

*This template should be used for all pilot evaluation plans (with adaptations, as necessary). The structure of the plan can be adapted. The version history below will help to keep track of any changes to the evaluation plan.*

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>Assessing the feasibility of a mixed-mode delivery model for the Hanen LLLI programme in PVI and maintained early years settings: a pilot evaluation</b>
<b>EVALUATOR (INSTITUTION)</b>	NatCen Social Research
<b>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S)</b>	Mary McKaskill
<b>EVALUATION PLAN AUTHOR(S)</b>	Tina Haux, Mary McKaskill, Helena Takala
<b>NUMBER OF SCHOOLS/ SETTINGS</b>	18

### Evaluation plan version history

VERSION	DATE	REASON FOR REVISION
1.3 [latest]	17/05/2022	NatCen responses to EEF comments – additional detail provided on sampling and how the pilot will inform the main trial. Logic model included.
1.2	14/04/2022	Formatting in the EEF study plan template, timeline updated so that the evaluation better aligned with programme delivery
1.1	23/02/2022	Adding an additional PVI setting to the evaluation sample
1.0 [original]	Jan 2022	<i>[leave blank for the original version]</i>

- *Any changes to the design need to be discussed with the EEF Evaluation Manager prior to any change(s) being finalised. Describe in the table above any agreed changes made to the evaluation design.*

## Background

### *Name*

Hanen Learning Language and Loving It programme (LLLI): a pilot assessing the feasibility of a mixed-mode delivery model in PVI and maintained early years settings

### *Why*

Hanen LLLI was designed to be delivered in-person. However, a recent process evaluation (NatCen Social Research, upcoming) took place during the COVID-19 pandemic when the programme delivery organisation changed the delivery mode from in-person to remote for two core elements of the programme: group training workshops and video feedback sessions. The process evaluation highlighted interest from participants to continue delivering these activities mixed-mode (in-person and remotely) even outside the COVID-19 context. In this pilot, the Hanen LLLI programme is delivered mixed-mode from start to finish for the first time. Our pilot evaluation aims to find out if the mixed-mode delivery is feasible for both PVI and maintained settings.

### *Who*

The programme developers are the Hanen Centre, a highly regarded Canadian charity that has developed a suite of programmes to support language development.

In this pilot, LLLI is delivered by Communicate SLT, a Blackpool-based organisation who provided the programme to settings in the previously funded trial. The programme involves two Hanen-certified trainers delivering training to a group of ~30 Early Years Professionals from 18 nursery settings that are both PVI and maintained settings.

### *What*

The Hanen Learning Language and Loving It programme (LLLI) provides training for Early Years practitioners to develop their approaches to developing children's language. It provides practical strategies for helping all children in the classroom build language and social skills.

### *How*

The Hanen LLLI strategies include encouraging children to initiate and engage in conversational interaction, encouraging extended individual and group conversations between adults and children, and modelling more sophisticated language to expand the child's oral language skills and facilitate the development of de-contextualised (or abstract) language.

### *Where*

The pilot is delivered in 17 settings (8 PVI and 9 maintained) in the Liverpool City Region.

### *When and how much*

The pilot is delivered from February to July 2022. Training consists of six, 2.5-hour group training sessions and an orientation/ introductory workshop (total 17.5 hours) and five individual video feedback sessions.

Among them the orientation / introductory workshop along with workshops 1, 5 and 6 and the baseline and video 1 took place in person and the rest workshops and video sessions happened virtually using Zoom.

## Project aims

The pilot will deliver the Hanen LLLI programme mixed-mode for the first time. Half of the training workshops will be delivered remotely and a third of the video feedback sessions will be in-person.

The pilot was developed in response to feedback from a previous evaluation highlighting interest from participants to continue delivery the programme mixed-mode. For example, nursery staff reported that

the quality of the videos for the video feedback sessions were higher with remote delivery and better mirrored their usual practice. Furthermore, a potential benefit of mixed-mode delivery is that it could make the programme more affordable, less burdensome for trainees and more scalable.

