

### 1 Summary of findings

#### 1.1 Summary – background and activity

Creating Safe & Inclusive Spaces (CSIS) is a package of training and support developed by Golden Key to work with Bristol's local business community to make public spaces safer and more inclusive. The training has evolved over time with participant and stakeholder feedback, and later included consultative support for businesses and organisations. The training (and later, support) was delivered to 95 participants in Bristol during one year between November 2018 and November 2019.

This initiative was led by Stephen Pratt (Senior Service Coordinator) who identified an issue around the response to the challenging behaviours of multiple and complex needs clients in the city. Specifically, challenging behaviours were identified to be frequently met with responses that escalated the difficult situations in which these behaviours presented.

In response, a framework informed by Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) principles, was deployed to support the community. Through awareness raising about the experiences of multiple and complex needs clients, guidance and advice on de-escalation, and opportunities for reflection amongst stakeholders, Stephen and other GK staff were able to initiate different conversations and responses to challenging behaviours.

#### 1.2 Summary - evidence of change

There is some evidence that this project has challenged stereotypes and perceptions of multiple disadvantage, providing alternative narratives for and different responses to challenging behaviour in the short-medium term. The evaluation was not able to collect evidence of longer term changes or changes for people with multiple complex needs. A small sample of follow-up interviews with training participants during 2020 indicate that the training and support has shaped different, potentially more positive responses from individuals and organisations to challenging behavioural incidents involving people with multiple disadvantage.

Key areas where positive changes were identified through the case study research included:

- An increase in participants' understanding of multiple complex needs (short term follow-up after training).
- An increase in participants' confidence in dealing with disruptive challenging incidents involving people with multiple complex needs (short term follow-up after training). Participants felt reassured that previously overwhelming challenges in relation to client behavior could be addressed with the CSIS approach. Participants interviewed gave examples of more positive responses to challenging behaviour incidents, which they ascribed to the training.
- Changes to policies driven by the training and/or support were described by interviewees in some organisations, including discussions of the experience of MCN and de-escalation technique discussions with security staff.

- Participants reported that the training made them feel ‘equipped’, encouraged self reflection and self care and that the information covered in the training was fundamental to their work.
- Wider benefits from the training reported by interviewees included that the training served to connect participants (often from different organisations) with each other and forge a more community cohesive response. Additionally, trainees reported that they found the opportunity to connect with GK and BDP staff to be particularly useful.

To date there is not yet available evidence concerning the long-term impact, or other objective data on long-term changed behaviours. There is a lack of follow up data to test whether there is a reliable response to the training, but the feedback from trainees is certainly consistent with training having facilitated this.

### 1.3 Summary – learning and next steps

Interim evaluation interviews with training participants identified initial responses from participating staff and organisations indicating that the foundations for sustained change are in place. A reflective approach was taken to this work and efforts have paid off from the investment in embedding continuous learning. However, one concern is the high turnover of staff in many of the settings where challenging behaviour incidents takes place (e.g. bars, cafes, retail). The partnership forged with the Business Improvement District (BID) is a key strategic benefit for GK. Key questions for GK when considering next steps are how to assure the long term sustainability of the initiative and how to understand the longer term behaviour changes which may result from the intervention.

## 2 About Golden Key and the Local Evaluation

[Golden Key](#) (GK) is an eight-year project that aims to unlock access to services for people with multiple complex needs (MCN), including homelessness, mental health problems, drug/alcohol dependency and criminal offending behaviour. Golden Key is a partnership of statutory and not-for-profit agencies across Bristol (including the NHS, police, probation, City Council, Second Step, Bristol Drugs Project, St Mungo’s and 1625ip) who are piloting new approaches to service delivery and mobilising systems change to ensure a lasting legacy for the city and its most vulnerable residents. It is funded through the National Lottery Community Fund [Fulfilling Lives](#) initiative. A team at UWE, Bristol is working as local evaluation partner to capture evidence and inform practice throughout the initiative<sup>1</sup>.

