increased skills, knowledge, and confidence to identify, understand, and act on children's SLC needs. This reflects the differing intensity of the training provided for each variant.

In both theories of change, the programme is expected to result in children being exposed to better quality adult-child interactions and modelling of language and a wider vocabulary. Consequently, both theories of change posit that the programme will result in children's improved SLC skills over time. They also suggest the programme will improve school readiness, although this is interpreted in the context of improved SLC providing children with the necessary levels of understanding and expression to be able to access learning (Beard, 2018). However, as a pilot study, the focus of this research is on childminder inputs, outputs, and outcomes, as detailed in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Measured child outcomes and longer term outcomes, such as school readiness, were outside the remit of this evaluation, although evidence was collected from childminders relating to the perceived impact of the programme on the children in their care.

Figure 1: CFHBS LTU5s programme variant theory of change

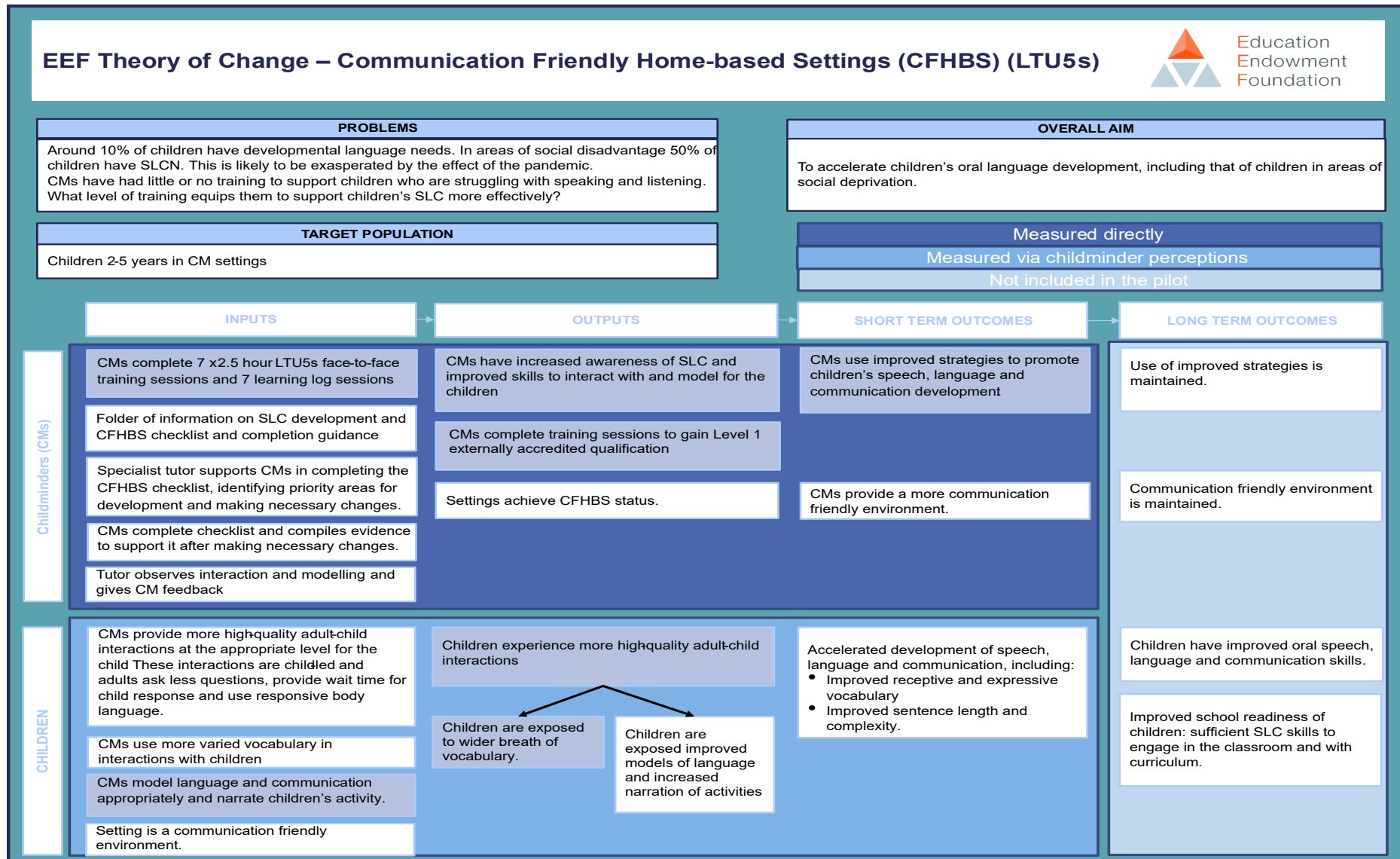
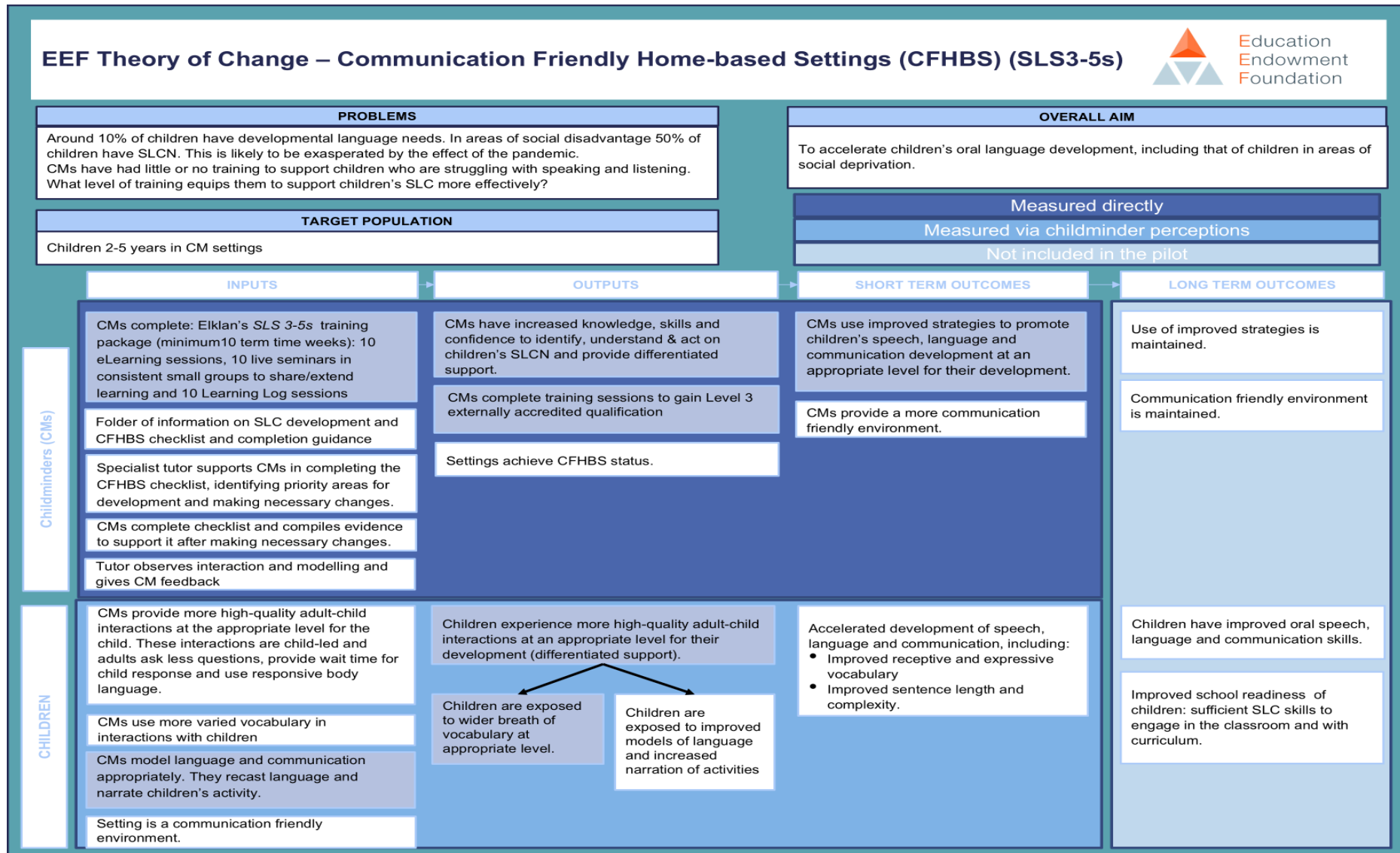


Figure 2: CFHBS SLS3-5s programme variant theory of change



Research questions

This pilot study was designed to answer the following overarching research questions:

- What is the feasibility of implementation, evidence of promise, and readiness for trial of the CFHBS intervention (both the SLS3-5s and LTU5s training versions) in terms of take-up of training, programme completion, and perceived impacts (on both childminders and the two- to five-year-old children in their settings)? Do these outcomes vary between the two programme variants (SLS3-5s and LTU5s)?

Within these overarching questions, the specific research questions relating to the three pilot criteria of evidence of promise, feasibility of implementation, and readiness for trial were as follows:

Feasibility of implementation

1. Is the CFHBS programme feasible and acceptable to childminders?
 - a. What is the level of engagement with the training in terms of attendance at training and completion of programme requirements?
 - i. Does this differ by programme variant?
 - b. Is the programme deemed to be of high quality and value to childminders?
 - i. What is the value placed on the CFHBS programme in terms of its perceived usefulness to childminders?
 - ii. What is the monetary value placed on the programme by childminders?
 - iii. To what extent do these differ by programme variant?
 - c. What are the barriers and facilitators for childminders in undertaking the CFHBS programme in terms of:
 - i. Engaging with the programme training?
 - ii. Making changes in their practice?

Evidence of promise

2. Is there evidence of promise that the CFHBS programme may lead to the changes expected in the theories of change?
 - a. To what extent does it improve childminders' skills, knowledge, and confidence with regard to children's SLC needs?
 - i. Does this differ by programme variant?
 - b. To what extent does the programme result in a change in childminders' reported practice?
 - i. Does this align with programme aims and strategies (e.g. are there reported improvements in adult-child interactions as a result of the programme)?
 - ii. What other changes do childminders report as a result of the programme?
 - iii. To what extent do these differ by programme variant?
 - c. What are the perceived outcomes of the CFHBS programme on the children in childminder settings, including the perceived impact on children's SLC skills?

Readiness for trial

3. How feasible is it to conduct an evaluation using a randomised controlled trial (RCT) design with this population (i.e. childminders and children aged two to five years)?
 - a. What factors would encourage childminders to participate in such an evaluation?

b. What factors would act as barriers to participation in evaluation research?

The success indicators, the associated research questions (where applicable), and the ways in which success will be assessed are provided in Table 4. Given that the CFS efficacy trial is now taking place over a longer time frame than originally anticipated, this report does not use the findings from that trial to assess evidence of promise of CFHBS as originally intended. Given that these success indicators rely on qualitative as well as quantitative data, the criteria of credibility, reliability, and generalisability have been applied, where appropriate.

Table 4: Success indicators for the pilot study

Pilot criteria	Success indicators (research question number)	How to assess this?
Feasibility of implementation	Childminders (80%) meet all or most of the CFHBS compliance criteria within the evaluation timeline including attendance at training and completion of course components (research question 1a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training attendance data • Learning logs
	The programme content is perceived to be of value to the majority of childminders (research question 1bi)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminder survey • Childminder interviews • Childminder emails
	The cost of the training is acceptable for the target population (research question 1bii)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminder survey • Childminder interviews
Evidence of promise	Improvement (perceived and measured) in childminder skills, knowledge, and confidence (research question 2a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning logs • Childminder survey • Childminder interviews • Trainer interviews • Childminder emails
	Perceived change in practice—childminders adopt programme strategies to promote children's SLC development (research question 2b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning logs • Audit checklists • Childminder surveys • Childminder interviews • Trainer interviews • Childminder emails
	Perceived impact on children including improvements in children's SLC skills (research question 2c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminder surveys • Childminder interviews • Childminder emails
	Positive impact of CFS programme in the efficacy trial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFS Evaluation Report
Readiness for trial	High level of engagement with the pilot evaluation activities (80% completion of programme surveys, completion of all scheduled interviews, and researcher-attended virtual home visits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminder surveys • Childminder interviews • Observation of virtual home visits • Evaluator/the EEF judgement
	Acceptability of randomisation/conduct of a trial/child outcomes assessment (research question 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childminder interviews • Childminder emails

Ethical review

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the University of York Education Ethics Committee (Ref: 23/18) and from the University of Leeds Cross-Faculty Research Ethics Committee (Faculties of Business, Environment & Social Sciences, Ref: 0946).

All data collected was subject to quality assurance procedures, to assess reliability, accuracy, and consistency. All outputs (including the statistical database, interview transcripts, reports, and publications) were anonymised. No participant or setting is identifiable in the report. The statistical database holds only non-identifiable data. Confidentiality was maintained and no-one outside of the evaluation team had access to the database, which is held securely on the University of Leeds servers. The University of Sheffield had access only to anonymised data.

All participating childminders signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that covered information about the study, the respective responsibilities of the childminder, evaluation team, and programme delivery team, and the ways in which the data would be handled under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The MoU included a clear statement of the University's legal basis for processing personal data. Where interviews and focus groups took place (with childminders and Elklan tutors, respectively) separate consent was also sought. This consent gave childminders the opportunity to request to view a copy of the transcript of their interview up to ten days after data collection and the same

time frame to amend or withdraw this data from the evaluation if they wished to do so. After this point, data were anonymised. Elklan tutors were not given this opportunity because they participated in focus groups, although they were also given the opportunity to withdraw their data within ten days of interview, after which point the data were anonymised. Associated privacy notices were issued by both the University of Leeds and Elklan, and all childminder consent forms and privacy notices were available via the Elklan Training Ltd website.

Copies of the MoU and participant information and consent forms are available in Appendix B.

This pilot study is registered with the Open Science Framework (OSF) Registries Network (<https://osf.io/registries>).

Data protection

Data were handled in accordance with the GDPR. Personal data were processed under Article 6 Section 1(e) of the GDPR ('Tasks carried out in the public interest') as the research is being conducted to support early years provision in the UK. The University of York and the University of Leeds were deemed as data controllers (as defined by the data protection legislation) with regards to personal data collected for the evaluation (i.e. through surveys or interviews). Elklan was deemed the data controller for data collected as part of the programme (e.g. learning logs, audit checklists, and online questionnaires) and childminder personal data, for the purposes of recruitment and training. Where programme data were shared by Elklan with the University of York and the University of Leeds, the University of York and the University of Leeds became the data controllers for the purposes of the evaluation.

A Data Management Plan was put in place under the oversight of the data protection officer at the University of York with regular review periods. This was revised and reviewed by the data protection office at the University of Leeds following the move of the project to the University of Leeds. Confidentiality was maintained and no-one outside of the evaluation team had access to the database, which was held securely on the department servers.

All data transferred between Elklan and the University of Leeds was done so via a secure Dropbox that was set-up and shared by Elklan. A professional transcription service was used to transcribe some of the interviews, and participant personal information was not shared with them. To further reduce any risk of data sharing by the transcription service, the university's approved service was used with whom there is an existing data sharing agreement. In some cases, the in-built transcription service that came with interview software (Microsoft Teams) was used instead of third parties.

All personal data held by the evaluation team will be retained for five years after publication of the final report and then securely destroyed. Anonymised data will be kept indefinitely.

Project team

Delivery team

The delivery team was responsible for liaising with the Stronger Practice Hubs, recruiting participants, delivering the programme, and liaising with the evaluation team in order to ensure the smooth running of the evaluation and associated data collection activities.

The delivery team comprised of:

- **Henrietta McLachlan (Director, Elklan Training Ltd).** Led on programme materials, initial tutor briefing and training, course delivery, and quality assurance.
- **Alex Hall (Project Manager, Elklan Training Ltd).** Led on liaison with the Stronger Practice Hubs, childminder recruitment, budgeting, and reporting to project partners and funders.
- The Stronger Practice Hubs were led by:
- **Fliss Dewberry (East Midlands Stronger Practice Hub).** Led the East Midlands Stronger Practice Hub in assisting Elklan in recruitment to the programme and the pilot study.

Evaluation team

The evaluation team was responsible for the conduct of the evaluation, including writing the protocol, data collection, analysis, and writing the final report.

The evaluation team comprised of:

- **Professor Louise Tracey (Co-Principal Investigator, University of York to 31 October 2023, University of Leeds from 01 November 2023).** Jointly responsible for the overall conduct of the pilot study, including the design, analysis, and report writing. Managed the project research assistant.
- **Professor Claudine Bowyer-Crane (Co-Principal Investigator, The University of Sheffield).** Jointly responsible for the overall conduct of the pilot study, including the design, analysis, and report writing.
- **Professor Carole Torgerson (Co-Investigator, University of York).** Advised on design, contributed to the report writing, and oversaw the quality assurance aspects of the evaluation.
- **Dr Erin Dysart (Co-Investigator, University of York to 31 October 2023, University of Leeds from 01 November 2023).** Assisted with instrument design, data collection, analysis, and report writing.
- **Elizabeth Colman (Co-Investigator, University of York).** Undertook randomisation for the study, advised on statistical analysis, and contributed to the report writing.
- **Dr Aimee Code (Research Assistant/Project Coordinator, University of York from 01 September 2023 to 31 October 2023, University of Leeds from 01 November 2023).** Responsible for the day-to-day running of the project, including managing data collection, processing data in line with data protection regulations, and the study plan, analysis, and report writing.
- **Dr Dee Fields (Research Assistant, University of York to 31 August 2023).** Contributed to the initial set-up of the pilot study, including contributing to writing the study plan.

Methods

Recruitment

Recruitment was conducted by the delivery team, supported by the East Midlands Stronger Practice Hub, the EEF, and the evaluation team. Recruitment took place in the following local authority areas in the East Midlands: Leicester; Leicestershire; Lincolnshire; North Northamptonshire; Rutland; and West Northamptonshire.

Alongside dissemination about the study (via Stronger Practice Hub events and communications and the EEF website) recruitment took place online. Elklan emailed childminders directly using contact details on publicly available local authority websites. Childminders were able to express interest in participating in the study via the Elklan Training Ltd website. This site also contained links to the Childminder Information Sheet, MoU, and the associated privacy notices.

The target was to recruit 40 childminders to participate in the training and the pilot study. This sample was deemed feasible for the pilot in that there would be sufficient numbers of participants for each variant of the programme and each cohort to be feasible for programme delivery. It was also believed that this number would provide sufficient variation to allow for meaningful analysis to inform any future roll-out of the programme and possibly evaluation on a larger scale.

Childminders were recruited if they:

- had at least one child in their care aged two to five years in the pilot year (2023–2024);
- agreed to undertake the CFHBS training and participate in the pilot study;
- signed an MoU;
- completed the baseline survey; and
- met the minimum entry criteria for the programme of their choice (see 'Intervention' section above).

Childminders were free to choose, which of the two programmes offered they would prefer to take, dependent on meeting the minimum entry criteria.³ This gave the evaluation team the opportunity to explore more thoroughly the reasons for their choices (e.g. why those who meet the eligibility criteria for both programmes choose one over another) and the desirability and acceptability of each option. It was hoped that this would also reduce attrition.

Given that the delivery took place over two terms for each programme, recruitment took place in April 2023 to July 2023 for delivery at two timepoints, with one cohort per programme per timepoint, for example, September 2023 (Cohort 1) and January 2024 (Cohort 2). This allowed for a midpoint for reflection to enable the pilot to be responsive and flexible.

A deadline was set for an Expression of Interest (EOI) to participate (July 2023). The recruitment target was 46 childminders, to allow for a waitlist of six childminders. Forty-seven childminders were recruited for the pilot study, although one childminder was deemed ineligible as being outside of the geographical remit of the East Midlands Stronger Practice Hub. Of the remaining 46 childminders, 35 indicated that they wished to undertake the SLS3-5s programme variant (and met the eligibility criteria to do so) and 11 chose LTU5s. Of those 29 childminders who expressed a preference for either the September 2023 or January 2024 start date (i.e. whether or not to take the programme in Cohort 1 or Cohort 2) 17 childminders indicated to start on September 2023 and 12 childminders indicated to start on January 2024. Seventeen childminders either did not express a preference or indicated that either cohort would be acceptable to them. Consequently, SLS3-5s was oversubscribed and LTU5s was undersubscribed. In addition, 12 childminders who expressed a preference for the September 2023 start date also indicated a preference for the SLS3-5s programme variant.

³ As detailed above, childminders are eligible for SLS3-5s if they have A levels, an NVQ Level 3, or a National Diploma and LTU5s if they have an Entry Level 3 or GCSE grades 3 to 1/D–G (or above). In addition, childminders are required to have the basic computer skills needed to be able to access and complete the programme digital learning logs as detailed in the setting information sheet and the MoU.

As there were ten places available for each course, for each timepoint, where necessary childminders were randomly selected for these places. Where possible, childminders not offered a place on their preferred course and/or timing were offered the alternatives if appropriate. The following algorithm was implemented with each step undertaken as needed (i.e. if there were only ten available childminders, then no randomisation was required):

1. Randomly select ten childminders who wished to do SLS3-5s in September 2023. Any childminders who were not offered a place in September 2023, and were only available in September 2023 were placed on a waitlisting list, with their order randomly assigned—to be approached if a childminder was to drop out prior to starting the training. Any childminders who were available in January 2024 but were not offered a place were not included on this waitlist and were instead included in step 4.
2. Repeat step 1 for those childminders wishing to do LTU5s.
3. If there was undersubscription of either course in September 2023, those on the waitlist would be offered a place on the alternative course if they were eligible for it.
4. Randomly select ten childminders who wished to do SLS3-5s in either September 2023 or January 2024, and did not receive a place in September 2023, or were only available in January 2024. As in step 1, an ordered waitlist was created for approaching those not offered a place.
5. Repeat step 4 for those who wished to do LTU5s.
6. Repeat step 3, using the waitlists for January 2024.
7. Review all waitlists to fill any remaining places.

Where randomisation was required, the statistical software Stata 17 (StataCorp LLC, College Station, Texas, USA) was used to assign each childminder a number between 0 and 1 using the runiform function. This randomly generated number was then sorted from smallest to largest, and the first ten childminders selected for the course.

This meant that childminders who had selected LTU5s and expressed a preference for a start date were automatically allocated to that programme variant in the cohort of their choice (five childminders to Cohort 1; one childminder to Cohort 2). The remaining childminders who had selected LTU5s, but not expressed a preference for a start date, were randomly allocated a place on either cohort. Given that there was oversubscription for both cohorts of SLS3-5s (13 childminders to Cohort 1; 12 childminders to Cohort 2) a waitlist was therefore, used with childminders' position on the waitlist randomly selected.

Six childminders withdrew after receiving their allocation (three allocated to SLS3-5s and three allocated to LTU5s); one childminder had decided to close their setting, the remainder either stated this was for personal reasons or because they did not feel they had the capacity to undertake the training at the timepoint allocated. The remaining 40 childminders were all allocated and accepted the offer of a place; 20 per programme variant (LTU5s and SLS3-5s) with half starting in September 2023 in Cohort 1 (ten LTU5s; ten SLS3-5s) and the remaining half in January 2024 in Cohort 2 (ten LTU5s; ten SLS3-5s). However, two childminders allocated to Cohort 2 subsequently withdrew prior to the training starting in January 2024 due to personal reasons (one childminder from each programme variant). This meant that 38 childminders continued the training.

Incentives

Training and support were fully funded (usual cost £626 plus value added tax [VAT] for SLS3-5s, £500 plus VAT for LTU5s) for each participating childminder. In recognition that there are costs associated with undertaking and implementing professional development, each childminder received a financial contribution, payable upon successful completion of the programme. The amount differed depending on the programme variant that childminders had completed, reflecting the differential time commitments for the two programme variants. For childminders following the SLS3-5s programme variant this was £386.25 per childminder and for those following LTU5s this was £296.25 per childminder. In addition, for their participation in the research elements of the study, including completing surveys, responding to researcher emails, and accommodating researcher observations at the virtual home visits, all childminders received £150. All payments were made via Elklan Training Ltd.

Data collection

The following methods of data collection (and associated research instruments) were used in the pilot study:

Attendance at training

To understand the programme, and the differences between the two variants more fully, researchers viewed recordings of four two-hour webinars of the programme (two LTU5s and two SLS3-5s). Two training videos (one LTU5s and one SLS3-5s) were watched by two researchers for quality assurance purposes. An observation checklist was developed by the evaluation team, which included the key elements of the training, as outlined in the theories of change and as listed in the Elklan training manual (depending on which training session was being observed), and which also allowed the researchers to note participant engagement in the training sessions. The training sessions observed were selected to cover both programme variants and different sessions and included:

- LTU5s Session 2: Adult-Child Interaction.
- LTU5s Session 4: Understanding Language.
- SLS3-5s Session 1: What is Communication?
- SLS3-5s Session 5: Information Carrying Words.

Observations of the training allowed the researchers to understand whether the childminders received the full content of the training, as outlined within the Elklan training manual, to assess childminder levels of engagement and presented opportunities for childminders to engage and to gain evidence that childminders were able to make links with the training to their own practice. Observations of the training were used to establish the general level of childminder engagement (research question 1a), the interpretation of findings relating to experience of training, barriers, and facilitators to training (research question 1c), and supported the design of the interview schedules (for trainers and childminders, see below).

Routinely collected programme data

The evaluation team used the following routinely collected programme data, collected by the delivery team (as described above):

- **Completion of training sessions.** SLS3-5s CFHBS: ten (one-hour) asynchronous e-learning alongside 11 (30 minutes to 90 minutes) live virtual seminars/webinars; LTU5s CFHBS: eight (30 minutes to 150 minutes) seminars/webinars. This aided the evaluation team in assessing compliance (80% attendance at live sessions is required to gain CFHBS status), assessing feasibility of training and identifying any timepoints within the training that presented challenges to completion of training (research questions 1, 1a, and 1c).
- **Learning logs.** Completion of learning logs were used to assess compliance and the content of learning logs contributed to understanding changes in practice and quality of implementation of new knowledge and skills gained through the programme training (research question 1a, research question 2).
- **CFHBS checklist.** As described previously, at the beginning of the programme, childminders rated their home-based setting against the CFHBS audit checklist as part of their programme variant learning log. At the end of training, this process was repeated by tutors alongside a 'virtual home visit' and recorded in the CFHBS learning log. This data was collected to allow the evaluation team to assess whether there was evidence of changes to childminder practice over the course of the CFHBS programme (research question 2b).
- **Completion of internally (CFHBS status) and externally (Level 1 and Level 3) accredited awards.** This was used to assess compliance, engagement, and acceptability of undertaking the CFHBS training (research question 1).

Taken together this data allowed the evaluation team to assess the length of time childminders took to complete the different elements (in particular the learning logs and virtual home visits, which may be more variable in terms of completion rates) and the programme overall.

Virtual home visits

The evaluation team attended five virtual home visits per programme variant (n=10) with the Elklan tutor at endline (conducted in January 2024 and April 2024 for LTU5s and January 2024 and May 2024 for SLS3-5s, dependent on cohort). Researchers observed the core tenets of the CFHBS programme as they are encapsulated within the self-rating checklist (modelling language, adult-child interaction, sharing books, resources, and the environment of the setting)

alongside researcher notes on the tutor and childminder discussion. This was to allow the evaluation team to observe childminder engagement in the assessment process, any barriers or facilitators affecting engagement, and take note of tutor comments on the changes that childminders had made in their setting or practice, evidencing promise of the programme. It was also hoped that this would allow the evaluation team to observe the feasibility of this assessment practice with childminders and home-based settings. Finally, it was intended that childminders would be randomly selected to be observed. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, scheduling random appointments for observations was not possible and so opportunity sampling was utilised on this occasion. Tutors who were conducting the virtual home visits were asked to inform the researchers when they would be taking place, and researchers joined those where tutors were confident that the researcher presence would not impact negatively on childminder mood or confidence. Childminders and Elklan tutors were reassured with regard to confidentiality and anonymity.

Focus groups with CFHBS tutors

The evaluation team conducted three focus groups with CFHBS tutors. Each focus group consisted of two CFHBS trainers, one who tutored on each of the programme variants. These took place at three timepoints:

- **At the start of delivery (October 2023).** The two participants both worked as Elklan tutors for the first cohort of CFHBS, one from each of the programme variants. The purpose of this focus group was to understand the two versions of the programme more effectively and the ways in which the causal mechanisms are perceived to impact and facilitate change.
- **Midpoint (end of Cohort 1 training/beginning of Cohort 2 training; January 2024).** The two participants both worked as Elklan tutors for the second cohort of CFHBS, one from each of the programme variants. These were different tutors to those who had worked with childminders in Cohort 1. They took part in discussions about how Cohort 2 training was going,⁴ as well as perceived barriers and facilitators to childminders accessing and implementing the training.
- **Post-delivery (June 2023).** The same tutors who had taken part in the midpoint focus group participated in the post-delivery focus group. They provided an overview of the evaluation year, including perceptions of change within settings, changes in practitioner knowledge, and lessons learned from the delivery.

These focus groups explored a range of topics, including childminder engagement with the CFHBS programme (research question 1a), and whether tutors perceived any evidence of change in childminder skills, and the barriers and facilitators for childminders taking part in the CFHBS programme (research question 1c).

Bespoke childminder survey

The evaluation team administered an online survey via Qualtrics at baseline (September 2023, Cohort 1 and January 2024, Cohort 2), end of training (March 2024, Cohort 1, and June 2024, Cohort 2), and six-month follow-up (June 2024 to July 2024, Cohort 1 only) (see Appendix C). Six-month follow-up surveys were only administered to Cohort 1 to fit within the timeline of the evaluation. All three surveys (baseline, endline, and six-month follow-up) comprised of both open and closed responses.

The childminder surveys explored:

- **At baseline/recruitment (n=37).** Setting context (population served, extent of early years provision i.e. age range, intake numbers), childminder experience (including years of experience as a childminder, qualifications, previous training undertaken), current practice, in particular in relation to SLC, participation in any recent initiatives, for example, the Department for Education (DfE) Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENDCO) training, reasons for undertaking training, considerations when choosing which version of the training programme to undertake, importance of accreditation, hopes for the training outcomes, prior experiences of participating in research, barriers, and facilitators to taking part in research.
- **Post-training (n=32).** Changes during the evaluation year (outside of the programme), changes made as a result of the programme, experiences, facilitators, and barriers to participating in the CFHBS programme (overall and for the version undertaken), and acquiring CFHBS status, perceived child-level

⁴ Cohort 2 training had begun prior to this midpoint focus group.

outcomes, intentions relating to the future (continue to maintain CFHBS status), value (monetary and perceived usefulness) placed on training, experience of taking part in research, and (if possible) the acceptability and feasibility of different research designs. It was also intended to ask about any additional work undertaken to acquiring CFHBS status if a childminder had been unsuccessful in the first attempt. However, this ultimately was not necessary.

- **Six-month post-training follow-up (Cohort 1 only; n=15).** Sustainability of the CFHBS approach, maintenance of CFHBS status, additional training, longer term perceived outcomes, and unintended consequences of training.
- **Embedded in the post-training and follow-up surveys were questions specifically designed for those who did not complete the training and/or did not achieve CFHBS status.** This was designed to allow the evaluation team to assess if the programme content was feasible and acceptable for childminders to access and implement (research question 1), including elucidating any barriers and facilitators in undertaking and implementing the CFHBS programme (research question 1c). However, although three childminders in Cohort 2 did not complete the CFHBS programme, none of these childminders engaged with this survey.

In addition, a bespoke measure of skills, knowledge, and confidence was embedded in the surveys at baseline (n=37), endline (n=32), and six-month follow-up (n=15) in order to assess this posited output from the programme in the associated theories of change for the programme variants (and to assist in answering research question 2a). The Skills, Knowledge, and Confidence Questionnaire (SKCQ) was developed by the evaluation team (independent of the delivery team). The evaluation team used the Elklan training manual (for SLS3-5s)⁵ to identify key areas of the training under seven of the ten areas of the SLS3-5s training (e.g. What is communication?) and cross-checked these with the LTU5s workbook for content covered in both programme variants. For each area, three question types were developed: a scenario judgement-based question (skills); a test of knowledge (knowledge); and a self-rated confidence question based on the childminders confidence in the answers they had given (confidence). The skills and knowledge questions were either multiple choice or open-ended questions. The skills subscale had a maximum possible score of 12; the knowledge subscale had a maximum possible score of 17; the confidence subscale had a maximum possible score of 30; and a total score can be calculated by totalling the scores of the three subscales, which can have a maximum of 59. The SKCQ was developed and piloted with six early years settings in the pre-delivery phase of the CFS efficacy trial and is also being used in the implementation and process evaluation (IPE) of the associated CFS efficacy trial. Following piloting, small changes were made to clarify questions (based on the feedback given). In addition, one item was removed from the knowledge subscale of the measure, at the point of analysis, due to conflicting research on the area of focus.⁶ It was planned that the evaluation team would also use this data to compare to that produced for the same measure within the IPE of the efficacy trial to enable us to assess 'evidence of promise'. However, given that the efficacy trial was subsequently changed to a two-year trial due to lower-than-expected levels of recruitment in the first year this is now outside the time frame of this pilot study.

Childminder interviews

The evaluation team conducted a small number of interviews with childminders to add depth to the data gathered as part of the survey. The evaluation team planned to carry out 12 interviews in total, six for each version of the programme, and three for each cohort. However, only five interviews ended up taking place, due to difficulty in making contact with childminders to arrange interviews. These interviews consisted of two interviews with childminders who completed the programme in Cohort 1 and three interviews with childminders from Cohort 2. Four of these childminders were from the LTU5s programme variant with the remaining childminder following SLS3-5s. The interviews took place at the end of the evaluation year (i.e. June 2024 to July 2024). It was planned to purposively sample interviewees based on childminder context and responses to selected survey items (e.g. number of children catered for, prior experience, and qualifications, reasons for undertaking the training [and, where appropriate, reasons for choosing one programme over another]). However, given difficulties in arranging interviews, participation was effectively self-selected, and this must be borne in mind when interpreting the findings from the interview analysis. Interviews took place over Microsoft Teams,

⁵ This was chosen because, given the higher requirements of SLS3-5s compared to LTU5s, it was perceived to allow for potential variation between programme variants as well as different childminders. In addition, this measure is also being used for the CFS efficacy trial where early years practitioners are trained in SLS3-5s.

⁶ As the measure is being used for the CFS efficacy trial, the area of focus for the removed knowledge question cannot be specified at the time of writing.

as this felt to be more appropriate in terms of minimising burden on participants. The interviews covered in more detail childminders' experiences of undertaking the programme (either variant), implementing the learning from the training, and any perceived outcomes of the programme or unintended consequences. Demand for the programme and the value of the programme (in terms of both monetary value and perceived usefulness) was also explored, as was the feasibility of taking part in research, and the feasibility of a possible future trial of the CFHBS programme.

Email exchanges

The evaluation team emailed all participants (n=38) at regular (monthly) intervals during the evaluation year (September 2023 to July 2024) to offer information on the study, encourage engagement, and provide the opportunity for childminders to feedback any thoughts, progress, or 'significant events' relating to the CFHBS programme in 'real-time'. Questions were posed dependent on the stage in the training and the delivery the childminder was at, and the programme followed. Replying to these emails was not mandatory, but any data thus collected formed part of the overall corpus to be analysed. Unfortunately, although it was planned to send emails from September 2023 to July 2024, the initial correspondence was delayed until October 2023. Additionally, several delays in the completion of Cohort 2's programme meant that the emails were halted and then cancelled. The email correspondence therefore, ended in March 2024. Between the months of September 2023 and March 2024, the evaluation team received 32 emails from 13 childminders following the LTU5s programme variant and 25 emails from 9 childminders following SLS3-5s.

Analysis

The evaluation team undertook an exploratory analysis to assess any change over time and/or differences between the two CFHBS programmes (LTU5s and SLS3-5). Survey data were subject to a descriptive quantitative analysis to summarise and describe trends in responses between programme variants and cohorts. Data from the bespoke SKCQ measure was also analysed quantitatively using statistical modelling. T-tests were carried out to identify differences between childminder's scores at baseline, endline, and follow-up on measures of their skills, knowledge, and confidence in supporting children's speech and language development.

Quantitative data from the learning logs for LTU5s, SLS3-5s, and CFHBS status relating to childminder self-ratings for CFHBS status, tutor ratings, dates of completion of the logs, and the end of programme survey embedded within the programme were entered into SPSS (SPSS Inc, Chicago, IL, USA) and analysed descriptively.

Interview and focus group data were recorded and transcribed by a professional transcription service with the exception of a small number where the in-built transcription service embedded within Microsoft Teams was used instead. All data were read through by one researcher (who had not conducted the interviews/focus groups to reduce bias) who made themselves familiar with the data and devised a coding frame deductively, based on the theories of change and the research questions and inductively, thus allowing the data to be interrogated thoroughly for any new themes. This coding frame was then amended following discussion within the wider team. The data were then uploaded into NVivo software and coded thematically (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The coding frame was also applied to the qualitative data from the childminder surveys.

Given the large amount of qualitative data provided by the learning logs for LTU5s, SLS3-5s, and CFHBS status, these were read through separately by the same researcher to identify any additional themes emerging and hand-coded with a particular focus on reported changes in practice (research question 2).

Qualitative data is often drawn from more than one form of data collection (i.e. qualitative survey data, interviews, and learning logs) to show triangulation of the data and overcome bias, which may have been introduced due to the self-selected nature of the interview sample. Both qualitative and quantitative data were triangulated in the analysis to provide a fuller picture of childminders' experiences and perspectives as well as reported changes in practice.

Where qualitative data is reported it is to represent a particular theme or strand of the narrative, data from childminder learning logs is identified by code number, the type of learning log, source, programme variant, and cohort. Interview data is reported as source and cohort, but not programme variant, so as not to identify individual participants. Qualitative data from survey responses is anonymised at the point of collection and so no identifiers are provided.

