

At a glance

Development of core outcome sets for family and child-focused interventions for child maltreatment and domestic violence

Key messages

- We developed two core outcomes sets that those who use, deliver and commission services agreed were the most important to measure.
- We involved survivors of violence and abuse and practitioners at every stage of the process.
- The aim is for the core outcome sets to be reported as *a minimum* in evaluations of child maltreatment and domestic violence interventions where the child is the focus; this includes interventions delivered to caregivers or other family members.

Why we did this study

It is not possible to summarise evidence from across studies about which child maltreatment and domestic violence programmes work best because: 1) studies measure different outcomes in different ways; and 2) the outcomes that are measured are not always priorities for families or practitioners. Core outcome sets can resolve these problems.

Implications

By applying the core outcome sets in different contexts we will understand the challenges in collecting these outcomes. We welcome all use and feedback.

Work is needed to understand whether the outcomes need adapting for minoritised groups. We will carry out further work to address this.

The next stage is a consensus process on how core outcomes should be measured. This will involve making the outcomes more specific and scoping how they are currently measured. The first stage of this work has begun. You can find out more [on our webpage](#).

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The two core outcome sets

Child maltreatment

- **Child abuse and neglect**
includes all harms caused to a child by adults in a position of responsibility
- **Service harms**
Any retraumatising effects of the intervention
- **Child's trusted relationships**
Positive relationships a child has with any adults

- **Child emotional health & wellbeing**
All aspects of emotional and mental health
- **Feelings of safety**
Includes psychological and physical safety

- **Freedom to go about daily life**
For example, getting home safely from school

- **Family relationships**
Quality and type of relationship with birth/foster/adoptive family

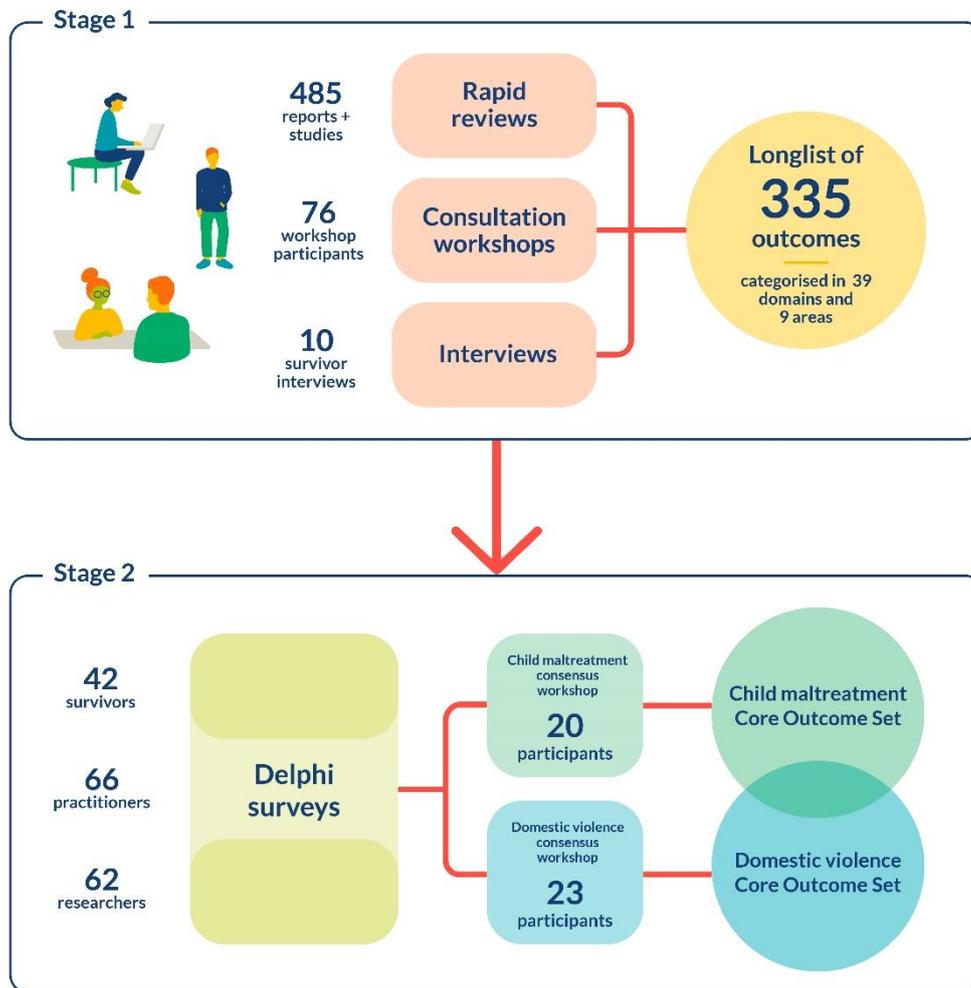
- **Caregiver emotional health & wellbeing**
All aspects of emotional and mental health

Domestic violence

There are two outcomes (child emotional health and wellbeing; feelings of safety) that are in both core outcome sets.

When evaluating or researching interventions, core outcomes should be reported along with other outcomes specific to the intervention.

How we developed the core outcome sets



Our core outcome set development process followed [COMET Initiative guidelines](#) and we pre-registered and published our [protocol](#).

We involved over 300 survivors, researchers, practitioners, commissioners, and policymakers as stakeholders in the consensus process. At least one in four participants were survivors to ensure their perspective was central.

In addition, we had two survivor advisory groups and an expert advisory group, advising the team throughout the process. We also undertook all the necessary ethical review.

As part of the first stage of the process we devised a comprehensive outcomes taxonomy. This was based on stakeholder consultation and pre-existing taxonomies and enabled us to categorise the outcomes into nine broad areas and 39 domains. The [taxonomy](#) has already sparked the interest of practitioners and commissioners.

Limitations: Covid-19 impacted on stage 2, moving all activity online. Restricting involvement to those with internet access affected minoritised groups particularly. We will address this in future work.

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