### 2.1 Why have we produced these case studies?

This case study has been compiled as one of a number of deep-dive investigations of systems change activity and impact in order to (a) understand in depth whether and how a sample of GK’s systems change activity is driving demonstrable change and the relationship with outcomes for people with MCN; and (b) draw out and capture learning from these activities to support enhancing GK’s progress towards systems change. Projects were identified in consultation with the GK Programme Team and Service Coordinator Team (SCT) in order to provide a cross-section of approaches to systems change where there is emerging evidence of outcomes and impact. These qualitative historical evaluation case study reports are intended to sample GK’s systems change activity and support learning, therefore should not be considered as a full comprehensive independent evaluation of the activity. Insights from these case studies will feed into the Phase 4 local evaluation report.

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<sup>1</sup> A selection of additional reports from the local and national evaluation be accessed at <https://www.goldenkeybristol.org.uk/impact-evaluation-reports>.

## 2.2 Research methods and approach

The local evaluation takes a formative approach which aims to support learning and development in a shifting complex environment. It is influenced by 'realist' principles whereby we seek to understand the *mechanisms* through which interventions produce *outcomes* within particular *contexts*. We aim to capture multiple perspectives, differing experiences and unanticipated/unintended consequences. This report presents findings from one qualitative retrospective evaluation case study to support the evaluation objectives. A mixed methods approach has been taken, with case studies based on a combination of semi-structured qualitative interviews as well as a review of associated secondary data sources where available.

Data collection was informed by the GK Phase 4 Local Evaluation Framework<sup>2</sup>, which was used to develop interview questions and structure the analysis process. The evaluation approach included:

**Desk research** included:

- Initial consultation documents with local community on Circle Wellbeing centre
- Quantitative and qualitative feedback on training
- Support guide created for managers
- Safe Inclusive Spaces Guide (most recent version used in Arnos Manor emergency accommodation training).
- Bristol City Centre Business Improvement District (BID) debrief.

The case study draws on 9 interviews with Golden Key staff, including Stephen Pratt (Senior Service Coordinator, Data & Learning Lead); and recipients of the Creating Safe and Inclusive Spaces training from New Rooms; The Station; and TIC (n=4).

## 3 Background and Purpose

### 3.1 Background

The Creative Safe & Inclusive Spaces (CSIS) initiative developed from the recognition that people who experience multiple disadvantages such as homelessness, substance misuse and mental health issues can behave in ways that is sometimes challenging for other members of the community. Staff working in homelessness, mental health and substance misuse services are often trained in how to manage and respond to this challenging behaviour. However, many other members of the Bristol community working in other settings will also experience this behaviour, and may be less well equipped to respond. This can result in those public and work spaces where challenging behaviour presents, feeling unsafe and unwelcoming. It was concluded that the frustrations, fears and anxieties of the public were often contributing to unhelpful narratives and stigmatisation of clients – which further exacerbated the challenge for clients and the community.

This issue was brought into sharp focus in Bristol in early 2018 with the suspension of trading in Bristol's Bearpit due to concerns for the safety of staff working there. Anti-social behaviour had increased to the point staff were being verbally abused and physically assaulted on a regular basis. At a meeting with a range of stakeholders, including Bristol City Council, the Police and traders, the concept of Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) was introduced by a member of the Golden Key (GK) team – Stephen Pratt. As the Bearpit reopened the GK team were able to engage with local tradespeople around the Bearpit and Stokes Croft, and learn more about the specific issues confronting the community. This provided an opportunity for Stephen to advise on how to manage the incidents with complex needs service users.

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<sup>2</sup> Isaac, B., Bolden, R., Pawson, C. and Gasper, R. (2020) *Golden Key Local Evaluation Phase 4 Evaluation Framework*. Bristol Leadership and Change Centre, UWE Bristol, May 2020.

The advisory and reflective process that emerged here incorporated several principles of PIE with Stephen offering information, support for the tradespeople, and an opportunity for reflective practice. This initiative therefore sought to address the needs of members of the community and provide them with skills to reduce the impact of challenging incidents. Through this process of knowledge dissemination and training to local stakeholders, the aim was to make local public spaces where members of the community interact feel safer, and more inclusive, for all.