Examples of code structures are as follows:

- **Learning log data.** Code number, type of learning log, source, programme variant, cohort namely, 1,2,3, and 4, CFHBS, learning log, LTU5s, and Cohort 1.
- **Interview data.** Source, cohort namely, Childminder Interview, and Cohort 2.

Timeline

Table 5: Timeline

Date	Activity
April 2023 – July 2023	Childminder recruitment
September 2023	Cohort 1 baseline childminder surveys
October 2023	Baseline tutor focus group
September 2023 – January 2024	Cohort 1 programme training: (September 2023 – December 2024 LTU5s; September 2023 – January 2024 SLS3-5s)
January 2024	Cohort 1 completion of learning logs
January 2024	Cohort 1 virtual home visit observations
January 2024	Cohort 1 endline survey
January 2024	Evaluation midpoint review
January 2024	Midpoint tutor focus group
January 2024	Cohort 2 baseline survey
January 2024 – March 2024	Cohort 2 programme training (LTU5s and SLS3-5s)
April 2024	Cohort 2 completion of learning logs
April 2024 – May 2024	Cohort 2 virtual home visit observations
April 2024 – May 2024	Cohort 2 endline survey
June 2024	Collection of programme data from Elklan
June 2024	Childminder interviews
June 2024	Endline tutor focus group
June 2024 – July 2024	Follow-up childminder surveys (Cohort 1 only)
August 2024 – December 2024	Analysis
January 2025	Draft evaluation report submitted

Findings

Participants

Twenty childminders undertook the CFHBS programme in September 2023 as part of Cohort 1 (ten LTU5s; ten SLS3-5s). A further 18 childminders began the training in January 2024 as Cohort 2 (nine LTU5s; nine SLS3-5s). Demographic details were requested from childminders in the baseline survey although it should be noted that only 37 childminders completed this survey (one childminder following SLS3-5s in Cohort 2 failed to do so despite starting the training).⁷ Accompanying tables are presented in Appendix D.

The two groups (by programme variant) were reasonably well balanced in terms of length of time working as a childminder: of those following the LTU5s programme variant (both cohorts), 13 out of 19 childminders reported having worked as a childminder for more than six years, as did 14 out of 18 childminders following SLS3-5s (both cohorts) (Appendix D Figure 1). Additionally, 17 out of 19 childminders following LTU5s reported working in the early years sector for over six years, as did 16 out of 18 childminders following the SLS3-5s programme variant (Appendix D Figure 2). Both cohorts were also reasonably well balanced in terms of the number of settings employing childminder assistants, with nine settings out of 17 on the LTU5s variant reporting employing childminder assistants, and nine settings out of 18 on the SLS3-5s variant (Appendix D Figure 3). This is in addition to the similarities in reports of the number of childminder assistants employed (with childminders following the LTU5s programme variant reporting employing a total of 14 childminders across their settings, and those following the SLS3-5s programme variant employing 13) (Appendix D Figure 4).

Those following SLS3-5s, in general, had higher prior qualifications, which was to be expected given the different entry requirements for the two programmes. For example, ten out of 17 childminders following the SLS3-5s programme variant had a Level 5 or higher qualification (e.g. Higher National Diploma [HND] or foundational degree) compared to eight out of 19 childminders following the LTU5s programme variant. Additionally, childminders following the LTU5s programme variant were more likely to have lower ranked prior qualifications, such as Level 3 (eight out of 19 childminders) compared to those following SLS3-5s (five out of 17 childminders) (Appendix D Figure 5).

Childminders taking the LTU5s programme variant also had more children on average in their care than those following SLS3-5s (15 children on average LTU5s; ten children on average SLS3-5s) (Appendix D Table 1). Childminders following LTU5s also had a higher proportion of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) than those following SLS3-5s (25 children in total for childminders taking the LTU5s programme variant and seven children in total for those following SLS3-5s) (Appendix D Figure 6).

LTU5s childminders in Cohort 2 reported having more children per setting than any other group (mean=18.4, range 7–70). They also reported having proportionately more children in the older age ranges, with some settings reporting a much higher mean number of primary school-aged children (mean=12.8, range 2–40). Comparatively, LTU5s childminders in Cohort 2 also reported having a much higher proportion of two- to three-year-olds (mean score of 4.4, range 1–10), three- to four-year-olds (mean score of 3.5, range 1–4), four- to five-year-olds (mean score of 4, range 0–4), and EAL children (mean score of 3, range 0-17) than either LTU5s Cohort 1 or either cohort of SLS3-5s (Appendix D Figure 6).

Some differences noted between the two cohorts are worth reporting here given the allocation process. For example, overall, childminders in Cohort 2 reported having more experience working as childminders compared to those in Cohort 1 (across the two programme variants) with 39% reporting having worked as a childminder for over 15 years in Cohort 2 compared to 20% of childminders in Cohort 1 (Appendix D Figure 1). More SLS3-5s childminders in Cohort 1 had a Level 5 qualification (70%) compared to those following the same programme variant in Cohort 2 (43%). The opposite was true for LTU5s childminders for Cohort 1 compared to Cohort 2 (30% of childminders on Cohort 1 had a Level 5 qualification and 56% on Cohort 2) (Appendix D Figure 5).

⁷ Unless otherwise stated this data were all collected from the baseline survey.

Evidence to support the theory of change

Key findings

- Childminder skills, knowledge, and confidence, as measured by the SKCQ and childminder self-report, increased across both programme variants, with greater gains across all three domains for those following the SLS3-5s programme variant compared to those following LTU5s.
- Childminders reported changes in practice in line with the theories of change including in modelling language and adult-child interactions. There is evidence of differential impacts between the two programme variants with those following LTU5s receiving on average higher tutor-rated scores on the adult-child interaction and modelling checklists. However, those following the SLS3-5s programme were more likely to make wider changes to the physical environment, books sharing, and use of resources compared to those following the LTU5s variant.
- Some childminders indicated that, rather than gaining new knowledge, the programme had acted as a reminder of good practice and some of their increased confidence came from the reassurance that they were supporting children's language and communication needs effectively.
- There is evidence that programme benefits in terms of skills, knowledge, and confidence and continued implementation of programme learning were sustained after the end of training.
- Childminders perceived positive impacts of the programme on children's SLC development, with additional reported benefits including children's confidence and socio-emotional development.

This section explores the evidence to support the theories of change in the two programme variants in order to establish evidence of promise of the CFHBS programme and its two variants (research question 2). Consequently, this section focuses on the following aspects of the theories of change:

- the impact of the programme on childminders skills, knowledge, and confidence relating to children's SLC needs (childminder output);
- reported changes in childminder practice, with particular regard to childminders using improved strategies to promote children's SLC and providing a more communication friendly environment (children's inputs and outputs, short-term childminder outputs); and
- perceived impact of the programme on children's SLC (children's short-term outcomes).

It also considers unexpected consequences as a result of the programme in terms of both childminder and child outcomes. Programme training, as detailed in the childminder inputs and outputs in the theories of change, is discussed in more detail in the subsequent section on 'Feasibility of implementation' below.

Childminder skills, knowledge, and confidence

As described in the 'Methods' section above, a bespoke measure of childminder skills, knowledge, and confidence⁸ about children's SLC needs was embedded in each survey timepoint (baseline, endline, and six-month post-training follow-up). Descriptive analyses were carried out to identify whether there were differences between scores at different timepoints or between variants. The results of these descriptive analyses may be seen in Appendix E.

Across the whole sample, there was an increase in the mean total score between baseline and endline (12.9 and 26.8, respectively). For the knowledge subscale, there was an increase in the mean scores between baseline and endline (6.1 and 7.7, respectively), and in the confidence subscale (8.6 and 13.9, respectively). There was also an increase in the judgement subscale (4.7 and 5.7, respectively), although this was smaller than that found on the knowledge and confidence subscales (Appendix E Figure 1).

⁸ For each area, three question types were developed: a scenario judgement-based question (skills); a test of knowledge (knowledge); and a self-rated confidence question based on the childminders confidence in the answers they had given (confidence).

When the analysis was conducted by programme variant (Appendix E Figure 2), it was found that for those childminders following the LTU5s programme variant, there were increases in the means across the whole measure between baseline and endline. The largest differences in the mean scores were in the confidence and total subscales:

- Knowledge (6.7 and 7.6, respectively);
- Judgement (4.6 and 4.9, respectively);
- Confidence (9.4 and 13.5, respectively);
- Total (20.7 and 26.0, respectively).

For those childminders following the SLS3-5s programme variant, there were increases in the means across the whole measure between baseline and endline, with the largest differences in the mean scores again showing in the confidence and total subscales:

- Knowledge (6.0 and 7.2, respectively);
- Judgement (5.0 and 6.4, respectively);
- Confidence (7.6 and 14.4, respectively);
- Total (18.5 and 27.9, respectively).

At endline, childminders following SLS3-5s had higher mean average scores on the judgement, confidence, and total subscale scores when compared to those following LTU5s. In addition, although their knowledge scores were lower than for those following LTU5s, those following SLS3-5s also scored lower at baseline and showed higher levels of change.

A descriptive analysis was carried out to compare the mean scores for Cohort 1 childminders only at baseline, endline, and six-month post-training follow-up to assess whether any impact of the training was sustained over a longer period of time (Figure D3). Over time, childminders' reported confidence increased, regardless of programme variant. In contrast, the mean average knowledge score, again, increased over time for those childminders following SLS3-5s (5.9 out of 17 at baseline, 7.4 at endline, and 8.4 at follow-up) whereas for those following LTU5s, while the mean average score was higher at six-month follow-up than at baseline, this did show a decline from the endline survey (6.1 out of 17 at baseline, 8.2 at endline, and 6.6 at follow-up). In addition, the mean judgement score for LTU5s remained relatively stable between endline and follow-up (4.8 and 4.9 out of 12, respectively), although the mean average score decreased for those following SLS3-5s across the same time period (6.5 and 5.5, respectively). As can be seen in the section on 'Continuity of implementation' below, there is evidence that changes in practice were sustained over the longer (six-month) period, which aligns with the findings here relating to childminder skills, knowledge, and confidence in supporting children's SLC.

Finally, the analysis was repeated for Cohort 2 by programme variant (LTU5s and SLS3-5s) (Figure D4). Taking the separate Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 analysis together (Figure D3 and Figure D4) it can be seen that almost all groups of learners, with the exception of those in Cohort 2 following the LTU5s programme variant, showed an improvement in their knowledge scores between baseline and endline testing. The largest mean differences between baseline and endline on the SKCQ subscales were consistently observed on the confidence and total subscales, indicating that the CFHBS training, regardless of variant, had a positive impact on childminders' overall approach to children's speech and language, and also boosted their confidence in this area of practice.

Analysis of the qualitative data (from email exchanges, interviews, and open response survey questions), supplemented by evidence from the learning logs, also reflected the findings relating to improved childminder skills, knowledge, and confidence. Childminders from both programme variants referred to the knowledge they gained from the programme:

I have learnt a lot from this course. (2106, LTU5s LL, LTU5s, C1)

I understand more how to work with children and how to support their language skills, I now understand what I am doing right and what I have to improve. (Follow-up survey, SLS3-5s, C1)

I have a better understand[ing] of the development stages and levels of the children as well as how better to support them. (1107, SLS3-5s LL, SLS3-5s, C1)

I feel more confident to identify a speech and language concern. (Follow-up survey, SLS3-5s, C1)

A small number of childminders indicated that they did not necessarily gain 'new' knowledge or strategies from the programme, rather in some instances, it reinforced existing knowledge or practice. This view was expressed by childminders from both programme variants:

You sort of feel that you do know [to wait] but it was really good to remind you and to really focus on taking your time and actually reviewing how that changed your instructions and things. (Childminder interview, C2)

Like I say, some things that I already know and I do anyway, and then there are other things that came up and I thought, oh, that's a good idea. (Childminder interview, C2)

I've been childminding for a very long time now...18 years and I had gained some support before on language development and so where it was always do something new I think, but I'm doing that. (Childminder interview, C1)

Overwhelmingly, however, childminders discussed the way that the course had benefited their confidence levels, irrespective of whether or not they felt they had gained new knowledge or skills. This was attributed to a number of factors, including the knowledge gained during the programme, as well as confirmation that their existing practice was of a high standard:

I am doing what I should be. (2103, Email exchange, LTU5s, C1)

My confidence in what I was already doing has improved and I have found new ideas to take the setting further. (Follow-up survey, LTU5s, C1)

I think potentially in confidence because I now feel like I know what I'm doing and like that I do know it because obviously being a childminder is obviously like individual and kind of isolating in a way that you don't necessarily have a sounding board to sound. (Childminder interview, C2)

Childminders also indicated additional benefits of their increased knowledge, and the confidence associated with that, in their communication with parents and when dealing with other professionals:

I offer more information to the parents now which they appreciate. They value my knowledge and are reassured by it. (Follow-up survey, LTU5s, C1)

I have been taken more seriously discussing my concerns with [the] health visitor because I have done this course. (Follow-up survey, SLS3-5s, C1)

One childminder indicated that they were cascading their knowledge to their assistant:

I've got a new assistant now and I've started feeding that information to her as well. So I'm using what I've been taught to teach somebody else. (Childminder interview, C1)

Similar themes relating to improvements in childminders' skills, knowledge, and confidence emerged from the focus groups with the CFHBS tutors. Tutors discussed knowledge and strategies childminders were learning from the programme. For example:

What order development comes in...what comes next, regardless of their age. (Tutor focus group, Baseline)

How many questions they use, whether they pause, the adult/child interaction. (Tutor focus group, Baseline)

However, tutors also recognised that, in some cases, childminders were 'rediscovering' things that they had already known, rather than picking up new material and that there was value in such reflection:

It's around allowing that reflection on what it is that they're doing and why that's good because there's a lot of actual good practice. (Tutor focus group, Endpoint)

They were very 'ah yes, I remember, I was supposed to wait and not ask so many questions', so it was just about refreshing their memory and nobody seemed to be like, 'I knew all of this anyway', I think they all saw it as a positive thing but it just reminded them about what they should be doing because although they knew those things, they'd perhaps forgotten or as we do, it just fizzles out of your practice a little bit over the course of time. (Tutor focus group, Endpoint)

Tutors also talked about the improvements that they had noticed in childminder confidence, which in many ways was a 'validation' (Tutor focus group, Midpoint) of existing practice:

Confidence that they're already doing a really good job. (Tutor focus group, Baseline)

Confidence in what they're doing and reassuring that actually, there's some really fantastic practice out there. (Tutor focus group, Endpoint)

Tutors also pointed to the differences in the two programmes, with both programme variants containing similar content, but SLS3-5s providing the theoretical underpinnings of the strategies taught, which may in part explain the greater gains in skills, knowledge, and confidence (as measured by the SKCQ) for those following this programme variants compared to those following LTU5s reported above:

It's the why part isn't it? It's the evaluation, so it's asking them for the SLS [Speech and Language Support], you need to identify what you're doing and describe yourself doing it, describe what happens to the children when you do it but then also evaluate why did that happen? So it's trying to underpin that knowledge with 'I know that when I make this change, it impacts on children because...' and seeing it all the way through. (Tutor focus group, Midpoint)

We don't do as much on the physical environment as well, Let's Talk With Under 5s, but most other things we cover, just not in as much depth. (Tutor focus group, Midpoint)

Other childminder outcomes

The CFHBS learning logs contained additional information relating to childminders' practice relating to core programme components, namely: 'adult-child interaction'; 'modelling language' with children; 'the physical environment: inside and out'; 'resources and opportunities'; and 'book sharing'. Within each section childminders completed a series of tasks evidencing how they meet the criteria for CFHBS status. Alongside each task they were required to indicate a self-rating (from 0 'inadequate' to 3 'outstanding'; although in line with changes in Ofsted [Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills], Ekklan plan to amend the current rating system from September 2025). The task was then marked by the tutor, who also rated the evidence. In some cases, additional information or evidence was requested by the tutor in order to establish the correct grade. The tutor ratings for each of these sections is discussed in turn below. It should, however, be acknowledged that these outcomes were largely only measured at one timepoint and where they are not (adult-child interaction) the baseline was purely self-reported. Reported changes in practice are discussed in the following section.

Adult-child interaction

In the learning logs for each programme variant (LTU5s and SLS3-5s), childminders were asked to complete a self-rated adult-child interaction checklist, which asked the frequency with which childminders engaged in a list of activities in their interactions with the children in their care ('never', 'sometimes', or 'always'). There were 12 statements on the checklist at baseline for those following SLS3-5s and nine for those following LTU5s. This meant that the possible scores ranged from 0 to 24 and 0 to 18, respectively. During the virtual home visits, tutors observed the childminders interacting with children and completed the SLS3-5s adult-child interaction checklist with all childminders (regardless of programme variant) in their CFHBS learning log. In addition, the tutors gave childminders a grade correlating with the overall score (ranging from 0 'inadequate' to 3 'outstanding'). The average scores from both the childminder self-rated baseline adult-child interaction checklists and tutor endline adult-child interaction checklist and ratings are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Childminder scores on the adult-child interaction checklist at pre- and post-training (n=35)

Programme	Baseline	Endline	
	Score mean (range) ^a	Score mean (range) ^b	Grade mean ^c
LTU5s	14.4 (12–18)	21.8 (19–24)	2.9
Cohort 1 (n=10)	14.1 (12–16)	23.0 (22–24)	3
Cohort 2 (n=9)	14.7 (12–18)	20.6 (19–24)	2.9
SLS3-5s	19.3 (14–24)	20.9 (18–24)	2.9
Cohort 1 (n=10)	19.4 (14–24)	21.5 (18–24)	2.9
Cohort 2 (n=6)	19.0 (14–24)	19.8 (19–21)	3
Total	16.6 (12–24)	21.4 (18–24)	2.9

^a Possible score: LTU5s, 0 to 18; SLS3-5s, 0 to 24.

^b Possible score: 0 to 24 (LTU5s and SLS3-5s).

^c Possible grade: 0 to 3 (LTU5s and SLS3-5s).

It is evident that childminders' self-ratings showed considerable variation. There was also no noticeable correlation between self-ratings at baseline and tutor ratings endline. However, at endline, those following LTU5s, on average, were scored more highly by the CFHBS tutors than those following SLS3-5s (with averages of 21.8 and 20.9, respectively) although overall scores were similar across the two groups suggesting that the programme had positive benefits on adult-child interaction for both groups (although it should be acknowledged that this evidence is primarily based on only one independent timepoint). The researchers did not observe any difference in the criteria applied by tutors between programme variants (LTU5s and SLS3-5s). It should also be noted that there was considerable variation in the time between the baseline, self-report checklist completion, and the endline tutor checklist and rating, with an average of 13 weeks but a minimum of 3 weeks and a maximum of 26 weeks.

Modelling language

CFHBS tutors also observed childminders to complete a modelling language checklist during the virtual home visit. The checklist has seven items and has a possible score range of 0 to 14. It covers aspects of language modelling such as extending a child's vocabulary in conversation and modelling correct grammar. Again, the tutor also rated the activity from 0 to 3 and the score and the rating were added to the childminders' CFHBS learning log. As with the adult-child interaction checklist, the researchers did not observe any difference in the criteria applied by tutors between programme variants (LTU5s and SLS3-5s). The results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Results of tutor-rated modelling language checklist (n=35)

Programme	Endline	
	Score mean (range) ^a	Grade mean ^b
LTU5s	12.6 (8–14)	2.8
Cohort 1 (n=10)	13.5 (13–14)	2.9
Cohort 2 (n=9)	11.7 (8–14)	2.8
SLS3-5s	12.2 (10–14)	3
Cohort 1 (n=10)	12.3 (10–14)	3
Cohort 2 (n=6)	12 (12–12)	3
Total	12.4 (8–14)	2.9

^a Possible score: 0 to 14.

^b Possible grade: 0 to 3.

Although the modelling language checklist was only completed at endline, so the results do not indicate the extent to which practice may have changed, it can be seen that, on average those following LTU5s scored marginally more highly than those following SLS3-5s. However, there was also wider variation in scores within those following LTU5s than those following SLS3-5s (means of 8–12 compared with 10–14, respectively).

The physical environment: inside and outside

There were 12 tasks in the section on the physical environment, for example, ensuring there was sufficient space indoors and outdoors to promote children's free movement and play, provision of 'a snug, quiet area for children to relax, have a conversation and/or share a book'. Scores could, therefore, range from 0 to 36. Childminders following SLS3-5s scored, on average, more highly on tasks within this section of the CFHBS learning logs than those following LTU5s (31.9 and 29.7, respectively; Table 8), meaning more childminders following the LTU5s programme variant were scored

a 2 'good' on the tasks as opposed to a 3 'outstanding' when compared to those following SLS3-5s, although the overall average grade showed little variation (a score of 3 for both programme variants).

Table 8: Ratings and grading for 'the physical environment' (n=35)

Programme	Score mean (range) ^a	Grade mean ^b
LTU5s	29.7 (22–35)	3
Cohort 1 (n=10)	29.8 (22–35)	3
Cohort 2 (n=9)	29.6 (27–32)	3
SLS3-5s	31.9 (26–36)	3
Cohort 1 (n=10)	31.8 (26–35)	3
Cohort 2 (n=6)	32.0 (28–36)	3
Total	30.7 (22–36)	3

^a Possible score: 0 to 36.

^b Possible grade: 0 to 3.

Resources and opportunities

There were 11 tasks in the section on 'resources and opportunities', including ensuring there were a range of resources linked to children's interests and development stages to promote gross and fine motor skills, and imaginative play, providing opportunities for children to experience the local community, for example, going shopping. Scores could, therefore, range from 0 to 33. Overall, childminders following SLS3-5s scored, on average, received slightly higher scores for the resources and opportunities available in their settings than those following LTU5s (29.8 and 28.3, respectively; Table 9), although the differences are only marginal.

Table 9: Ratings and grading for 'resources and opportunities' (n=35)

Programme	Score mean (range) ^a	Grade mean ^b
LTU5s	28.3 (24–33)	2.8
Cohort 1 (n=10)	28.3 (24–33)	2.8
Cohort 2 (n=9)	28.2 (24–33)	2.9
SLS3-5s	29.8 (24–33)	2.9
Cohort 1 (n=10)	29.3 (24–33)	2.9
Cohort 2 (n=6)	30.7 (27–33)	3.0
Total	29.0 (24–33)	2.9

^a Possible score: 0 to 33.

^b Possible grade: 0 to 3.

Book sharing

There were 18 tasks in the section on 'book sharing', which covered areas such as ensuring books are accessible for children, and that there was a sufficient range of books linked to children's developmental stages. Scores could, therefore, range from 0 to 54. Again, childminders following SLS3-5s received, on average, higher scores for these tasks than those following LTU5s (45.9 and 44.4, respectively; Table 10), although again, the difference is marginal.

Table 10: Ratings and grading for 'book sharing' (n=35)

Programme	Score mean (range) ^a	Grade mean ^b
LTU5s	44.4 (35–52)	2.8
Cohort 1 (n=10)	43.3 (35–50)	2.8
Cohort 2 (n=9)	45.4 (38–52)	2.8
SLS3-5s	45.9 (36–54)	2.9
Cohort 1 (n=10)	44.6 (36–51)	2.9
Cohort 2 (n=6)	48.2 (41–54)	3.0
Total	45.1 (35–54)	2.9

^a Possible score: 0 to 54.

^b Possible grade: 0 to 3.

Change in childminders' practice

In the endline surveys, childminders were again asked to reflect on their practice and how it related to the core components of the CFHBS programme, including adult-child interactions, modelling language, the physical setting environment, resources available in the setting, and the way books are shared with children. In the surveys, to address whether the programme had resulted in a change in childminders' reported practice (research question 2b) childminders were asked about any changes that they had made within their setting since starting the CFHBS training.

Table 11: CFHBS core components in which childminders reported changes to practice at endline (n=33)^a

Core components	LTU5s (n=18)	SLS3-5s (n=15)	Total
Modelling language with children	15	11	26
The way that you interact with children	13	13	26
The physical environment of the setting	11	11	22
The resources available in your setting	9	9	18
The way that books are shared with children in the setting	9	8	17
Other (please describe) ^b	2	2	4

^a More than one response could be given.

^b Other: 'Being more reflective'; 'Reintroduced some activities (shopping, cooking, etc.)'; 'Other changes are ongoing'; 'Sharing tips from the course with parents'. Photos and labels of resources.

As can be seen in Table 11 above:

- majority of childminders reported changes in the way in which they interacted with the children in their care (26 out of 33 respondents) and changes in the way that they modelled language with children (26 out of 33 respondents).
- two-thirds of respondents (22 out of 33) reported having made changes to the physical environment of their setting at the end of training and just over a half reported that they had made changes to the resources available in their setting (18 out of 33 respondents) and that they had changed the way books were shared with children in their setting (17 out of 33 respondents).
- 'the resources available in your setting' and 'the way that books are shared with children in the setting' were the least selected options by both groups of childminders (18 out of 33 respondents and 17 out of 33 respondents, respectively).

The learning logs for both LTU5s and SLS3-5s and the CFHBS learning log (completed by childminders from both programme variants) allowed for more qualitative insight into these changes in practice. Childminders also discussed the changes they had made as a result of the training in their interviews and the email exchanges. Examples of the changes they reported echo those in Table 11 and are provided below.

Adult-child interaction

The strategies childminders most frequently mentioned finding most useful during the programme in the end of CFHBS learning logs related to adult-child interaction, in particular the 'ten second rule' (i.e. waiting for longer for a child's response), modelling language, and not asking too many questions:

The changes we have made have been more about how we interact with the children. Listening and pausing more. We are calmer and more in tune with the needs of the individual children. We had the access to lots of resources and outdoor spaces, but it was how we interacted with children in them that we found we have improved on most. (2110, CFHBS LL, LTU5s, C1)

I have changed the way that I interact with children in my setting. I no longer ask lots and lots of questions while they are engaged in a planned activity, I now allow the child thinking and response time before jumping in with another question or giving them the answer. I am now more mindful of how the question is posed to the child in front of me, tailoring it to their age and stage of development. (1208, CFHBS LL, SLS3-5s, C2)

In their interviews and email exchanges childminders also talked about adult-child interactions and how these had changed, although, for some, this was a reminder of good practice rather than new knowledge:

I constantly consider my own language and how I speak to children. I notice when I ask too many questions, this habit is so hard to drop! (1106, Email correspondence, SLS3-5s, C1)

You sort of feel that you do know but it was really good to remind you and to really focus on taking your time and actually reviewing how that changed your instructions and things. (Childminder interview, C2)

Modelling language

Alongside adult-child interaction, childminders also discussed modelling language and again, for some this was new knowledge:

I [now] wait for them to speak their ideas and model correct language back to them. (2102, Email correspondence, LTU5s, C1)

I think I always did it, but I'm more conscious of doing it and more careful about how I do it now with modelling to her, repeating back to her. (Childminder interview, C1)

This is something I hadn't particularly considered or been aware of before. (1110, Email correspondence, SLS3-5s, C1)

The physical environment: inside and outside

Childminders also discussed more physical changes in their setting or changes in the activities they conducted. Often, this was again brought back to SLC as a focus of the programme:

I've created a calm corner which I've never heard of before...I've implemented that, which is, I think it's going well. (Childminder interview, C2)

I've got a periscope on the fence with lots of bird signs so they can look through at the tree at the bottom of the garden and try to identify the birds that are on the fence. (Childminder interview, C2)

The CFHBS learning logs also provided extensive evidence of the changes made to the physical environment of childminders' settings:

[M]y playroom has gone through many changes which I am proud of. I created a sensory pod...it provides a sensory space for the children that need to have a bit of quiet time...I have also created a small 'house' which is open and light, this is used to create a variety of spaces for the children to play—it's been a café, a fire station and Santa's workshop to name a few. (2101, CFHBS LL, LTU5s, C1)

The visual timetable and cosy nook have been the most useful changes to my setting. I have found these have made the biggest difference to communication within my setting so far. (1202 CFHBS Learning log, SLS3-5s, C2)

I think it was just perfect...you know, like looking at hot and cold areas within the setting as well and making them more interesting for the children, I've found that really handy, actually because you don't think of it like that, do you. (Childminder interview, C2)

Resources and opportunities

Childminders discussed providing more opportunities for the children in their care, including one childminder who reported resuming cooking and shopping with the children in their care, a practice they had stopped during the Covid-19 pandemic:

I have just reintroduced going shopping, we are limited to a small supermarket we can walk to. This time we used a familiar recipe for me to draw the list with [child, and [child] found the items, carried the basket, paid for the shopping, and helped to put it away once home. I intend to do this regularly now as she really enjoyed it. (1110, CFHBS LL, SLS3-5s, C1)

Other reported changing their resources, or being more thoughtful in their provision:

I think using the phrase 'less is more' and tidying some of the resources away and rotating them is helpful. I think also looking through the guidance has helped me reflect on how I set up in the morning and what is on offer. (2205, CFHBS LL, LTU5s, C2)

I have thoughtfully considered how the resources I'm choosing effect the children's language opportunities and have specifically grown my book collection in various areas. (Endline survey, SLS3-5s, C1)

Book sharing

Finally, childminders discussed changes in both access to books and the ways in which they shared books with the children:

We've always had books and an area to read but I hadn't given enough thought to the different types of books and considered the different learning levels of the children aside from babies and pre-schoolers. Since doing the course I have expanded the variety of books available and visited the library more often than we were...I have kept some books away to introduce rotation. (1107, CFHBS LL, SLS3-5s, C1)

Reading and reading more with the children now or letting them choose their books and letting them lead the reading more than me just reading to them. (Childminder interview, C2)

In contrast to the above, two childminders stated in their interviews that they had not made any 'significant' changes as a result of the programme in their interviews (one from each programme variant) although they did discuss the value of the programme in reminding them of good practice and confirming existing practice:

The modelling language I felt like I was already doing because of my background. I felt like I feel like I do that anyway...so I've just continued with that and now and from the training, it's helped me realise that that is actually the correct way to do it. (Childminder interview, C1)

A key theme within these changes, however, was that childminders were making changes in their practices with SLC at the core:

We have changed how we plan each week so that language and communication is at the centre of what we are doing. (1101, CFHBS LL, SLS3-5s, C1)

Using the course information has helped me plan ahead. it has helped me think about the structure of an activity, why I am doing it, and the expected result. Reflecting on what the children said or did if it was beneficial to the child. (1104, CFHBS LL, SLS3-5s, C1)

In the survey and the qualitative data, the pattern of responses was similar across the two programme variants. However, Table 11 indicates the following notable exceptions in the survey data⁹:

- A slightly higher proportion of those following SLS3-5s indicated making changes in each category compared to childminders following LTU5s. For example, nearly three-quarters of childminders following SLS3-5s reported making changes to the physical environment of their settings (11 out of 15 respondents) compared to less than two-thirds of childminders following LTU5s (11 out of 18 respondents). This is noteworthy given that both variants followed the same process for gaining CFHBS status, which focused on environmental changes.
- 'Modelling language with children' was the change cited by the highest number of childminders following LTU5s and in higher proportions (over four-fifths of childminders following LTU5s, 15 out of 18 respondents) than those following SLS3-5s (less than three-quarters, 11 out of 15 respondents).
- 'The way that you interact with children' was the most frequently indicated response for those following SLS3-5s (13 out of 15 respondents) and in higher proportions (over four-fifths of respondents) compared

⁹ Given that the interview data were skewed towards those following the LTU5s programme variant (four out of the five interviews which took place) we were unable to identify such patterns in the qualitative data.

to childminders following the LTU5s programme variants (13 out of 18 respondents, less than three-quarters of respondents).

Continuity of implementation

In the six-month post-training follow-up survey, childminders in Cohort 1 were again asked about any changes that they had made over the course of training. In particular, they were asked whether they had maintained these changes, and about any changes they were still making to their setting. The two most frequently mentioned items ('modelling language with children' and 'the way that you interact with children') by respondents in the baseline survey (Table 11) were, again, mentioned by the highest number of respondents at follow-up (Table 12). However, unlike in the baseline survey, changes in the way books are shared was indicated more frequently than resources and changes in the physical environment. As can be seen in Table 12:

- All nine respondents from the LTU5s variant of the programme indicated that they had maintained the changes that they had made to the way that they modelled language with children in their setting.
- The majority (five out of six) of respondents from the SLS3-5s programme variant responded that they had maintained changes that they had made to the way that they modelled language with children in their setting. One childminder in this group indicated that they were still making changes to this.
- Only one of six respondents from the SLS3-5s programme indicated making and maintaining changes to the resources available in their setting, and three childminders in this group indicated that they are still making changes to this.
- Only one-third (three of nine) of the childminders on the LTU5s variant indicated making and maintaining changes to the way that books were shared with the children in their setting.

A separate response category was provided for childminders to indicate that they had not maintained a particular change since completing the training. However, this was not selected by any of the respondents so has been excluded from Table 12.¹⁰

Table 12: Maintenance of changes to practice and setting at follow-up for Cohort 1

	LTU5s (n=9)		SLS3-5s (n=6)		All (n=15)	
	I have maintained these changes	I am still making changes to this	I have maintained these changes	I am still making changes to this	I have maintained these changes	I am still making changes to this
Modelling language with children	9	0	5	1	14	1
The way that you interact with children	6	0	4	2	10	2
The way that books are shared with children in the setting	3	0	5	0	8	0
The resources available in your setting	6	0	1	3	7	3
The physical environment of the setting	4	1	3	1	7	2

Additional changes

At follow-up, childminders from Cohort 1 were also asked to indicate any aspects about their setting that they had changed *after* gaining CFHBS status. Four (out of nine) respondents from the LTU5s programme variant reported making changes to the physical environment of the setting since the training ended, compared to just one childminder (out of six respondents) from the SLS3-5s programme variant. Over half of childminders from the LTU5s programme variant (five out of nine respondents) reported making changes to the way that they modelled language with children

¹⁰ This may have been because practitioners were less aware of changes they had not maintained or because they perceived it as less socially desirable to report not maintaining changes.

since the training ended, compared to only a third of respondents from the SLS3-5s programme variant (two out of six respondents) (Table 13).

Table 13: Changes made to practice and setting since completion of training (follow-up survey; Cohort 1)

	LTU5s (n=9)	SLS3-5s (n=6)	Total (n=15)
Modelling language with children	5	2	7
The way that you interact with children	4	3	7
The resources available in your setting	3	2	5
The physical environment of the setting	4	1	4
The way that books are shared with children in the setting	1	2	3
Other (please describe) ^a	1	0	1

^a Other: 'Gave the parent leaflets of ideas how to help with language at home'.

Childminders were also asked to reflect on why they had made the changes that they had reported on after they had already gained CFHBS status:

- all 15 childminders indicated that they had made changes after the end of the programme because they had continued to reflect on the learning from the programme;
- three childminders (out of 15 respondents) reported that they had made changes after the programme had ended because of feedback from their tutor after the virtual home visit;
- three childminders indicated they had made changes after the programme because they had wanted to make the changes, but did not have the time to do so until after the programme was complete; and
- two childminders reported that they had wanted to make changes throughout the programme but had not had the funds until after the programme.

Reported child outcomes

In the endline survey, childminders were asked whether or not they had perceived impacts of the programme on the children in their care. The majority of childminders (28 out of 33 respondents; 16 out of 19 LTU5s; 12 out of 14 SLS3-5s) indicated that they thought that the training had impacted positively on the children in their care's SLC. The remaining five (out of 33) respondents indicated that they thought the training would have an impact on the SLC of the children in their care, but that it was too soon to say.

Childminders were then asked about potential impacts of the programme on those aspects of children's SLC specified in the theories of change (short-term outcomes) and school readiness (long-term outcomes). The results are presented in Figures 3 to 7. They show that:

- Children's expressive language (11 out of 27 respondents) and their sentence complexity (ten out of 28 respondents) were the two domains the programme was felt to have a major impact on by the highest number of childminders, although the numbers were similar across all domains except sentence length (seven out of 25 respondents).
- Just over a third of childminders following LTU5s indicated major impacts on children's receptive language, expressive language, and school readiness (six out of 15 respondents, for each area). Just under a third indicated major impacts on sentence complexity (four out of 15 respondents) and three out of 14 respondents from the LTU5s programme variant indicated major impacts on sentence length.
- Nearly a half of childminders following SLS3-5s indicated that the programme had a major impact on children's sentence complexity (six out of 13 respondents) and that it had a major impact on expressive language (five out of 12 respondents). Over a third indicated major impacts on sentence length (four out of 11 respondents) and a quarter reported major impacts on receptive language and school readiness (both three out of 12 respondents).