The findings from the pilot evaluation will be used to inform any adaptations made to the Hanen LLLI programme for the efficacy trial to begin in November 2022. Findings will also be used to consider the sustainability and scalability mixed-mode delivery of Hanen LLLI training.

## Research questions

The research questions for this pilot evaluation focus on the feasibility of the mixed-mode delivery and the extent that trained practitioners can effectively cascade their learning to non-trained colleagues within their settings. Through this pilot evaluation, we will work with the delivery partner to better understand the component parts of a high-quality mixed-mode delivery model of Hanen LLLI that also can effectively enable trained practitioners to cascade their learning to non-trained colleagues.

The research questions are aligned with the core programme elements are:

### 1) Mixed-mode training delivery

- a) Is this type of mixed-mode delivery acceptable to practitioners?
- b) Are there any key barriers to implementation and ways in which barriers can be overcome?
- c) What are the key enablers to high-quality delivery and participation?
- d) Are there any key differences between how PVI and maintained settings engaged with the mixed-mode training?

### 2) Cascading learning

- a) Do the strategies for cascading developed by Communicate SLT and Hanen enable trained practitioners to cascade learning to non-trained colleagues?
- b) What conditions within settings enable learning to be effectively cascaded?

### 3) Training length and dosage

- a) Is the training length and dosage sufficient to deliver the programme, taking into account variations in delivery from the previous evaluation?

## Methods

### Recruitment

Recruitment for the pilot took place in January-February 2022 and was carried out by Communicate SLT. They recruited 18 settings (9 PVI and 9 maintained settings) in the Liverpool City Region. Settings had to ensure that participants all had access to a laptop and camera in order to participate in the pilot. Once selected to take part, settings nominated between could be involved if they sent 50% or at least 2 staff who work in the nursery with the preschool cohort. Settings also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which explained in detail what their participation in the pilot evaluation will involve.

Recruitment for the pilot evaluation involved sampling 5 case study settings to take part in qualitative fieldwork. We selected five settings for in-depth case study investigation. The criteria for selecting which settings would take part in the case studies included:

- Three PVI and two Maintained settings
- Size: 3 settings with less than 40 pupils and 2 with over 40 pupils
- Programme day to reflect the spread of engagement

The web-based survey will be sent to all trained practitioners in all the participating settings.

## **Data collection**

Fieldwork is taking place between February and June 2022 with interim findings reported in May and a draft report submitted by August 2022.

### **Review of specific segments of intervention and logic model review**

We held a Logic model/Intervention Development and Evaluation Analysis (IDEA) workshop with Communicate SLT in February 2022. In the workshop, we reviewed the existing Hanen LLLI logic model in light of the recent process evaluation. This review also informed the chosen methodology for the evaluation.

### **Strand 1: Observation of mixed-mode training workshops**

We will observe a minimum of one online and one in-person training workshop. These observations will provide insights into feasibility and fidelity and stimulus material for investigation in interviews.

### **Strand 2: Qualitative research with settings and trainers**

The aim of Strand 2 is to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of mixed-mode, length of training and cascading, which will be used to inform questionnaire development.

We will carry out five site visits in April-May. During the visits, we will seek to conduct:

- **Interviews with nursery managers.** The interviews will explore experience of mixed-mode training, length of training and barriers and facilitators to implementation and extent of cascading knowledge.
- **Interview(s) with 1 or 2 trained practitioners.** These will explore understanding of programme and aims, perceived adequacy of support, particularly focussed on mixed-mode delivery changes in practice, perceived impacts for children and recommendations for intervention improvements.
- **Interview(s) with 1 or 2 non-trained practitioners,** to explore cascading of training.

We will aim to conduct all interviews in-person and will arrange fieldwork at a date and time that is most convenient to the setting. Settings are provided the list of the roles that researchers would like to speak to and then the setting nominates appropriate personnel who have availability. However, in case staff are absent or unavailable on the day of the visits, we can also conduct interviews by telephone/online on a different day.

