



Terms of Reference: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Consultancy for the Making it Matter Project

1. Background

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation (CBF) is the only UK charity specifically focused on the needs of children, young people and adults with severe learning disabilities whose behaviour may be described as challenging, and their families.

Building on our record of designing and delivering co-produced [training workshops](#) and spreading evidence-based practice on engaging with young people with severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities under our [What Matters to Me](#) project, the CBF has received funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to deliver *Making it Matter: no voice but a lot to say*. *Making it Matter* is a five-year project to increase direct engagement with young people with severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities who have been historically excluded from engagement activities.

This project is funded by [The UK Fund](#), as part of The National Lottery Community Fund's 2023-2030 strategic commitments to put community first. Funding projects that help children and young people thrive is one of the funder's four key missions and this project will enable that by supporting children and young people to shape the decisions that affect them and their communities.

The Making it Matter project will involve three main areas of activity:

- Co-producing a new training workshop to support and encourage other organisations to directly engage with young people in a way which will influence policy and practice.
- Ensuring the perspectives of young people with severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities whose behaviours challenge inform the work of the [Challenging Behaviour-National Strategy Group](#).

- Establishing a national online community of practice to share learning and identify themes for UK-wide policy influencing.

The CBF will work closely with partners on this project: [PAMIS](#) in Scotland and the [Southern Health and Care Trust](#) in Northern Ireland to support work to embed this approach across the UK; the [Race Equality Foundation](#) will support a specific focus on working with minority ethnic groups to identify systemic issues where race intersects with disability; and, the University of Birmingham will continue to ensure that the approach used is rigorous, ethical and based on the latest evidence.

2. Objectives

The CBF is seeking a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Consultant or consulting team to ensure that data and insights inform the Making it Matter project's work and effectively demonstrate our impact while also developing systems that enable us to gather evidence to demonstrate and share our learning with others. The consultant / team will embed project MEL systems, provide technical support and guide the team. In addition, the consultant /team will lead on evaluation, develop data collection tools, analyse data and share reports and learning to improve project effectiveness.

3. Scope and Focus

The MEL Consultant will be responsible for delivering the following scope of work over the five-year project period (2026-2031):

3.1 MEL Framework

The MEL Consultant will design and deliver a monitoring, evaluation and learning framework for the project, with a focus on understanding and evidencing systems change and transformational, sustainable impact for young people with severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities. This will include:

- Identifying an outcomes framework (either existing or newly developed) that we can use to set goals, track progress and measure the success of our work.
- Developing tools and systems for collecting data and feedback throughout the project
- Identifying Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) measures
- Designing impact measures
- Analysing and disseminating feedback from the CB-National Strategy Group meetings, the training workshops and the Community of Practice.

The consultant will establish processes for ongoing learning and reflection, helping the project team understand what is and is not working, assess outcomes and impact for participants and stakeholders, and identify opportunities for improvement. The

approach should be iterative and adaptive, enabling learning to inform decision-making throughout the life of the project. The MEL consultant will seek the input of project stakeholders including family carers when designing and delivering the MEL Framework.

The National Lottery has guidance on [Reporting progress | The National Lottery Community Fund](#) and [Gathering evidence and learning | The National Lottery Community Fund](#) including tools to gather data. This guidance will inform our approach to gathering evidence and sharing our learning from this project.

3.2 Critical Friend

As a critical friend, the MEL Consultant will provide independent challenge, reflection and constructive feedback to support project learning, adaptation and continuous improvement throughout the programme. The consultant will attend Project Steering Group meetings and facilitate twice-yearly Critical Learning Meetings with national partners, creating opportunities to review progress, test assumptions, identify emerging learning and inform decision-making. Insights generated through these processes will help guide project delivery.

3.3 Interim Evaluation

An interim evaluation report will be produced by the MEL consultant to assess project progress, including the extent to which intended and unintended outcomes are being achieved, the factors influencing success or challenges, and recommendations for strengthening delivery during the remainder of the project. The report will also identify strengths, limitations and key lessons learned from the *Making it Matter* project to inform ongoing improvement and future practice.

3.4 Workshop Pilot Evaluation and Final workshop evaluation

At the end of Year 2, the MEL Consultant will undertake an evaluation of the workshop pilot to assess its effectiveness, relevance, and contribution to intended outcomes. The evaluation will identify strengths, areas for improvement and key learning to inform the refinement and successful roll-out of the workshop model across the remainder of the project. This will be followed by a final workshop evaluation in Year 5.

3.5 Final Evaluation

The MEL consultant will support the project to measure the difference it makes, assess how activities contribute to changes in services, systems and organisational practice, and identify the extent to which young people with severe or profound and multiple learning disabilities are influencing decisions that affect them.

The Final Evaluation will also review the recommendations of the Interim Evaluation and assess the extent to which these were implemented.

