



The BeST? Services Trial Newsletter – May 2022

A reminder about the trial...

BeST? is a randomised controlled trial comparing an infant mental health service (the New Orleans Intervention Model, or NIM) with social work's services-as-usual. Eligible families have been invited to take part if they have a child aged between 0 and 5 years when they entered an episode of foster care, kinship care, or PLO arranged by social work services in Glasgow or London.

Once consented by their birth parents, participants have been randomised by a computer into one of the two arms of the study: Case Management (services-as-usual) or Infant and Family Team (GIFT in Glasgow and LIFT in London), an intervention following the NIM model which is provided by the NSPCC in partnership with the study in the UK.

The BeST? research team aims to find out which service works best for children's development and wellbeing: Case Management or GIFT/LIFT.



BeST? finished recruiting participants

Recruitment for the study was completed in August 2021. In total, 488 children – from 382 families – were consented into the trial, of whom 378 are in Glasgow and 110 are in London, making BeST? one of the largest studies conducted in foster care, as well as the first one of its kind in the UK.

Data collection is on track!

We are collecting data at three time points:

- ✓ when the family comes into the study
- ✓ about a year later
- ✓ at 2.5 years after the family came into the study

The data is collected in the form of self-completion questionnaires, interviews, and video data, following additional consent from the child's current main carer.

Data collection is progressing well, even though we have had to adapt our collection methods with the covid pandemic and move from face-to-face visits (at the hospital or participant's home) to remote visits, which are being conducted by telephone, electronically and/or online.

Assessments completed	Children
Time 1	446
Time 2	342
Time 3	262

We are on course to deliver a trial with statistically robust results. Work is underway with participating local authorities to collect other data in relation to the children, such as placement outcomes and more information about the parenting assessment families have received. This will help us to measure the cost effectiveness of NIM compared with services-as-usual.



Making a difference

Although the results are not yet known the study is already making an impact:

- ✓ The Scottish Government is now funding infant mental health teams across Scotland.
- ✓ In Glasgow and some participating London boroughs, the NSPCC will continue to provide GIFT and LIFT parenting assessments for some families.
- ✓ A new intervention development and feasibility trial, Partnership for Change, has been funded and is just getting started. It will take place in Glasgow and Bromley and incorporates many of the elements of NIM, together with other support mechanisms that will support families with some of the structural issues they face when their child has a social worker.

Who is organising and funding this research?

This study is run by the University of Glasgow and Kings College London and is funded by the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR). The trial is supported by the NSPCC.

Confidentiality

All information is stored according to the UK Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and kept in strict confidence within the research and clinical team, except in the unlikely event of concerns about safety of the child and/or others.

Thank you for being a part of our research study!

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<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/research/the-best-services-trial>
2min video about the study: <http://bit.ly/BeSTmedia>