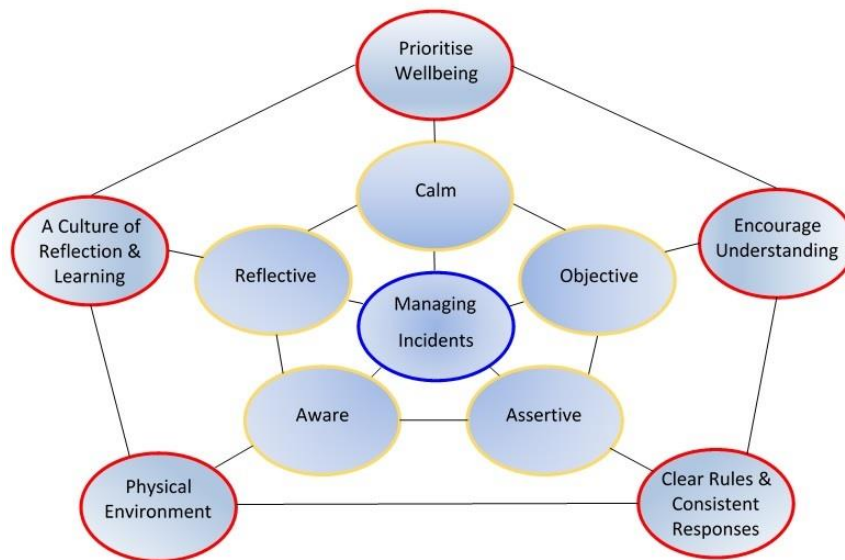
### 3.2 Purpose / aims

The CSIS project was underpinned by a psychologically informed framework, which proposed that members of the community could be enabled to retain more effective psychological and behavioural responses to incidents. More specifically the project proposed that training of staff who may be confronted by challenging behaviours (and their managers) can facilitate the development of a more enabling environment (see Figure 1 below). Consistent with the principles of PIE, this is achieved through the nurturing of a number of environmental factors (outer red ring below).

The theory of change adopted by the project assumes that through encouraging the environmental factors, this in turn supports specific psychological and behavioural responses (inner yellow ring below). These responses are theorised by the project team to be central to successful management of incidents with those with multiple complex needs, and have been termed the 'COAR' responses:

- **Calm** (stay calm and keep control)
- **Objective** (don't take it personally)
- **Assertive** (be clear and consistent)
- **Aware** (know your surroundings)
- **Reflective** (learn from your experience)

Fig.1. CSIS developed illustration of environmental factors and the psychological responses they enable in managing incidents



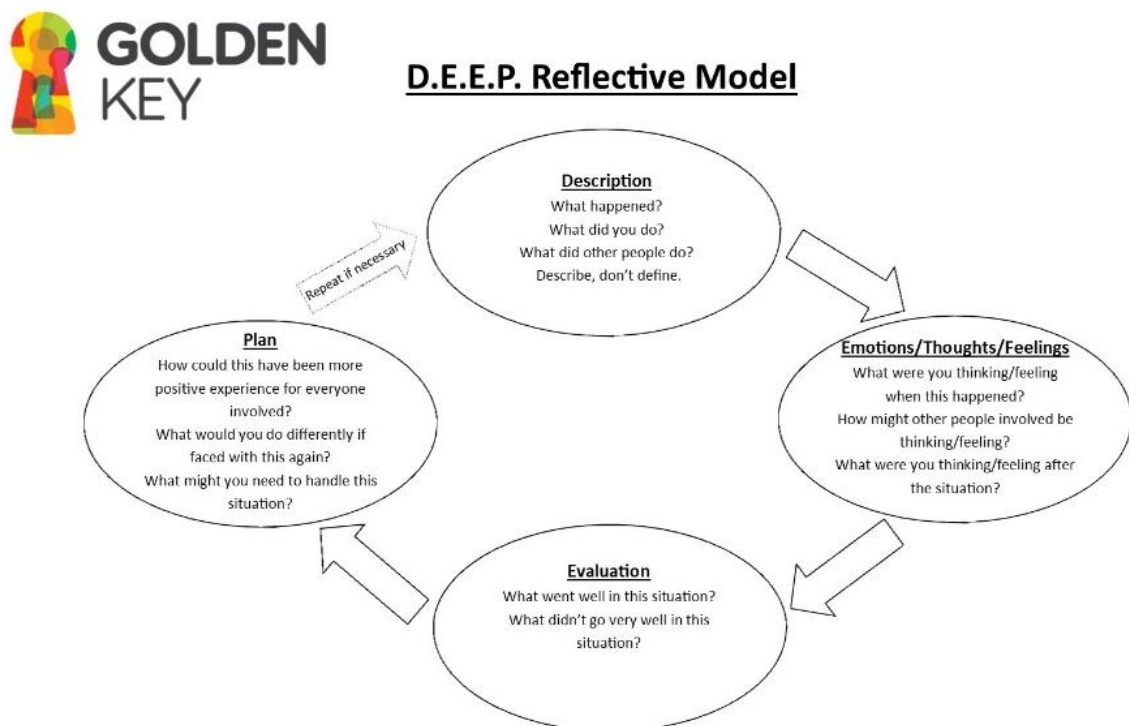
Elaborating on the proposed mechanism by which each of the **red** environmental factors can support the **yellow** COAR psychological and behavioural responses:

- By **prioritising the wellbeing** of staff experiencing difficult interactions with clients, the aim is that organisations can reassure staff and enable a calmer approach that avoids affectively charged interactions and escalation;
- Similarly, **encouraging understanding** of those experiencing multiple disadvantages, facilitates empathy. In turn, this enables a less judgmental and more objective response to challenging

behaviours. Central to the training ethos around encouraging understanding was to ask trainees to consider the following questions: ‘What would need to happen to me for me to behave like this?’ or ‘What must the world look and feel like for this person to behave this way?’;

- iii) The model proposes that the way in which **rules** are responded to when broken is central to avoiding escalation. Adopting a behaviourist approach, it contends that incidents are more likely to escalate and become more frequent when responses are inconsistent and staff are not empowered to be assertive;
- iv) Finally, the model contends that the **physical environment** can have an effect on incidents happening in the first place because the environment impacts how spaces are used and treated by clients. However, it is also influential in facilitating more effective management of incidents when they occur. The objects/furniture and the flow and movement of people in an environment can impede staff members’ ability to manage their own safety and that of others if confronted by challenging behaviour. The physical environment can be improved by learning from experience of incidents that have occurred.
- v) The fifth environmental factor ‘A **Culture of Reflection and Learning**’ the approach seeks to nurture is pivotal to the model because of its role in supporting the further development and strengthening all other environmental factors. It is also central to ensuring continued learning from all incidents, and for managing future incidents more effectively. This pivotal aspect of the model is further theoretically rooted in a four stage ‘DEEP’ model which provides a template for recording incidents and providing reflective support afterwards (see Figure 2 below). This process is proposed in order to draw out any learning from the experience, but also support staff to process and discuss any difficult emotions they may be feeling that if left unchecked could have a negative effect on their wellbeing. CSIS also recommended reflective practice sessions, group briefings before and after shifts, and the identification of ‘champions’ to support and encourage reflective practice.

Fig.2. The Golden Key ‘DEEP’ model of Reflection



Adapted by Stephen Pratt from Gibbs Reflective Cycle (1988)

## 4 Development and implementation

### 4.1 Development and planning

Golden Key have been central to the identification of the challenge, and subsequent development of the project. Through informal engagement with local stakeholders (including business owners and clients), and formal consultations (in late 2018 and early 2019), Stephen Pratt was able to gain an understanding of the views and needs of the community in relation to the impact of multiple and complex needs client behaviour.

Stephen then worked collaboratively with other service providers, including St Mungo's Assertive Contact and Engagement (ACE) service, and Bristol Drugs Project (BDP – Stephen's secondment agency with GK). This served to identify what was already in place, and in collaboration with them a training package was developed. The structure of the training was initially built around the pillars of Psychologically Informed Environments, with a specific focus on:

- **Creating a psychological understanding:** Teaching people about mental health, trauma informed care, personality disorders.
- **Staff support and training:** Exploring burnout, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma and giving advice on managing wellbeing more effectively.
- **Evaluation and Learning:** Through the use of an adapted four step version of Gibbs Reflective Cycle (Gibbs, 1988)<sup>3</sup>, giving participants the tools to learn from incidents by completing this as a post incident debrief.