In addition to visits in settings, in April-May we will also conduct:

- **Interviews with 1 Speech and Language Therapist and 1 Early Years Teacher who deliver the Hanen LLLI training.** These interviews will provide evidence on the delivery of training and video feedback, and perceived impacts and recommendations for intervention improvements from the perspective of these expert trainers both with regards to the mixed-mode delivery as well as the length of the training. The interviews will be conducted by telephone or online.

### **Strand 3: Web-based survey**

The final strand will include a short web-based survey of all trained practitioners in all the participating settings eliciting views on the mixed-mode delivery, barriers to implementation, support needs and activities around cascading. The questionnaire will be developed based on the earlier qualitative research with settings as well as conversations with the developers and EEF. The survey will take about 10 to 15 minutes and all settings will be sent a web link to participate in the survey. The survey will take place in the first half of June.

## **Data analysis**

All qualitative interview data will be digitally recorded with permission from participants and transcribed by a professional external transcription agency.

We will be managing the data and carrying out within and cross-setting analysis either using charting and framework analysis in Excel. Using the themes covered in interview topic guides and incorporating new emerging themes a matrix will be set out in which each row represents an individual and each column a theme and any related sub-themes. Transcript data is thematically summarised and illustrative verbatim quotes added to the matrix. These summaries and quotes are linked to verbatim transcript data for cross-referencing, quality assurance checks, and transparency. Once all transcripts have been coded, analysis is carried out by theme and individual responses. Coded data can be collated by case study units if needed. Framework maintains individual narratives and allows for thematic comparison and identification of areas of convergence and dissonance adding richness to the analysis. Triangulation of all data and thematic synthesis by the main pilot domains will provide a comprehensive assessment of evidence of promise, feasibility, and readiness for trial.

Data from the survey will be analysed in SPSS. Our assumption, based on the specification and the timescales for analysis, is that the analysis will primarily be descriptive. This will include frequency analysis and subgroup analysis for key break variables where numbers permit.

## **Learning and improvement**

Findings from the pilot will be used to inform the main trial in the following ways.

- The research questions for the IPE accompanying the main trial will be developed from findings of the pilot ensuring that it builds on learning about high quality implementation of mixed-mode delivery of Hanen.
- Core and flexible elements that support trained practitioners to cascade learning within settings will be more clearly defined and guidance will be provided to settings in the main trial.
- Evidence from the pilot will allow developers and programme leaders to consider whether any minor changes could be made to delivery to enhance the quality of the sessions and support participant engagement. This is particular the case for learning about what programme elements are best suited for in-person or online sessions.

## **Ethics and registration**

NatCen has a robust ethics governance procedure. Research projects are scrutinised by the NatCen Research Ethics Committee (REC). The REC procedure is designed to provide ethical advice and guidance, and to ensure that all research undertaken by NatCen is ethically sound and meets the ethical standards of government and other funders. The process provides reassurance to potential research participants and, where relevant, to gatekeepers through whom they are approached.

The REC has completed a full review of this pilot study and approved the study design.

## **Data protection**

Like with all NatCen projects that involve the collection, storage or processing of personal data, this project has its own data security plan. The plan will detail all data security procedures to be applied, including names of those who have access rights to respondent confidential data, details of third parties (e.g. transcribers) involved in the project and specific requirements for data destruction. The plan will be updated throughout the project via regular monitoring and internal audits.

In the unlikely event of a breach to data security procedures, this will be immediately raised as an Information Security incident. Incidents will be automatically flagged and reviewed immediately by Mary McKaskill and other senior staff in the organisation to agree corrective actions. This will include amendments to the data security plan where required to minimise risk of reoccurrence.

NatCen is the data controller and the data processor. The lawful basis for processing data is 'legitimate interest'. We will issue a privacy notice to all concerned parties and publish it on the study's webpage also. All data will be deleted six months after the end of the project.