The MEL consultant will submit an initial evaluation plan for review by the Making it Matter team which will include the methodology, ethical review process and draft information forms and draft interview guidance that will be shared with stakeholders. The consultant will be responsible for recruiting stakeholders to participate in the evaluation. The consultant will gather, analyse and synthesise a range of evidence, including quantitative and qualitative data, project documents, primary and secondary research, and evidence drawn from lived experience, stories, reflection and participation. The evaluation approach should assess progress against the UK Fund aims by examining how the project:

- Supports children and young people facing specific challenges to influence and change the systems that affect them.
- Increases the capacity of organisations to involve, listen to and respond to the voices of children and young people.
- Contributes to wider systems change and sustainable improvements in policy, practice or service delivery.

3.6 Stakeholders

Stakeholders will include (but are not limited to):

- Young people with severe learning disabilities or profound and multiple learning disabilities
- Family carers
- Partner organisations
- Professionals participating in our training workshops
- Steering group and working group members
- Service providers
- CBF staff and volunteers

4. Deliverables

Deliverable	To be completed by
Draft Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework	November 2026
Final Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework including: • Impact measures • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion measures • Outcomes Framework	December 2026

• Tools and systems for collecting data and feedback throughout the project • Ethical considerations	
Evaluation forms for ongoing feedback for workshops, community of practice and CB National Strategy Group meetings	January 2027
Workshop pilot evaluation	October 2028
Training workshop quality monitoring - Review training workshop content and feedback with co-trainers and project team	April 2028
Interim report on project progress	October 2028
Annual feedback to enable continuous learning - 2 x critical learning meetings per year	Annually
Full evaluation of training workshop	October 2030
Initial evaluation plan for review by the Making it Matter team to include: • Methodology • Ethical review process • Draft information forms • Draft interview guidance	November 2030
Final project evaluation report	April 2031

5. Reporting and Location

The consultant will report to the Learning Disability Sharing Best Practice Lead and work closely with the Making it Matter team to ensure effective implementation and development of key deliverables. Regular progress reports and feedback sessions will be scheduled to track milestones and address any emerging issues. This role is remote but will require occasional travel within the UK to attend meetings. The initial contract will be for a period of six months, at which point it will be reviewed for extension.

The Evaluator will need to attend meetings with the Making it Matter Team. In addition, they will be required to participate in the following meetings:

- Project Steering Group meetings (2 hour online meetings every quarter).

- Conduct bi-annual critical learning meetings

6. Ethical Considerations

All MEL activities must be conducted in accordance with recognised ethical research principles, ensuring that participants are able to participate safely, meaningfully and on an informed basis. Evaluation methods should be accessible and inclusive, with appropriate adjustments made to meet different communication, sensory, cognitive and support needs. The CBF has robust Consent and Best Interest Procedures in place which will be shared with the MEL Consultant during the inception phase. The MEL Consultant will be responsible for managing consent processes during all evaluations. All personal information must be collected, stored, processed and shared in compliance with UK GDPR and the Data (Use and Access) Act 2025, with clear arrangements for data security, confidentiality, anonymisation and retention. Particular care should be taken when handling sensitive personal data relating to disability, health, lived experience and protected characteristics. MEL activities should uphold the rights, dignity and voice of participants while ensuring findings are reported in a way that protects individual privacy and confidentiality.

7. Person Specification

- A proven track-record in developing MEL frameworks and systems.
- Demonstrated experience in project level monitoring, evaluation, and learning in the charity sector.
- Strong background in using both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools.
- Excellent analytical and research skills, including the ability to process large amounts of information, present it appropriately and extract critical analysis from it.
- Demonstrated experience translating complex data into strategic insights.
- Excellent written, communication, and facilitation skills.
- Knowledge/experience of the issues facing children, young people and adults with severe or profound learning disabilities, whose behaviours may be described as challenging and their families.
- Experience in involving stakeholders in MEL framework design and delivery.
- Understanding and alignment with the CBF values and the [Challenging Behaviour Foundation Charter](#) and a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

- Able to work constructively with a small project team and steering group to provide independent challenge, reflection and constructive feedback.

8. Timing

The consultancy will begin in late October 2026 and end in April 2031.

9. Budget

The budget for this MEL Consultancy is £69,750 over 5 years inclusive of any applicable VAT.

10. Selection criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on the candidate's qualifications, relevant experience, and demonstrated ability to fulfil the scope of work outlined in this document, in particular:

- Presentation of experience in the implementation of comparable tasks.
- Draft proposal of detailed tasks and sub-tasks (that presents clear understanding of deliverables).
- Overall qualification of the individual and cost proposal.

11. Confidentiality and Intellectual Property

The consultant is expected to maintain the confidentiality of all project related information. All reports, data and other materials generated by the consultant will be the property of the CBF.

12. How to Apply

Please submit your application to makingitmatter@theCBF.org.uk by 5pm on 30th September 2026 with the subject heading: 'Making it Matter MEL Consultancy'. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview on 15th October 2026. If you have any questions, please send them to makingitmatter@theCBF.org.uk before the 24th September 2026

Applications should include:

- A cover letter explaining how the applicant's experience is relevant to this project and describing a track record of similar undertakings (2 pages max).
- Curriculum vitae for individual consultant or for all team members if applying as a team.
- Technical proposal outlining understanding of the consultancy, a tentative methodology, and a draft workplan (4 pages max).

- Financial Proposal including daily rate and proposed budget
- Contact details for two professional references.