### 4.2 Implementation and practice

There were three phases of project delivery:

Phase	Activity summary	Timing
<b>Phase 1</b>	Pilot delivery of 1 day training to 11 staff from a local café/bar	Nov 2018
<b>Phase 2</b>	6 x ½ day training sessions delivered to 46 manager and staff groups of participants from 16 stakeholder organisations	Mar-May 2019
<b>Phase 3</b>	Further training and support delivered in collaboration with Bristol City Centre Business Improvement District (BID) to 38 participants from 11 stakeholder organisations. Additional consultative support offered to managers and participants before/after training.	Oct-Nov 2019

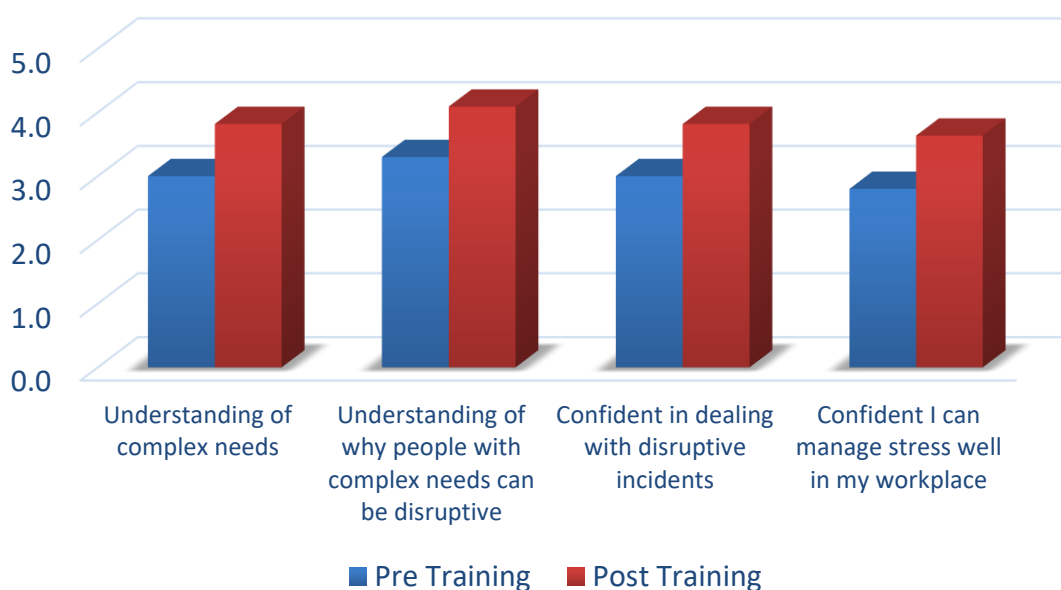
**Phase 1:** In Phase 1, a full day of training was delivered to 11 members of staff from 'The Canteen', a local café/bar. The content and context of the training was then amended following reflection on the learning from the delivery of the training. This training was evaluated and there was, descriptively speaking, some increase in participant understanding (see figure 3 below). Feedback was positive and contributed to the further evolution of the training for Phase 2.

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<sup>3</sup> Gibbs, G. (1988). Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford.



Fig.3. Mean Pre- and Post CSIS Training Outcome Evaluation Scores



**Phase 2:** Phase 2 involved the delivery of 6 half day sessions which was now termed ‘Managing Incidents and Wellbeing at Work’ training. 46 participants from 16 different organisations received the training which, on the basis of feedback was now half a day of less didactic and more active learning. Training recipients included staff from community centres, bars, cafes and the Tourist Information Centre. In addition, Golden Key now delivered the training separately to managers and staff due to differing needs, and to facilitate a more open environment for reflective practice.

**Phase 3:** Reflection on the Phase 2 training led to the development of a more mixed consultative-training model. In partnership with the Bristol City Centre Business Improvement District (BID), organisations were identified and provided with consultative support. After consultation with managerial staff, they received advice and a ‘Guide for Managers’, and could also opt into additional training for staff (as per Phase 2), or provision for ad hoc reflective practice from GK staff and peer mentors. This resulted in provision of support for 38 participants from 11 different organisations. All training in Phase 3 was followed up with the offer of a 1 hour session on the DEEP model to help in thinking about any incident that had occurred post training, and to embed the DEEP Model as a debrief tool.