## Personnel

**Table 1: Evaluation team**

Name	Project role	Role and institution
Mary McKaskill	Principal Investigator, Project Lead	Research Director, NatCen Social Research
Helena Takala	Joint Project Manager	Senior Researcher, NatCen Social Research
Nicky McGuinness	Joint Project Manager	Senior Researcher, NatCen Social Research
Alina Fletcher	Project Support	Researcher, NatCen Social Research
Monica Day	Project Support	Research Assistant, NatCen Social Research
Tina Haux	Senior Quality Assurance	Director, Children & Families, NatCen Social Research

**Table 2: Delivery team**

Name	Project role	Role and team
Caroline Coyne	Delivery partner lead	Director, Communicate SLT
Helen Laycock	Delivery partner project manager	Project Manager, Communicate SLT
Adele Banton	program leader	Early Years Teacher
Vicki Maughan	program leader	Speech and Language Therapist

## Risks

As part of our project management system, we will maintain a risk register (below), which will help us to anticipate and communicate risks in a timely way and to set out mitigation strategies.

**Table 3: Risk register**

Risk	Likelihood / Impact	Mitigation/Contingency
<b>Settings or practitioners reluctant to sign up to the pilot.</b>	<b>Likelihood:</b> Low <b>Impact:</b> Medium	We will work closely with the developers to ensure that recruitment materials are attractive while providing full details about the requirements of the pilot evaluation. At the set-up meeting, we will discuss contingency plans in case recruitment is slow, including a phased approach to delivery.
<b>Lack of success in gaining access to practitioners.</b>	<b>Likelihood:</b> Low <b>Impact:</b> High	We will identify a key contact in each setting (e.g. the nursery manager) to support the research and facilitate access to staff. We will work in close collaboration with

		the intervention developers and seek their support if we struggle to engage staff.
<b>Settings drop out of the pilot.</b>	<b>Likelihood:</b> Low <b>Impact:</b> Low	This is a formative study mainly using qualitative methods. The research has been designed to minimise the burden on providers whilst ensuring depth of data. We will give providers advance notice of all research activities and arrange interviews and visits to suit their availability. We will work closely with the developers to address any concerns about research burden.
<b>Children’s parents or settings oppose researchers observing sessions.</b>	<b>Likelihood:</b> Medium <b>Impact:</b> Low	The focus of observations will be on the practitioners rather than the children. Parents will be informed as to when researchers will be on-site, and it will be made clear that no data will be collected about or directly from their children as part of this evaluation.

## Timeline

**Table 4: Timeline**

Dates	Activity	Org responsible
Jan-Feb 2022	Recruitment	Communicate SLT
Feb 2022	Ethical review	NatCen Social Research
Feb-Mar 2022	Logic model review	NatCen Social Research, Communicate SLT
Feb-July 2022	Programme delivery	Communicate SLT
March-July 2022	Strand 1: Observations	NatCen Social Research
April-May 2022	Strand 2: Qualitative research	NatCen Social Research
31 <sup>st</sup> May 2022	Initial review of findings	NatCen Social Research
June 2022	Strand 3: Web-based survey	NatCen Social Research
May-July 2022	Analysis	NatCen Social Research
July-Aug 2022	Report-writing	NatCen Social Research
31 <sup>st</sup> of August 2022	Submit final report	NatCen Social Research

## Logic model

The logic model for the Hanen Learning Language and Loving It pilot focuses on the mixed-mode delivery and cascading programme to non-trained practitioners and how those elements could enhance the quality and impact of the Hanen LLI programme for practitioners and their settings. This is particularly summarised under the heading of ‘change mechanisms’. The logic model does not include pupil outcomes as they are not studied in the pilot, but will be measured in the main trial.

## Learning Language and Loving It™ - The Hanen Program® for Early Childhood Educators Logic Model (Pilot)