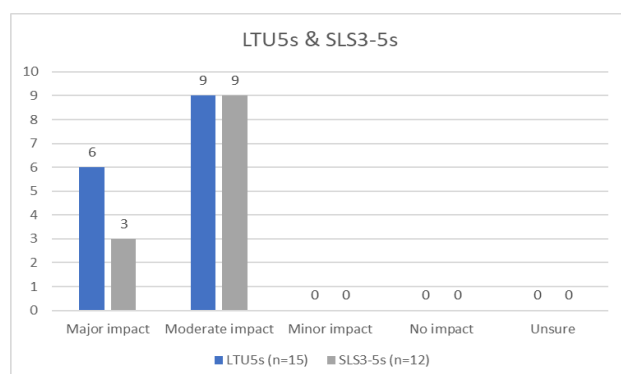


Figure 3: Receptive language (n=27)

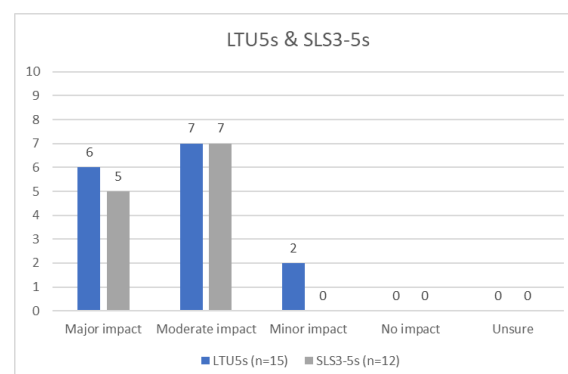


Figure 4: Expressive language (n=27)

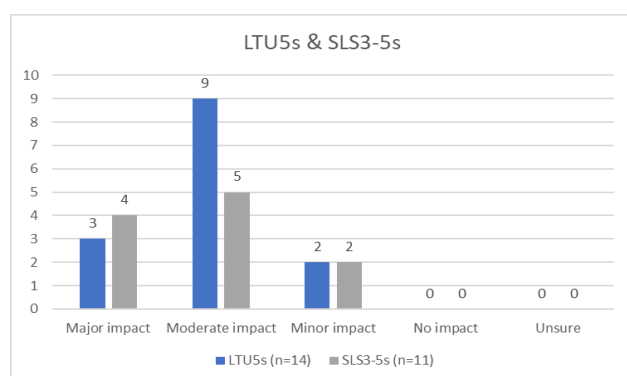


Figure 5: Sentence length (n=25)

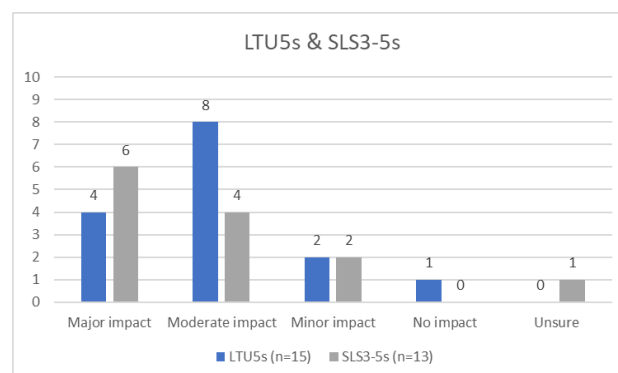


Figure 6: Sentence complexity (n=28)

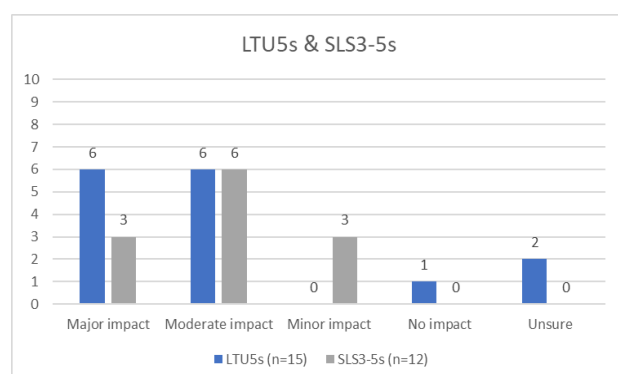


Figure 7: School readiness (n=27)

The same questions relating to impacts of the programme on children in their care were asked to Cohort 1 childminders in the follow-up survey in order to assess whether childminders perceptions had changed since completing the training. Again, the majority of childminders (14 out of 15 respondents; 9 out of 9 LTU5s; 5 out of 6 SLS3-5s) indicated that they had noticed a positive impact on the SLC of the children in the care. One childminder (SLS3-5s) reported that they felt that the programme would have an impact, but it was too soon to say. Figures 8 to 12 provide the reported impact of the programme on the different aspects of children's SLC and school readiness as suggested by the programme theories of change, at follow-up. Interestingly, the programme was indicated by the highest number of childminders as having a major impact on school readiness at follow-up (9 out of 15 childminders; Figure 12), which compares with a third of childminders (9 out of 27 respondents; Figure 7) in the endline survey. In addition, the proportions of childminders indicating that each area of interest had been majorly impacted by the programme had also increased.

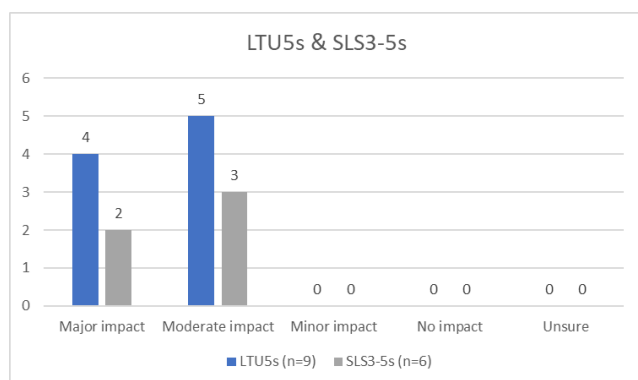


Figure 8: Receptive language (n=15)

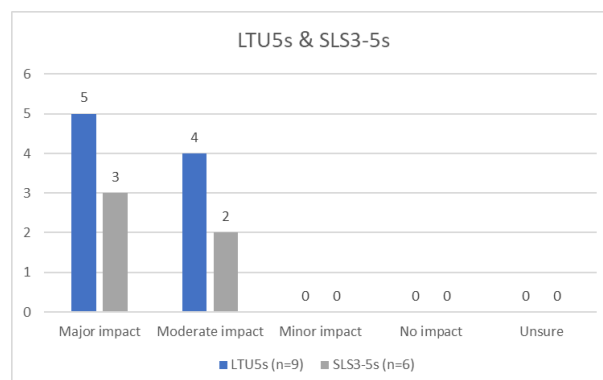


Figure 9: Expressive language (n=15)

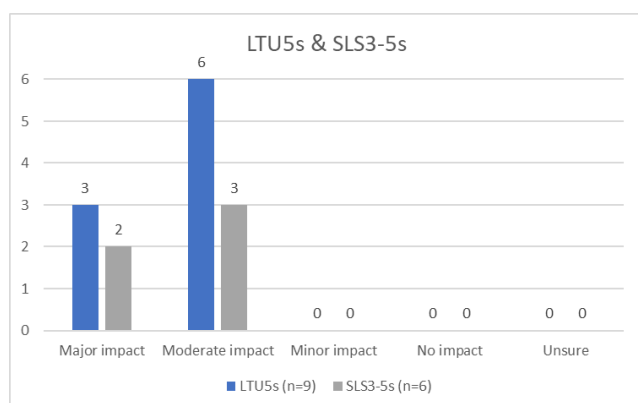


Figure 10: Sentence length (n=15)

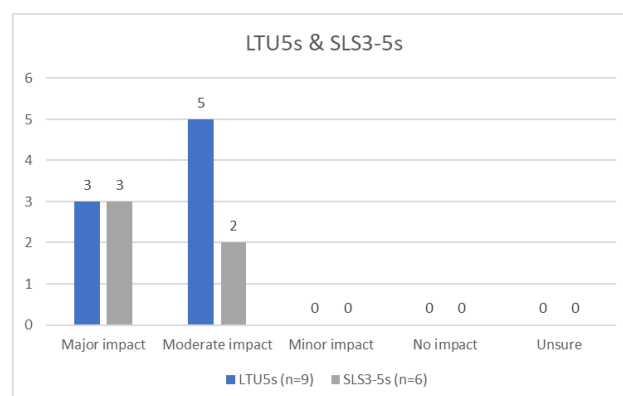


Figure 11: Sentence complexity (n=15)

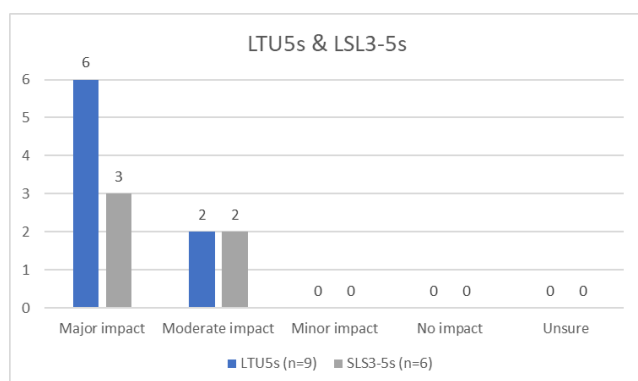


Figure 12: School readiness (n=15)

Additional analysis was conducted to analyse only those responses of childminders who responded to these survey questions at both endline and follow-up survey (n=11). Figures 13 to 17 show that the perceived impact reported at endline remained the same at follow-up for receptive language and sentence length. At follow-up, childminders reported an increase in major impact, compared to endline for expressive language (seven out of 11 respondents), and school readiness (seven out of 11 respondents).

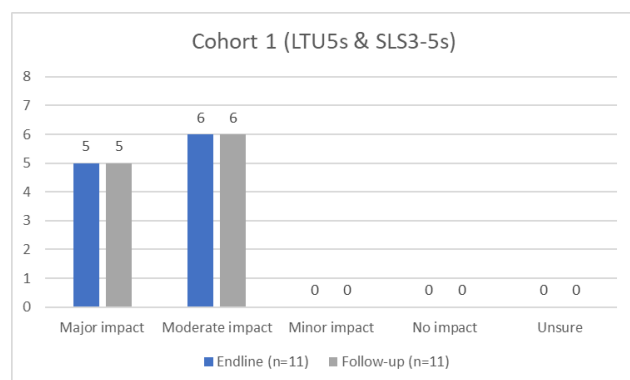


Figure 13: Receptive language (n=11)

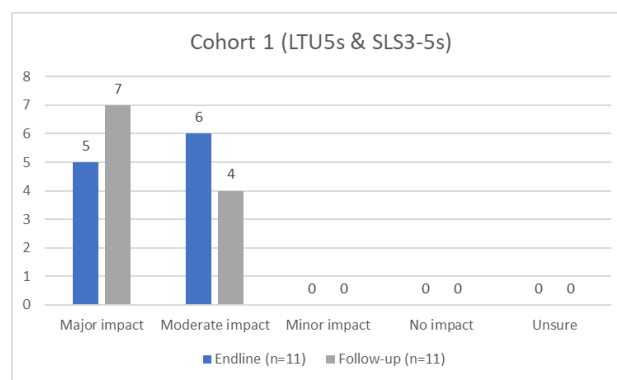


Figure 14: Expressive language (n=11)

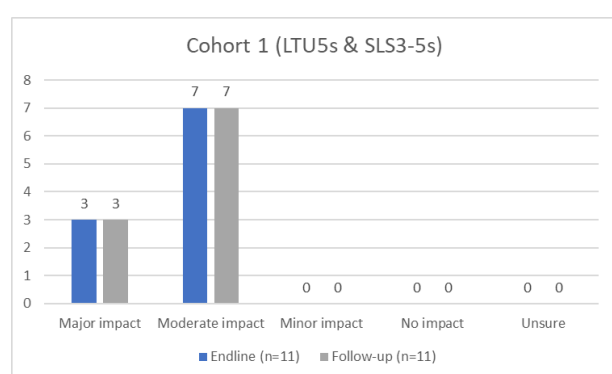


Figure 15: Sentence length (n=11)

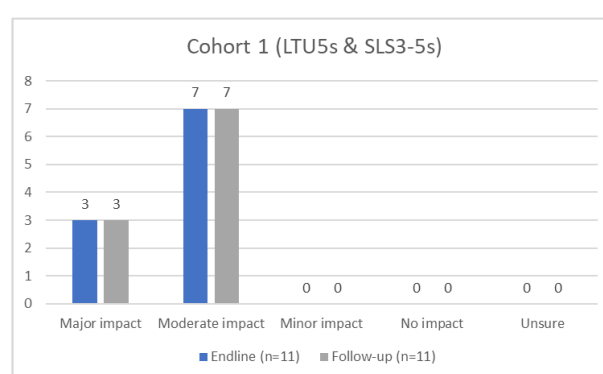


Figure 16: Sentence complexity (n=11)

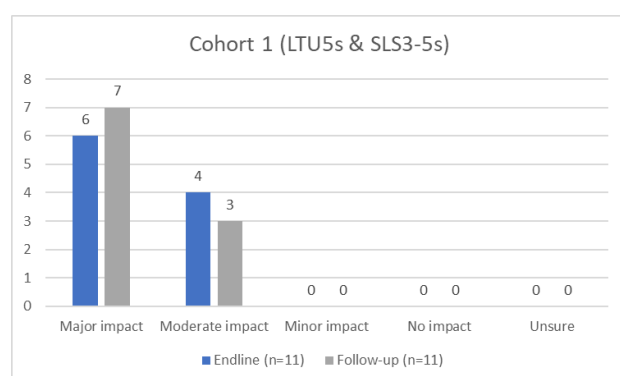


Figure 17: School readiness (n=11)

In their interviews, most of the childminders interviewed also talked about the positive impact on children's SLC of the changes in their practice as a result of their training, and given the interviews tended to have only a few children in their care each, they were often clear about the impact on each child within their setting. Impacts were reported in both developing and extending language and communication:

Actually I do notice that they talk a lot more and with the comments rather than a question...It has definitely had a positive impact on the sort of discussions we have and the interactions we have with them. (Childminder interview, C2)

[His] language isn't clear, it's just repetitive...I was able to, because of the course, have a confident conversation with mum. I did a bit of an IEP [Individualised Education Plan] for him and with that I did some visuals to do with Play Dough...The course was really useful because I could explain all the why we're doing what we're doing and how it will help him and now he won't shut up. (Childminder interview, C1)

In the follow-up survey, childminders were also asked if they had observed any impacts on children, other than improvements in SLC, as a result of the programme. Their responses, by programme variant, are presented in Table 14, demonstrating a range of additional benefits of the programme reported by childminders. In particular:

- nearly all childminders (12 out of 15 respondents) reported that the programme had improved children's confidence;
- two-thirds (ten out of 15 respondents) indicated that the programme had positively impacted on children's play; and
- nearly half of all childminders (seven out of 15 respondents) reported positive impacts on children's socio-emotional well-being.

Table 14: Additional reported child outcomes

	LTU5s (n=9)	SLS3-5s (n=6)	Total (n=15)
Children's confidence	7	5	12
Play	6	4	10
Children's socio-emotional well-being	4	3	7
Numeracy	3	2	5
Literacy	4	2	6

In the endline survey, childminders were asked if the programme had a particular impact on the SLC of specific groups of children and/or different age ranges. Childminders were asked to only report impacts where they had a child in any particular group in their care. Overall, major impacts were reported by between a third and a half of childminders for children aged between one and five years with the highest proportions of childminders reporting a major impact for children aged two to three years (14 out of 28 respondents) and those aged three to four years (11 out of 24 respondents) (Figure 18). Although the number of childminders who reported they had children with EAL, children eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), and children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) were low, making it hard to generalise, it is perhaps notable that of these three groups the highest proportion of childminders reporting a major impact was for EAL children (a quarter of childminders, two out of eight respondents) (Figure 18).

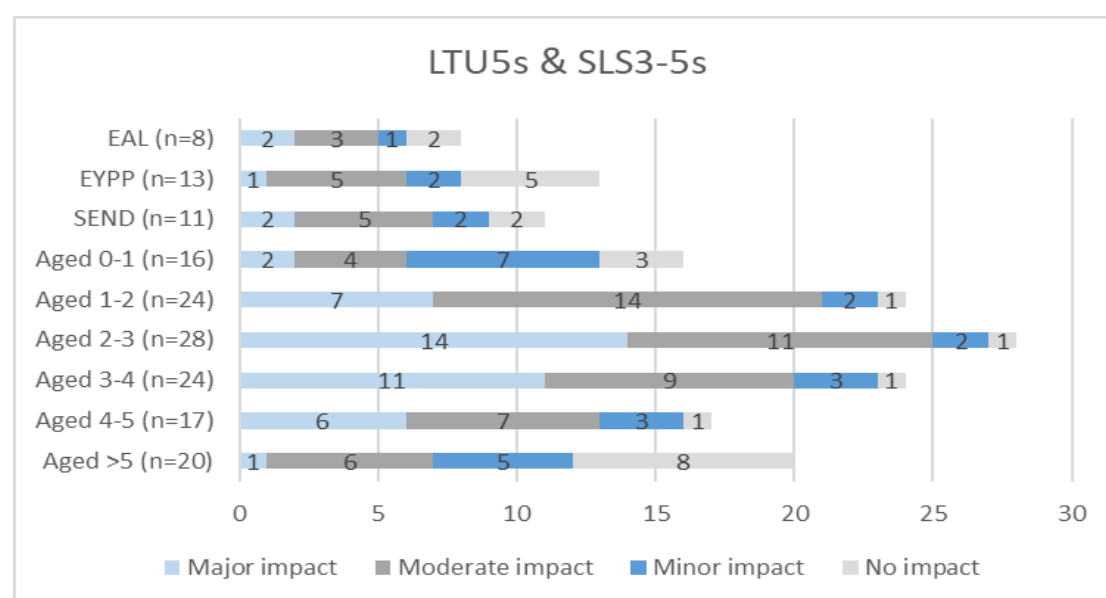


Figure 18: Perceived impact of the programme on SLC of different groups and ages of children at endline. The numbers vary as childminders' responses were based on having children in any particular group in their care

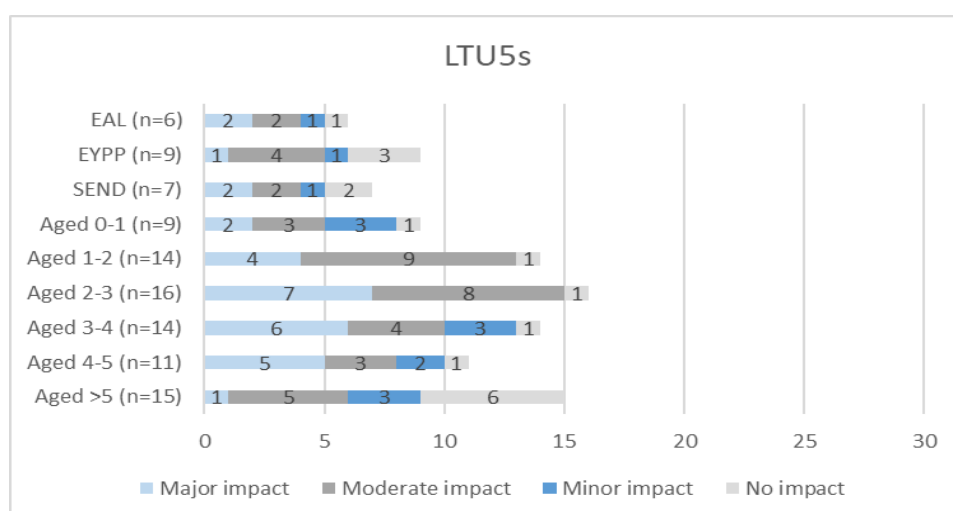


Figure 19: Perceived impact of the programme on SLC of different groups and ages of children at endline, LTU5s. The numbers vary as childminders responses were based on having children in any particular group in their care

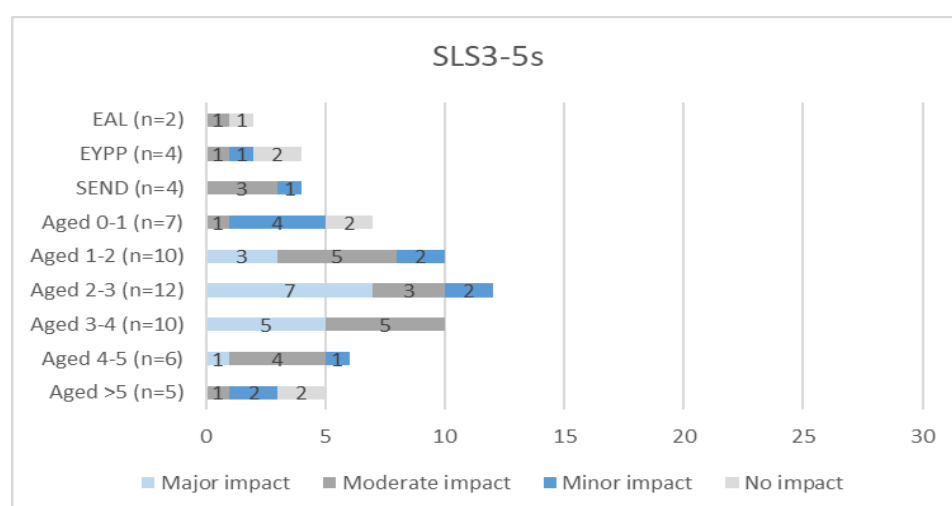


Figure 20: Perceived impact of the programme on SLC of different groups and ages of children at endline, SLS3-5s. The numbers vary as childminders responses were based on having children in any particular group in their care

When responses from childminders are compared across the two programme variants, LTU5s (Figure 19) and SLS3-5s (Figure 20) slightly higher proportions of those following SLS3-5s reported major impacts for the age ranges 1–2, 2–3, and 3–4 than those following LTU5s. For example, five out of ten respondents from the SLS3-5s variant reported major impacts for three- to four-year-olds in their care compared to six out of 14 respondents following LTU5s. However, the numbers across each category, particularly within the SLS3-5s programme variant, are small meaning that generalisations should be treated with caution. Interestingly, although the numbers of children with EAL, SEND, or in receipt of EYPP are low across both programme variants (especially for childminders following the SLS3-5s programme variant), only those childminders following LTU5s report major impacts of the programme on these groups of children, compared to those following SLS3-5s who only report moderate impacts at most. However, the numbers overall are too low to generalise.

This question was repeated in the Cohort 1 follow-up survey. Given the small numbers involved in that survey the figures have been aggregated across the two programme variants. The most notable differences from endline are that higher proportions of childminders at follow-up indicated a major impact on one to two-year-olds in their care at follow-up compared to endline (six out of six respondents and seven out of 24 respondents, respectively) and higher proportions indicated major impacts on children over five in their care at follow-up compared to endline (two out of ten respondents and one out of 20 respondents, respectively). Although the numbers are too low to generalise it may suggest that childminders at follow-up were beginning to see more diffuse impacts of their change in practice across the children in their setting.

Feasibility of implementation

Key findings

- Around 80% of childminders (32 out of 40 participants) met all of the CFHBS compliance criteria within the evaluation timeline including attendance at training and completion of course components.
- The main reasons for non-compliance were non-completion of course requirements (three participants), low attendance at training (three participants), and withdrawal from training (two participants).
- Childminders motivations for undertaking the CFHBS training were predominantly for professional development, to develop their skills, knowledge, and confidence in children's SLC, and to address the SLC needs of the children in their care.
- Childminders valued the training received, regarded the course content as useful, and appreciated the support offered by CFHBS tutors, both of which were facilitators to completing the CFHBS programme and gaining CFHBS accreditation.
- There were few barriers to implementing the CFHBS programme noted by childminders, however, timing of the training was noted by childminders across both programme variants and time taken to complete the prep work was a barrier cited by childminders on the SLS3-5s programme variant.
- While childminders valued the training and knowledge they had gained many indicated that they would not be able to afford the amount needed to complete the training. If they were to pay, the majority indicated this would be under £200, less than the cost of either programme.

This section addresses the acceptability and feasibility of the CFHBS programme and the two programme variants, LTU5s and SLS3-5s (research question 1). It does so by addressing:

- the demand for the programme and the two programme variants;
- programme compliance;
- childminder engagement with, and attitudes towards, training;
- barriers and facilitators to training and completion of programme components (including changes in practice); and
- the value childminders place on the CFHBS programme.

Reasons for undertaking the CFHBS training

In the baseline survey, childminders were asked why they chose to take the CFHBS training (Table 15). The most frequently indicated reason for choosing to pursue the CFHBS programme, selected by childminders on both cohorts, was 'professional development' (19 out of 19 LTU5s, 17 out of 18 SLS3-5s). This was followed closely by 'to enhance my own confidence, skills, and knowledge in SLC' (17 out of 19 LTU5s, 16 out of 18 SLS3-5s).

Table 15: Reasons for undertaking the CFHBS training (n=37)

Reasons	LTU5s (n=19)			SLS3-5s (n=18)		
	Cohort 1 (n=10)	Cohort 2 (n=9)	Total	Cohort 1 (n=10)	Cohort 2 (n=8)	Total
Professional development	10	9	19	9	8	17
To enhance my own confidence, skills, and knowledge in SLC	9	8	17	10	6	16
Because I have children in my care who need extra support in SLC	8	6	14	6	5	11
To gain an externally accredited award	7	4	11	6	4	10
Because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children's SLC	8	5	13	4	5	9
To gain CFHBS status	4	5	9	5	4	9
Other ^a	1	0	1	4	0	4

^a Other: 'Children with difficulties with SLC'; 'Lacking confidence in language abilities'; and 'Seeking confidence in teaching children how to communicate'.

In the interviews, childminders were also asked why they decided to take the training. In addition, at the beginning of the learning logs for each programme variant and the CFHBS learning logs childminders were asked to write about what they would like to achieve through the training, which provided additional information relating to their motivations. Similar themes emerged across the two datasets, with the principal reason being to benefit the children in their care, which childminders felt was an area of increasing concern, particularly since the pandemic. Notably, many childminders discussed the particular SLC needs of specific children in their setting and the desire to work with parents to improve the outcomes for these children:

I would like to gain more confidence in how to support children with Speech and Language needs as well as ensuring I am providing good learning opportunities in regards to speech and language for all children in my care. (2201, LTU5s LL, LTU5s, C2)

I have noticed that children are using soothers more frequently, and until they are older, in recent years, which is impacting on their speech and speech sounds. Along with this, children are spending more time on devices instead of interacting with others, again impacting on their language and communication. (1110, SLS3-5s LL, SLS3-5s, C1)

I'm also conscious of the impact that Covid and lockdown has had on children's development in general, therefore I feel it even more important to learn and be able to support the children, to enable a positive future for them. (1205, SLS3-5s LL, SLS3-5s, C2)

For the last 12 months I have been minding a now 4-year-old whose speech is very delayed...In the next few weeks I will have another child who is non verbal starting with me so he can socialise more. Both children will benefit from the more knowledge I can accrue....hopefully I'll get both reassurance that we (myself and his parents) are supporting them both as well as we can and also now ideas to try. (2105, LTU5s LL, LTU5s, C1)

Although some childminders had previous experience and training in SLC, other childminders were concerned that this was an area they did not know enough about, or feel confident in, and one for which there was insufficient training offered:

At no point during [previous training and qualifications] was there any like specific obviously speech, language, communication was brought up because it's obviously a big, a big part, but I didn't feel like there was any other specific kind of training aimed towards that. (Childminder interview, C1)

A small number of childminders also discussed their motivation as part of a desire for CFHBS accreditation for their setting:

That I think that is very useful as like...you know, to show to showcase how your setting is. (Childminder interview, C2)

Demand for programme variants

When signing up for the research, childminders were asked to express a preference for which programme variant they wished to follow (although for SLS3-5s this was also dependant on having at least a Level 3 qualification). At recruitment, SLS3-5s was the most popular of the two options (with 37 of the 46 recruited childminders indicating a preference for this programme variant and only 11 indicating LTU5s). Consequently, in the final sample, half of the childminders allocated to take LTU5s (ten out of 20 childminders) were qualified to take, and had expressed a preference for, the SLS3-5s programme variant.

However, childminders were asked in the baseline surveys if they had ended up on their first choice of programme variant. Only four (out of 37) said no; all four of which were on the LTU5s variant. When asked how they felt about not being on their first choice variant, three childminders selected the option 'I feel fine about it' and one selected 'Happy'.

In the baseline survey, childminders were also asked to indicate the factors that had influenced their choice to request one variant over another. Table 16 shows that the most frequently selected reason for childminders on the SLS3-5s variant was 'level of accreditation (Level 1 for LTU5s, Level 3 for SLS3-5s)', with 15 out of 37 childminders indicating that this influenced their choice of variant.

Table 16: Childminders' reasons for selecting the chosen programme variant (n=37)

Reasons	LTU5s (n=19)			SLS3-5s (n=18)		
	Cohort 1 (n=10)	Cohort 2 (n=9)	Total	Cohort 1 (n=10)	Cohort 2 (n=8)	Total
Level of accreditation (Level 1 for LTU5s, Level 3 for SLS3-5s)	2	5	7	7	8	15
I was qualified to take this programme variant	0	2	2	5	1	6
The time commitment (in terms of training and completion of course requirements) suited me best	4	5	9	3	1	4
Length of training	2	3	5	2	1	3
I thought it was the easiest way to gain CFHBS status	1	3	4	1	0	1
I was not qualified to take the other programme variant	1	0	1	0	0	0

Previous training

In the baseline survey, childminders were also asked if they had undertaken any previous training in SLC. As indicated in Table 17, the majority of childminders had not participated in training related to SLC before (23 out of 37). However, just over a quarter of those taking the SLS3-5s programme variant had participated in SLC training previously (five out of 14 respondents) compared to nearly a half of those following LTU5s (nine out of 19 respondents).

Table 17: Childminders' previous training in SLC (n=37)

Training	Yes	No
LTU5s (n=19):		
Cohort 1 (n=10)	3	7
Cohort 2 (n=9)	6	3
Total	9	10
SLS3-5s (n=18):		
Cohort 1 (n=10)	4	6
Cohort 2 (n=8)	1	7
Total	5	13
Overall total	14	23

Where childminders indicated that they had previously participated in SLC training, they were further asked what that training had been:

- the majority (six out of 14 respondents) had participated in training provided by their local authority (five out of nine childminders following LTU5s and one out of five respondents from the SLS3-5s programme variant);
- three out of nine childminders following the LTU5s programme variant had previously participated in DfE SENDCO training (in contrast to no childminders following SLS3-5s); and
- two out of nine childminders in the LTU5s programme variant stated that they were trained in 'Early Talk 0-5' training (whereas no childminders following SLS3-5s).

Two out of five childminders in the SLS3-5s programme variant indicated that they took part in the DfE Early Years Professional Development Programme and two out of five childminders indicated they had participated in an introductory speech and language course (Speech and Language UK). In contrast, one out of nine survey respondents following the LTU5s programme variant reported attending the DfE Early Years Professional Development Programme and one out of nine respondents reported attending the Speech and Language UK introductory course.

Implementation of other interventions

The baseline childminder survey also asked questions around language and communication interventions being implemented with children in the setting. I CAN Early Language Development¹¹ was indicated as the most used intervention used for all children within a setting (seven out of 37 respondents: four out of 19 respondents following LTU5s; and three out of 18 respondents following SLS3-5). Childminders following the LTU5s programme variant also indicated they used Read, Play, and Learn![®] (two out of 19 respondents) and the WellComm toolkit (one out of 19 respondents). Two (out of 18) childminders in the SLS3-5s variant indicated that they implemented Early Talk 0–5.

In terms of targeted interventions, the most used intervention across the home-based settings was Every Child a Talker (ECAT) with three out of 19 childminders in the LTU5s variant implementing and eight out of 19 childminders in the SLS3-5s variant implementing. Three (out of 19) childminders in the LTU5s programme variant stated they implemented I CAN Early Language Development as a targeted intervention compared to one childminder (out of 18) in the SLS3-5s programme variant.¹²

Compliance

Compliance in this pilot study was defined as:

- childminder attendance at 80% of live webinars/online training;
- completion of all self-directed learning modules (SLS3-5s-only);
- successful completion of the learning logs to the level required by the programme;
- award of either a Level 1 (LTU5s) or Level 3 (SLS3-5s) externally accredited award; and
- successful completion of the CFHBS checklist and virtual home visit.

Of the original 40 childminders recruited to complete the CFHBS training, 32 childminders (80%) were compliant. The main reasons for non-compliance were withdrawal from the programme (two participants), non-completion of training within the time frame of the pilot (three participants), followed by low attendance at training (three participants). Further details relating to completion of course requirements are given below. Attendance at training is discussed in the following section.

Completion of course requirements

Overall, 35 out of the 40 childminders completed the programme training and course requirements. In Cohort 1, all 20 childminders (ten SLS3-5s, ten LTU5s) completed the programme and in Cohort 2, 15 (six SLS3-5s, nine LTU5s) completed the programme. All 35 childminders who completed the training were successful in achieving CFHBS status. The research team were informed by Elklan Training Ltd that all childminders were successful on their first attempt at the home visit observation, they successfully completed the CFHBS checklist, and were able to be granted the CFHBS award. Two childminders did not start the programme, having withdrawn before it began (one per programme variant). Three childminders on the SLS3-5s programme variant in Cohort 2 started the programme, but did not complete within the time frame of the pilot study for personal reasons outside of the research.

Training for the LTU5s programme variant took place between September 2023 and November 2023 for Cohort 1 and between January 2024 and March 2024 for Cohort 2. The learning logs were expected to be completed by January 2024 and April 2024, respectively. Training for the SLS3-5s programme variants took place between September 2023 and December 2023 for Cohort 1 and between January 2024 and March 2024 for Cohort 2 with the learning logs for each cohort again being January 2024 and April 2024, respectively. Table 18 provides details by programme variant of whether or not programme requirements were completed on time for those childminders who completed the programme (which excludes the three participants who did not complete the overall programme). Interestingly, only those who

¹¹ This programme was referred to as I CAN Early Language Development by childminders completing the survey but is now known as Early Talk Boost.

¹² It should also be noted that these programmes and interventions are predominantly targeted at group-based rather than home-based settings.

completed the programme and followed the LTU5s programme variant experienced slippage in terms of completion of their learning logs, and this was in completion of the CFHBS learning log as opposed to the training-related learning log. Those that did not meet the expected timelines all completed in the month following the expected completion date (i.e. in February 2024 or May 2024) with the exception of one childminder following LTU5s who completed within two additional months.

Table 18: Completion of learning logs by programme variant (n=35)

Programme	Programme variant learning logs	CFHBS learning log	
	Completed	Completed on time	Completed later than expected
LTU5s (n=19)	19	12	7
SLS3-5s (n=16)	16	16	0

In addition, while most childminders completed the two learning logs alongside each other, nearly three-quarters of childminders following LTU5s (12 out of 19) completed the CFHBS approximately a month after completing their variant learning log, compared to just over a quarter following SLS3-5s (four out of 15 childminders).

Finally, the learning logs indicated whether or not childminders passed each task on the first or a subsequent submission. This CFHBS learning logs data were additionally analysed to understand whether childminders passed the tasks within each of the three task-based sections (the physical environment [12 tasks], resources and opportunities [11 tasks], and book sharing [18 tasks]) first time or were required to resubmit their evidence.¹³ The CFHBS learning logs were selected because these were completed by childminders from both programme variants and therefore, provided a direct comparison, as compared to the LTU5s and SLS3-5s learning logs, which were different in both content and length. While on average most tasks were passed on the first submission, overall, for each section more childminders following LTU5s were required to submit at least one task more than once (i.e. they passed on the second or third submission) than those following SLS3-5s (Figure 21). For example, over two-thirds of childminders following LTU5s were required to resubmit at least one task within the section 'the physical environment' (13 out of 19 childminders), compared to less than a fifth of those following SLS3-5s (three out of 16 childminders). Further analysis of the learning logs indicated that the main reason for a resubmission was insufficient evidence for the tutor to assess the task rather than a lack of implementation of programme strategies, and in a small number of cases resubmissions were due to technical difficulties (i.e. the evidence had not uploaded for the tutor to view).

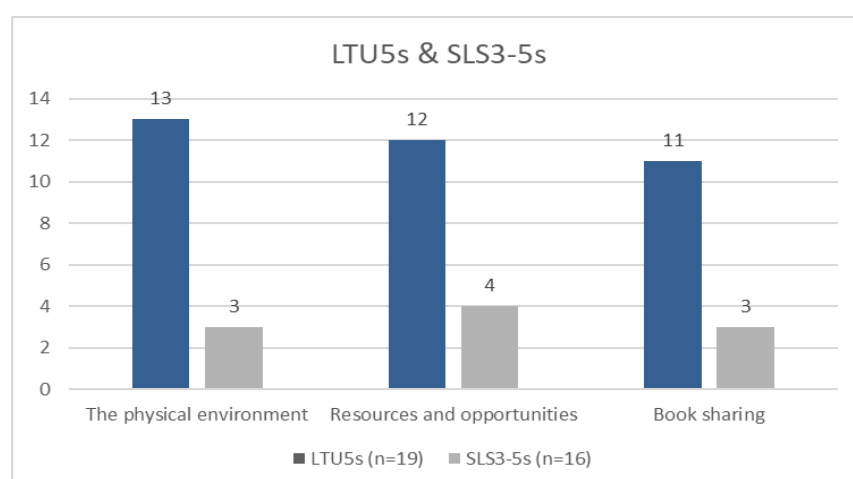


Figure 21: Number of childminders required to resubmit tasks in the CFHBS learning logs by section, by programme variant (n=35)

¹³ The adult-child interaction and modelling language sections were not subject to the same analysis as these involved tutor-completed checklists.

Non-completion of course requirements

The evaluation team did not examine the learning logs of the three childminders following SLS3-5s who did not complete the programme within the specified time frame. However, Elklan provided details of their progress in the CFHBS learning logs. Of these three childminders:

- One childminder had completed the first three sections of the CFHBS learning log ('the physical environment', the tutor completed the adult-child interaction checklist, and the tutor completed the modelling language checklist). The childminder received a Level 3 ('outstanding') for all three sections. The remaining two sections had been started but neither had been completed so it is difficult to assess the level at which they were working.
- One childminder had started work on the three main sections, although they had not been observed by the tutor for either the adult-child interaction or modelling language checklists. Of the three started sections they had achieved Level 2 for 'the physical environment' and 'resources and opportunities' and a Level 1 for 'book sharing'. However, given the lack of further details it is difficult to determine whether or not this childminder was scoring low in general or whether the low score is due to the low number of tasks completed in each section.
- One childminder did not complete any of the CFHBS learning log tasks and so can be judged to have withdrawn during the SLS3-5s training and to have chosen to complete the CFHBS after the training rather than concurrently.

In addition, the CFHBS tutors were asked in the endpoint focus group about childminders not able to complete the programme requirements within the time frame of the pilot study. They understood that often personal circumstances hindered programme completion. However, they also explained that once a childminder fell behind with the training, it could be very difficult to catch-up:

It does make it really hard for them to catch up once they get behind and often, you find they start mixing up or they tend to have more amendments because they started mixing up content from different sessions, it's just not fresh in their minds...You feel really horrible because you say, 'I've just noticed you're falling a bit behind, I've not had a..., everybody's always got such a good reason why they haven't done it and I do feel horrible, it's not that I'm trying to pressure you into doing this, I just don't want you to miss out'. (Tutor focus group, Endline)

Attendance at training

Overall, of the 35 childminders who completed the programme, 32 attended at least 80% of sessions. Of those who did not meet the compliance criteria:

- two childminders were from the LTU5s programme variant (both in Cohort 1) and both attended five out of the seven live sessions provided (70% attendance rate); and
- the remaining childminder was following the SLS3-5s programme variant (Cohort 2) and only attended five out of the ten live sessions provided (50% attendance rate).