### 4.3 Future Delivery

The team have since reflected on low take up of reflective practice offering, and the ‘marketing’ of the training. There are some concerns that there is suspicion as to why managers may initiate training, and the explanation and underlying motivation for the training is all important for uptake and engagement. Future plans prior to Covid-19 were to address these issues, incorporate more of a client ‘lived experience’ voice, and develop a workbook.

## 5 Understanding change

### 5.1 Change for people with multiple complex needs (MCN) and other service users

GK clients or a specific cohort of MCN individuals	Wider population of MCN service users in Bristol	Service users generally
MAYBE	MAYBE	MAYBE

There is a lack of objective evidence from the service user perspective to suggest that the training has changed the experience of people with MCN, or other service users. However, there are several indicators from the evaluation to date to suggest that recipients of training are more aware of the experiences of clients and are more likely to adopt a different (less stigmatised) perspective toward them. Several interviews with recipients of training reveal incidents where the response to challenging behaviour, and new policies, have been more positive. These different responses are ascribed to training.

## 5.2 Changes within and between organisations

Changes in individual staff (values, behaviours, beliefs, skills, knowledge)	Coordination/structural changes <u>within</u> organisations	Coordination/structural changes <u>between</u> organisations	Change experienced by Bristol citizens
YES	YES	MAYBE	YES

The training was very well received with participants reporting that it made them feel ‘equipped’ and that the information covered in the training is fundamental to their work and should be rolled out more widely.

*“I just feel more capable in dealing with it and also I think less at risk of engaging myself too much with the situation like now I’m doing what I can to support and help and make sure everyone’s ok”.*

A strong theme in the feedback and interviews is that the training encourages self-reflection and self-care. Trainees reported feeling more self-aware, and particularly in relation to the cost of managing challenging behaviours.

*“On work I think it’s made me acknowledge things like if I’m having a stressful time at work then I need to just prioritise what’s important and instead of letting myself get bogged down half in all the actual stressful, traumatic situations that are going on”.*

The data above (see Fig 3.) suggest that the training approach is, at least in the short term, able to increase knowledge and understanding amongst participants. To date there is no data concerning the longitudinal impact, or objective data on behavioural change. However, as described above, the follow up interviews reveal some different narratives concerning MCN service users and challenging behavior.

*“People can start to be quite negative in the way they speak about the young people, they’re obviously all professionals in youth work so not to a massive degree. But you can feel that slipping in and I think now I’m a lot more careful to never ever use that kind of language or that kind of tone. ‘She’s really difficult’ I just don’t want to be talking like that about these people, so I think it’s made me much more conscious about the way that I communicate what’s going on with them, even though their behaviours, the way that I communicate and keep trying to remind people, there are reasons why this is happening”.*

*“I think that that exercise kind of helped me kind of think about the wider impact that all those different issues have on each other. That kind of allows you to, or prevents you, I suppose from pigeon holing people in a way that perhaps can happen quite easily. I think my understanding of that has helped my approach to speaking to other people whose understanding is... And just*



*kind of recognize them as people with problems rather than problems themselves”.*

Furthermore, there are evident changes to policy in some of the organisations who engaged with the training, including discussions of the experience of MCN and de-escalation techniques discussed with security staff.

*“The learning from this training factored into that very heavily to the point that now our guidelines, I think it's guidelines rather than policy. Our guidelines feature, the four gears of managing incidents. So they are clearly noted in the guidelines that are going to be taking part in staff training, to some degree volunteer training, and future inductions. Those four gears are our approach to the situations highlighting around the consistency and being prepared to follow through with consequences. So I think that was a really key part of the learning that I took away from the situation”.*

*“I think sometimes there are some members of staff that say ‘why are they here? Why are they doing this?’ but I think it's put it back to the front of my mind that it's so complex what's going on in their lives, there's multiple reasons why they're here and why they're behaving the way they do. I think the way that I communicate that to other members of staff has probably changed for the better as well”.*

Trainees reported that they found the opportunity to connect with GK and BDP staff to be particularly useful. They were reassured that previously overwhelming challenges in relation to client behavior could be addressed with the approach CSIS provided. They also reported that the training served to connect them with Golden Key and each other as local stakeholders and forge a more community cohesive response. There is a lack of follow up data to test whether there is a coordinated response, but the feedback from trainees is certainly consistent with training having facilitated this.