Of those (32) childminders who did meet the compliance criteria:

- six childminders on the SLS3-5s variant across both cohorts attended 100% of the sessions;
- seven SLS3-5s childminders missed one session (90% attendance rate), and five missed two sessions (80% attendance rate);
- six childminders on the LTU5s variant attended 100% of sessions; and
- eleven childminders on the LTU5s variant attended six out of the seven sessions (86% attendance rate).

It can be seen that for Cohort 2 of SLS3-5s (Table 19), attendance tended to decline as the training progressed, with the highest levels of attendance at the start of the programme and a tail-off nearer the end.¹⁴ This could be explained by the fact that the end of training for this cohort of childminders took place in the summer, when many childminders may have had additional childcare demands as the school ended. For LTU5s (Table 20), however, attendance patterns tended to vary across the training period.

Table 19: SLS3-5s learners attendance rates

	Cohort 1 (n=10)	Cohort 2 (n=10)
1. What is communication?	10	8
2. Adult-child interaction	10	6
3. Learning to listen and supporting understanding through non-verbal communication and visual strategies	10	7
4. Promoting the development of vocabulary	8	7
5. Understanding spoken language and information carrying words	9	7
6. The Blank Language Scheme (or Language for Thinking)	9	7
7. Developing early language skills	10	7
8. Developing play for language	9	8
9. Supporting children with unclear speech and phonological awareness	9	6
10. Stammering and course reflection	9	6

Table 20: LTU5s learners attendance rates

	Cohort 1 (n=10)	Cohort 2 (n=9)
1. What is communication?	9	8
2. Adult-child interaction	10	9
3. Play	9	8
4. Understanding language	7	7
5. Helping young children use words and sentences	9	8
6. Asking questions and sharing books	7	7
7. Helping children with unclear speech	10	9

In the interviews, where childminders discussed missing training sessions, this tended to be reported in relation to other work commitments:

It was just pure scheduling, I think I ended up working into the evening...in general I'm open 8 till 5, but I do ad hoc bits and other bits around that. (Childminder interview, C2)

Training observations

Training observation data showed that for both programme variants the full content of the Elklan training material was delivered. For the LTU5s sessions, the researchers noted that a PowerPoint presentation was used by the tutor along with references made to the workbook to reinforce learning and discussion, while in the SLS3-5s sessions, it was noted that the tutor concentrated on the tasks for the learners that were covered in the e-learning to support consolidation of knowledge. For both variants of the programme, researchers noted the high levels of support given from tutors and the clear expectations for completion of tasks that were set.

The use of breakout rooms facilitated small group discussion followed by whole-group discussion for both programme variants. Both researchers commented on the opportunities given by the tutors for childminders to ask questions as well as the high level of engagement of childminders both with each other and with the tutor. One researcher noted from the LTU5s session:

One practitioner added to a discussion about positive adult-child interaction and limiting the amount of questions directed to children by sharing positive practice that they had put into place: instead of asking a lot of questions, they would say the question in their head and then say the answer out loud, which forms a comment rather than a question. (Researcher notes, Training observation, LTU5s, C1, Session 2)

¹⁴ Although it should be noted that webinars were recorded and made available to those childminders unable to attend a particular session.

It was also noted that for both programme variants childminders were given several opportunities to reflect on their learning in terms of their own practice. For example:

Learners reflected on ways of integrating learning into practice in the future: for example, they discussed ways to use information carrying words in interactions with children, supporting parents to do the same, and the equipment that they could use to facilitate such interactions. (Researcher notes, Training observation, SLS3-5s, C1, Session 5)

Learners were asked to plan questions that they could use at different levels of blank language. (Researcher notes, Training observation, SLS3-5s, C1, Session 6)

Overall, for both programme variants, the training observation data showed that the full course content was delivered by tutors in an engaging manner, which allowed childminders to both clarify and consolidate learning as well as understand how to implement their learning into their own practice.

Experience of training

The positive interactions seen within the training observations were also evidenced within the childminder interviews. Overall, childminders were very positive about the training. They reported that the format was effective and helpful:

The system of it obviously being mixed together two different ways rather than just being all online and not speaking to anyone versus it all being spoken at you. I think it was a good mix of both. (Childminder interview, C2)

It was quite self-explanatory, really easy to use and to navigate around. (Childminder interview, C1)

It's really useful having a word limit because you know what kind of depths to go into. (Childminder interview, C1)

Interestingly, given the online format of the training, childminders also appreciated the book and the folder they received as part of their training:

I really like the fact that you get a little pack through the post as well because it's nice to see on paper as well...you know, it's just easier to refer to. (Childminder interview, C2)

I just think it's so informative and also you've got a little folder with all your achievement and then you can look back at that anytime if you're unsure of anything. (Childminder interview, C2)

In addition, the CFHBS tutors were recognised for their understanding of childminders professional context, their availability and support:

The tutor was really quick at responding and she was always there to offer help and support and explain things more clearly if I didn't understand the question. (Childminder interview, C1)

Although the virtual home visits could be a focus of anxiety and childminders talked extensively about planning for their virtual visit, including thinking about, which children would be in attendance and what activities they would engage in, they were, in retrospect, also spoken about positively. Again, the role of the tutor was vital:

It was kind of quite nice to have someone actually properly observe your interactions and tell you whether or not you are actually doing OK. (Childminder interview, C2)

That was good because it was nice to get feedback from somebody else to see, to inform me of how I was with the children. They're professional inputs as well, so it's nice to get that because being a childminder you never get that. (Childminder interview, C2)

Within this context, other childminders were also seen as important sources of ideas and support by childminders (in their interviews):

During the session, hearing the other childminders and the other points of view and like, where they're at, that was good and enough of a sounding board. (Childminder interview, C2)

It was good to chat things through as well and ideas with other people, how they did things in their own settings and stuff like that. So I did find them really useful. It was nice to get along with other people as well. (Childminder interview, C2)

CFHBS tutors also talked about the importance of childminders having the opportunity to meet and learn from other childminders in the context of childminding being potentially an isolated occupation:

I think one of the things that or something that somebody said to me last week was how pleased they were to have this opportunity because...they said it's quite lonely as a childminder because there aren't the support networks out there that there used to be for them. (Tutor focus group, Midpoint).

The less positive aspects of the training discussed in the interviews related to where new knowledge was not felt to have been gained,¹⁵ and, in one example, a childminder reported disliking the self-rating aspect of the CFHBS learning logs, although she recognised the value of the exercise:

And it would perhaps be nicer to actually reflect on your practice as an assessment rather than just assuming you don't do anything and therefore you need to do something new. (Childminder interview, C1)

I feel like as time went on, I was kind of like, yeah, OK, I know this, I know like it was just going over stuff...And I think it was, I mean a couple of the tasks kind of felt like I was doing them just to tick a box. (Childminder interview, C2)

I think it was like writing yourself from inadequate to outstanding¹⁶...because sometimes you're a bit out or I don't want to sound like I'm really big-headed but if I'd put good and then sometimes it'd come back outstanding from the tutor which was nice. So, I found that a bit strange but I suppose it's just self-reflection, isn't it. (Childminder interview, C1)

Finally, one childminder (following the SLS3-5s programme variant) indicated that she would have liked the training to have been spread out over a longer period of time:

You were effectively doing a topic and then changing topic halfway through the week, ready for the next meeting kind of thing. (Childminder interview, C1)

In the endline survey, childminders were asked how useful they found the CFHBS training overall. The majority (25 out of 33 respondents) indicated that they found it 'very useful', eight out of 33 indicated they found it 'useful'. Of these, a slightly higher proportion of those following LTU5s rated the programme as 'very useful' (15 out of 19 respondents) compared to those following SLS3-5s (ten out of 14 respondents). Childminders were also asked, in the endline survey, to rate how useful they found each of their training sessions. The findings for LTU5s are presented in Figures 22 to 28 and SLS3-5s in Figures 29 to 38. Childminders were asked to only rate those sessions they attended (numbers may vary due to non-attendance).

The highest proportion of childminders following the LTU5s programme variant rated Session 7: 'Helping children with unclear speech' as 'very useful' (14 out of 18 respondents). Overall, the majority of childminders (approximately three-quarters) rated each session attended as 'very useful'. However, three childminders consistently rated each session as 'not very useful' or 'not very useful at all'. Their survey responses were then explored further, and it was noted that all three rated the training overall as either 'very useful' or 'useful'. Therefore, we have concluded that in these cases childminders inadvertently transposed the scale and answered in the reverse order to which they intended, rather than not finding the sessions particularly valuable.

Again, the majority of childminders following the SLS3-5s programme variant consistently rated each session as 'very useful' (approximately three-quarters of respondents to each session), with the exception of Session 6: 'The Blank Language Scheme (or Language for Thinking)' where only half of childminders (seven out of 14 respondents) did so,

¹⁵ Given that the majority of interviewees were following the LTU5s programme variant, many of whom were eligible for the higher level SLS3-5s programme variant it is difficult to determine whether or not this was due to the programme variant or the previous training received by interviewees.

¹⁶ As indicated in the section on 'Other childminder outcomes' single word ratings will no longer be used from September 2025.

and Session 10: 'Stammering and course reflection', which was rated as 'very useful' by six out of 14 respondents. Again, there were three respondents from this programme variant who reported that they did not find sessions useful, albeit it due to the lower numbers of childminders taking SLS3-5s this was a higher proportion than the three similar childminders following LTU5s (i.e. approximately a fifth of those following SLS3-5s compared to approximately a sixth of those following LTU5s). On closer inspection, these three childminders consistently reported finding the training 'very useful' in their other survey responses, so the researchers again concluded that they had transposed their responses to this question (although this does not appear to have been the case for one childminder for Session 1). However, an additional childminder also stated that they found Session 3: 'Learning to listen and supporting understanding through non-verbal communication and visual strategies' 'not very useful at all'. Also, one childminder following SLS3-5s indicated some sessions as 'neutral' (i.e. neither helpful nor unhelpful); Session 3: 'Learning to listen and supporting understanding through non-verbal communication and visual strategies', Session 4: 'Promoting the development of vocabulary', and Session 10: 'Stammering and course reflection'.

Figure 22: Session 1: What is communication? (n=19)

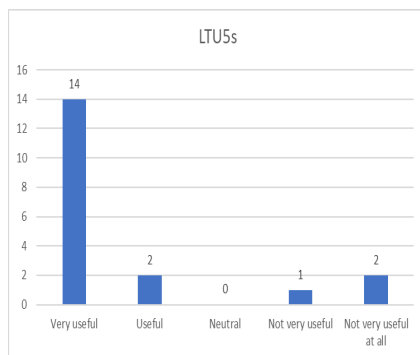


Figure 23: Session 2: Adult-child interaction (n=19)

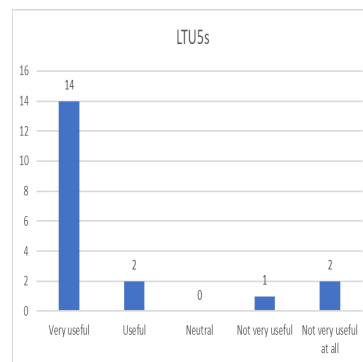


Figure 24: Session 3: Play (n=18)

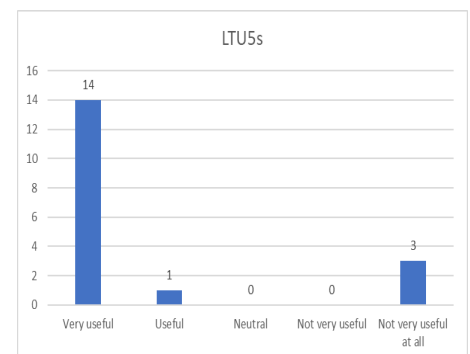


Figure 25: Session 4: Understanding language (n=19)

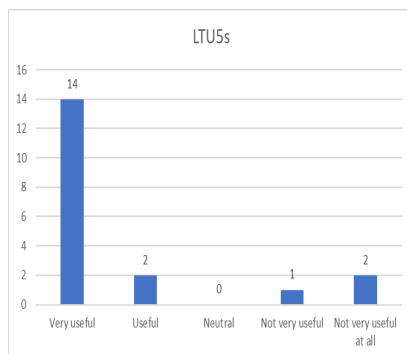


Figure 26: Session 5: Helping young children use words and sentences (n=19)

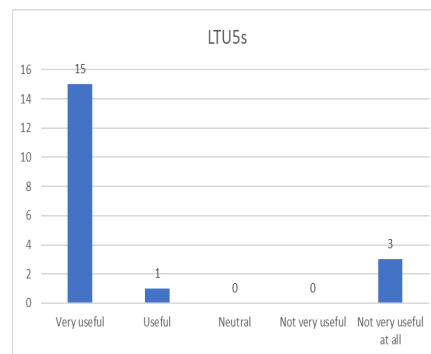


Figure 27: Session 6: Asking questions and sharing books (n=19)

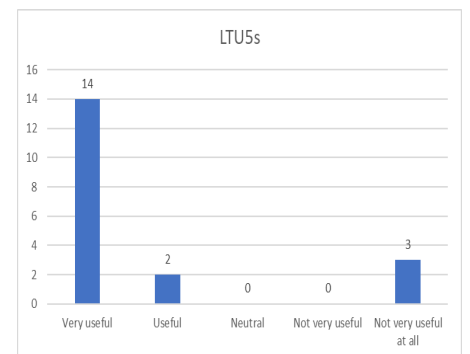


Figure 28: Session 7: Helping children with unclear speech (n=18)

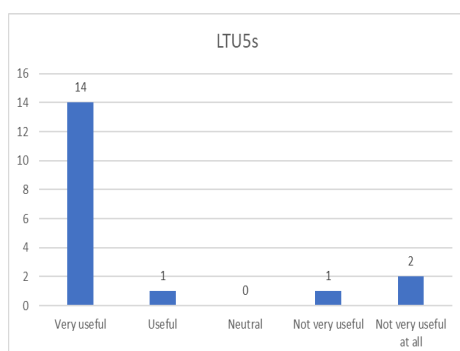


Figure 29: Session 1: What is communication? (n=14)

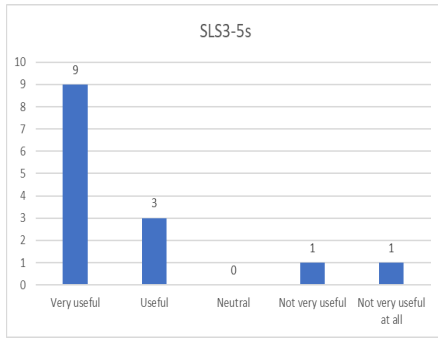


Figure 30: Session 2: Adult-child interaction (n=14)

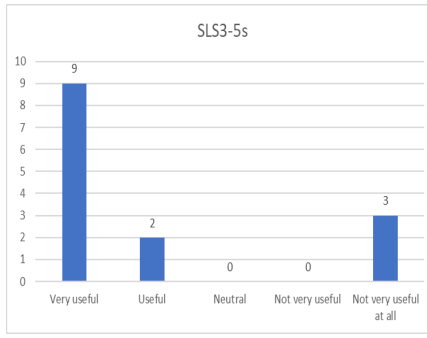


Figure 31: Session 3: Learning to listen and supporting understanding through non-verbal communication and visual strategies (n=14)

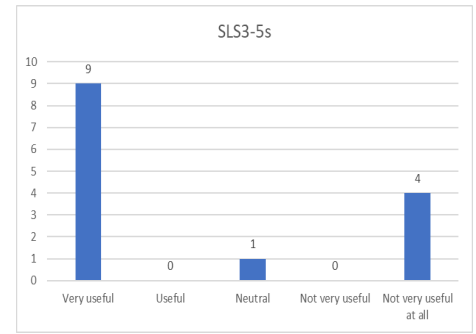


Figure 32: Session 4: Promoting the development of vocabulary (n=14)

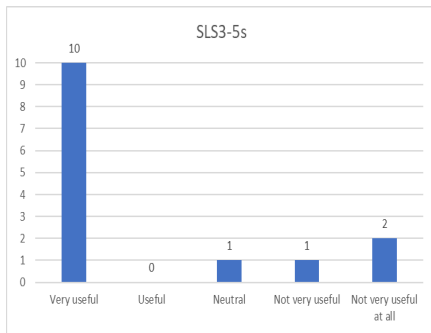


Figure 33: Session 5: Understanding spoken language and information-carrying words (n=12)

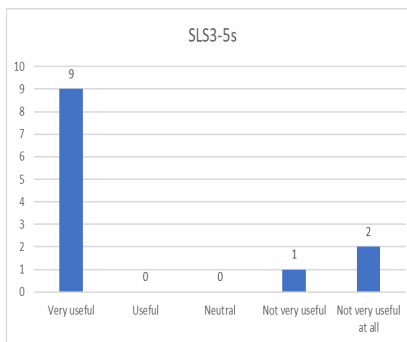


Figure 34: Session 6: The Blank Language Scheme (or Language for Thinking) (n=14)

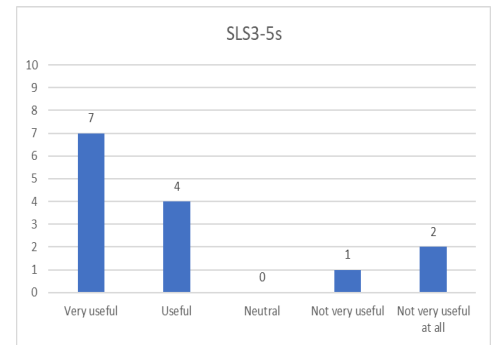


Figure 35: Session 7: Developing early language skills (n=13)

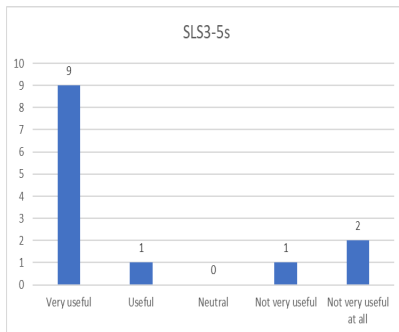


Figure 36: Session 8: Developing play for language (n=14)

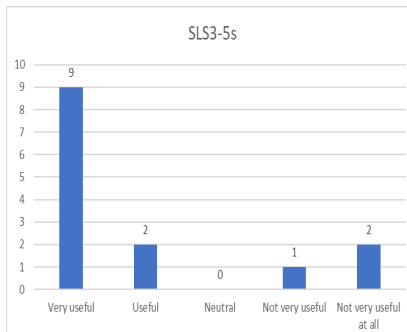


Figure 37: Session 9: Supporting children with unclear speech and phonological awareness (n=14)

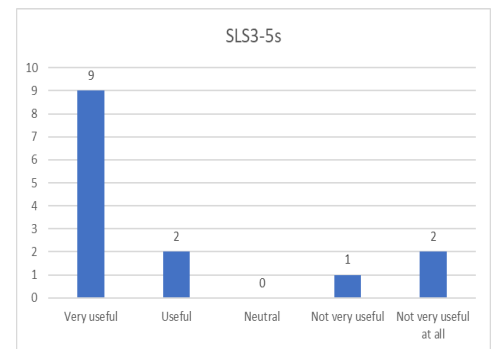
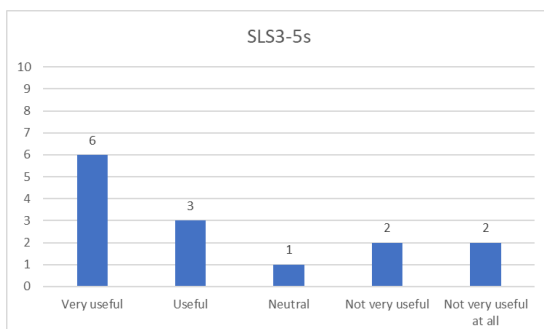


Figure 38: Session 10: Stammering and course reflection (n=14)



Facilitators to completing the CFHBS programme

In the endline survey, childminders were asked about factors that helped or motivated them to attend training sessions. Table 21 shows that the content of the training being useful or important was the option selected by the highest number of childminders (28 out of 33 respondents), followed by 'the tutors' (26 out of 33 respondents) and 'the timing of the sessions' (22 out of 33 respondents). This was true for both programme variants, although each of these three items was selected by higher proportions of childminders following LTU5s compared to those following SLS3-5s. For example, the content of the training was indicated by 17 out of 19 respondents following the LTU5s programme variant but only by approximately three-quarters of those following SLS3-5s (11 out of 14 respondents). In addition, over two-thirds of childminders following LTU5s (13 out of 19 respondents) indicated that this was a factor in attending training compared to only a half of those following SLS3-5s (seven out of 14 respondents). In contrast, half of childminders following SLS3-5s indicated that 'other childminders' were important motivators to attending training (seven out of 14 respondents) compared to approximately a quarter of those following LTU5s (five out of 19 respondents).

Table 21: Facilitators to attendance at training (n=33)

	LTU5s (n=19)	SLS3-5s (n=14)	Total
The content being useful or important	17	11	28
The tutors	16	10	26
The timing of sessions	14	8	22
Personal goals/motivation	13	7	20
Having a clear idea of what was going to happen and when	10	8	18
The other childminders	5	7	12
The content of the prep work	3	1	4
The time taken to complete the prep work	2	1	3
Other	2	1	3

Similarly, in the endline survey, childminders were also asked what helped them to complete the CFHBS programme (Table 22). The main factor, indicated by the highest number of childminders (28 out of 33 respondents), was 'the tutors'. Again, 'other childminders' was indicated by nearly a half of those following SLS3-5s (six out of 14 respondents) but less than a third of those following LTU5s (six out of 19 respondents).

Table 22: Facilitators to completing the programme (n=33)

	LTU5s (n=19)	SLS3-5s (n=14)	Total
The tutors	16	12	28
Session content	15	7	22
The content of the e-learning logs	10	5	15
Having a clear idea of what was going to happen and when	10	5	15
Personal goals/motivation	12	3	15
The length of the programme	10	4	14
The timing of the sessions	8	5	13
The other childminders	6	6	12
The time taken to complete the e-learning logs	6	2	8
The content of the e-learning sessions ^a	–	6	6

^a This option was not shown to childminders on the LTU5s programme.

Finally, in the endline survey, childminders were asked to select from a list of factors that helped them to achieve CFHBS status (i.e. to implement the programme learning) (Table 23). The majority of childminders (29 out of 33 respondents) indicated that 'the tutor' had helped them to achieve CFHBS status. Interestingly, the majority of childminders following the LTU5s programme variant indicated that the course content was a facilitator to completion (16 out of 19 respondents) compared to just over half of those following SLS3-5s (eight out of 14 respondents). Again, 'other childminders' was cited by higher proportions, and higher numbers, of those following SLS3-5s compared to LTU5s (ten out of 14 respondents and seven out of 19 respondents, respectively).

Table 23: Facilitators to achieving CFHBS status (n=33)

	LTU5s (n=19)	SLS3-5s (n=14)	Total
The tutors	19	10	29
The course content	16	8	24
The other childminders	7	10	17
The number of sessions	11	4	15
I had already implemented communication friendly practices into my setting before the course began	7	4	11
The time taken to complete the prep work	6	3	9
The content of the prep work	6	2	8
Personal factors	2	1	3

The interviews with childminders provided additional detail relating to many of the factors identified in the survey as being facilitators of engagement with the training, and programme completion and implementation. For example, when childminders discussed the course content, they identified the different ways in which this facilitated engagement and implementation, namely, through the perceived usefulness of the content in benefiting the children in their care, and that the changes were easy to implement. Conversely, for some childminders a facilitator of their engagement with the programme was that the course content confirmed existing practice:

I really try to make improvements to make it better for the children. If I don't feel like it was going to improve anything for them...I just won't implement it. (Childminder interview, C2)

For me I think they were engaging and they were important. (Childminder interview, C2)

I didn't think that it wouldn't work in our setting, I can't think of part of the training that I didn't think you could implement in some way. (Childminder interview, C2)

Modelling of the language I'd already implemented so I've just continued with that and now, from the training, it's helped me realise that that is actually the correct way to do it. (Childminder interview, C1)

The CFHBS tutors in the focus groups highlighted the personal goals and motivation of childminders themselves as an important factor and this was linked closely to the conditions in which childminders often work, particularly the autonomy of an individual childminder within their own setting:

Whereas a practitioner in a setting, they just get drawn into other things or they won't get released, whereas the childminder has that autonomy in organising their own time. And they come signed up to it and committed to it themselves, rather than being told by a line manager or SEN[DJ]CO, 'you're going to complete this course'. (Tutor focus group, Midpoint)

A massive advantage of them being childminders is because they're on their own, they are autonomous so if they see a change that they think needs to be made...they can just think, 'I really need to sort those out, I'll just do it', and they don't have to go through anybody, explain to a manager or justify it, they can just do it and that's a massive strength. (Tutor focus group, Baseline)

In addition, the CFHBS tutors and other childminders were also seen to facilitate programme attendance and programme completion (see 'Experience of training' section above).

Finally, one childminder indicated how having a childminder assistant facilitated them completing the training:

I'd set aside time during the day, you know, so the assistant would take over while I set aside time that I could do the work for the for the [sic] course itself. So that was good. (Childminder interview, C2)

Barriers to engagement and implementation

In the endline survey, childminders were also asked to select from a list all the factors that were barriers to their attendance at training. As seen in Table 24 the timing of the sessions was mentioned by the highest number, and highest proportion, of childminders following each programme variant (four out of 19 respondents following LTU5s and four out

of 14 respondents following SLS3-5s). Interestingly, only childminders following SLS3-5s indicated the time taken to complete the prep work as a barrier (four out of 14 respondents) perhaps reflecting the heavier workload of this programme variant.

Table 24: Barriers to attendance at training (n=33)

	LTU5s (n=19)	SLS3-5s (n=14)	Total
The timing of sessions	4	4	8
The time taken to complete the prep work	0	4	4
Personal goals/motivation	1	0	1
The content of the prep work	0	1	1
Other	13	7	20

Overall, there were a low number of barriers to attendance listed, which is perhaps reflective of the high levels of compliance with training attendance. Notably, however, there were a large number of responses in the 'other' category. The open-text responses provided for this category were further analysed and all found to detail personal factors (external to the programme and beyond the control of the childminders), which hindered attendance at training.

Childminders were also asked, in the endline survey, to identify factors that hindered programme completion (Table 25). The most frequently cited factor was the time taken to complete the learning logs (ten out of 33 respondents). In addition, each item was indicated by proportionately more childminders following SLS3-5s than those following LTU5s, perhaps indicating the higher intensity of that variant of the programme. For example, a half of childminders following SLS3-5s indicated the content of the learning logs was a barrier (seven out of 14 respondents) compared to only three out of 19 respondents following LTU5s. The principal barrier cited by childminders following LTU5s came under the 'other' category and, as before, when analysed further, were found to be due to personal factors outside of the programme (Table 25).

Table 25: Barriers to programme completion (n=33)

Barriers	LTU5s (n=19)	SLS3-5s (n=14)	Total
The time taken to complete the e-learning logs	3	7	10
The timing of the sessions	1	5	6
The content of the e-learning logs	1	4	5
The length of the programme	1	4	5
The content of the e-learning sessions ^a	0	3	3
Session content	1	1	2
Personal goals/motivation	1	1	2
Other ^b	6	3	9

^a This option was not shown to childminders on the LTU5s programme.

^b Other: Personal factors given, which are not shared here to maintain anonymity.

Finally, in the endline survey, childminders were asked about factors, which had been barriers to them working towards achieving CFHBS status (Table 26). The factor indicated by the highest number of respondents was personal reasons (12 out of 33 respondents). However, 'the time taken to complete the prep work' continued to be a factor for a larger proportion of those following SLS3-5s compared to those following LTU5s (seven out of 14 respondents and two out of 19 respondents, respectively; Table 26). The responses to the 'other' category were further analysed and primarily echoed the time needed to complete the workload.

Table 26: Barriers to working towards achieving CFHBS status (n=33)

Barriers	LTU5s (n=19)	SLS3-5s (n=14)	Total
Personal factors	8	6	12
The time taken to complete the prep work	2	7	9
The number of sessions	1	1	2
The course content	0	1	1
The content of the prep work	0	1	1
Other ^a	9	5	15

^a Other: 'Time' (LTU5s) and 'Just fitting the workload in' (LTU5s).

In their interviews, childminders were also asked about barriers to attendance at training, completion of the programme, and implementation in their interviews, as were the CFHBS tutors during the focus groups. As indicated in the survey (see Tables 24 to 26), the main barrier to completing the programme identified by childminders was time:

It is so time consuming. You just need to be aware of that before you go in. You need to be aware that it's actually a big time commitment. (Childminder Interview, C1)

It's just having the time to sit and do it on the computer. But I managed to I think there was a couple of times where I was probably a little bit behind, but I caught myself up. (Childminder interview, C1)

In contrast, to the survey where the timing of the sessions was cited as a barrier to programme completion (Table 25), childminders in their interviews did not talk about this being a barrier to attendance, although it could be a challenge in the context of a long working day. They discussed that the timing of the training (generally at 6:00 p.m. after work) worked well for them although they did indicate that this lengthened an already long working day and sometimes involved a tight turnaround:

She [the tutor] was really good because she did appreciate that sometimes people were literally saying goodbye to a child or something...but they were fine actually to be fair, sometimes it's almost easier to just get straight in, so then you've got more of your evening. (Childminder interview, C2)

Overall, tutors described attendance at training as 'good' (Tutor focus group, Midpoint). As indicated above, they were also understanding that childminders' long working hours could mean they were late in arriving at sessions:

I've just had a couple of people who have perhaps arrived 10, 15 minutes late but that has been mainly because some of them don't shut until 6 o'clock and we start at 6 o'clock, so there's been that overlap. But then to start much later than 6 o'clock, you'd be going until 9 at night and that's just too late for everybody, so I try and say to them, 'I appreciate it's difficult, if you're a few minutes' late arriving, don't worry'. (Tutor focus group, Midpoint)

However, the tutor focus groups identified another potential barrier relating to the timing of the sessions, relating to the challenges of learning at the end of a busy working day:

We're often catching them at the end of their working day, so just that fatigue...which is something I always try and hold in my mind when I'm delivering that training, the compassion fatigue that they might be having at the end of the day. (Tutor focus group, Endline)

A further barrier discussed by both childminders and by CFHBS tutors was related to technical issues. Tutors indicated that, given the programme was delivered online, difficulties with technology could act as a barrier to engagement, both in terms of webinars and e-learning sessions:

I always have one or two learners where the camera isn't working, they can't hear each other...technology is a massive barrier, some of them are on a phone and then they go off and get an iPad, somebody's got three teenage kids in the house and they're all using internet and her broadband isn't fast enough. Without the camera, you miss the non-verbals. (Tutor focus group, Baseline)

A few people have just, this is the case with any online course, is the technology, so just being able to upload their pictures and get the work in, a few little stumbling blocks with that but on the whole, people have managed really well. (Tutor focus group, Endline)

Examination of the learning logs revealed that in a small number of cases childminders had been asked to resubmit individual tasks due to technical issues relating to uploading content, and technical difficulties were also discussed by some childminders in their interviews:

I know that in our group there was quite a few technical issues' (Childminder interview, C2)

Childminders did not identify any barriers to implementation of their learning from the programme. However, they did talk about the context of their own setting and, primarily, the needs of the children in their setting:

I know the baby, if I put them anyway she can access them she'll be throwing them all over...Every setting is different, So, and it also changes to the ages and needs of the children. My setting is constantly changing because, oh right, we've got a baby now, let's move everything up, you know. (Childminder interview, C1)

A further barrier to implementation, discussed in the tutor focus groups but not in the childminder interviews, was the overall timescale of the training. It was recognised that completing LTU5s or SLS3-5s alongside gaining CFHBS status has involved a very concentrated period of learning and implementation, especially for those following the SLS3-5s programme variant:

I personally would feel as though they would get more out of it with more time, to really embed new strategies and activities and resources and ideas and then evaluate. (Tutor focus group, Baseline)

The learning log demand is much lower [for LTU5s]. The depth at which they have to evaluate is much lower, they don't have to write nearly as much, they can write it in a workbook and take a photo and upload it and I think for some childminders, that's enough and it's not because they don't have the ability, it's because they don't have the time and I think that course [those following LTU5s] are therefore not finding the portfolio quite as burdensome, the Home Learning Environment portfolio quite as burdensome. (Tutor focus group, Baseline)

However, childminders did discuss the difficulties in finding time to complete the programme and implement the programme learning in both the open response boxes in the survey and in their learning logs and, notably, these childminders tended to be those following SLS3-5s:

It was a massive time commitment, which was not as indicated. (Endline survey, SLS3-5s, C1)

There is not enough time as the course is currently ran over the ten weeks to properly understand the material, plan interventions, carry them out and properly evaluate their impact. (1101, SLS3-5s LL, SLS3-5s, C1)

More time is needed to have to implement the ideas for the CFHBS section in order to really cement the changes. (Endline survey, SLS3-5s, C1)

Value of the programme

Overall, childminders, in their interviews, valued the CFHBS training:

I think it is important and I think it's valuable. (Childminder interview, C2)

They valued both the knowledge and the confidence they had gained through the programme, which they could continue to apply in their practice, and in the future:

I know that when that time comes, if it does come, if I do get a child with English as an additional language, I'll be prepared. (Childminder interview, C2)

In the learning logs, childminders also frequently stated that they had 'enjoyed' the training, and praised the tutors for their support:

I have absolutely loved it. It has been enjoyable. (2104, CFHBS LL, LTU5s, C1)

The tutor was lovely and always happy to help. (1204, CFHBS LL, SLS3-5s, C2)

One aspect of the training that was particularly valued was that the programme was aimed specifically at childminders, compared to other courses they had attended:

I really enjoyed it because really, a lot of the courses childminders get to go on, a lot of nurseries go on. So you know I've been on courses where there's everybody in the room is from a nursery and there's me, just one childminder. (Childminder interview, C2)

This was echoed by the CFHBS trainers, who also emphasised that they perceived childminders to both value and feel valued by the training:

So much training is around Early Years settings...it's still very different from having children in your own home...And I think they really value that somebody's taken the time to write something that is more specific to their needs, as we say, everything is geared towards a setting or typical nursery and it doesn't quite always fit their model of working, so I think they really value that. (Tutor focus group, Midpoint)

They say it's really nice to have the opportunity to share and to actually have that respect amongst the team...those professional conversations in a safe space where you feel as though your opinions matter, and your experiences matter because the number of times they have said exactly that, with the school, with other settings and also with the parents, their input is just not valued. (Tutor focus group, Baseline)

The majority of childminders (32 out of 33 respondents) indicated in the endline survey that they would recommend the programme to other childminders. This was indicated in the interviews:

Without a shadow of a doubt, definitely, especially for new starters or people who have not been doing it for very long because I think it is just so informative. (Childminder interview, C2)

Only one respondent (following SLS3-5s) indicated that they would not, but this was primarily due to the time involved in completing the programme rather than the programme learning itself.

Maintenance of CFHBS status

Childminders were also asked in the endline survey and in the follow-up survey (Cohort 1 only) whether they planned to maintain CFHBS status by applying for re-accreditation in three years. At endline, 16 out of 33 respondents indicated that they did intend to apply for re-accreditation, with proportionately more childminders following LTU5s indicated that they intended to do so compared to those following SLS3-5s (11 out of 19 respondents and five out of 14 respondents, respectively). Half of respondents following SLS3-5s indicated at endline that they 'may' apply for re-accreditation (seven out of 14 respondents) and seven out of 19 respondents following LTU5s. Only two respondents at endline indicated that they did not intend to apply for re-accreditation, both from the SLS3-5s variant of the programme. At endline, the proportions of childminders intending to reapply for accreditation had decreased (four out of 15 respondents), although again, this option was viewed more favourably by those who had followed LTU5s (three out of nine respondents) when compared to those who had followed SLS3-5s (one out of six respondents). One respondent (who had completed SLS3-5s) indicated at follow-up that they did not intend to apply for re-accreditation. The remaining ten respondents (six out of nine LTU5s and four out of six SLS3-5s respondents) indicated that they 'may apply for accreditation in three years' time in the follow-up survey.

Monetary value

In the baseline survey, childminders were asked how much they would be prepared to pay for the training (if it was not being provided free of charge as part of the pilot). Only five childminders provided ballpark figures they would be prepared to pay: £150; £200; £300; £500; and £800/£1,000. Eight childminders wrote that they were 'not sure'. Overall, there was a reluctance by childminders to indicate how much they would pay without any guidance. Consequently, the question was rephrased in the endline survey. Again, childminders were asked to indicate how much they would be prepared to pay to take the training that they had received but were given a range of options to select. A breakdown of their responses may be seen in Table 27, which shows that:

- Childminders were unwilling, unable, to pay over £350 for the training that they had received. This included childminders following SLS3-5s, which overall costs £626 plus VAT.
- The majority of childminders (23 out of 33 respondents) indicated that they would be prepared to pay up to £200 for the training that they had received, considerably less than the £500 plus VAT for the less expensive programme variant, LTU5s.

Table 27: The amount childminders would be prepared to pay for the training at endline (n=33)

	LTU5s (n=19)	SLS3-5s (n=14)	Total
Up to £200	15	8	23
Between £200 and £350	4	6	10
Between £350 and £500	0	0	0
Over £500	0	0	0

Analysis of responses to this question in the childminder interviews and the open responses in the endline survey suggested that the low financial value placed on paying for the programme was not related to the programme itself, rather that, most childminders would '*struggle to pay for any training*' (Baseline survey, SLS3-5s, C1):

The income from childminding is not enough to pay much for courses, regardless of how valuable they are. (Baseline survey, SLS3-5s, C1)

I think the problem is we're not particularly well paid and all the professional development we do is in our own time, taking away from our own families. So to have a financial outlay on top of that because you're effectively working for free just, you know, to do the course. (Childminder interview, C1)

The cost of re-accreditation was also a deterrent to some childminders seeking to maintain CFHBS status in three years' time although there were some suggestions that flexible payment plans for both the training and re-accreditation would be useful.

Readiness for trial

Key findings

- While it was challenging to reach childminders for recruitment to the pilot, childminders demonstrated a high demand for the CFHBS training. Sixty-four childminders expressed an interest in participating in the pilot study and the recruitment target of 46 childminders was met.
- Two childminders (one from each programme variant) withdrew from the programme and the research prior to training; three childminders (following the SLS3-5s programme variant) did not complete the programme within the time frame of the pilot study.
- The majority of research activities were completed by over 80% of participants. However, participating in interviews was low (with only five out of an expected 12 interviews taking place). In addition, childminders following LTU5s had, overall, higher rates of participation in, and completion of, research activities.
- Childminders rated research activities such as surveys (mean=2.2) and interviews (mean=3.5) lower than activities, which would entail a home visit such as having a researcher administer child assessments (mean=5).
- Professional development and financial incentives were both indicated in the follow-up survey to be motivating factors to take part in a RCT, although the childminder interviews indicated that it was professional development and not the financial incentives, which encouraged childminders to participate in the pilot study.
- The main barriers to participation in a possible future RCT were the amount of time it would take to participate and possibly being allocated to the control condition (four out of 12 respondents and three out of 12 respondents, respectively), although childminders' understanding of what a RCT would involve appeared limited.

This section addresses whether or not the programme is ready to progress to an efficacy trial and covers research question 3, which explores the feasibility of a RCT design for childminders. This section therefore, addresses:

- levels of attrition;
- completion of evaluation activities including facilitators and barriers to completion; and
- childminders perspectives on participation in RCTs, including the payment of incentives.

Recruitment

As can be seen in the consort diagram (Figure 39), the recruitment target was 46 childminders, to allow for a waitlist of six childminders. Overall, the delivery team detailed that reaching childminders for recruitment was 'challenging' (personal correspondence) in terms of finding ways to signal the opportunity to childminders directly given that there is no easily accessible central database of registered childminders and limited communication between childminders and local authorities (in contrast, e.g. to communications between local authorities and early years group-based settings). Consequently, Elklan utilised lists of childminders publicly available on websites. While this was time consuming it was effective, and the delivery team reported childminders responded positively to the offer of training free of charge. They also reported that it was important to childminders that it was stated at the outset that training would take place outside of normal childminder working hours.

Consequently, Elklan received 64 EOIs from childminders. Two of these EOIs were returned after the project deadline and one childminder subsequently withdrew their EOI. The remaining 61 childminders were sent an MoU. One childminder was deemed ineligible as being outside of the geographical remit of the East Midlands Stronger Practice Hub. When the target of 46 childminders for recruitment was met the recruitment was considered closed. Recruitment took place between 26 April 2023 and 14 July 2023.

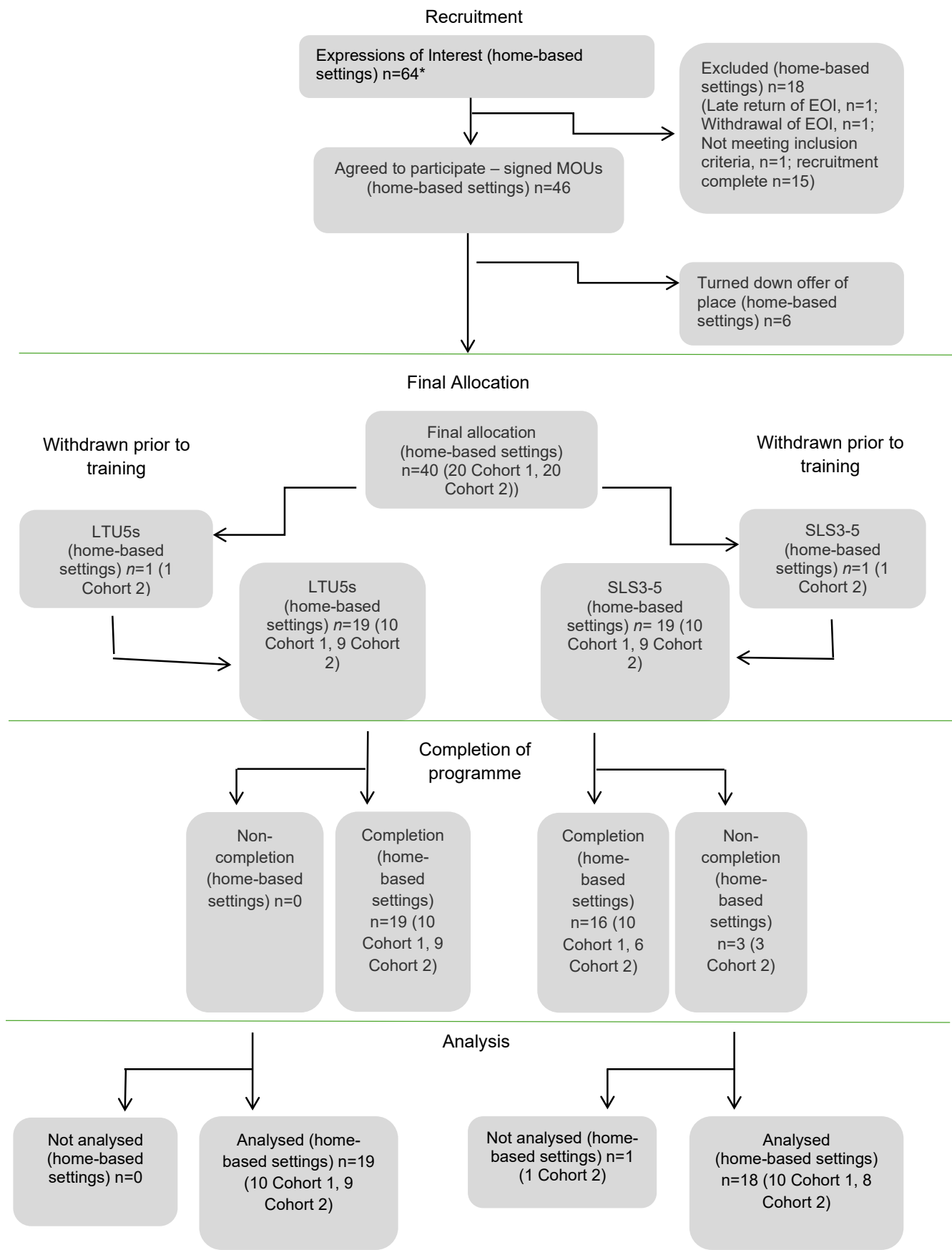
Withdrawals/non-completion

Childminders were offered places on the CFHBS programme training as detailed in the section on 'Recruitment' immediately above. Six childminders withdrew from the evaluation after receiving their allocation (Figure 39); one childminder had decided to close their setting, the remainder either stated this was for personal reasons, or because they did not feel they had the capacity to undertake the training at the timepoint allocated. From the 40 childminders who were in the final allocation, a further two withdrew prior to training (one SLS3-5 and one LTU5s, both in Cohort 2) due to personal reasons. From the original 46 childminders this represents an attrition rate of 17% (eight out of 46 childminders recruited).

Three childminders from Cohort 2 SLS3-5s did not complete the whole programme (again due to personal reasons) although two of these childminders did complete the research activities at endline (but not the learning logs, which formed part of the programme) (see Figure 39). This represents an attrition from the research ranging from 8% (three out of 40 childminders who formed the final allocations) to 20% (nine out of the original 46 childminders recruited).

The figures presented within this section include those who completed the SLS3-5s programme (16 in total; 10 in Cohort 1, 6 Cohort 2) and the two childminders following the SLS3-5s programme variant who did not complete the programme but did continue to engage in the research activities (n=18).

Figure 39: Participant flow diagram



* Given the recruitment strategy we cannot specify the number of childminders invited to participate in the study.

Completion of research activities

Childminders taking part in the pilot study were asked to complete the following research measures:

- Online surveys, to be completed at three timepoints: baseline (before training began); endline (after training had completed)) and follow-up (Cohort 1 only). The exact timings of these surveys were dependent upon cohort and is discussed in the 'Methods' section above.
- The SKCQ, a bespoke measure of childminder skills, knowledge, and confidence in SLC. This was embedded in the surveys described above at each timepoint.
- Email correspondence with the research team, which was initiated by the research team on a monthly basis between October 2023 and March 2024.

A subsample of childminders were also asked to allow a member of the research team to observe their 30-minute virtual home visit, and to participate in 45-minute online interviews with a member the research team.

Table 28 below, indicates the number of childminders that participated in each research activity. Overall, the completion of research methods was high and the majority of the research activities were completed by over 80% of participants, with the following notable exceptions:

- The follow-up survey was completed by three-quarters of participants (15 out of 20 childminders in Cohort 1). One of these childminders did not complete the embedded SKCQ at this timepoint, meaning the SKCQ at follow-up was completed by 14 out of 20 participants. This was probably due to participant fatigue as the SKCQ was embedded at the end of the survey. Completion was slightly higher for those following LTU5s than those following SLS3-5s, primarily due to the slightly different pattern of completion of the programme requirements.
- Only five out of 12 interviews took place (42% of the intended target). Potential childminders were contacted at least three times by the research team to request an interview. The primary reason for not conducting an interview given by childminders was time. Interestingly, the majority of interviewees (four out of five) were from the group following the LTU5s programme variant. Despite the requests for the interview being made after completion of training, this may indicate more general fatigue from participants following this programme variant, although given that fewer childminders from SLS3-5s completed the training and were, thus, less likely to want to participate in an interview this also made our potential pool of interviewees from this programme variant smaller.

In addition, a target was not set for the email exchanges given the exploratory nature of this methodology. However, in total 22 childminders participated in this aspect of the study. As above, more childminders from LTU5s participated, which is probably reflective of the lower learning demands of that programme variant compared to SLS3-5s (13 out of 19 participants and nine out of 19 participants, respectively). However, childminders from each variant sent on average a similar number of emails (an average of 2.4 emails per LTU5s childminder, 32 emails from 13 participants in total; an average of 2.8 emails per SLS3-5s childminder, 25 emails from 9 participants in total). Overall, however, research participation for those following LTU5s was higher than for those following SLS3-5s, which possibly reflects the different time requirements of the two programme variants (with LTU5s having the lower time expectations of the two).

Table 28: The number of childminders participating in each research activity (n=38)^a

Research activity	No. of childminders that participated (LTU5s/SLS3-5s)	Recruitment target (LTU5s/SLS3-5s)	% of recruitment target met (LTU5s/SLS3-5s)
Emails ^b	22 (13/9)	N/A	N/A
Baseline survey	37 (19/18)	38 (19/19)	97 (100/95)
Baseline SKCQ	37 (19/18)	38 (19/19)	97 (100/95)
Endline survey	32 (18/14)	38 (19/19)	84 (95/74)
Endline SKCQ	32 (18/14)	38 (19/19)	84 (95/74)
Follow-up survey	15 (9/6)	20 (10/10)	75 (90/60)
Follow-up SKCQ	14 (8/6)	20 (10/10)	70 (80/60)
Interviews	5 (4/1)	12 (6/6)	42 (67/17)
Virtual home visit observations	10 (5/5)	10 (5/5)	100 (100/100)

^a LTU5s n=19 and SLS3-5s n=19. The two withdrawn childminders have not been included in these figures to avoid double counting.

^b These were largely exploratory as a methodology. Consequently, no targets were set for completion.

N/A=not applicable.

To better understand why childminder completion of some research activities was more successful than others, and additionally to provide an insight into the research methodologies that might be most successful with this population in research in the future, childminders provided with a list of research activities and asked to rank them in order of preference in the baseline and endline surveys. These rankings were then associated with a number, where a higher ranked—and therefore, more preferred—research activity was allocated number 6, and a lower ranked (less preferred) activity was allocated a lower number. Table 29 below shows:

- The two highest ranked research activities were ‘having a researcher visit to administer assessments with the children in my care’ (total mean score of 5) and ‘having a researcher observe my practice’ (total mean score of 4.3).
- The lowest ranked research activity at both baseline and endline was ‘completing a survey’ (total mean score of 2.2).

Overall, activities such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups were ranked lower than activities that definitely involved a visit to the home environment, such as having a researcher observe practice, or having a researcher visit to administer assessments.¹⁷ In addition, it is interesting that the rankings change between baseline and endline measurement (i.e. before childminders have been involved in the research and afterwards¹⁸). Preference rankings for ‘completing a survey’ increased (baseline mean score of 1.7, endline mean score of 2.7), which is perhaps not surprising, given that participants had completed two by this timepoint; however, it remains relatively low in the rankings. ‘Administering assessments with the children in my care myself’ also increased in preference between baseline and endline (mean score of 2.9 and mean score of 3.4, respectively). Although this was still ranked lower than having a researcher complete assessments with the children (endline mean score of 4.8), this rise in the ranking may reflect the increase in childminder confidence relating to SLC reported as a result of the training above.

Table 29: Mean rankings of research activities in order of preference, at baseline and endline^a

Research activity	Baseline (n=35)	Endline (n=32)	Total mean
Having a researcher visit to administer assessments with the children in my care	5.2	4.8	5.0
Having a researcher observe my practice	4.6	4.1	4.3
Having an interview with a researcher	3.4	3.5	3.5
Administering assessments with the children in my care myself	2.9	3.4	3.1
Taking part in a focus group with my peers	3.2	2.6	3.0
Completing a survey	1.7	2.7	2.2

^a Scores ranged from 0 to 6; a higher average score indicates that the activity was rated more highly.

Motivation to participate in the research

In their interviews, childminders were asked what encouraged them to take part in the research aspect of the CFHBS programme. Overwhelmingly they stated that they did so in order to receive the CFHBS training, although a small number indicated that they also (generally, retrospectively) perceived the wider benefits of taking part in research:

I think a lot of people, they just want the training. That’s what motivated me was to get the actual training. (Childminder interview, C2)

Because I think it’s important. Yeah, I think it’s important for you, as you say, to research actually how is it working? You know, how is it for us as well? (Childminder interview, C1)

One of the incentives provided for participating in the research had been financial. However, in their interviews, childminders indicated that although incentives for taking part in research were ‘nice’ (Childminder interview, C1), it was essentially the offer of free training, which was felt to be important for any future research programme:

I did it purely because I’ve got an I had an interest in it. It was my passion and I felt it would benefit me, my setting and the children that I care for. So I did it for me more than an incentive. I mean, an

¹⁷ This is based on the assumption that interviews and focus groups could, in theory, be conducted online, especially given that interviews in this study were conducted via Microsoft Teams.

¹⁸ It is also worth noting that childminders indicated that they had very little experience of participating in research prior to the pilot study.

incentives nice. It's nice to be like, oh, well, thank you for your time. And I don't know. Thank you for your time and thank you for doing this. So, it is nice to have an incentive. But I don't do it purely for that [the financial incentive], that was just a no, it's just a nice gesture. (Childminder interview, C1)

So, I think more having the training for me would be an incentive to take part again. (Childminder interview, C1)

Barriers to participation in the research

In their interviews, childminders were also asked to identify anything that had acted as a barrier or perhaps may have discouraged them from participating in the research aspect of the programme. Some childminders said they would have liked more explanation of what was involved at the start of the programme, although others felt that they did understand what was expected of them:

I think it should be probably a bit more explained about the research. (Childminder interview, C2)

I don't think it was particularly invasive or you know, I think you know it was already the emails had explained beforehand what might have, you know, what would happen. (Childminder interview, C2)

Time also remained a factor although the research tasks were not described as overly burdensome:

It's not taken that much time out of my day to reply to an email or any of it really. It's quite easy to reply to the emails and they've never taken too long, which is obviously always a positive because everyone's not got enough time to do anything else. (Childminder interview, C2)

I think there's one more survey I need to do. I did start it, but then. I had to go back into the room so that we'll get finished at some point. (Childminder interview, C1)

Participating in RCTs

It became clear while speaking with participants that childminders were relatively new to the idea of participating in research and found the concept of being involved in a RCT difficult to grasp:

I've never had it [research] before and when I first got approached to do the research programme I was a bit. Oh, what's this? I don't really know what. What's expected of me? (Childminder interview, C1).

I would have no idea [about RCTs]. To be fair. I don't. I don't know, because it's [research] not something I do very often, you know? So I don't know. (Childminder interview, C2)

The level of obviously training and commitment to obviously lots of people have got lots of things going on and not everyone prioritises kind of the fact that actually this research would be helpful to them, a bigger group of children. So I think depending on what is important to the childminder, then yeah, like I would do it, but I know other people might not have the time to commit to it and everything else. So it's kind of, it's a difficult one to answer because it's very individual based on circumstances and obviously opinions and views on kind of what's important and what's not necessarily. (Childminder interview, C2)

Since a key component of the research was to investigate whether or not the programme is ready to progress to an efficacy trial, and the feasibility of a RCT design for childminders, the researchers sought to investigate whether—with more information—childminders could provide their feedback on the practices involved in a RCT research.

In a survey question posed only to childminders in Cohort 2,¹⁹ a description of a RCT was provided:

A randomised controlled trial (or RCT for short) is a kind of rigorous research which can find out how well the training works for childminders and children. In a RCT, outcomes for childminders and children

¹⁹ The question was added to the Cohort 2 endline survey after it became clear that more detail on what a RCT involved was needed.

who have the training are compared with outcomes for childminders and children who do not have the training. We decide which childminders have the training by allocating them to have the training or not randomly, like in a lottery. When we do this, it sets up a fair test of the training so we can be sure of the result.

Participating childminders were then asked to describe any factors that may encourage them, or other childminders, to take part in a RCT. The results can be seen in Table 30.

Table 30: Factors that would encourage childminders to participate in a RCT (n=13)

Factor	N
Any financial incentives	10
The amount of time that it would take to participate	10
What the study is about	9
The kind of research activities I would do (e.g. interviews, surveys)	9
Any benefits that this could have for myself, or the children involved (e.g. training)	9
The length of the study	9
Other, non-financial incentives (e.g. vouchers or resources)	6
Knowing that if I weren't allocated the training (e.g. I was part of the control group), I would receive it at a later date	5
The benefits that the research could have for other practitioners or policy	5
Knowing that whether I am allocated to the training or not is completely random	1

The findings in Table 30 above show that the majority of childminders (ten out of 13 respondents) indicated that they would be encouraged to participate by considerations such as the financial incentives and the time burden associated with participation in a trial. Over a third of childminders (five out of 13 respondents) indicated that they would be encouraged to take part in a RCT if they would receive that training at a later date if allocated to the control group. And over two-thirds of childminders (nine out of 13 respondents) indicated that benefits (e.g. training) would encourage them to participate in a RCT. Qualitative response in the endline survey also indicated the importance of professional development for childminders as an incentive for taking part in a RCT, although financial incentives were also discussed:

Personal development, benefits for the children and the setting. (Endline survey, LTU5s, C2)

Being paid is a great incentive, as it supports the setting to implement any new practice or change parts of their setting, when we are very under funded. (Endline survey, LTU5s, C2)

Childminders in Cohort 1 were also asked to describe and identify barriers to participation in a RCT as part of the follow-up survey (Table 31).

Table 31: Barriers to participating in a RCT (n=12)

Factor	N
The amount of time that it would take	4
Knowing that I may not be allocated to the training programme, and might be in the control group	3
The length of the study	2
Knowing that whether I am allocated to the training or not is completely random	2
The kind of research activities I would do (e.g. interviews, surveys)	1

Almost a third of childminders (four out of 12 respondents) indicated 'the amount of time that it would take'. Additionally, the prospect of potentially being allocated to the control group, and hence not receive the training, was also seen as a barrier by nearly a quarter of respondents (three out of 12 respondents). The open responses to the endline survey also indicated that time burden, including the time needed to undertake the training itself, was of particular concern:

Not all childminders would want to spend their personal time completing training, especially if they have other family commitments. (Endline survey, LTU5s, C2)

Timings, as childminders are working during the day, length of time it takes. (Endline survey, LTU5s, C2)

Conclusion

Table 32: Summary of pilot findings

Research question	Findings
1. Is the CFHBS programme feasible and acceptable to childminders?	<p>The findings of this pilot study suggests that the CFHBS programme is feasible and acceptable to childminders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of childminders across programme variants met all levels of compliance including attending at least 80% of training sessions, completion of the learning logs, and gaining CFHBS status. The programme content was perceived to be of value to childminders across programme variants with childminders appreciating that the programme was targeted at childminders. <p>However, while childminders saw great value in the training they received, they indicated that they would not be able to afford to pay for the programme should they have to pay for it themselves. If they were to pay, the majority indicated this would be under £200, less than the cost of either programme.</p>
2. Is there evidence of promise that the CFHBS programme may lead to the changes expected in the theories of change?	<p>The evidence gained from the pilot indicates that there is evidence of promise that the CFHBS programme leads to changes as expected in the theories of change:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Childminders skills, knowledge, and confidence increased for those following both programme variants. Greater gains across all three domains were found for those following the SLS3-5s programme variant compared to those following LTU5s. Childminders reported changes in their SLC practice, particularly around modelling language and adult-child interactions. Childminders perceived positive impacts of the programme on children's SLC, particularly for expressive vocabulary.
3. How feasible is it to conduct an evaluation using a RCT design with this population (i.e. childminders and children aged two to five years)?	<p>The findings suggest that it may be feasible to conduct an evaluation using an RCT design with this population, but there are some key areas for consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of research activities were completed by over 80% of participants. However, when asked to rate different possible research activities, childminders rated surveys and interviews less favourably than activities such as having a researcher administer child assessments. Financial incentives, opportunities for professional development, and potential benefits for the children in their care were all reported by childminders as motivating factors for taking part in a RCT. The amount of time it would take to participate in a RCT and knowing that they may be allocated to the control condition were the main reasons childminders would have reservations about taking part in a larger scale trial, although childminders' understanding of what a RCT would involve appeared limited.

Formative findings

When interpreting the findings from this pilot study it is important to bear in mind childminders working conditions, which is largely as a lone adult, in the home, with long working days, and relatively low remuneration. The CFHBS programme is specifically designed for childminders in home-based settings. Childminders reported valuing this aspect of the programme as well as valuing the content of the training. They reported changes in their SLC practices. Overall, the theories of change for both programme variants were felt to reflect the implementation of the CFHBS programme and its proposed outcomes well (see below). Given this, we are reluctant to suggest any changes to the existing programme. However, if any changes were to be made, we would suggest that some additional thought could be given to the time frame of delivery, in particular, whether the training could be spread out over a longer time period to enable childminders to fully embed the programme in their practice while still undertaking the training. At the same time, we acknowledge that to do so could mean childminders lose momentum and it is possible that extending the length of their time commitment to the training may impact overall completion rates. Alongside this, it should be noted that the delivery team would normally recommend a longer time period for the overall programme, including delivery of SLS3-5s once a fortnight with the CFHBS element delivered following completion of each variant in order to maintain momentum. Unfortunately, a shorter time frame was used for this pilot programme and this decision should be carefully considered for any future research. However, regardless of the delivery model, it is important that childminders understand the time commitment prior to the training which, accompanied by stronger evidence of the impact of the programme, should encourage childminders to undertake the programme successfully. Additionally, thought may need to be given around either the cost of the programme or potential alternative sources of funding to enable childminders to take-up CFHBS training outside of the evaluation (where training was provided free of charge).

Interpretation

This pilot study was designed to answer the overarching research questions:

- What is the feasibility of implementation, evidence of promise, and readiness for trial of the CFHBS intervention (both the SLS3-5s and LTU5s training versions) in terms of take-up of training, programme completion, and perceived impacts (on both childminders and the two- to five-year-old children in their settings)? Do these outcomes vary between the two programme variants (SLS3-5s and LTU5s)?

It also set out success indicators relating to feasibility of implementation, evidence of promise, and readiness for trial. As seen in Table 33, the majority of the success indicators were either fully or partially met. The following sections provide further details as to each of the three pilot criteria, and the related findings.

Table 33: Success indicators for the pilot study

Pilot criteria	Success indicators (research question number)	Success indicators achieved
Feasibility of implementation	Childminders (80%) meet all or most of the CFHBS compliance criteria within the evaluation timeline including attendance at training and completion of course components (research question 1a)	Yes, 80% of childminders across programme variants met all levels of compliance including attending at least 80% of training sessions, completion of the learning logs, and gaining CFHBS status
	The programme content is perceived to be of value to the majority of childminders (research question 1bi)	Yes, the programme content was perceived to be of value to childminders across programme variants with childminders appreciating that the programme was targeted at childminders
	The cost of the training is acceptable for the target population (research question 1bii)	No. While childminders saw great value in the training they received, they indicated that they would not be able to afford to pay for the programme should they have to pay for it themselves
Evidence of promise	Improvement (perceived and measured) in childminder skills, knowledge, and confidence (research question 2a)	Yes, childminders skills, knowledge, and confidence increased for those following both programme variants
	Perceived change in practice—childminders adopt programme strategies to promote children's SLC development (research question 2b)	Yes, childminders reported changes in their SLC practice, particularly around modelling language and adult-child interactions
	Perceived impact on children including improvements in children's SLC skills (research question 2c)	Yes, childminders perceived positive impacts of the programme on children's SLC, particularly for expressive vocabulary
	Positive impact of the CFS programme in the efficacy trial	TBD ^a
Readiness for trial	High level of engagement with the pilot evaluation activities (80% completion of programme surveys, completion of all scheduled interviews, and researcher-attended virtual home visits)	Yes, the majority of research activities were completed by over 80% of participants
	Acceptability of randomisation/conduct of a trial/child outcomes assessment (research question 3)	Partially, financial incentives, opportunities for professional development and potential benefits for the children in their care were all reported by childminders as motivating factors for taking part in a RCT. However, the amount of time it would take to participate in a RCT and knowing that they may be allocated to the control condition were the main reasons childminders would have reservations about taking part in a larger scale trial. In addition, there are concerns relating to childminders' understandings of what a RCT would involve

^a The CFS efficacy trial is due to report in 2026.

TBD=to be decided/determined.

Evidence of promise

The programme shows evidence of promise and, although the CFS programme has yet to report on the 'positive impact of the CFS programme in the efficacy trial', it meets all the agreed success criteria relating to the pilot study. There were

improvements in childminder knowledge around children's language, skills in applying their knowledge in scenario situations, and confidence in their own judgements, as measured by the SKCQ across both programme variants, with overall changes in average scores from 20.7 (baseline) to 26.0 (endline) out of a possible total of 59 for those following LTU5s and from 18.5 (baseline) to 27.9 (endline) out of a possible 59 for those following the SLS3-5s programme variant. However, the SLS3-5s programme variant showed greater gains across all three domains (skills, knowledge, and confidence) compared to LTU5s. This accords with the theories of change, with SLS3-5s providing more in-depth knowledge surrounding children's SLC needs, which should then also impact on childminder skills and confidence. In contrast, childminders following LTU5s were scored more highly by CFHBS tutors than those following the SLS3-5s programme variant on the adult-child interaction checklist (averages of 21.8 and 20.9, respectively) and modelling language checklist (12.6 and 12.2, respectively). These higher scores for LTU5s meant they were demonstrating higher quality interactions with children and higher-level modelling language skills when observed by CFHBS tutors. Both adult-child interaction and modelling language were key components of the programme for both variants. When interpreting these findings, it should be borne in mind that, while SLS3-5s has higher prior qualification entry requirements, in this pilot study, approximately half of those following LTU5s were qualified for, and had expressed a preference for, the SLS3-5s programme variant. It can therefore be assumed that they had higher prior knowledge than generally expected for those undertaking this variant. However, the SKCQ was primarily designed around the content of the SLS3-5s programme variant-specific training, so the gains made by those following LTU5s remain notable.

Childminders also reported perceived improvements in their skills, knowledge, and confidence. Although a small number of childminders indicated that they did not always learn something new through the training, for the majority of these the training was still a reminder of good practice. Overwhelmingly, childminders reported increased confidence as a result of the training, either through increasing their knowledge and skills or through confirming existing practice. Given the conditions in which childminders work (within their own home, usually as a lone practitioner), childminders emphasised the reassurance the programme brought surrounding their existing practice, the recognition of their professional role, and the validation of their practice by an external source (the CFHBS tutor). This was particularly evident in the retrospective positive reactions to the virtual home visits as part of gaining CFHBS status. An additional (unintended) consequence of the training was the impact the training, and associated improved knowledge and confidence, had on childminders interactions with both parents and other professionals. In addition, one childminder reported cascading the training to their assistant.

There were also reported changes in childminder practice evidenced through triangulation of the learning logs, childminder survey responses, email exchanges, and childminder interviews. Although adult-child interaction (e.g. using more comments than questions) and modelling language (e.g. modelling correct language and not correcting a child's incorrect use of language) were only measured (by CFHBS tutors) at one timepoint (at the end of training), these were the most frequently reported changes in practice by childminders (both reported to be changes in practice by 26 out of 33 childminders in the endline survey). In the current theories of change for the two programme variants, based on wider research (e.g. Dockrell *et al.*, 2012; EEF, 2022), suggest that such changes would lead to improved language outcomes for children. Those following SLS3-5s were more likely than those following LTU5s to report wider changes (e.g. in the physical environment such as providing a quiet space, resources which promote verbal interaction, and book sharing which encourages conversation) perhaps reflecting the more in-depth training for that programme variant. At six-month post-training follow-up, childminders reported maintaining the changes they had made due to the programme training and continuing to make changes as they reflected back on programme learning. In addition, higher proportions of childminders following SLS3-5s reported that they were still making changes compared to those following LTU5s (see Table 13. This may be a reflection of the deeper knowledge and understanding provided by this programme variant.

Childminders reported perceived positive impacts on children's SLC in general, and specifically on the four domains being measured in the CFS efficacy trial (i.e. receptive vocabulary, expressive vocabulary, sentence length, and sentence complexity). Additional reported outcomes included children's confidence and their socio-emotional well-being (including behaviour), although these could also come under the umbrella term 'school readiness', which childminders also perceived to have improved as a result of the programme. At six-month post-training follow-up childminders reported that child outcomes had either been sustained (receptive language and sentence length) or increased (expressive language, sentence complexity, and school readiness) compared to at baseline. The largest perceived impact reported by childminders across variants was on children aged between two and four years. This closely mirrors the target age range of the programme variants (three- to five-year-olds) although the slightly lower age range may also reflect that the programme is flexible in encompassing a wider range of children (outside of three- to five-year-olds) and, by age five, children will predominantly have entered school-based reception classes. Consequently, any childminder

provision for the higher age group (i.e. five-year-olds) may be seen as predominantly wraparound care rather than educational provision. At six-month post-training follow-up higher proportions of childminders also reported perceived large impacts on one- to two-year-olds and children over five years of age suggesting that there was a diffusion of impact over time. For childminders who had EAL, SEND, and EYPP children in their care just over a half indicated that the programme had a major or moderate impact on the SLC skills of EAL and SEND children and just under a half stated this for children in receipt of EYPP. Although the numbers are small, a quarter reported a major impact on the SLC skills of EAL children. It should also be noted that while one of the success indicators related to the outcome of the CFS efficacy trial, there are some key differences between childminders and early years practitioners in other settings. CFHBS tutors indicated that childminders could be more motivated, and more able, to enact change within their settings. In addition, adult-child ratios tend to be lower in childminder settings, which may mean childminders are more able to differentiate the provision they provide for children in their care, both of which could mean that CFHBS has a greater potential to impact on child outcomes than CFS.

Feasibility of implementation

Compliance in the pilot study was high, with 88% of childminders (35 out of 40 participants) meeting most of the CFHBS compliance criteria within the evaluation timeline and 80% (32 out of 40 participants) meeting all the compliance criteria, including attendance at training and completion of course components. Within this, those childminders not meeting compliance because they did not complete the course requirements were all following the SLS3-5s programme variant (three out of 40 childminders) and those not meeting compliance due to lower than 80% attendance were all from the LTU5s programme variant (three out of 40 participants). Those childminders who took longer than expected to complete the learning logs were also all from the LTU5s programme variant (seven out of the 35 childminders who completed all course requirements). The main reasons for non-compliance were personal reasons, although missed training sessions were also reportedly due to other work commitments. This highlights the difficulties of attending training and completing training requirements for childminders, who generally lack any cover arrangements for when these circumstances arise, although recordings of the webinars were subsequently made available for non-attenders.

In the endline survey, childminders identified time as the main barrier to attending training along with completion of course requirements. The time to complete the preparation work for the online webinars was reported as a barrier by higher proportions of those following SLS3-5s than those following LTU5s, which reflects the higher learning demands of that programme variant (e.g. half of those following SLS3-5s, seven out of 14 respondents reported that 'the time taken to complete the learning logs' was a barrier to programme completion compared to three out of 19 participants following LTU5s). The timing of the training sessions was also reported as a barrier in the endline survey by approximately a quarter of participants (eight out of 33 respondents) although in their interviews childminders appreciated that the training did fit around their working day (being scheduled either after 6:00 p.m. or at the weekend). Although childminders having a lack of cover is an issue for childminders undertaking training opportunities, one childminder discussed in their interview how their childminder assistant facilitated their meeting programme requirements. It should be noted that just under half of childminders in this study reported having childminder assistants, although little is known of their exact role either within the setting or potentially facilitating training. This figure is considerably higher than the 20% of childminders reported to have childminder assistant(s) nationally (DfE, 2024). CFHBS tutors also considered the difficulties for childminders attending training at the end of a busy working day.

Demand for the programme was, however, high with the recruitment target of 46 childminders met in a relatively short recruitment window (less than three months; 26 April 2023 to 14 July 2023), and 40 childminders were subsequently allocated places on the programme. Childminders were keen to do the training for a number of reasons, mainly relating to professional development, enhancing their skills, knowledge, and confidence in SLC, and because they had children in their care they perceived as in need of SLC support. Although some childminders had expressed a preference for a different programme variant than they received the training for (i.e. ten out of the 20 childminders following LTU5s had expressed a preference for SLS3-5s) they were reportedly happy with their allocation. Childminders valued the training and materials they received through the CFHBS programme. They particularly valued the support offered by the tutors and usefulness of the course content and associated materials, both of which were cited as facilitators to attendance at training sessions. In addition, childminders valued the opportunity to network with other childminders and the recognition of their professional role as childminders. This was contrasted with the wider reality of childminding, often conducted by an individual childminder within their own home. Conversely, as indicated above, CFHBS tutors saw the independent working conditions of individual childminders as facilitators of implementation and changes in practice.

Nearly two-thirds of participants (23 out of 37 participants) reported having had no previous training relating to children's SLC. One childminder also highlighted that what training there is tends to be primarily aimed at, and attended by, practitioners in early years settings, as opposed to home-based settings. Consequently, it can be argued that opportunities for childminder training are low. This is compounded by a lack of financial resources reported by childminders to pay for training. Despite valuing the training highly, the majority of childminders indicated that they could not have afforded it outside of the pilot study (as training was provided free of charge). Of the three success criteria set for feasibility of implementation in this pilot study this was the only criteria not met by the programme in this pilot. Consequently, it can be envisaged that the cost of the programme would be a substantial barrier to those wishing to take either variant of the programme in the future. Although some childminders discussed the possibility of payment plans the reality is that, in order for childminders to be able to undertake the training, alternative forms of funding or subsidies would need to be sought, for example, through central government or local authorities. In addition, although LTU5s is the less costly of the two programme variants, SLS3-5s, as the more in-depth training of the two, does show more evidence of promise in terms of the SKCQ and overall reported changes in childminder practice. This would, however, need to be balanced against the higher completion rates and lower entry requirements for LTU5s.

Readiness for trial

Overall, there was a high level of engagement with most of the pilot study research activities. Reassuringly for a potential RCT, childminders rated the prospect of a researcher visiting their home-based setting to observe or conduct one-on-one assessments with the children in their care positively (and was the potential research activity ranked, on average, the highest by participants). However, in terms of any future research it would be important to carefully consider the research burden, and which methods were chosen for any IPE methods. For example, while interviews were difficult to arrange in this study, and not a popular option as a possible research methodology, it may be that face-to-face interviews are more feasible, and acceptable, than online interviews, and this could be completed if a researcher was already visiting a home-based setting although the timing of the interview, given the childminder may work alone, would also need to be considered. The researchers have found this to be the case in other trials, including the CFS efficacy trial, where having a researcher on site, and being able to establish a face-to-face relationship has been a facilitator to interviews taking place as opposed to 'virtually', particularly when practitioners have many other demands on their time. Overall, the findings in this study suggest a preference, by childminders, for offline activities. Such activities may also facilitate increased engagement given that childminders reported enjoying and valuing interactions with CFHBS tutors and other childminders during the training. A further reason for a preference for researcher visits to conduct assessments could also be related to the fact that the majority of childminders work alone and, in particular, would have other children to care for at the same time making administering assessments themselves a difficult prospect. Whichever research methods are chosen the implications for childminders needs to be made clear at the recruitment stage.

The main motivation reported by childminders for participating in this, and any future research, was personal development and training. Although interviewees did not appear to value financial incentives highly, the more anonymous survey responses, coupled with childminder reports of the difficulties in funding training, suggest that some financial incentive would be needed for a future trial, reflective of the time burden involved. Additionally, given the high demand for training, a waitlist design would probably be the most appropriate in terms of recruitment to a RCT although this also has inherent disadvantages given the additional cost involved and the implications of delivering training to the control group if such a trial was unable to demonstrate impact.

Finally, it is important to once again highlight the importance of sensitivity to childminders working conditions, being home-based, often conducted by a lone adult, involving long hours, and with low rates of pay. This has numerous implications for the design of any future research, not least for a trial where attrition levels can be potentially high, and outside the control of the programme or the evaluation, namely, attrition in this study, and non-completion of the CFHBS programme requirements, were generally linked to childminders personal circumstances and childminders do not tend to have any cover arrangements in place for such eventualities. In the case of this study, attrition was deemed acceptable (38 of the 46 originally recruited childminders completed the research), but it must also be admitted that this was largely outside of the control of the researchers and of the delivery team.