## 6 Engagement with GK system change principles

The Phase 4 evaluation framework outlines nine key principles/assumptions that underpin the GK approach to system change. The extent to which these are evident within the (a) approach and (b) within the outcomes of Safe and Inclusive Spaces are summarised below.

- **PERSON CENTRED, ADAPTIVE SERVICES:** The CSIS project was consistently seeking to tailor its support to the specific needs of individuals and organisations. Prior to Covid the aim was to further develop the consultative model to support this.
- **SUPPORT WORK INFORMED BY PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY:** This is a real strength of this project. The CSIS project was informed by PIE and sought to articulate its own model for change. Everything is in place for an impact for people with MCN.
- **SERVICES INFORMED BY MCN LIVED EXPERIENCE:** There has been involvement by peer mentors, and some initial consultation with a few service users. However, this was clearly articulated as an aim prior to Covid.
- **FOCUS ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS:** In many respects, this project is all about developing the relationships between staff within organisations (through reflective practice) and with the MCN clients they come in to contact with.
- **STAFF SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT:** As above, the commitment to staff is evident in the model. However, the lack of uptake of reflective practice suggests that a mechanism by which this was posited to be achieved has been hampered.

- **LEARNING AND REFLECTION:** The initial strengths-based, and consultative approach deployed in developing the approach reveals a strong orientation toward L&R. This evidently continued throughout with the embedding of RP, but also the constant evolution of the programme in response to feedback.
- **DIVERSITY OF PERSPECTIVES & EXPERIENCE:** It is not clear how the sampling of views in consultations operated, or the extent to which partners such as BID represent diversity, but the approach appears to have been inclusive, and open.
- **PARTNERSHIP WORKING:** The approach of the team to collate examples of best practice and then collaborate and co-produce (with BDP, ACE and Streetwise) was evident from the outset. The subsequent evolution appears to have become much more GK owned – but the partnership working continued to be nurtured through different channels (e.g. BID). This partnership has strong potential to support and sustain the CSIS project post-Covid.
- **WHOLE SYSTEM APPROACH:** Overall this is unclear. The development of the initiative itself certainly reflects consideration which found an innovative alternative to designing interventions within/between services to effect change for people with multiple disadvantage. The intervention not only aims to meet the needs of those organisations/staff who are dealing with challenging behaviours in Bristol’s public places, but also intends to improve experiences for people with multiple disadvantage. If the intervention works as intended and incidents are less frequently escalated to other services, there may also be a positive outcomes for services too.

## 7 Learning and next steps

Interim evaluation interviews with training participants identified initial responses from participating staff and organisations indicating that the foundations for sustained change are in place. A reflective approach was taken to this work and efforts have paid off from the investment in embedding continuous learning, through the training evolving over time to better meet participants’ needs and GK’s aims. However, one concern which may affect the initiative’s ability to effect long term sustained change in experiences of people with multiple disadvantage, is the high turnover of staff in many of the settings where challenging behaviour incidents takes place (e.g. bars, cafes, retail). GK are aware of this risk and prior to Covid, had proposed some alternative approaches which could address the issue.

The partnership forged with the Business Improvement District (BID) is a key strategic benefit for GK. BID’s awareness of this initiative (and increasingly co-productive role) as well as their role in identifying potential organisations in need of support, points to a sustainable future.

- i) How can the initiative’s sustainability be assured in the long term, given the project is highly dependent on the knowledge and motivation of a very small and fixed term contracted GK team?
- ii) What can be planned to understand and capture whether/how longer term behaviour changes are embedded in the community of participating staff and organisations?

**Should you have any queries about the GK local evaluation or feedback on this report please email [chris.pawson@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:chris.pawson@uwe.ac.uk) or [Richard.Bolden@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Richard.Bolden@uwe.ac.uk).**