Limitations

There were a number of limitations in this pilot study worth noting. In particular, we were not able to sufficiently assess whether or not there were any additional programme factors affecting childminders who did not complete the programme within the specified time frame as we did not have access to their learning logs, and they did not engage with those

aspects of the endline survey relating to this or participate in the interviews. Rather, we assume that personal reasons compounded the time pressures felt by childminders in completing the programme and the research activities more generally. We also know that childminder assistants could aid in relieving these pressures and that higher proportions of participating childminders had such assistants than is the case nationally. However, the evidence is extremely limited, and we do not know enough about the role of, or extent of support, childminder assistants actually provide or provided in this study. In addition, half of the childminders participating in the LTU5s programme variant were qualified to, and had expressed a preference for, the SLS3-5s variant. The data indicates that the LTU5s programme was acceptable to them. However, this also means that the data is not necessarily representative of those who would normally choose to take the LTU5s programme because their prior qualifications are below a Level 3.

The low participation rates in the interviews were also a limitation, especially as the majority of those who did take part were following the LTU5s programme variant (four out of the five interviewees). This does provide a lack of depth in some of our understandings although wherever possible the interview data were triangulated with the email exchanges and open survey responses (both of which were rich data sources) and the learning logs (although it is acknowledged that these were completed as part of the CFHBS programme and with a different audience [CFHBS tutors] and purpose [completion of the programme requirements] in mind). Nevertheless, the different data sources did tend to agree and so we are confident in our findings. The SKCQ was also developed specifically for the CFS efficacy trial and therefore, targeted at learning from the SLS3-5s programme variant. This means it is not a completely independent measure of childminders skills, knowledge, and confidence in SLC, rather their skills, knowledge, and confidence as they relate to SLS3-5s programme content. However, the SKCQ did capture change over time, and we can feel confident that this is an accurate reflection of learning from the CFHBS programme as a whole (given that tutors argued that the core components of the programme were in place for both programme variants, with the main difference being the theoretical underpinnings explicitly taught in SLS3-5s).

Overall, the sample size for this pilot was small (40 childminders at baseline), which limits the generalisability of the findings. In addition, some of the analysis is based on even lower numbers of childminders (e.g. the follow-up survey was completed by only 15 childminders, nine childminders following LTU5s and only six childminders following SLS3-5s), so these findings should be treated with caution. In addition, there does seem to have been some differences within programme variants between cohorts, which we are unable to explain (except that these childminders had a longer lead in time between being allocated a place on the programme and starting the programme). For example, Cohort 2 revealed no significant differences between baseline and endline scores on the SKCQ, whereas Cohort 1 did show significant gains in each domain, although this may be a function of the lower numbers of childminders completing this measure in Cohort 2. Finally, childminders reported low numbers of children with EAL, SEND, or who are in receipt of EYPP, meaning that findings relating to perceived outcomes for these groups of children should be treated with caution.

Future research and publications

In conclusion, while we believe an efficacy trial may be feasible, we would propose great care be taken in the evaluation design, particularly with regard to the research burden, which may be imposed on participating childminders. Given the demand for training in SLC we would suggest a waitlist design would be the most appropriate, although financial incentives should also be used to offset the time in taking completion of research activities. Such activities, where possible should be face-to-face and the importance of relationship-building between researchers and childminders should be emphasised given the uncertainty and inexperience of most childminders relating to research. We would suggest the outcomes measures mirror those used in the CFS efficacy trial (i.e. OxEd & Assessment's 'LanguageScreen' and the Renfrew Action Picture Test) for comparative purposes, and because, in this study, childminders perceived impacts across each of the associated domains in these measures.

Research questions we would like to see addressed in the future include: i) the impact of the LTU5s programme variant when it is undertaken by those childminders it is considered most suitable for (i.e. those whose highest prior qualification is below a Level 3); ii) the role of childminder assistants within home-based settings and how they support programme training and implementation; and iii) whether or not the programme meets the specific needs of children with EAL, SEND, or who are in receipt of EYPP, given that childminders in this pilot study had low numbers of these children attending their settings. Finally, we leave open the question of how best to fund training for childminders more generally.

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Appendix A: Comparison between programme variants

Figure A1: A comparison of the LTU5s and SLS3-5s programme variants

	LTU5s	SLS3-5s
Minimum entry requirement	Level 3 or GCSE grades 3 to 1/D-G	A levels, a NVQ, or National Diploma
Mode of course delivery	All content through live webinars, cameras on, learner discussion/engagement required (no e-learning self-study content)	e-learning self-study, shorter time through live webinars, cameras on, learner discussion/engagement required
Number of two-hour sessions	7	10
Taught hours per session	2	1
Expected self-study hours per session	1	3
Total guided learning hours	21	40
Depth of knowledge and skills	Basic information (including about child development) and simple strategies only	Patterns of child development, identifying strengths/needs, impact of Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), monitoring of progress, variety of universal and targeted strategies, knowledge re adapting strategies to meet individual needs.
Learning log	Implementation of one strategy per session and observing impact on child	Choosing, implementing and evaluating a variety of strategies per session
Who is course designed for?	Parents but is completed by some Early Years Practitioners. Appropriate for childminders because designed for a home-based setting	Early Years Practitioners

Appendix B: Ethics documentation

Appendix B1 – Memorandum of Understanding

Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings (Childminders) Pilot Study

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

As part of the **Department for Education's Early Years Recovery Programme**, [Insert NAME of HUB/S] and the Education Endowment Foundation are working together to fund childminders' access to evidence-informed programmes and study the programmes' influence on their knowledge, skills and confidence about children's speech, language and communication development. The aims of this funding are to support education recovery following the pandemic, and to develop our understanding of effective professional development in the early years.

The Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings programme (CFHBS) has been developed by Elkland Training Ltd. and this pilot evaluation will be assessing the feasibility of the two routes to achieving the CFHBS award (Let's Talk with Under 5s (LTU5) + CFHBS and Speech and Language Support (SLS 3-5s) + CFHBS). We are seeking approximately 40 childminders to take part in this study. The research will help Elkland refine the programme and allow us to find out whether the programme is ready to be provided to more childminders and children.

This memorandum of understanding (MoU) explains what your participation in the study will entail. If you agree to take part and accept the terms and conditions outlined, please sign a copy of this form. (A copy will be emailed back to you for your records).

The Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) Programme.

Two variants of the CFHBS programme will be offered. These are:

- CFHBS through Let's Talk with Under 5s (LTU5s). Childminders will be able to gain a Level 1 OCN accredited award and their settings achieve CFHBS status; and
- CFHBS through Speech and Language Support for 3–5-year-olds (SLS 3-5s). Childminders will be able to gain a Level 3 OCN accredited award and their settings achieve CFHBS status.

Participants will be asked to choose which of these programme variants they would prefer to undertake, as long as they meet the minimum eligibility criteria for their chosen route. Further details about the variants of the programme and the associated training can be found in the information sheet for the study.

Expressions of interest to the September 2023 programmes and January 2024 programmes must be made by (add date). Confirmation of Childminders being accepted on to the September 2023 programmes and January 2024 programmes will be confirmed by (add date).

During this project, you will be contacted by both the **Delivery Team** (Elkland Training Ltd.), who are responsible for delivering the programme Continuing Professional Development (CPD), and by the **Evaluation Team** (University of York/The University of Sheffield), who are carrying out an independent evaluation of the programmes feasibility.

Structure of the pilot

We are seeking approximately 40 Childminders to take part in its evaluation. The **two** variants of the CFHBS programme (LTU5s and SLS 3-5s) will each be delivered starting at two timepoints. For each programme variant there will be 20 places in total, 10 starting in September 2023 and 10 in January 2024. Both the LTU5s and SLS 3-5s variants of the programme are open to Childminders who meet the eligibility criteria. Childminders will be asked to choose between the two variants. The two variants of the programme have different entry criteria (See Entry Criteria below). If Childminders meet the entry criteria for both programmes then it is entirely up to them to choose which one they would prefer to do.

As part of the evaluation Childminders will be asked to complete two online short surveys (beginning and end of the training) about their experiences of training in their home-based settings. In order to understand how the programme is working, the Evaluation Team will observe a sample of virtual tutor observation visits (5 Childminders from each

programme). To gain a deeper understanding of the programme we will also ask childminders to engage in email conversations with the researchers and, for a small sample of childminders to agree to be interviewed by the research team. We would also like to join some childminders on their 'virtual CFHBS audits' and will ask Elklan to provide us with data relating to the programme such as attendance at training.

Training and support will be fully funded for the enrolled Childminders as part of the academic year 2023/2024. All Childminders will receive the workbooks for LTU5s and SLS 3-5s programmes. Successful completion will result in childminders being accredited and certificated, at level 3, for SLS 3-5s and level 1 for LTU5s, by OCN, London and the setting gaining accredited Communication Friendly Home-Based Setting status award (from Elklan) which lasts for three years, after which it can be renewed at a cost of £100.00. Childminders will receive a financial contribution for the time they spend participating in the programme, payable upon successful completion. For childminders following the SLS route this is £386.25 per childminder and for those following the LTU5s route this is £296.25 per childminder (proportional to the time commitments for the two programmes).

Eligibility criteria for participation

All childminders will be eligible to participate if they have:

- at least one child in their care aged 2-5 years of age 2023-2024;
- agreed to undertake the CFHBS training and participate in the pilot study;
- signed a Memorandum of Understanding; and
- completed the baseline survey; and
- meet the minimum entry criteria listed below. If Childminders are eligible for both programmes they should indicate their preference below.

Programme Entry requirements:

	Let's Talk with Under 5s (LTU5s)	Speech and Language Support for 3-5s (SLS 3-5s)
Accreditation Level	Level 1	Level 3
Entry Criteria	<p>Have children 2- 5 years in your care</p> <p>Entry level 3 or GCSE grades 3to1/D-G (or above)</p> <p>Be able, following CPD, to identify appropriate strategies and describe (in one or two sentences) how the strategy was implemented.</p>	<p>Have children under 5 in your care.</p> <p>A level, NVQ3, National Diploma.</p> <p>Be confident in learning via online elearning sessions which require more motivation and self-directed study skills.</p> <p>Be able, following CPD, to give detailed descriptions, evaluate the outcome of using chosen strategies and plan next steps.</p>
	<p>Basic computer skills to be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log into the Elklan website to access the digital learning log • Take photos and upload these into the learning log • Type text into text boxes 	
Guidance Time Commitment*	Approximately 39.5 hrs	Approximately 51.5 hrs

*Childminders will vary in the amount of time taken to complete the online e-learning sessions (if completing SLS), learning logs and checklists, the following is therefore only guidance.

What will happen if I meet both and don't get my chosen programme?

Places for oversubscribed courses will be randomly allocated to eligible applicants. Applicants for oversubscribed courses (who are not randomly allocated their first preference) may be allocated (in the following order) to:

The same course, alternate date – if places are available and they have indicated availability

The other course, preferred start date – if they meet the entry criteria

Alternate course and alternate date – if they have indicated availability and meet entry criteria

Use of Data

All personal data used for the project will be treated with the strictest confidence and will be used and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2018) and the Data Protection Act (2018). For information about GDPR please follow the link:

https://www.york.ac.uk/education/research/gdpr_information/

The University of York will be deemed a Data Controller (as defined by the data protection legislation) with regard to personal data used for the evaluation setting-level data (i.e. through surveys or interviews). Elklan will be the Data Controller for data including setting-level data and Childminder personal data, including learning logs, audit checklists and online questionnaires for the purposes of recruitment and training. Learning logs, audit checklists and online questionnaires will be shared with the University of York and shall be the Data Controller for the purposes of the evaluation. Personal data will be processed under Article 6 (1) (e) (*Processing necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest*) of the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

All individually identifiable data held by UoY will be destroyed 5 years after the end of the study (2029). The University of Sheffield will only have access to anonymous data. Anonymous data will be kept indefinitely by UoY. All results will be anonymised so that no Childminder or individual student will be identifiable in the report or dissemination of any results. Detailed information about how participant data will be used for this project can be found in the associated Privacy Notices. [Insert links]

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact the research team by email (cfhbs-evaluation-project@york.ac.uk), or the University of York Education Ethics Committee via email education-research-admin@york.ac.uk. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk.

Responsibilities of the Delivery Team (Elklan):

- Recruit Childminders
- Review of Childminder checklists and undertake either face-to-face, where possible, or virtual observations and walk-throughs
- Provide CPD training and support as described above
- Act as the first point of contact for any questions about the content of the training sessions and/or the CFHBS and achieving the accreditation and/or CFHBS award.
- Provide payment towards the cost of childminders participating in the training.

Responsibilities of the Evaluation Team (University of York/The University of Sheffield):

- Act as the first point of contact for any questions about the pilot evaluation activities (programme queries will be directed at the Elklan Tutor)

- Provide information about the pilot evaluation for Childminders
- Organise data collection including administering surveys, conducting interviews and observations of a sample of virtual tutor audit visits
- Analyse the data from the pilot
- Disseminate the research findings through the EEF report and at conferences and through academic papers.

Responsibilities of the Childminder:

- Provide accurate information about their setting as requested below
- Support evaluation activities as set out in the agreement below
- Commit to attendance at their training course and to complete their learning log commitments
- Facilitate virtual audits with an Elklan tutor

Key Dates

Activity	September 2023 Cohort	January 2024 Cohort	Responsible
Childminder recruitment	January – July 2023		Elklan
Pre-evaluation childminder surveys	September 2023	January 2024	University of York/Childminders
First e-learning module	11-15 th Sept 23 (SLS route only)	8-12 th Jan 2024 (SLS only)	Childminders
First webinar	11-15 th Sept 2023 (LTU5s) 18-22 nd Sept 23 (SLS)	15-19 th Jan 2024 (LTU5s and SLS)	Elklan/Childminders
E-learning modules, live webinars	Sept 23-Dec 23 (LTU5s) Sept 23-Jan 24 (SLS)	Jan-Apr 2024 (LTU5s) Jan-May 2024 (SLS)	Elklan/Childminders
Childminders to receive virtual or face to face visits by Elkan Audit evaluators to selected settings	Nov 23(LTU5s) Jan 24 (SLS)	Mar-Apr 2024 (LTU5s) Apr-May 2024 (SLS)	Elklan
Evaluators to observe virtual audits in a selected number of Childminder settings	TBC	TBC	University of York
Post-evaluation setting Childminder survey	March 2024	June 2024	Childminders
Level 1 and Level 3 certificates for successful Childminders and the	May 2024	July 2024	Elklan

Communication Friendly Settings status awarded			
Evaluation report published	Spring 2025		University of York/EEF

COMMUNICATION-FRIENDLY HOME-BASED SETTINGS AGREEMENT

This form is to be completed by the Childminder. Please read carefully and, if you are happy to take part, please initial beside each statement and complete the subsequent sections.

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the Memorandum of Understanding for the above project and evaluation and have had the opportunity to ask questions. Initials
2. I agree to receive and complete the training either LTU5s + CFHBS or SLS 3-5s + CFHBS and implement changes to practice within my setting. Initials
3. I agree to completing the separate learning logs (LTU5s + CFHBS or SLS 3-5s + CFHBS) and submitting work on time on a weekly basis and/or as advised by the Elklan Tutor. Initials
4. I permit the publication of anonymised data collected. Initials
5. I agree to facilitate researchers from the Evaluation Team and members of the Delivery Team in collecting evaluation data. This includes email exchanges, completing two surveys during the year and facilitating a face-to-face or virtual audit visit and interview for the purposes of understanding the implementation of the programme, if requested. Initials
6. I agree that Elklan can share programme data relating to my attendance and coursework with the evaluation team for the purposes of the evaluation Initials
7. I agree to notify the Delivery Team and the Evaluation Team, at the earliest opportunity, if I have any issues that could affect the effective implementation of the programme. Initials
8. I will notify the Delivery Team and Evaluation Team immediately if my setting has to withdraw from the project for operational or other unavoidable reasons and wherever possible still participate in evaluation activities. Initials
9. I will provide a valid email address and telephone contact number to the Evaluation and Delivery Teams and agree to check communications regularly during the period of the research. Initials
10. Initials I confirm I have read the Memorandum of Understanding (Insert doc name) for the Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings study. I agree to take part in the study and accept the terms and conditions outlined in this document.

Childminder Name: _____

Childminder Telephone Number: _____

Childminder Address: _____

Childminder URN: _____

Elklan Tutor name: _____

Elklan Tutor Telephone: _____

Elklan Tutor Email Address: _____

Evaluation Lead Name: _____

Evaluation Lead Email Address: _____

Evaluation Lead Job Title: _____

WE WILL EMAIL YOU A COPY OF ALL THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THIS FORM FOR YOUR OWN RECORDS. Please return this form to [TBC]

Evaluation Team: cfhbs-evaluation-project@york.ac.uk

Delivery Team: details for Elklan

Appendix B2 – Setting information sheet

Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings (Childminders) Pilot Study

Invitation to participate

We are seeking Childminders with children aged 2-5 years to participate in pilot study of the Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings programme.

Two routes for achieving a Communication Friendly Home-Based Setting (CFHBS) award will be offered; childminders can undertake either Let's Talk with Under 5s (LTU5s), gaining a Level 1 OCN accredited award OR Speech and Language Support for 3–5-year-olds (SLS 3-5s), gaining a Level 3 OCN accredited award. In both cases the childminders will be provided with additional support and professional development to gain the CFHBS award.

Participants will be asked to choose which of these programme variants they would prefer to undertake, as long as they meet the minimum eligibility criteria for their chosen route. Childminders can also choose whether they would prefer a September 2023 or January 2024 start date. The deadline for applications is [Insert Date]. If there is oversubscription, places will be randomly allocated.

All courses will be delivered virtually to groups of Childminders, by an Elklan Tutor. There are 40 places available across the two routes.

As part of the **Department for Education's Early Years Recovery Programme**, [Insert NAME of HUB/S] and the Education Endowment Foundation are working together to fund Childminders' access to evidence-informed programmes and study the programmes' influence on their knowledge, skills and confidence about children's speech, language and communication development. The aims of this funding are to support education recovery following the pandemic, and to develop our understanding of effective professional development in the early years.

The Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) programme has been developed by Elklan Training Ltd. and this pilot evaluation will be assessing the feasibility of the two routes to achieving the CFHBS award (LTU5s + CFHBS and SLS 3-5s + CFHBS). We are seeking approximately 40 Childminders to take part in this study. The research will help Elklan refine the programme and allow us to find out whether the programme is ready to be provided to more Childminders and children.

What is the Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) programme?

Elklan's CFHBS programme is a parallel programme to Elklan's Communication Friendly Setting programme but is for Childminder provision rather than maintained and PVI sector early years settings. During the programme childminders will consider and develop the opportunities, resources and interactions provided in their homes to support the speech, language and communication development of all the children they care for, with guidance from an Elklan Tutor.

There will be two cohorts for each route, one commencing in September 2023 and the second commencing in January 2024. Therefore 10 Childminders can sign up for the LTU5s route and 10 for the SLS 3-5s route for each of the start dates of September 2023 and January 2024.

	September 2023 start	January 2024 start
LTU5s + CFHBS	10 places	10 places
SLS 3-5s + CFHBS	10 places	10 places

The two routes have different entry criteria (See Entry Criteria below). If Childminders meet the entry criteria for both variants, they may choose which route they would prefer to follow.

LTU5s + CFHBS

This professional development is accredited at Level 1 by OCN, London. Childminders will receive additional support and professional development to gain the CFHBS award (awarded by Elklan). There are two components.

The LTU5s component consists of:

- 7 x 2-hour live group webinars including interactive teaching methods, practical activities, videos and group discussion. The two hour webinars are held at the same time each week with an Elklan Tutor (speech and language therapist or specialist teacher), giving learners opportunities to reflect on the implementation of their acquired knowledge and strategies and share experiences in consistent small groups.
- The completion of an online learning log of evidence of implementing and evaluating strategies learnt (the learning log).
- Seven key areas are explored;
 - What is communication
 - Adult-Child interaction
 - Play
 - Understanding language
 - Helping young children to use words and sentences
 - Asking questions and sharing books
 - Helping children with unclear speech

Successful completion of LTU5s and CFHBS results in accreditation at level 1 through an Ofqual approved and regulated national Awarding Organisation (OCN London). Childminders receive a Communication Friendly Home-Based Setting award for their setting from Elklan.

For further details of the CFHBS component, see below.

SLS 3-5 + CFHBS

This professional development is accredited at level 3 by OCN, London (a level 2 accreditation may be available in some circumstances). There are two components.

The SLS 3-5 component consists of:

- 10 x one hour e-learning sessions, self-directed learning, with flexible timing within the week to suit each learner. Please note this is different from the LTU5s where all learning is completed via live webinars with an Elklan Tutor so there is no requirement for any online self-directed learning.
- 10 x 1-hour live group webinars (one hour at the same time each week) with an Elklan Tutor (speech and language therapist or specialist teacher), giving learners opportunities to reflect on the implementation of their acquired knowledge and strategies and share experiences in consistent small groups.
- The completion of an online learning log to consolidate and demonstrate learning (marked by Elklan). The time needed every week for the duration of the course is:
 - one to two hours planning and implementing strategies with the children
 - one hour to write up the learning log tasks.
- Ten key areas are explored:
 - What is communication?
 - Communication friendly settings, adult-child interaction
 - Learning to listen, and supporting understanding through non-verbal communication and visual strategies
 - Promoting vocabulary development
 - Understanding spoken language and ICWs

- The Blank Language Scheme
- Developing expressive language skills
- Developing play for language
- Supporting children with unclear speech and phonological awareness
- Stammering and course reflection

Successful completion of SLS 3-5s and CFHBS results in accreditation at level 3 (level 2 may be available in some circumstances) through an Ofqual approved and regulated national Awarding Organisation (OCN London). Childminders receive a Communication Friendly Home-Based Setting award for their setting from Elklan.

For further details of the CFHBS component, (see below.)

CFHBS Component (this component is a taken irrespective of whether LTU5s or SLS 3-5s is chosen)

- The CFHBS element is the same for both the Let's Talk with Under 5s, and Speech and Language Support for 3-5s routes.
- 15-30 minute extensions to the live webinars being undertaken as part of the LTU5s course.
- One stand-alone half-hour webinar.
- Completion of an online learning log with a CFHBS checklist to complete and an opportunity to showcase the changes childminders make.
- Review of the practitioner's checklist and evidence by an Elklan Tutor who visits the home to observe the environment and the childminder's interaction and modelling skills with children. The visit is completed face-to-face where possible or through virtual observations and walk-throughs. If all criteria are rated 'good' or 'outstanding' then CFHBS status is awarded. If the criteria are not met, feedback is given and a further visit from an Elklan Tutor provided after the childminder has been given time to make additional changes.
- Five key areas are explored:
 - The physical environment (inside and outside).
 - Appropriate interaction with children (with Elklan Tutor observation).
 - How to model and develop children's talking (with Elklan Tutor observation).
 - The range of resources and opportunities for communication and learning.
 - How to explore books to support language and communication development.
- Childminders are provided with a manual including:
 - The Elklan Communication Friendly Home-Based Setting checklist.
 - Information about the development of speech, language and communication skills and checklists to monitor progress and for early identification of SLC needs.
 - Universal level advice and strategies to develop young children's SLC.
 - Guidance about the evidence Childminders require to showcase what they have done to create Communication Friendly Home- Based Setting.

What will taking part in the study involve?

The University of York and the University of Sheffield have been selected as the independent evaluators for this pilot study, and we will assess the feasibility of the two variants of the CFHBS programme: The LTU5s route and the SLS 3-5s route. Allocation to each programme will depend on the entry criteria (see criteria below).

As part of the evaluation Childminders will be asked to complete two online short surveys (beginning and end of the programme) about their experiences of training and its perceived impact in their home-based settings. To gain a deeper understanding of the programme we will also ask childminders to engage in email conversations with the researchers and, for a small sample of childminders to agree to be interviewed by the research team. We would also like to join some childminders on their 'virtual CFHBS audits' and will ask Elklan to provide us with data relating to the programme such as attendance at training.

Who can take part in the study?

All Childminders are eligible to participate if they have:

- at least one child in their care aged 2-5 years of age 2023-2024;
- agreed to undertake the CFHBS training and participate in the pilot study;
- signed a Memorandum of Understanding; and
- completed the baseline survey.
- Met the minimum entry criteria listed below.

If Childminder Assistants are employed they can support the Childminder in making the changes and collating the evidence towards the CFHBS award but the assistant will not achieve an individual award for either Let's Talk with Under 5s or Speech and Language Support for 3-5s.

Programme Eligibility requirements:

As indicated above the two routes have different eligibility criteria. If you meet both sets of requirements then you are free to choose which route you would prefer to undertake.

	Let's Talk with Under 5s (LTU5s)	Speech and Language Support for 3-5s (SLS 3-5s)
Accreditation Level	Level 1	Level 3
Entry Criteria	<p>Have children 2- 5 years in your care</p> <p>Entry level 3 or GCSE grades 3to1/D-G (or above)</p> <p>Be able, following CPD, to identify appropriate strategies and describe (in one or two sentences) how the strategy was implemented.</p>	<p>Have children under 5 in your care.</p> <p>A level, NVQ3, National Diploma.</p> <p>Be confident in learning via online elearning sessions which require more motivation and self-directed study skills.</p> <p>Be able, following CPD, to give detailed descriptions, evaluate the outcome of using chosen strategies and plan next steps.</p>
	<p>Basic computer skills to be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Log into the Elklan website to access the digital learning log • Take photos and upload these into the learning log • Type text into text boxes • Type text into text boxes 	
Guidance Time Commitment*	Approximately 39.5 hrs	Approximately 51.5 hrs

*Childminders will vary in the amount of time taken to complete the online e-learning sessions (if completing SLS), learning logs and checklists, the above is therefore only guidance.

What will happen if I meet both eligibility requirements and don't get my chosen programme?

Places for oversubscribed courses will be randomly allocated to eligible applicants. Applicants for oversubscribed courses (who are not randomly allocated their first preference) may be allocated (in the following order) to:

- The same course, alternate date – if places are available and they have indicated availability
- The other course, preferred start date – if they meet the entry criteria
- Alternate course and alternate date – if they have indicated availability and meet entry criteria

If you have been allocated a place you will be informed by [add date]

What are the benefits of taking part?

- Completing either route of the CFHBS programme variant (LTU5s + CFHBS or SLS 3-5s + CFHBS) is completely free of charge.

- Both programmes offer practical advice and strategies which are easy to implement – both supported with paperback workbooks.
- Both programmes are supported by Elkland Tutors.
- Both programmes are OCN accredited – LTU5s (Level 1) and SLS 3-5s (Level 3).
- Both programmes will support Childminders to develop improved knowledge and skills. Please note that SLS 3-5s gives greater depth of knowledge than LTU5s, although both can result in acquiring CFHBS status.
- A CFHBS certificate is valid for 3 years, after which it can be renewed at a cost of £100.
- Childminders will receive a financial contribution for the time they spend participating in the programme, payable upon successful completion. For childminders following the SLS route this is £386.25 per childminder and for those following the LTU5s route this is £296.25 per childminder (proportional to the time commitments for the two programmes).

Key Dates

Activity	September 2023 Cohort	January 2024 Cohort	Responsible
Childminder recruitment	January – July 2023		Elkland
Pre-evaluation Childminder surveys	September 2023	January 2024	Childminders Settings
Programme delivery	Sept - Dec 2023 (LTU5s) Sept - Jan 24 (SLS)	Jan - April 2024 (LTU5s) Jan - May 2024 (SLS)	Childminder settings
Virtual or face to face visits by Elkland Audit evaluators to selected settings	Nov 2023 (LTU5s) Jan 2024 (SLS)	Mar-Apr 2024 (LTU5s) Apr-May 2024 (SLS)	Elkland
Evaluators to observe virtual audits in a selected number of settings	TBC	TBC	University of York
Post pilot Childminder survey	March 2024	June 2024	Childminder settings
Level 1-3 award for successful Childminders and the CFHBS status awarded	May 2024	July 2024	Elkland
Evaluation report published	October 2024		University of York/EEF

How will data be protected?

All personal data used for the evaluation will be treated with the strictest confidence and used and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (2018) and the Data Protection Act (2018). Full details of data protection will be available in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and associated privacy notices should you agree to participate in the pilot study and be allocated a place.

Next Steps

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN TAKING PART, OR HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT: [TO BE ADDED]

Expressions of Interest

The deadline for expressing interest in LTU5s and SLS 3-5s September 2023 and January 2024 is [TBC].

Confirmation of Programme Choice

Confirmation of being accepted on to the September 2023 (LTU5s and SLS 3-5s) programme and January 2024 (LTU5s and SLS 3-5s) programme will be confirmed by [TBC].

Appendix B3 – Privacy Notice

Privacy Notice

Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings programme (childminders) pilot study

The Department of Education and York Trials Unit, both part of the University of York (UoY), alongside the School of Education at the University of Sheffield (TUoS) are the independent evaluators of the Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings programme.

As part of the **Department for Education's Early Years Recovery Programme**, [Insert NAME of HUB/S] and the Education Endowment Foundation are working together to fund Childminders' access to evidence-informed programmes and study the programme's influence on their knowledge, skills and confidence of the about children's speech, language and communication development. The aims of this funding are to support education recovery following the pandemic, and to develop our understanding of effective professional development in the early years.

The Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings programme (CFHBS) has been developed by Elklan Training Ltd. and this pilot evaluation will be assessing the feasibility of the two variations of the programme (LTU5 and SLS 3-5). We are seeking approximately 40 Childminders to take part in this study. The research will help Elklan refine the programme and allow us to find out whether the programme is ready to be provided to more Childminders and children.

This privacy notice is for childminders and any childminder assistants in home-based settings which are participating in the Communication-Friendly Home-based Settings project. It covers two variations of the programme: CFHBS + Let's Talk with Under 5s (LTU5s) and CFHBS + Speech and Language Support for 3-5s (SLS 3-5s). It sets out the ways in which UoY and TUoS gathers, uses, stores and shares your data. It also sets out how long we keep your data and what rights you have in relation to your data under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

For the purposes of this privacy notice, University of York is the Data Controller as defined in the General Data Protection Regulation. **We are registered with the Information Commissioner's Office**, and our registration number is: Z4855807.

Where do we get your data from and what data do we collect?

We collect personal data about you and your home-based setting for the purposes of conducting the study, to evaluate the feasibility of the Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings programme, and to prepare a report about our findings. We will collect the following information.

From Elklan:

- Names and contact details of participating Childminders
- Learning Logs and audit checklists completed by childminders
- A link to Elklan's privacy notice can be found here.
[https://www.elklan.co.uk/Privacy_Policy_Terms_and_Conditions]

From Childminder settings:

- Childminder (and any assistant childminder) name(s) and contact details
- Setting details (e.g. number of children on role, % Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), % English as Additional Language (EAL))
- Survey information at the beginning of the study (to include setting context, childminder experience, current practice with SLC, participation in any recent initiatives, reasons for undertaking and choice of programme, hopes for training outcomes, prior experiences of participating in research and barriers/facilitators to taking part in research)

- Survey information at the end of the study (to include changes during evaluation year and as result of programme, facilitators/barriers to participating in the CFHBS programme and acquiring CFHBS-status, perceived child-level outcomes, changes in childminder knowledge, confidence and skills in providing SLC support, confidence in talking to parents about their children's SLC needs, intentions relating to future training, experience of taking part in research programmes offered).
- Observational data (a selected number of participating settings will be asked to facilitate a virtual audit observation visit by the evaluation team)
- Childminder interview data – a small number of interviews with Childminders purposively selected (5 for each version of the programme, 10 interviews in total).

What is our legal basis for processing your data?

Personal data will be processed under Article 6 (1) (e) (*Processing necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest*) of the General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

Ethical Approval

The study has received ethical approval from the Department of Education at the University of York (23/18). If you have any questions or complaints about this research, please contact the evaluation team (cfhbs-evaluation-project@york.ac.uk) or the Deputy Chair of the Education Ethics Committee (education-research-admin@york.ac.uk). If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk.

How do we use your data?

We process data for the following purposes:

- To evaluate the impact and feasibility of the pilot and prepare a report about potential scale up for efficacy trial.

Who do we share your data with?

During the period of the evaluation no-one outside the research team will have access to research data. As such, the UoY will act as data controller for the data named above throughout the evaluation period. The University of York will be deemed a Data Controller (as defined by the data protection legislation) with regard to personal data used for the evaluation setting-level data (i.e. through surveys or interviews). Elklan will be the Data Controller for data including setting-level data and Childminder personal data, including learning logs, audit checklists and online questionnaires for the purposes of recruitment and training. Learning logs, audit checklists and online questionnaires will be shared with the University of York and shall be the Data Controller for the purposes of the evaluation. Personal data will be processed under Article 6 (1) (e) (*Processing necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest*) of the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). The University of Sheffield will only have access to anonymous data.

How do we keep your data secure?

The University takes information security extremely seriously and has implemented appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect personal data and special category data. Access to information is restricted on a need-to-know basis and security arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure their continued suitability.

Your personal information will not be transferred outside of the European Economic Area (EEA).

How long will we keep your data?

All individually identifiable data held by UoY will be destroyed 5 years after the end of the study (2029). Anonymous data will be kept indefinitely by UoY.

What rights do you have in relation to your data?

Under the General Data Protection Regulation, **you have rights in relation to your data**, including a right of access to the data, a right to rectification, erasure (in certain circumstances), restriction, objection or portability (in certain circumstances).

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time during the course of the study (information already collected will be retained). In this event, please contact us directly using the details below.

If you wish to exercise any of the rights set out above in connection with this research project, please email us or write to us at the contact addresses below.

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this privacy notice or concerns about how your data is being processed, please contact UoY using the details below, or the University's Data Protection Officer at dataprotection@york.ac.uk.

Right to complain

If you are unhappy with the way in which the University has handled your personal data, we ask that you contact us in the first instance, to enable us to resolve your concerns. If you remain dissatisfied, you have the right to make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the UK supervisory authority for data protection issues (www.ico.org.uk).

Changes to our privacy notice

We may change this Privacy Notice from time to time. If we make any significant changes in the way we treat your personal information, we will make this clear by contacting your setting and ensuring they provide you with an updated version of this Privacy Notice.

This privacy notice was last updated on 28th March 2023.

How to contact us:

Post: Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings Evaluation Team, Department of Education, University of York, Heslington, York YO10 5DD

Email: cfhbs-evaluation-project@york.ac.uk Tel: 01904 328160

Appendix B4 – Interview consent

Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings Pilot Study

Interview Information Sheet

Please read this information sheet carefully and let us know if anything is unclear or you would like further information.

Purpose of the interview

The primary objective of this interview is to gain insights into your experiences of the Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) training and implementation.

What would participation mean for you?

We ask you to take part in an interview with a researcher from the University of Leeds, lasting no longer than 30-45 minutes, at a time convenient to you, via Teams. The interview will be recorded and transcribed. You will be able to comment on a written record and if there is anything you would like to clarify/change, you may contact the research team by email (see below) within 7 days of receiving your copy of the transcript.

Participation is voluntary

Participation is optional. If you decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet for your records and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you change your mind at any point including during the interview, you will be able to withdraw your participation without having to provide a reason. If you want to stop taking part, please inform the researcher. You may withdraw up to 7 days after data collection. The visiting member(s) of the research team will comply with any school policies.

Anonymity and confidentiality

The data you provide (notes and/or audio recordings of the interview) will be stored with information that identifies you in a password protected file on a secure University of York filestore for 7 days following data collection and transcription, after which point identifying information will be removed and stored on a separate filestore. The video recording will be deleted immediately after the interview has taken place. You are free to withdraw at any time during data collection/transcription and during these 7 days, by emailing **cfhbs-evaluation@leeds.ac.uk**. You do not need to give a reason for withdrawal. After this time data will be analysed so it will not be possible to withdraw your data after this point. The University of Sheffield will only have access to anonymised data.

Storing and using your data

Data will be stored on a password protected computer. Audio recordings will be deleted after they have been transcribed. Transcriptions will be carried out by an authorised supplier and in compliance with General Data Compliance Regulation (GDPR).

For information about GDPR please follow the link: <https://deliveringresults.leeds.ac.uk/support/gdpr/>

Written extracts of interview transcriptions will be used in an anonymised format in publications, presentations and online. Personal data will be destroyed by June 2030. Anonymous data may be kept indefinitely.

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact the research team by email (conceptcat-evaluation@leeds.ac.uk), or the University of York Education Ethics Committee via email at **education-research-admin@york.ac.uk**. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at **dpo@leeds.ac.uk**

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Please keep this copy for your records.

Appendix B5 – Focus group consent

Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings Pilot Study

Focus Group Information Sheet

Please read this information sheet carefully and let us know if anything is unclear or you would like further information.

Purpose of the focus group

The primary objective of this focus group is to gain insights into your experiences of the Communication-Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) training and the differences between the variants in programmes.

What would participation mean for you?

We ask you to take part in a focus group with two researchers from the University of York, lasting no longer than 30-45 minutes, at a time convenient to you, via Zoom. The meeting will be recorded and transcribed. You will be able to comment on a written record and if there is anything you would like to clarify/change, you may contact the research team by email (see below) within 7 days of receiving your copy of the transcript.

Participation is voluntary

Participation is optional. If you decide to take part, you will be given a copy of this information sheet for your records and will be asked to sign a consent form. If you change your mind at any point including during the meeting, you will be able to withdraw your participation without having to provide a reason. If you want to stop taking part, please inform the researcher. You may withdraw up to 7 days after transcription. The visiting member(s) of the research team will comply with any school policies.

Anonymity and confidentiality

The data you provide (notes and/or audio recordings of the meeting) will be stored with information that identifies you in a password protected file on a secure University of York filestore for 7 days following transcription, after which point identifying information will be removed and stored on a separate filestore. The video recording will be deleted immediately after the meeting has taken place. You are free to withdraw at any time during data collection/transcription and during these 7 days, by emailing the CFHBS Evaluation Project **educ645@york.ac.uk**. You do not need to give a reason for withdrawal. After this time data will be analysed so it will not be possible to withdraw your data after this point. The University of Sheffield will only have access to anonymised data.

Storing and using your data

Data will be stored on a password protected computer. Audio recordings will be deleted after they have been transcribed. Transcriptions will be carried out by an authorised supplier and in compliance with General Data Compliance Regulation (GDPR).

For information about GDPR please follow the link: https://www.york.ac.uk/education/research/gdpr_information/

Written extracts of focus group transcriptions will be used in an anonymised format in publications, presentations and online. Personal data will be destroyed by June 2030. Anonymous data may be kept indefinitely.

Questions or concerns

If you have any questions about this information sheet or concerns about how your data is being processed, please feel free to contact the research team by email (**cfhbs-evaluation-project@york.ac.uk**), or the University of York Education Ethics Committee via email **education-research-admin@york.ac.uk**. If you are still dissatisfied, please contact the University's Data Protection Officer at **dataprotection@york.ac.uk**.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. Please keep this copy for your records.

Appendix C: Surveys

Appendix C1 – Childminder Baseline survey

CFHBS Childminder baseline survey

Start of Block: Survey information

Information Thank you for your participation in the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings research study. The Department for Education's Early Years Recovery Programme, Stronger Practice Hubs and the Education Endowment Foundation are working together to fund Early Years settings' access to evidence-informed programmes and to study their impact on children and Early Years practitioners. We would be very grateful if you could complete this short online questionnaire. It should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.

End of Block: Survey information

Start of Block: General Setting Information

Q1 Your name:

Q2 Setting Name:

Q3 How many children do you look after in your setting?

Q4 Please tell us approximately how many children of each age group you look after, and approximately how many hours per week you look after them.

	Under 15 hours per week (number) (1)	Between 16 and 24 hours per week (number) (2)	Over 25 hours per week (number) (3)

0-1 year old (1)			
1-2 years old (2)			
2-3 years old (3)			
3-4 years old (4)			
4-5 years old (5)			
Primary school age (6)			

Q5 How many children in your setting are classed as EAL?

Q6 How many children in your setting are eligible to receive EYPP?

Q7 How many children in your setting have been diagnosed with learning needs (including physical and sensory needs) or additional learning needs?

End of Block: General Setting Information

Start of Block: The Communication Friendly Settings Programme

Q1 What was the main reason(s) for signing up to the Communication Friendly Home-based Settings programme (tick all that apply)?

- ☐ Because I have children in my care who need extra support in Speech, Language and Communication (1)
- ☐ Because of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on children's Speech, Language and Communication (2)
- ☐ To enhance my own confidence, skills and knowledge in Speech, Language and Communication (3)
- ☐ Professional development (4)
- ☐ To gain an externally accredited award (5)
- ☐ To gain Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status (6)
- ☐ Other (please state) (7) _____

Q2 What do you hope will change after taking part in the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings training?

End of Block: The Communication Friendly Settings Programme

Start of Block: Your Programme Variant

Q1 Which programme variant are you undertaking?

- ☐ Let's Talk with Under 5s (1)
- ☐ Speech and Language Support 3-5s (2)

Q2 Was this your first choice of programme variant?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Was this your first choice of programme variant? = No

Q3 How do you feel about receiving a different variant of the programme?

- ☐ Unhappy (1)
- ☐ I feel fine about it (2)
- ☐ Happy (3)

End of Block: Your Programme Variant

Start of Block: Choice of Programme Variant

Q1 What factors influenced your choice of programme variant? (Tick all that apply)

- ☐ Length of training (1)
 - ☐ Level of accreditation (Level 1 for LTU5s/Level 3 for SLS 3-5s) (2)
 - ☐ The time commitment (in terms of training and completion of course requirements) suited me best (3)
 - ☐ I thought it was the easiest way to gain Communication Friendly Home-based Settings status (4)
 - ☐ I was qualified to take this programme variant (5)
 - ☐ I was not qualified to take the other programme variant (6)
 - ☐ Other (please state) (7)
-

Q2 As part of this research the programme is being provided free of charge. If that was not the case, how much would you be prepared to pay to take this training?

End of Block: Choice of Programme Variant

Start of Block: General Practitioner information

Q1 For how many years have you been a childminder?

- ☐ Less than a year (1)
 - ☐ Between 1 and 5 years (6)
 - ☐ Between 6 and 10 years (2)
 - ☐ Between 11 and 15 years (3)
 - ☐ More than 15 years (4)
-

Q2 How many years of experience do you have working in the Early Years sector?

- ☐ Less than a year (1)
 - ☐ Between 1 and 5 years (2)
 - ☐ Between 6 and 10 years (3)
 - ☐ Between 11 and 15 years (4)
 - ☐ More than 15 years (5)
-

Q3 What is your highest level of qualification? A full list of qualifications and their levels can be found here:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/qualifications-what-different-levels-mean#toc-1>

- ☐ GCSE/A-level or equivalent (1)
- ☐ Level 2 (e.g. intermediate apprenticeships, OCR nationals) (2)
- ☐ Level 3 (e.g. AS and A Levels, Access to Higher Education diploma, BTEC diplomas) (3)
- ☐ Level 4 (e.g. BTEC Professional diplomas, certificates and awards, HNCs) (4)

- o Level 5 (e.g. HNDs, Foundation Degrees) or higher (5)
-

Q4 Have you participated in any previous training to meet the Speech, Language and Communication?

- o Yes (1)
 - o No (2)
-

Display This Question:

If Have you participated in any previous training to meet the Speech, Language and Communication? = Yes

Q5 Please select below all training for Speech, Language and Communication you have participated in.

- ☐ Online Short Course: An introduction to speech and language (Speech and Language UK) (1)
- ☐ DfE SENCo training (2)
- ☐ Early Years Professional Development Programme (DfE) (please state which version) (3)
- _____
- ☐ Early Talk 0-5 (Speech and Language UK) (4)
- ☐ Early Years Speech and Language (Speech & Language Garden) (5)
- ☐ Let's Talk with Under 5s (Elklan Training Ltd) (6)
- ☐ Let's Get Talking (Tamsin Grimmer) (7)
- ☐ Let's Get Talking in the EYFS (Early Excellence) (8)
- ☐ Local authority training (Please specify) (9)
- _____
- ☐ Speech, Language and Communication in the Early Years (Early Years Alliance). (10)
- ☐ Speech and Language Support 3-5s (Elklan Training Ltd) (11)
- ☐ Speech and Language Support 0-3 (Elklan Training Ltd) (12)
- ☐ Speech Sounds Steps to Success (Speech & Language Garden) (13)
- ☐ Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs (PACEY) (14)
- ☐ Supporting Early Language Development (Educare) (15)
- ☐ Supporting Speech & Language Development in Early Years (High Speed Training Ltd) (16)
- ☐ Communication Friendly Settings (Elklan Training Ltd) (17)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (18) _____

End of Block: General Practitioner information

Start of Block: Usual Practice

Q1 What 'whole class' programmes/interventions do you currently use in your setting to enhance Speech, Language and Communication?

- ☐ Communication Friendly Settings (1)
- ☐ Word Aware (2)
- ☐ I CAN Early Language Development Programme (3)
- ☐ Story Friends (4)
- ☐ Doors to Discovery (5)
- ☐ Let's Begin with the Letter People (6)
- ☐ Read, Play, Learn (7)
- ☐ Talk Boost (8)
- ☐ Learning Language and Loving It (Hanen) (9)

- ☐ WellComm Big Book of Ideas (10)
 - ☐ Early Talk 0-5 (11)
 - ☐ Other (please specify) (12) _____
-

Q2 What 'targeted' programmes/interventions do you currently use in your setting to enhance Speech, Language and Communication?

- ☐ Communication Friendly Settings (1)
- ☐ Word Aware (2)
- ☐ I CAN Early Language Development Programme (3)
- ☐ Story Friends (4)
- ☐ Doors to Discovery (5)
- ☐ Let's Begin with the Letter People (6)
- ☐ Read, Play, Learn (7)
- ☐ Talk Boost (8)
- ☐ Learning Language and Loving It (Hanan) (9)
- ☐ WellComm Big Book of Ideas (10)
- ☐ Early Talk 0-5 (11)
- ☐ Every Child a Talker (ECAT) (12)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (13)

End of Block: Usual Practice

Start of Block: Skills, Knowledge and Confidence - Block 1

[Removed]

End of Block: Skills, Knowledge and Confidence - Block 10

Start of Block: Experience of participating in research

Q1 Have you ever taken part in research before?

- ☐ Yes, as an individual (1)
 - ☐ Yes, as a childminder (2)
 - ☐ No (3)
-

Display This Question:

If Have you ever taken part in research before? = No

Q2 What was the research you participated in, and which year did you do this?

Q3 Please rank, in order of importance, what factors you would consider when considering taking part in research. You can do this by clicking and dragging each factor into the place you want to rank it.

- _____ Amount of time involved (1)
 - _____ The topic of the research (4)
 - _____ Any benefits to myself or to the children involved (e.g. training) (2)
 - _____ Any financial incentives (5)
 - _____ The kind of activities I would be asked to do (6)
 - _____ The benefits that the research could have for other practitioners or policy (7)
 - _____ Other (please state any other factors you can think of) (3)
-

Q4 In terms of research activities please rank the following in order of preference.

- _____ Completing a survey (1)
- _____ Having an interview with a researcher (2)
- _____ Taking part in a focus group with my peers (3)
- _____ Having a researcher observe my practice (4)
- _____ Having a researcher visit to administer assessments with the children in my care (5)
- _____ Administering assessments with the children in my care myself (6)

End of Block: Experience of participating in research

Appendix C2 – Childminder Endline survey (SLS3-5)

CFHBS Endline Survey- SLS 3-5s

Start of Block: Survey Information

Survey Information Thank you for your participation in the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings research study. The Department for Education's Early Years Recovery Programme, Stronger Practice Hubs and the Education Endowment Foundation are working together to fund Early Years settings' access to evidence-informed programmes and to study their impact on children and Early Years practitioners. We would be very grateful if you could complete this short online questionnaire. It should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

End of Block: Survey Information

Start of Block: General Setting Information

Q1 Please provide the name of your setting.

Q2 How many children do you currently look after in your setting?

Q3 Please tell us approximately how many children of each age group you look after, and approximately how many hours per week you look after them. Please use the boxes to type how many children you look after.

	Under 15 hours per week (1)	Between 16 and 24 hours per week (2)	Over 25 hours per week (3)
0-1 years of age (1)			
1-2 years of age (2)			

2-3 years of age (3)			
3-4 years old (4)			
4-5 years old (5)			
Primary school age (6)			

Q4 How many children in your setting are classed as having English as an Additional Language (EAL)?

Q5 How many children in your setting are eligible to receive Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)?

Q6 How many children in your setting have been diagnosed with learning needs (including physical and sensory needs)?

End of Block: General Setting Information

Start of Block: Experiences, facilitators, and barriers to participating in CFHBS

Q7 What, if anything, helped or motivated you to attend the sessions? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The timing of sessions (1)
- ☐ The content being useful or important (2)
- ☐ The content of the prep work (3)
- ☐ The time taken to complete prep work (4)
- ☐ Having a clear idea of what was going to happen, and when (5)
- ☐ The tutors (6)

- ☐ Personal goals or motivation (7)
- ☐ The other childminders (8)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (9) _____

Q8 What, if anything, made it difficult to attend any of the sessions? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The timing of sessions (1)
- ☐ The content not being useful or important (2)
- ☐ The content of the prep work (3)
- ☐ The time taken to complete prep work (4)
- ☐ Not having a clear idea of what was going to happen, and when (5)
- ☐ The tutors (6)
- ☐ Personal goals or motivation (7)
- ☐ The other childminders (8)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (9) _____

Q9 Please rate the sessions below on a scale of how useful you found them.

	Extrem ely useles s (1)	Moder ately useles s (2)	Slightly useles s (3)	Neither useful nor useles s (4)	Slightly useful (5)	Moder ately useful (6)	Extrem ely useful (7)	I did not attend this sessio n (8)
What is communicat ion? (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adult-child interaction (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Learning to listen and supporting understandi ng through non-verbal communicat ion and visual strategies (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Promoting the developme nt of	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

vocabulary (4)								
Understanding spoken language and information- carrying words (5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Blank Language Scheme (or Language for Thinking) (6)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Developing Early Language skills (7)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Developing play for language (8)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supporting children with unclear speech and phonological awareness (9)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stammering and course reflection (10)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q10 What, if anything, helped you to complete the CFHBS programme? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The length of the programme (1)
- ☐ The timing of the sessions (2)
- ☐ The session content (3)
- ☐ The content of the e-learning logs (4)
- ☐ The content of the e-learning sessions (5)
- ☐ The time taken to complete the e-learning logs (6)
- ☐ Having a clear idea of what was going to happen (7)

- ☐ The tutors (8)
 - ☐ Personal goals or motivation (9)
 - ☐ The other childminders (10)
 - ☐ Other (please specify) (11) _____
-

Q11 What, if anything, made it difficult to complete the CFHBS programme? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The length of the programme (1)
 - ☐ The timing of the sessions (2)
 - ☐ The session content (3)
 - ☐ The content of the e-learning logs (4)
 - ☐ The content of the e-learning sessions (5)
 - ☐ The time taken to complete the e-learning logs (6)
 - ☐ Not having a clear idea of what was going to happen and when (7)
 - ☐ The tutors (8)
 - ☐ Personal goals or motivation (9)
 - ☐ The other childminders (10)
 - ☐ Other (please specify) (11) _____
-

Q12 As part of this research, the programme has been provided free of charge. If that was not the case, how much could you feasibly pay for the training you have received?

- ☐ Up to £200 (1)
 - ☐ Between £200 and £350 (2)
 - ☐ Between £350 and £500 (3)
 - ☐ Between £500 and £600 (4)
 - ☐ Between £600 and £750 (5)
 - ☐ Over £700 (6)
-

Q13 How much do you think the training is worth?

- ☐ Up to £200 (1)
 - ☐ Between £200 and £350 (2)
 - ☐ Between £350 and £500 (3)
 - ☐ Between £500 and £600 (4)
 - ☐ Between £600 and £700 (5)
 - ☐ Over £700 (6)
-

Q14 How would you describe the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings programme overall?

- ☐ Very useful (1)
- ☐ Useful (2)
- ☐ Somewhat useful (3)
- ☐ Not very useful (4)
- ☐ Not at all useful (5)

Q15 Would you recommend the programme to another childminder?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No (2)

Display This Question:

If Q15 = Yes

Q16 Why would you recommend the programme to other childminders?

Display This Question:

If Q15 = No

Q17 Why would you not recommend the programme to other childminders?

Q18 Is there anything else you would like to feedback about the sessions?

Q19 What things helped you to achieve Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) status?
Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The course content (1)
- ☐ The content of the prep work (2)
- ☐ The time taken to complete the prep work (3)
- ☐ The tutors (4)
- ☐ The other childminders (5)
- ☐ The number of sessions (6)
- ☐ Personal factors (7)
- ☐ I had already incorporated communication friendly practices into my setting before the course began (8)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (9) _____

Q20 What things were barriers to you to achieve Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) status? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The course content (1)
- ☐ The content of the prep work (2)
- ☐ The time taken to complete the prep work (3)
- ☐ The tutors (4)
- ☐ The other childminders (5)
- ☐ The number of sessions (6)
- ☐ Personal factors (7)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (8) _____

Q21 Since starting the programme, have you made any changes to any of the below? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The physical environment of your setting (1)
- ☐ The way that you interact with children (2)
- ☐ Modelling language with children (3)
- ☐ The resources available in your setting (4)
- ☐ The way that books are shared with children in the setting (5)
- ☐ Other changes (please see next question) (6)

Display This Question:

If Q21 = The physical environment of your setting

Q22 Please describe the changes that you have made to the physical environment of your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q21 = The way that you interact with children

Q23 Please describe the changes that you have made to the way that you interact with the children in your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q21 = Modelling language with children

Q24 Please describe the changes that you have made to the way that you model language with the children in your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q21 = The resources available in your setting

Q25 Please describe the changes that you have made to the resources available in your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q21 = The way that books are shared with children in the setting

Q26 Please describe the changes that you have made to the way that books are shared with the children in your setting

Display This Question:

If Q21 = Other changes (please see next question)

Q27 Please describe any other changes that you have made to your setting since starting the programme.

Display This Question:

If Q21 = The physical environment of your setting

Q28 Please indicate the reason that you did not make changes to the physical environment of your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve communication friendly setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q21 = The way that you interact with children

Q29 Please indicate the reason that you did not make changes to the way that you interact with children in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve communication friendly setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q21 != Modelling language with children

Q30 Please indicate the reason that you did not make changes to the way that you model language with children in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve communication friendly setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q21 != The resources available in your setting

Q31 Please indicate the reason that you did not make changes to the way to the resources available in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve communication friendly setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q21 != The way that books are shared with children in the setting

Q32 Please indicate the reason that you did not make changes to the way that books are shared with children in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve communication friendly setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Q33 What helped you to make the changes you have described?

Q34 What hindered you in making the changes you have described?

Q35 Are there any changes that you would like to make, but have been unable to?

End of Block: Experiences, facilitators, and barriers to participating in CFHBS

Start of Block: Perceived child-level outcomes

Q36 Do you think that the training has impacted positively on the children in your care's speech, language and communication?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ Unsure (2)
- ☐ No (3)
- ☐ I think it will have, but it's too soon to say (4)

Display This Question:

If Q36 = Yes

Q37 Which aspects of children's overall development do you think the programme has impacted positively on?

	It has had a major effect (1)	It has had a moderate effect (2)	It has had a minor effect (3)	It has had no effect (4)	Unsure (5)
Receptive language: this is a child's ability to understand spoken language. For example, being able to listen and follow instructions, or understand a story. (1)	0	0	0	0	0
Expressive language: this is a child's ability to communicat e through words and sentences in a grammaticall y correct way. For example, asking questions, or communicati ng wants and needs. (2)	0	0	0	0	0
Sentence Length (3)	0	0	0	0	0
Sentence complexity: this refers to a child's ability to speak in	0	0	0	0	0

well-structured sentences (4)					
School readiness: children being socially, physically, and intellectually prepared for the transition to school (5)	0	0	0	0	0
Other changes that have happened as a result of the programme (please describe) (6)	0	0	0	0	0

Q38 How have different groups of children been affected?

	It has had a major effect (1)	It has had a moderate effect (2)	It has had a minor effect (3)	It has had no effect (4)	There are none of these children in my setting (5)
Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) (1)	0	0	0	0	0
Children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) (2)	0	0	0	0	0

Children who have been diagnosed with learning needs (including physical and sensory needs) (3)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 0-1 (4)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 1-2 (5)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 2-3 (6)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 3-4 (7)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 4-5 (8)	0	0	0	0	0
Children older than 5 (9)	0	0	0	0	0

End of Block: Perceived child-level outcomes

Start of Block: The future

Q39 Do you plan to maintain Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status by applying for reaccreditation in 3 years?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ Maybe (2)
- ☐ No (3)

Q40 Do you plan on taking any other type of training in the next year?

- ☐ Definitely not (1)
- ☐ Probably not (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably yes (4)
- ☐ Definitely yes (5)

Display This Question:

If Q40 = Probably yes

And Q40 = Definitely yes

Q41 What kind of training might you take?

Display This Question:

If Q40 = Probably yes

And Q40 = Definitely yes

Q42 Why would you like to take this training?

End of Block: The future

Start of Block: Skills, Knowledge and Confidence Questionnaire

[Removed]

End of Block: SKCQ14

Start of Block: Experience of participating in research

Q76 Please rank, in order of importance, what factors you would consider when considering taking part in research. You can do this by clicking and dragging each factor into the place you want to rank it.

- _____ Amount of time involved (1)
- _____ The topic of the research (2)
- _____ Any benefits to me or to the children involved (e.g. training) (3)
- _____ Any financial incentives (4)
- _____ The kind of activities I would be asked to do (5)
- _____ The benefits that the research could have for other practitioners or policy (6)
- _____ Other (please state any other factors you can think of) (7)

Q77 In terms of research activities please rank the following in order of preference.

- _____ Completing a survey (1)
- _____ Having an interview with a researcher (2)
- _____ Taking part in a focus group with my peers (3)
- _____ Having a researcher observe my practice (4)
- _____ Having a researcher visit to administer assessments with the children in my care (5)
- _____ Administering assessments with the children in my care myself (6)

Q78 If this pilot study is successful, we may want to conduct a randomised controlled trial of the programme in the future. We will not ask you to take part, as you have already done the training, but below we give details of what we think it would involve. A randomised controlled trial (or RCT for short) is a kind of rigorous research which can find out how well the training works for childminders and children. In the RCT, outcomes for childminders and children who have the training are compared with outcomes for childminders and children who do not have the training. We decide which childminders have the training by allocating them to have the training or not randomly, like in a lottery. When we do this, it sets up a fair test of the training so we can be sure of the result. We would welcome your perspective as a childminder on any barriers that you think might stop childminders from taking part, and anything that would encourage childminders to take part.

Q79 Please select any factors that would encourage you to take part in a randomised control trial research study. (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Any financial incentives (1)
- ☐ Other, non-financial incentives (e.g. vouchers or resources) (2)
- ☐ Any benefits that this could have for myself or the children involved (e.g. training) (3)
- ☐ The benefits that the research could have for other practitioners or policy (4)
- ☐ The amount of time that it would take to participate (5)
- ☐ What the study is about (6)
- ☐ The kind of research activities I would do (e.g. interviews, surveys) (7)
- ☐ Knowing that whether I am allocated to the training or not is completely random (8)
- ☐ Knowing that if I weren't allocated the training (e.g. I was part of the control group), I would receive it at a later date (9)
- ☐ The length of the study (10)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (11) _____

Q80 Please select any factors that would discourage you from participating in a randomised control trial research study. (Please select all that apply)

- o The amount of time that it would take (1)
- o Knowing that I may not be allocated to the training programme, and might be in the control group (2)
- o Knowing that whether I am allocated to the training or not is completely random (3)
- o The kind of research activities I would do (e.g. interviews, surveys) (4)
- o The length of the study (5)
- o Other (please describe) (6) _____

Appendix C3 – Childminder Endline survey (LTU5s)

CFHBS Endline Survey - LTU5

Start of Block: Survey Information

Survey Information Thank you for your participation in the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings research study. The Department for Education's Early Years Recovery Programme, Stronger Practice Hubs and the Education Endowment Foundation are working together to fund Early Years settings' access to evidence-informed programmes and to study their impact on children and Early Years practitioners. We would be very grateful if you could complete this short online questionnaire. It should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

End of Block: Survey Information

Start of Block: General Setting Information

Q1 Please provide the name of your setting.

Q2 How many children do you currently look after in your setting?

Q3 Please tell us approximately how many children of each age group you look after, and approximately how many hours per week you look after them. Please use the boxes to type how many children you look after.

	Under 15 hours per week (1)	Between 16 and 24 hours per week (2)	Over 25 hours per week (3)
0-1 years of age (1)			
1-2 years of age (2)			

2-3 years of age (3)			
3-4 years old (4)			
4-5 years old (5)			
Primary school age (6)			

Q4 How many children in your setting are classed as having English as an Additional Language (EAL)?

Q5 How many children in your setting are eligible to receive Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)?

Q6 How many children in your setting have been diagnosed with learning needs (including physical and sensory needs)?

End of Block: General Setting Information

Start of Block: Experiences, facilitators, and barriers to participating in CFHBS

Q7 What, if anything, helped or motivated you to attend the sessions? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The timing of sessions (1)
- ☐ The content being useful or important (2)
- ☐ The content of the prep work (3)
- ☐ The time taken to complete prep work (4)
- ☐ Having a clear idea of what was going to happen, and when (5)
- ☐ The tutors (6)

- ☐ Personal goals or motivation (7)
- ☐ The other childminders (8)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (9) _____

Q8 What, if anything, made it difficult to attend any of the sessions? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The timing of sessions (1)
- ☐ The content not being useful or important (2)
- ☐ The content of the prep work (3)
- ☐ The time taken to complete prep work (4)
- ☐ Not having a clear idea of what was going to happen, and when (5)
- ☐ The tutors (6)
- ☐ Personal goals or motivation (7)
- ☐ The other childminders (8)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (9) _____

Q9 Please rate the sessions below on a scale of how useful you found them.

	Extrem ely useles s (1)	Moder ately useles s (2)	Slightly useles s (3)	Neither useful nor useles s (4)	Slightly useful (5)	Moder ately useful (6)	Extrem ely useful (7)	I did not attend this sessio n (8)
What is communicat ion? (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adult-child interaction (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Play (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Understandi ng language (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Helping young children use words and sentences (5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asking questions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

and sharing
books (6)

Helping
children
with unclear
speech (7)

0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Q10 What, if anything, helped you to complete the CFHBS programme? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The length of the programme (1)
- ☐ The timing of the sessions (2)
- ☐ The session content (3)
- ☐ The content of the e-learning logs (4)
- ☐ The time taken to complete the e-learning logs (5)
- ☐ Having a clear idea of what was going to happen (6)
- ☐ The tutors (7)
- ☐ Personal goals or motivation (8)
- ☐ The other childminders (9)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (10) _____

Q11 What, if anything, made it difficult to complete the CFHBS programme? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The length of the programme (1)
- ☐ The timing of the sessions (2)
- ☐ The session content (3)
- ☐ The content of the e-learning logs (4)
- ☐ The time taken to complete the e-learning logs (5)
- ☐ Not having a clear idea of what was going to happen and when (6)
- ☐ The tutors (7)
- ☐ Personal goals or motivation (8)
- ☐ The other childminders (9)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (10) _____

Q12 As part of this research, the programme has been provided free of charge. If that was not the case, how much could you feasibly pay for the training you have received?

- ☐ Up to £200 (1)
- ☐ Between £200 and £350 (2)
- ☐ Between £350 and £500 (3)
- ☐ Between £500 and £600 (4)
- ☐ Between £600 and £750 (5)
- ☐ Over £700 (6)

Q13 How much do you think the training is worth?

- ☐ Up to £200 (1)
 - ☐ Between £200 and £350 (2)
 - ☐ Between £350 and £500 (3)
 - ☐ Between £500 and £600 (4)
 - ☐ Between £600 and £700 (5)
 - ☐ Over £700 (6)
-

Q14 How would you describe the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings programme overall?

- ☐ Very useful (1)
 - ☐ Useful (2)
 - ☐ Somewhat useful (3)
 - ☐ Not very useful (4)
 - ☐ Not at all useful (5)
-

Q15 Would you recommend the programme to another childminder?

- ☐ Yes (1)
 - ☐ No (2)
-

Display This Question:

If Q15 = Yes

Q16 Why would you recommend the programme to other childminders?

Display This Question:

If Q15 = No

Q17 Why would you not recommend the programme to other childminders?

Q18 Is there anything else you would like to feedback about the sessions?

Q19 What things helped you to achieve Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) status?
Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The course content (1)
- ☐ The content of the prep work (2)
- ☐ The time taken to complete the prep work (3)
- ☐ The tutors (4)
- ☐ The other childminders (5)
- ☐ The number of sessions (6)
- ☐ Personal factors (7)
- ☐ I had already incorporated communication friendly practices into my setting before the course began (8)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (9) _____

Q20 What things were barriers to you to achieve Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings (CFHBS) status? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The course content (1)
- ☐ The content of the prep work (2)
- ☐ The time taken to complete the prep work (3)
- ☐ The tutors (4)
- ☐ The other childminders (5)
- ☐ The number of sessions (6)
- ☐ Personal factors (7)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (8) _____

Q21 Since starting the programme, have you made any changes to any of the below? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The physical environment of your setting (1)
- ☐ The way that you interact with children (2)

- ☐ Modelling language with children (3)
- ☐ The resources available in your setting (4)
- ☐ The way that books are shared with children in the setting (5)
- ☐ Other changes (please see next question) (6)

Display This Question:

If Q21 = The physical environment of your setting

Q22 Please describe the changes that you have made to the physical environment of your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q21 = The way that you interact with children

Q23 Please describe the changes that you have made to the way that you interact with the children in your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q21 = Modelling language with children

Q24 Please describe the changes that you have made to the way that you model language with the children in your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q21 = The resources available in your setting

Q25 Please describe the changes that you have made to the resources available in your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q21 = The way that books are shared with children in the setting

Q26 Please describe the changes that you have made to the way that books are shared with the children in your setting

Display This Question:

If Q21 = Other changes (please see next question)

Q27 Please describe any other changes that you have made to your setting since starting the programme.

Display This Question:

If Q21 != The physical environment of your setting

Q28 Please indicate the main reason that you did not make changes to the physical environment of your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve communication friendly setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q21 != The way that you interact with children

Q29 Please indicate the main reason that you did not make changes to the way that you interact with children in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve communication friendly setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q21 != Modelling language with children

Q30 Please indicate the main reason that you did not make changes to the way that you model language with children in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve communication friendly setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q21 != The resources available in your setting

Q31 Please indicate the main reason that you did not make changes to the way to the resources available in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve communication friendly setting status (1)
 - ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
 - ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
 - ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____
-

Display This Question:

If Q21 != The way that books are shared with children in the setting

Q32 Please indicate the main reason that you did not make changes to the way that books are shared with children in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve communication friendly setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Q33 What helped you to make the changes you have described?

Q34 What hindered you in making the changes you have described?

Q35 Are there any changes that you would like to make, but have been unable to? Please describe these, and why you have not been able to make those changes.

End of Block: Experiences, facilitators, and barriers to participating in CFHBS

Start of Block: Perceived child-level outcomes

Q36 Do you think that the training has impacted positively on the children in your care's speech, language and communication?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ Unsure (2)
- ☐ No (3)
- ☐ I think it will have, but it's too soon to say (4)

Display This Question:

If Q36 = Yes

Q37 Which aspects of children's overall development do you think the programme has impacted positively on?

	It has had a major effect (1)	It has had a moderate effect (2)	It has had a minor effect (3)	It has had no effect (4)	Unsure (5)
Receptive language: this is a child's ability to understand spoken language. For example, being able to listen and follow instructions, or understand a story. (1)	0	0	0	0	0
Expressive language: this is a child's ability to communicate through words and sentences in	0	0	0	0	0

a grammatically correct way. For example, asking questions, or communicating wants and needs. (2)

Sentence Length (3)

0

0

0

0

0

Sentence complexity: this refers to a child's ability to speak in well-structured sentences (4)

0

0

0

0

0

School readiness: children being socially, physically, and intellectually prepared for the transition to school (5)

0

0

0

0

0

Other changes that have happened as a result of the programme (please describe) (6)

0

0

0

0

0

	It has had a major effect (1)	It has had a moderate effect (2)	It has had a minor effect (3)	It has had no effect (4)	There are none of these children in my setting (5)
Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) (1)	0	0	0	0	0
Children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) (2)	0	0	0	0	0
Children who have been diagnosed with learning needs (including physical and sensory needs) (3)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 0-1 (4)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 1-2 (5)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 2-3 (6)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 3-4 (7)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 4-5 (8)	0	0	0	0	0
Children older than 5 (9)	0	0	0	0	0

End of Block: Perceived child-level outcomes

Start of Block: The future

Q39 Do you plan to maintain Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status by applying for reaccreditation in 3 years?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ Maybe (2)
- ☐ No (3)

Q40 Do you plan on taking any other type of training in the next year?

- ☐ Definitely not (1)
- ☐ Probably not (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably yes (4)
- ☐ Definitely yes (5)

Display This Question:

If Q40 = Probably yes

And Q40 = Definitely yes

Q41 What kind of training might you take?

Display This Question:

If Q40 = Probably yes

And Q40 = Definitely yes

Q42 Why would you like to take this training?

End of Block: The future

Start of Block: Skills, Knowledge and Confidence Questionnaire

[Removed]

End of Block: SKCQ Block 9

Start of Block: Experience of participating in research

Q76 Please rank, in order of importance, what factors you would consider when considering taking part in research. You can do this by clicking and dragging each factor into the place you want to rank it.

- _____ Amount of time involved (1)
 - _____ The topic of the research (2)
 - _____ Any benefits to me or to the children involved (e.g. training) (3)
 - _____ Any financial incentives (4)
 - _____ The kind of activities I would be asked to do (5)
 - _____ The benefits that the research could have for other practitioners or policy (6)
 - _____ Other (please state any other factors you can think of) (7)
-

Q77 In terms of research activities please rank the following in order of preference.

- _____ Completing a survey (1)
 - _____ Having an interview with a researcher (2)
 - _____ Taking part in a focus group with my peers (3)
 - _____ Having a researcher observe my practice (4)
 - _____ Having a researcher visit to administer assessments with the children in my care (5)
 - _____ Administering assessments with the children in my care myself (6)
-

Q78 If this pilot study is successful, we may want to conduct a randomised controlled trial of the programme in the future. We will not ask you to take part, as you have already done the training, but below we give details of what we think it would involve. A randomised controlled trial (or RCT for short) is a kind of rigorous research which can find out how well the training works for childminders and children. In the RCT, outcomes for childminders and children who have the training are compared with outcomes for childminders and children who do not have the training. We decide which childminders have the training by allocating them to have the training or not randomly, like in a lottery. When we do this, it sets up a fair test of the training so we can be sure of the result. We would welcome your perspective as a childminder on any barriers that you think might stop childminders from taking part, and anything that would encourage childminders to take part.

Q79 Please select any factors that would encourage you to take part in a randomised control trial research study. (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Any financial incentives (1)
 - ☐ Other, non-financial incentives (e.g. vouchers or resources) (2)
 - ☐ Any benefits that this could have for myself or the children involved (e.g. training) (3)
 - ☐ The benefits that the research could have for other practitioners or policy (4)
 - ☐ The amount of time that it would take to participate (5)
 - ☐ What the study is about (6)
 - ☐ The kind of research activities I would do (e.g. interviews, surveys) (7)
 - ☐ Knowing that whether I am allocated to the training or not is completely random (8)
 - ☐ Knowing that if I weren't allocated the training (e.g. I was part of the control group), I would receive it at a later date (9)
 - ☐ The length of the study (10)
 - ☐ Other (please describe) (11) _____
-

Q80 Please select any factors that would discourage you from participating in a randomised control trial research study. (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ The amount of time that it would take (1)
 - ☐ Knowing that I may not be allocated to the training programme, and might be in the control group (2)
 - ☐ Knowing that whether I am allocated to the training or not is completely random (3)
 - ☐ The kind of research activities I would do (e.g. interviews, surveys) (4)
 - ☐ The length of the study (5)
 - ☐ Other (please describe) (6) _____
-

End of Block: Experience of participating in research

Appendix C4 – Childminder Follow-up survey

CFHBS Follow-Up Cohort 1

Start of Block: Survey Information

Information Thank you for your participation in the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings research study. The Department for Education's Early Years Recovery Programme, Stronger Practice Hubs and the Education Endowment Foundation are working together to fund Early Years settings' access to evidence-informed programmes and to study their impact on children and Early Years practitioners. We would be very grateful if you could complete this short online questionnaire. It should take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

End of Block: Survey Information

Start of Block: Setting information

Q1 Please provide the name of your setting.

Q2 How many children do you currently look after in your setting?

Q3 Please tell us approximately how many children of each age group you look after, and approximately how many hours per week you look after them.

	Under 15 hours per week (please write the number of children) (1)	Between 16 and 24 hours per week (number of children) (2)	Over 25 hours per week (number of children) (3)
0-1 years of age (1)			
1-2 years old (2)			
2-3 years old (3)			
3-4 years old (4)			
4-5 years old (5)			

Primary school age (6)			
---------------------------	--	--	--

Q4 How many children in your setting are classed as having English as an Additional Language (EAL)?

Q5 How many children in your setting are eligible to receive Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)?

Q6 How many children in your setting have been diagnosed with learning needs (including physical and sensory needs)?

Q7 Which programme variant did you receive?

- ☐ SLS 3-5s (1)
- ☐ LTU5s (2)

End of Block: Setting information

Start of Block: Sustainability

Q7 Please select from the below any aspects of your setting that you changed during the process of gaining Communication Friendly status.

- ☐ The physical environment of your setting (1)
- ☐ The way that you interact with children (2)
- ☐ The way that you model language with children (3)
- ☐ The resources available in your setting (4)
- ☐ The way that books are shared with children in your setting (5)
- ☐ Other changes (please describe) (6) _____

Display This Question:

If Q7 = The physical environment of your setting

Q8 Please reflect on the changes that you made to the **physical environment** of your setting as a result of the CFHBS programme. Please select the appropriate option:

- ☐ I have maintained these changes (1)
- ☐ I initially made changes, but I have since changed this back to how it was before the training (2)
- ☐ I am still making changes to this (3)

Display This Question:

If Q7 = The way that you interact with children

Q9 Please reflect on the changes that you made to the **way that you interact with the children** in your setting as a result of the CFHBS programme. Please select the appropriate option:

- ☐ I have maintained these changes (1)
- ☐ I initially made changes, but I have since changed this back to how it was before the training (2)
- ☐ I am still making changes to this (3)

Display This Question:

If Q7 = The way that you model language with children

Q10 Please reflect on the changes that you made to the **way that you model language with the children** in your setting as a result of the CFHBS programme. Please select the appropriate option:

- ☐ I have maintained these changes (1)
- ☐ I initially made changes, but I have since changed this back to how it was before the training (2)
- ☐ I am still making changes to this (3)

Display This Question:

If Q7 = The resources available in your setting

Q11 Please reflect on the changes that you made to the **resources available** in your setting as a result of the CFHBS programme. Please select the appropriate option:

- ☐ I have maintained these changes (1)
- ☐ I initially made changes, but I have since changed this back to how it was before the training (2)
- ☐ I am still making changes to this (3)

Display This Question:

If Q7 = The way that books are shared with children in your setting

Q12 Please reflect on the changes that you made to the **way that books are shared with the children** in your setting as a result of the CFHBS programme. Please select the appropriate option:

- ☐ I have maintained these changes (1)
 - ☐ I initially made changes, but I have since changed this back to how it was before the training (2)
 - ☐ I am still making changes to this (3)
-

Q15 Please select from the below any aspects of your setting you changed **after you gained** Communication Friendly Home-Based Setting status.

- ☐ The physical environment of your setting (1)
- ☐ The way that you interact with the children in your setting (2)
- ☐ Modelling language with children (3)
- ☐ The resources available in your setting (4)
- ☐ The way that books are shared with children in the setting (5)
- ☐ Other changes (please describe) (6) _____

Display This Question:

If Q15 = The physical environment of your setting

Q16 Please describe the changes that you made to the **physical environment** of your setting after you gained Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings Status.

Display This Question:

If Q15 = The way that books are shared with children in the setting

Q17 Please describe the changes that you made to the **way that books are shared with children** in your setting after you gained Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings Status.

Display This Question:

If Q15 = The resources available in your setting

Q20 Please describe the changes that you made to the **resources available in** your setting after you gained Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings Status.

Display This Question:

If Q15 = Modelling language with children

Q19 Please describe the changes that you made to the **way that you model language with children in** your setting after you gained Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings Status.

Display This Question:

If Q15 = The way that you interact with the children in your setting

Q18 Please describe the changes that you made to the **way that you interact with children in** your setting after you gained Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings Status.

Display This Question:

If Q15 = The physical environment of your setting

Q21 Why did you make the changes to the **physical environment** of your setting after you gained Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status? Please select all that apply.

☐ Because of feedback from my tutor after the home visit (1)

- ☐ I had wanted to make these changes, but did not have time until after the programme was complete (2)
- ☐ I had wanted to make these changes, but did not have the funds until after the programme was complete (3)
- ☐ I reflected on the learning from the programme (4)
- ☐ My decision to make these changes was not related to the programme (please describe what prompted you to make these changes) (5) _____
- ☐ I made changes to gain Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status but then reverted back to normal practice as it wasn't working for me or the children in my care. (6)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (7) _____

*Display This Question:**If Q15 = The way that you interact with the children in your setting*

Q22 Why did you make the changes to the **way that you interact with children in** your setting after you gained Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Because of feedback from my tutor after the home visit (1)
- ☐ I had wanted to make these changes, but did not have time until after the programme was complete (2)
- ☐ I had wanted to make these changes, but did not have the funds until after the programme was complete (3)
- ☐ I reflected on the learning from the programme (4)
- ☐ My decision to make these changes was not related to the programme (please describe what prompted you to make these changes) (5) _____
- ☐ I made changes to gain Communication Friendly Home Based Settings status, but then reverted back to normal practice as it wasn't working for me or the children in my care. (6)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (7) _____

*Display This Question:**If Q15 = Modelling language with children*

Q23 Why did you make the changes to the **way that you model language with children in** your setting after you gained Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Because of feedback from my tutor after the home visit (1)
- ☐ I had wanted to make these changes, but did not have time until after the programme was complete (2)
- ☐ I had wanted to make these changes, but did not have the funds until after the programme was complete (3)
- ☐ I reflected on the learning from the programme (4)
- ☐ My decision to make these changes was not related to the programme (please describe what prompted you to make these changes) (5) _____
- ☐ I made changes to gain Communication Friendly Home Based Settings status, but then reverted back to normal practice as it wasn't working for me or the children in my care. (6)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (7) _____

*Display This Question:**If Q15 = The resources available in your setting*

Q24 Why did you make the changes to the **resources available in** your setting after you gained Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Because of feedback from my tutor after the home visit (1)
- ☐ I had wanted to make these changes, but did not have time until after the programme was complete (2)
- ☐ I had wanted to make these changes, but did not have the funds until after the programme was complete (3)
- ☐ I reflected on the learning from the programme (4)
- ☐ My decision to make these changes was not related to the programme (please describe what prompted you to make these changes) (5) _____
- ☐ I made changes to gain Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status, but then reverted back to normal practice as it wasn't working for me or the children in my care. (6)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (7) _____

Display This Question:

If Q15 = The way that books are shared with children in the setting

Q25 Why did you make the changes to the **way that you share books with children in** your setting after you gained Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Because of feedback from my tutor after the home visit (1)
- ☐ I had wanted to make these changes, but did not have time until after the programme was complete (2)
- ☐ I had wanted to make these changes, but did not have the funds until after the programme was complete (3)
- ☐ I reflected on the learning from the programme (4)
- ☐ My decision to make these changes was not related to the programme (please describe what prompted you to make these changes) (5) _____
- ☐ I made changes to gain Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status, but then reverted back to normal practice as it wasn't working for me or the children in my care. (6)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (7) _____

End of Block: Sustainability

Start of Block: Maintenance

Q26 Do you plan to maintain Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings status by applying for re-accreditation in three years?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ Maybe (2)
- ☐ No (3)

Q27 Please explain your answer to the previous question.

End of Block: Maintenance

Start of Block: Additional Training

Q28 Have you taken or signed up for any other type of training since completing the CFHBS programme?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ No, and I don't have any plans to sign up for any other training (2)
- ☐ Not yet, but I plan to in the next year (3)
- ☐ Not yet, but I plan to in a few years (4)

Display This Question:

If Q28 = Yes

Q29 Please name and describe the type of training you have signed up for.

Display This Question:

If Q28 = Yes

Q30 Please select the reasons that you have signed up for this training. Please select all that apply.

- ☐ It is available at a subsidised rate/for free (1)
- ☐ It looks interesting to me (2)
- ☐ There is a particular child/children that I have identified that would benefit from this training (3)
- ☐ I think all the children in my setting would benefit from this training (4)
- ☐ This training fills a gap in my knowledge/training (5)
- ☐ I identified this topic as something I want to develop during the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings programme (6)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (7) _____

Display This Question:

If Q28 = Not yet, but I plan to in the next year

Or Q28 = Not yet, but I plan to in a few years

Q31 Please describe the type of training that you plan to sign up for in the future.

Display This Question:

If Q28 = Not yet, but I plan to in the next year

Or Q28 = Not yet, but I plan to in a few years

Q32 Is there a reason why you have not signed up for this training yet? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ It is currently too expensive (1)
- ☐ It is not being offered currently, but will be in the future (2)
- ☐ I do not currently have the time (3)
- ☐ Personal factors (4)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (5) _____

Display This Question:

If Q28 = No, and I don't have any plans to sign up for any other training

Q33 Please describe the reason that you do not plan on signing up for any training at present.

- ☐ It is currently too expensive (1)
- ☐ It is not being offered currently, but will be in the future (2)
- ☐ I do not currently have the time (3)
- ☐ Personal factors (4)
- ☐ There is not currently any available training that I find interesting (5)
- ☐ There is not currently any available training that I think would be useful (6)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (7) _____

Q34 If it were possible to attend any additional training in the future, what, if anything, would you like that training to be on?

End of Block: Additional Training

Start of Block: Long term outcomes

Q35 Do you think that the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings training has impacted positively on the children in your care's speech, language, and communication?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ Unsure (2)
- ☐ No (3)
- ☐ I think it will have, but it's too soon to say (4)

Display This Question:

If Q35 = Yes

Q36 Which aspects of children's overall development do you think the programme has impacted positively on?

	It has had a major effect (1)	It has had a moderate effect (2)	It has had a minor effect (3)	It has had no effect (4)	Unsure (5)
Receptive language: this is a child's ability to understand spoken language. For example, being able to listen and follow instructions, or understand a story. (1)	0	0	0	0	0
Expressive language: this is a child's ability to communicate through words and	0	0	0	0	0

sentences in
a
grammaticall
y correct
way. For
example,
asking
questions, or
communicati
ng wants
and needs
(2)

Sentence
length (3)

0

0

0

0

0

Sentence
complexity:
this refers to
a child's
ability to
speak in
well-
structured
sentences
(4)

0

0

0

0

0

School
readiness:
children
being
socially,
physically,
and
intellectually
prepared for
the transition
to school (5)

0

0

0

0

0

Other
changes that
have
happened
as a result of
the
programme
(6)

0

0

0

0

0

Q37 How much of an impact do you think the training has made on the following groups of children:

	It has had a major effect (1)	It has had a moderate effect (2)	It has had a minor effect (3)	It has had no effect (4)	There are none of these children in my setting (5)
Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) (1)	0	0	0	0	0
Children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) (2)	0	0	0	0	0
Children who have been diagnosed with learning needs (including physical and sensory needs) (3)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 0-1 (4)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 1-2 (5)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 2-3 (6)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 3-4 (7)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 4-5 (8)	0	0	0	0	0
Children older than 5 (9)	0	0	0	0	0

End of Block: Long term outcomes

Start of Block: Wider outcomes

Q38 The Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings programme aims to improve children's speech, language, and communication. Have you observed any other impacts that you would attribute to the training? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Children's confidence (1)
- ☐ Children's emotional wellbeing (2)
- ☐ Play (3)
- ☐ Numeracy (4)
- ☐ Literacy (5)
- ☐ Your confidence as a practitioner (6)
- ☐ The number of referrals you have made to speech and language therapists (7)
- ☐ Communication with parents (8)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (9) _____

Display This Question:

If Q38 = Children's confidence

Q39 Please describe the impact that you have observed in **children's confidence** since completing the programme.

Display This Question:

If Q38 = Children's emotional wellbeing

Q40 Please describe the impact that you have observed in **children's emotional wellbeing** since completing the programme.

Display This Question:

If Q38 = Play

Q41 Please describe the impact that you have observed in **play** since completing the programme.

Display This Question:

If Q38 = Numeracy

Q42 Please describe the impact that you have observed in **numeracy** since completing the programme.

Display This Question:

If Q38 = Literacy

Q43 Please describe the impact that you have observed in **literacy** since completing the programme.

Display This Question:

If Q38 = Your confidence as a practitioner

Q44 Please describe the impact that you have observed in **your confidence** since completing the programme.

Display This Question:

If Q38 = The number of referrals you have made to speech and language therapists

Q45 Please describe the impact that you have observed in **the number of referrals you have made to speech and language therapists** since completing the programme.

Display This Question:

If Q38 = Communication with parents

Q46 Please describe the impact that you have observed in **communication with parents** since completing the programme.

End of Block: Wider outcomes

Start of Block: Skills, Knowledge and Confidence Questionnaire

[Removed]

End of Block: SKCQ14

Start of Block: Impact

Q103 This study focuses on figuring out how to make training accessible to childminders. This means making sure that it is both useful and feasible for childminders to attend. We would like to ask you some questions about the outcomes of the study.

Q104 Would you like to be informed about the results of this study?

- ☐ Yes (1)
 - ☐ No (2)
 - ☐ Don't feel strongly (3)
-

Q105 If you were to be informed about the results of this study, what would be your preference?

- ☐ I would like to read the full report (1)
 - ☐ I would like to read a brief summary of the report (2)
 - ☐ I would like to attend an online presentation event (3)
 - ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____
-

Q106 We will be sharing the results of this study with Elklan, who created the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings programme. Who else do you think should be informed about the results of this study?

End of Block: Impact

Appendix C5 – Childminder did not complete programme survey

CFHBS Endline Cohort 2 - Did Not Complete

Start of Block: Survey information

Information Thank you for your participation in the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings research study. The Department for Education’s Early Years Recovery Programme, Stronger Practice Hubs and the Education Endowment Foundation are working together to fund Early Years settings’ access to evidence-informed programmes and to study their impact on children and Early Years practitioners. We would be very grateful if you could complete this short online questionnaire. It should take no more than 20 minutes to complete.

End of Block: Survey information

Start of Block: General setting information

Q2 Please provide the name of your setting.

Q3 How many children do you currently look after in your setting?

Q4 Please tell us approximately how many children of each age group you look after, and approximately how many hours per week you look after them.

	Under 15 hours per week (1)	Between 16 and 24 hours per week (2)	Over 25 hours per week (3)
0-1 years of age (1)			
1-2 years old (2)			

2-3 years old (3)			
3-4 years old (4)			
4-5 years old (5)			
Primary school age (6)			

Q5 How many children in your setting are classed as having English as an Additional Language (EAL)?

Q6 How many children in your setting are eligible to receive Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)?

Q7 How many children in your setting have been diagnosed with learning needs (including physical and sensory needs)?

End of Block: General setting information

Start of Block: Experiences, facilitators, and barriers to participating in CFHBS

Q8 What, if anything, helped or motivated you to attend the sessions? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The length of the programme (1)
- ☐ The session content (2)
- ☐ The timing of sessions (3)
- ☐ The tutors (4)
- ☐ Personal goals/motivation (5)
- ☐ The content of the e-learning sessions (6)

- ☐ The content of the e-learning logs (7)
- ☐ The time taken to complete the e-learning logs (8)
- ☐ Having a clear idea of what was going to happen and when (9)
- ☐ The other childminders (10)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (11) _____

Q10 What, if anything, made it difficult to attend the sessions? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The length of the programme (1)
- ☐ The session content (2)
- ☐ The timing of sessions (3)
- ☐ The tutors (4)
- ☐ Personal goals/motivation (5)
- ☐ The content of the e-learning sessions (6)
- ☐ The content of the e-learning logs (7)
- ☐ The time taken to complete the e-learning logs (8)
- ☐ Not having a clear idea of what was going to happen and when (9)
- ☐ The other childminders (10)
- ☐ Other (please specify) (11) _____

Q11 Please rate the sessions below on a scale of how useful you found them.

	Extrem ely useles s (1)	Moder ately useles s (2)	Slightly useles s (3)	Neither useful nor useles s (4)	Slightly useful (5)	Moder ately useful (6)	Extrem ely useful (7)	I did not attend this sessio n (8)
What is communicat ion? (1)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adult-child interaction (2)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Learning to listen and supporting understandi ng through non-verbal communicat ion and visual strategies (3)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Promoting the development of vocabulary (4)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Understanding spoken language and information-carrying words (5)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The Blank Language Scheme (or Language for Thinking) (6)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Developing Early Language Skills (7)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Developing play for language (8)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Supporting children with unclear speech and phonological awareness (9)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stammering and course reflection (10)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Q15 How would you describe the Communication Friendly Home-Based Settings programme overall?

- ☐ Very useful (1)
- ☐ Useful (2)
- ☐ Somewhat useful (3)

- ☐ Not very useful (4)
 - ☐ Not at all useful (5)
-

Q16 Would you recommend the programme to another childminder?

- ☐ Yes (please state why) (1) _____
 - ☐ No (please state why) (2) _____
-

Q17 Is there anything else you would like to feedback about the sessions?

Q12 As part of this research, the programme has been provided free of charge. If that was not the case, how much could you feasibly pay for the training you have received?

- ☐ Up to £200 (1)
 - ☐ Between £200 and £350 (2)
 - ☐ Between £350 and £500 (3)
 - ☐ Between £500 and £600 (4)
 - ☐ Between £600 and £700 (5)
 - ☐ Over £700 (6)
-

Q14 How much do you think the training is worth?

- ☐ Up to £200 (1)
- ☐ Between £200 and £350 (2)
- ☐ Between £350 and £500 (3)
- ☐ Between £500 and £600 (4)
- ☐ Between £600 and £700 (5)
- ☐ Over £700 (6)

End of Block: Experiences, facilitators, and barriers to participating in CFHBS

Start of Block: Changes

Q18 Since starting the programme, have you made any changes to any of the below? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ The physical environment of your setting (1)
- ☐ The way that you interact with children (2)
- ☐ Modelling language with children (3)
- ☐ The resources available in your setting (4)
- ☐ The way that books are shared with children in the setting (5)
- ☐ Other changes (please describe) (6) _____

Display This Question:

If Q18 = The physical environment of your setting

Q19 Please describe the changes that you have made to the physical environment of your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q18 = The way that you interact with children

Q20 Please describe the changes that you have made to the way that you interact with children in your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q18 = Modelling language with children

Q21 Please describe the changes that you have made to the way that you model language with children in your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q18 = The resources available in your setting

Q22 Please describe the changes that you have made to the resources available in your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q18 = The way that books are shared with children in the setting

Q23 Please describe the changes that you have made to the way books are shared with children in your setting.

Display This Question:

If Q18 != The physical environment of your setting

Q24 Please indicate the reason that you did not make changes to the physical environment of your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve Communication Friendly Setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q18 != The way that you interact with children

Q25 Please indicate the reason that you did not make changes to the way that you interact with children in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve Communication Friendly Setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q18 != Modelling language with children

Q26 Please indicate the reason that you did not make changes to the way that you model language with children in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve Communication Friendly Setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q18 != The resources available in your setting

Q27 Please indicate the reason that you did not make changes to the resources available in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve Communication Friendly Setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q18 != The way that books are shared with children in the setting

Q28 Please indicate the reason that you did not make changes to the way that books are shared with children in your setting.

- ☐ I did not need to make changes to achieve Communication Friendly Setting status (1)
- ☐ I did not have the resources to make changes to my setting in this way (2)
- ☐ I focused on making changes to other aspects of my setting/practice (3)
- ☐ Other (please describe) (4) _____

Display This Question:

If Q18 = The physical environment of your setting

Or Q18 = The way that you interact with children

Or Q18 = Modelling language with children

Or Q18 = The resources available in your setting

Or Q18 = The way that books are shared with children in the setting

Q29 What helped you to make the changes that you have described?

Display This Question:

If Q18 = The physical environment of your setting

Or Q18 = The way that you interact with children

Or Q18 = Modelling language with children

Or Q18 = The resources available in your setting

Or Q18 = The way that books are shared with children in the setting

Q30 What hindered you in making the changes that you have described?

Q31 Are there any changes that you would like to make, but have been unable to? Please describe any changes you would like to make, and why you have so far been unable to do so.

End of Block: Changes

Start of Block: Child outcomes

Q32 Do you think that the training has impacted positively on the children in your care's speech, language and communication?

- ☐ Yes (1)
- ☐ Unsure (2)
- ☐ No (3)
- ☐ I think it will have, but it's too soon to say (4)

Display This Question:

If Q32 = Yes

Q33 Which aspects of children's overall development do you think the programme has impacted positively on?

	It has had a major effect (1)	It has had a moderate effect (2)	It has had a minor effect (3)	It has had no effect (4)	Unsure (5)
Receptive language: this is a child's ability to understand spoken language. For example, being able to listen and follow instructions, or understand a story. (1)	0	0	0	0	0
Expressive language: this is a child's ability to communicate through words and sentences in a grammatically correct way. For example, asking questions, or communicating	0	0	0	0	0

ng wants and needs. (2)					
Sentence length (3)	0	0	0	0	0
Sentence complexity: this refers to a child's ability to speak in well- structured sentences (4)	0	0	0	0	0
School readiness: children being socially, physically, and intellectually prepared for the transition to school (5)	0	0	0	0	0
Other changes that have happened as a result of the programme (please describe) (6)	0	0	0	0	0

Display This Question:

If Q32 = Yes

Q34 How have different groups of children been affected?

	It has had a major effect (1)	It has had a moderate effect (2)	It has had a minor effect (3)	It has had no effect (4)	There are none of these children in
--	-------------------------------------	--	-------------------------------------	-----------------------------	--

	my setting (5)				
Children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) (1)	0	0	0	0	0
Children receiving Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) (2)	0	0	0	0	0
Children who have been diagnosed with learning needs (including physical and sensory needs) (3)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 0-1 (4)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 1-2 (5)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 2-3 (6)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 3-4 (7)	0	0	0	0	0
Children aged 4-5 (8)	0	0	0	0	0
Children older than 5 (9)	0	0	0	0	0

End of Block: Child outcomes

Start of Block: The future

Q35 When do you plan to complete the CFHBS training?

Q76 What has hindered your completion of the CFHBS training programme so far?

Q77 Is there any additional support that would have helped you to complete the CFHBS programme?

Q36 Do you plan on taking any other type of training in the next year?

- ☐ Definitely not (1)
- ☐ Probably not (2)
- ☐ Might or might not (3)
- ☐ Probably yes (4)
- ☐ Definitely yes (5)

Display This Question:

If Q36 = Probably yes

Or Q36 = Definitely yes

Q37 What kind of training might you take?

Display This Question:

If Q36 = Probably yes

Or Q36 = Definitely yes

Q38 Why would you like to take this training?

End of Block: The future

Start of Block: Skills, Knowledge, and Confidence - Block 1

[Removed]

End of Block: Skills Knowledge and Confidence Block 10

Start of Block: Experience of participating in research

Q71 Please rank, in order of importance, what factors you would consider when considering taking part in research. You can do this by clicking and dragging each factor into the place you want to rank it.

- _____ Amount of time involved (1)
- _____ The topic of the research (2)
- _____ Any benefits to myself or to the children involved (e.g. training) (3)
- _____ Any financial incentives (4)
- _____ The kind of activities I would be asked to do (5)
- _____ The benefits that the research could have for other practitioners or policy (6)
- _____ Other (please state any other factors you can think of) (7)

Q72 In terms of research activities please rank the following in order of preference.

- _____ Completing a survey (1)
 - _____ Having an interview with a researcher (2)
 - _____ Taking part in a focus group with my peers (3)
 - _____ Having a researcher observe my practice (4)
 - _____ Having a researcher visit to administer assessments with the children in my care (5)
 - _____ Administering assessments with the children in my care myself (6)
-

Q73 If this pilot study is successful, we may want to conduct a randomised controlled trial of the programme in the future. We will not ask you to take part, as you have already done the training, but below we give details of what we think it would involve. A randomised controlled trial (or RCT for short) is a kind of rigorous research which can find out how well the training works for childminders and children. In the RCT, outcomes for childminders and children who have the training are compared with outcomes for childminders and children who do not have the training. We decide which childminders have the training by allocating them to have the training or not randomly, like in a lottery. When we do this, it sets up a fair test of the training so we can be sure of the result. We would welcome your perspective as a childminder on any barriers that you think might stop childminders from taking part, and anything that would encourage childminders to take part.

Q74 Please select any factors that would encourage you to take part in a randomised control trial research study. (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Any financial incentives (1)
 - ☐ Other, non-financial incentives (e.g. vouchers or resources) (2)
 - ☐ Any benefits that this could have for myself or the children involved (e.g. training) (3)
 - ☐ The benefits that this research could have for other practitioners or policy (4)
 - ☐ The amount of time that it would take to participate (5)
 - ☐ What the study is about (6)
 - ☐ The kind of research activities I would do (e.g. interviews, surveys) (7)
 - ☐ Knowing that whether I am allocated to the training or not is completely random (8)
 - ☐ Knowing that if I weren't allocated the training (e.g. I was part of the control group), I would receive it at a later date (9)
 - ☐ The length of the study (10)
 - ☐ Other (please describe) (11) _____
-

Q75 Please select any factors that would discourage you from participating in a randomised control trial research study. (Please select all that apply)

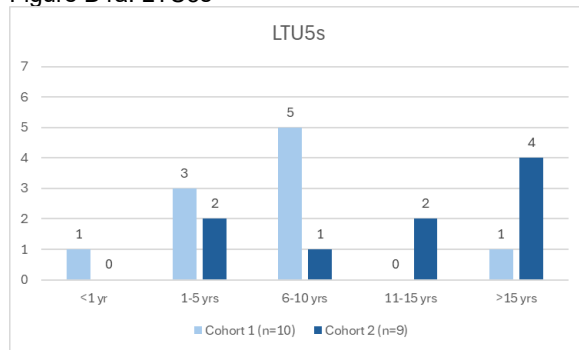
- o The amount of time that it would take (1)
- o Knowing that I may not be allocated to the training programme, and might be in the control group (2)
- o Knowing that whether I am allocated to the training or not is completely random (3)
- o The kind of research activities I would do (e.g. interviews, surveys) (4)
- o The length of the study (5)
- o Other (please describe) (6) _____

End of Block: Experience of participating in research

Appendix D: Demographics

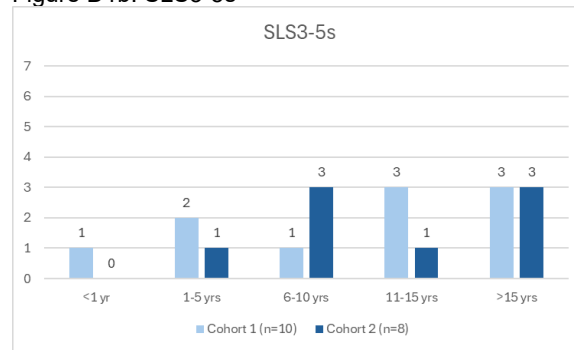
Figure D1: Length of time worked as a childminder

Figure D1a: LTU5s*



*N=19

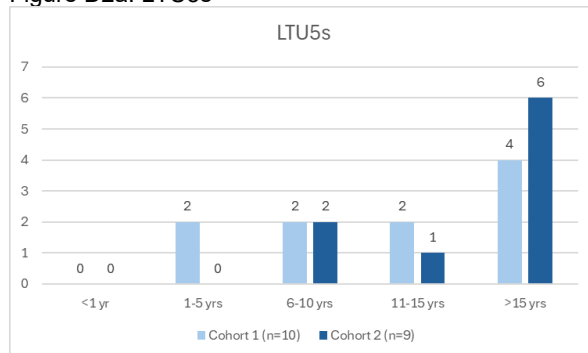
Figure D1b: SLS3-5s*



*N=18

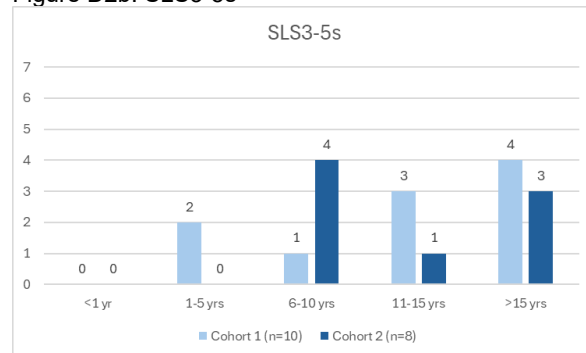
Figure D2: Length of time worked in the early years sector

Figure D2a: LTU5s*



*N=19

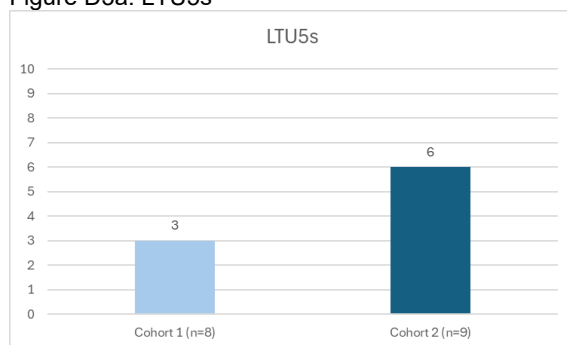
Figure D2b: SLS3-5s*



*N=18

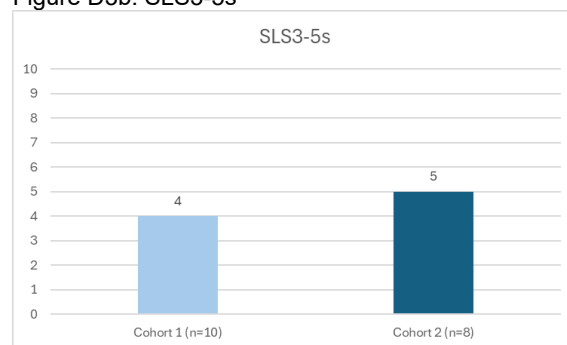
Figure D3: Number of settings employing childminder assistants

Figure D3a: LTU5s*



*N=17

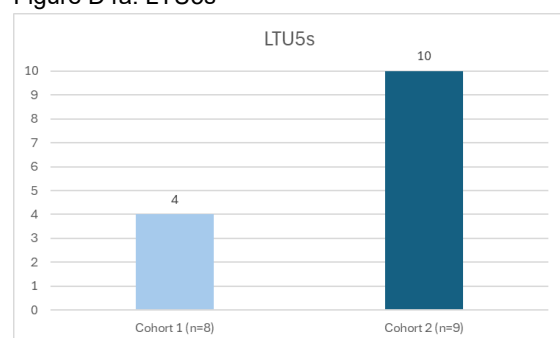
Figure D3b: SLS3-5s*



*N=18

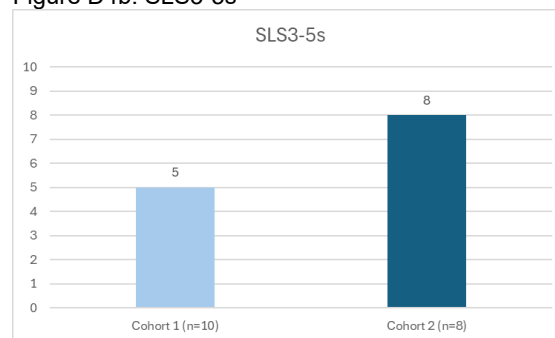
Figure D4: Number of childminder assistants employed

Figure D4a: LTU5s*



*N=17

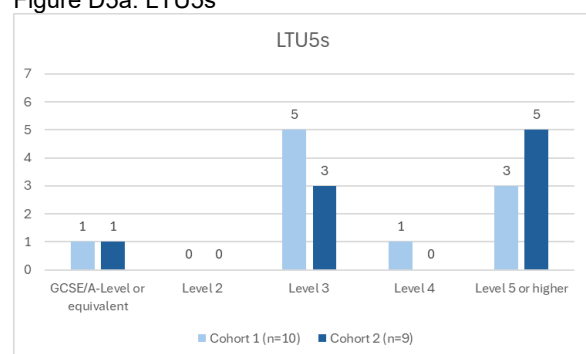
Figure D4b: SLS3-5s*



*N=18

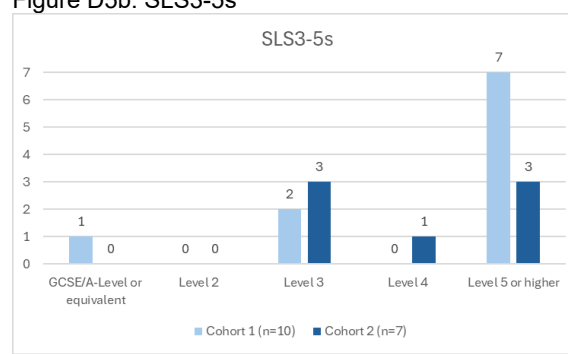
Figure D5: Highest level of previous qualification

Figure D5a: LTU5s*



*N=19

Figure D5b: SLS3-5s*



*N=17

** Level 2: e.g. intermediate apprenticeships, OCR nationals; Level 3: e.g. AS and A Levels, BTEC Diplomas, Access to Higher Education diploma; Level 4: e.g. BTEC Professional Diplomas, certificates and awards; Level 5: e.g. HNDs, Foundational Degrees.

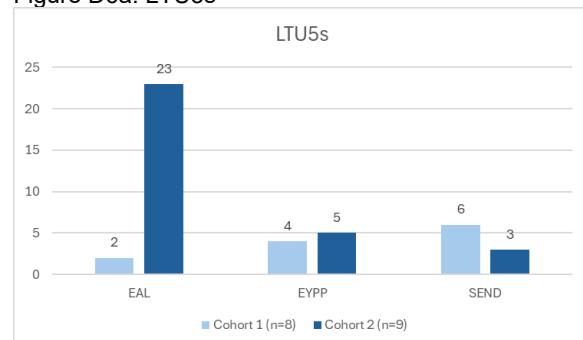
Table D1: Mean number of children per setting**

	LTU5s			SLS3-5s		
	Cohort 1 M (range)	Cohort 2 M (range)	Total M (range)	Cohort 1 M (range)	Cohort 2 M (range)	Total M (range)
Mean number of children per setting	12.7 (4-28)	18.4 (7-70)	15.4 (4-70)	9.5 (3-32)	10.0 (7-16)	9.7 (3-32)

* N=36 (LTU5s=18: C1, 8; C2, 9; SLS3-5s=18: C1, 10; C2, 8)

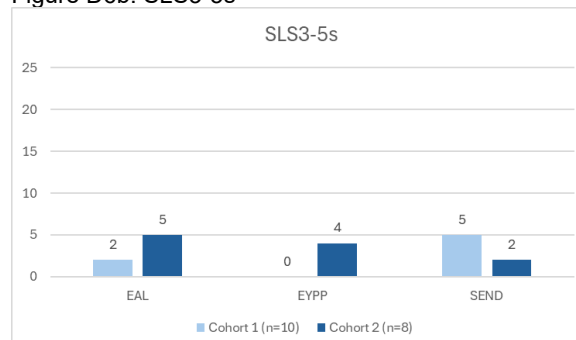
Figure D6: Number of EAL, EYPP and SEND children within settings

Figure D6a: LTU5s*



*N=17

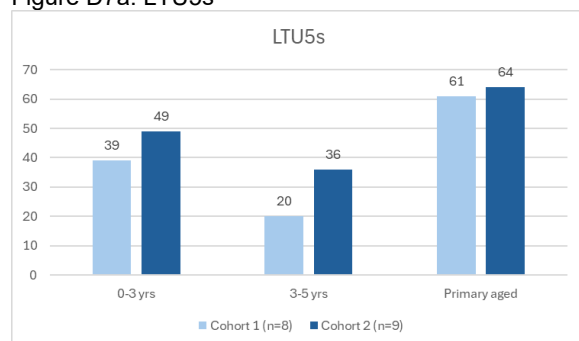
Figure D6b: SLS3-5s*



*N=18

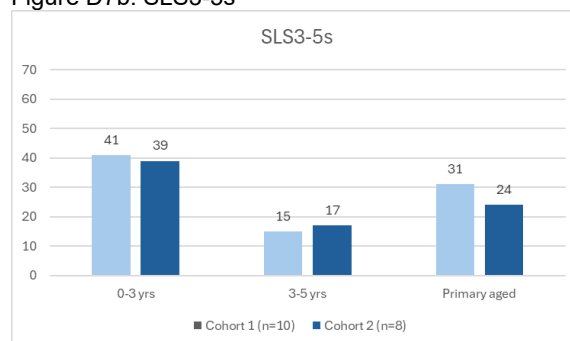
Figure D7: Ages of children within settings

Figure D7a: LTU5s*



*N=17

Figure D7b: SLS3-5s*



*N=18

Appendix E: Childminder Skills, Knowledge, and Confidence measure analysis

Please note: the SKCQ has been removed from the surveys until the CFS efficacy trial has completed data collection.

Figure E1: Whole sample comparison of baseline vs. endline scores on the SKCQ subscales*

Scores	Baseline	Endline
Knowledge Mean (SD) Min-Max	6.1 (1.9) 3-10	7.7 (1.9) 4-11
Judgement Mean (SD) Min-Max	4.8 (1.8) 2-10	5.7 (1.4) 3-8
Confidence Mean (SD) Min-Max	8.6 (3.8) 0-16	13.9 (4.4) 5-24
Total Mean (SD) Min-Max	19.4 (5.8) 6-30	27.2 (5) 18-41

*Baseline N=36, Endline N=33

Figure E2: Mean average scores for Knowledge, Skills and Confidence relating to children's SLC needs by programme variant at baseline, endline, and follow-up*

Score	LTU5s			SLS3-5s		
	Baseline	Endline	Follow-up	Baseline	Endline	Follow-up
Knowledge Mean (SD) Min-Max	6.7 (1.6) 3-9	7.6 (1.8) 4-10	6 (1.2) 5-8	6.1 (1.4) 4-8	7.2 (1.6) 5-10	8.4 (2.2) 7-12
Judgement Mean (SD) Min-Max	4.6 (1.3) 2-7	4.9 (1.3) 3-8	6.8 (2) 4-10	5 (2.3) 2-10	6.4 (1.1) 5-8	5.6 (3) 2-9
Confidence Mean (SD) Min-Max	9.4 (4.2) 0-16	13.5 (4.6) 5-20	5.1 (2) 3-8	7.6 (3) 2-11	14.4 (4.3) 9-24	16.8 (5.1) 9-23
Total Mean (SD) Min-Max	20.7 (6.2) 6-30	26.0(5.1) 17-33	15.6 (4.1) 8-20	18.5 (4.5) 11-25	27.9 (4.8) 22-39	30.8 (8.2) 18-38

*LTU5s: Baseline N=19, Endline N=19, Follow-up N=9; SLS3-5s: Baseline N=17, Endline N=14, Follow-up N=6

Figure E3: Mean average scores for Knowledge, Skills and Confidence relating to children's CLS needs by programme variant in Cohort 1*

	Cohort 1 Baseline	LTU5s Cohort 1 Endline	Cohort 1 Follow-up	Cohort 1 Baseline	SLS3-5s Cohort 1 Endline	Cohort 1 Follow-up
Knowledge Mean (SD) Min-Max	6.1 (1.5) 3-8	8.2 (1.5) 6-10	6.6 (2) 5-11	5.9 (1.2) 4-8	7.4(1.7) 5-10	8.4 (2.2) 7-12
Judgement Mean (SD) Min-Max	4.2 (1.3) 2-6	4.8 (1.1) 3-6	4.9 (1.5) 2-7	5 (2.4) 2-10	6.6 (1.1) 5-8	5.6 (3) 2-9
Confidence Mean (SD) Min-Max	6.7 (3.6) 0-12	11.8 (4.4) 5-18	12.9 (5.2) 8-20	7.4 (3.4) 2-11	14.6 (4.6) 9-24	16.8 (5.1) 9-23
Total Mean (SD) Min-Max	17.2 (6.1) 6-26	24.8 (4.8) 17-33	24.3 (7.1) 16-36	18.1 (5.4) 11-25	28.6 (5.2) 22-39	30.8 (8.2) 18-38

* LTU5s: Baseline N=10, Endline N=10, Follow-up N=9; SLS3-5s: Baseline N=10, Endline N=9, Follow-up N=6

Figure E4: Mean average scores for Knowledge, Skills and Confidence relating to children's CLS needs by programme variant in Cohort 2#

	LTU5s		SLS 3-5s	
	Cohort 2 Baseline	Cohort 2 Endline	Cohort 2 Baseline	Cohort 2 Endline
Knowledge Mean (SD) Min-Max	7.1 (1.7) 4-9	6.8 (2) 4-10	6.7 (1.6) 4-9	6.8 (1.3) 5-8
Judgement Mean (SD) Min-Max	5 (1.8) 2-7	5.1 (2) 3-8	4.9 (1.1) 3-6	6 (1) 5-7
Confidence Mean (SD) Min-Max	10.3 (3.5) 4-16	15.6 (4.1) 8-20	11 (3.6) 6-16	14 (4.3) 10-19
Total Mean (SD) Min-Max	22.4 (4.1) 18-30	27.5 (5.4) 19-33	22.6 (4.8) 16-29	26.8 (4.9) 22-32

* LTU5s: Baseline N=9, Endline N=8; SLS3-5s: Baseline N=7, Endline N=5

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