



Changing childhoods.
Changing lives.

The rise and rise of the learning partnership

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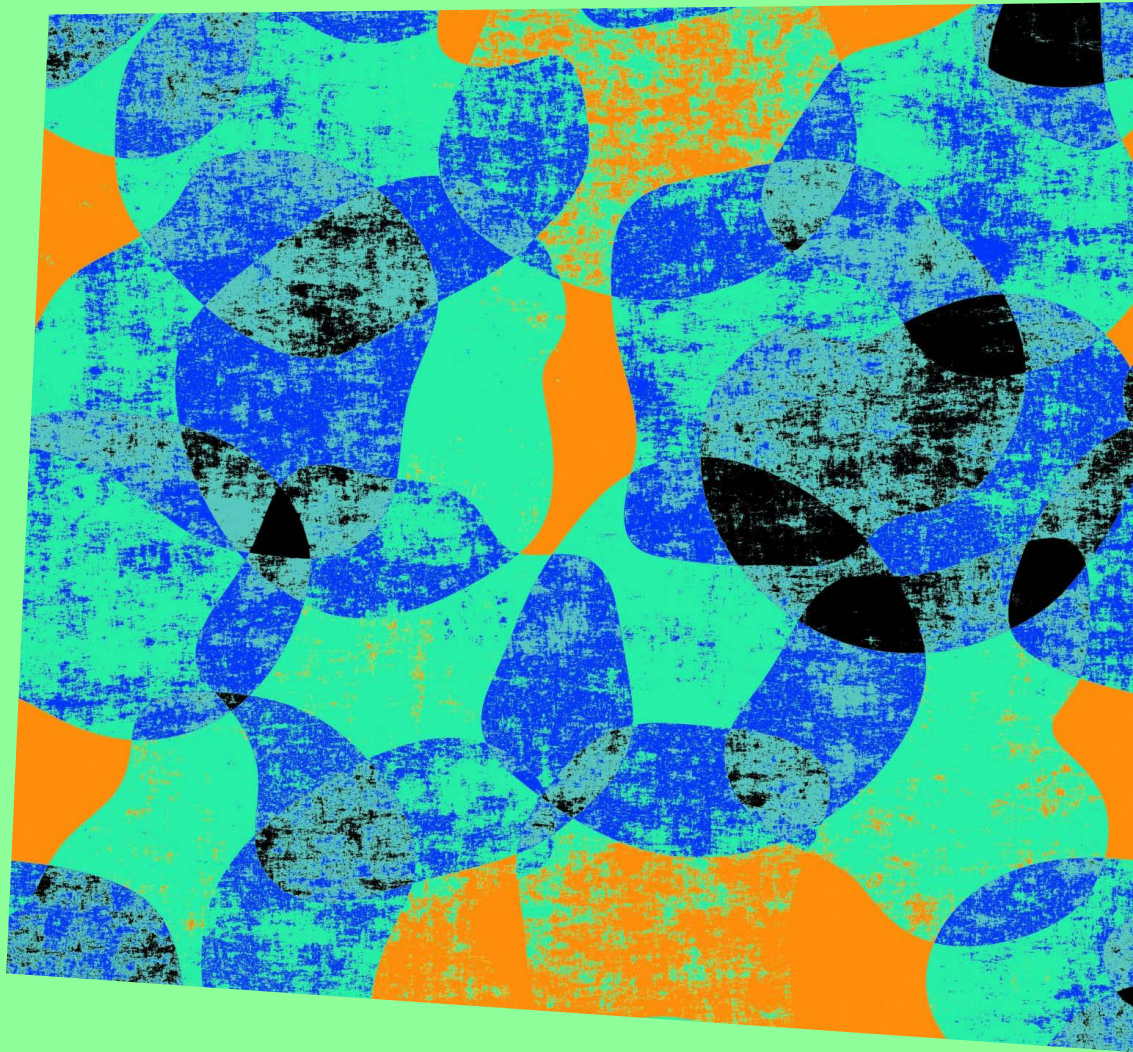
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About me



What is a learning partnership?



Started becoming more and more popular as an option for going beyond conventional evaluation research



Increasingly commissioned by organisations already working in partnerships, to add more depth/ embeddedness



Intended to amplify, deepen and/or get more value from commissioned evaluative research



Partner can be more integrated in intervention teams; get a deep understanding of contexts and values



Partner *facilitates* learning, bringing stakeholders together, ideating more on insights and the “so what” question

Why are learning partnerships becoming more popular?



Perception that learning partnerships are better at recognising and working with complexity and change



A feeling that evaluation makes people feel judged, burdened, done-to...learning partners as the antidote to this – anti-oppressive?

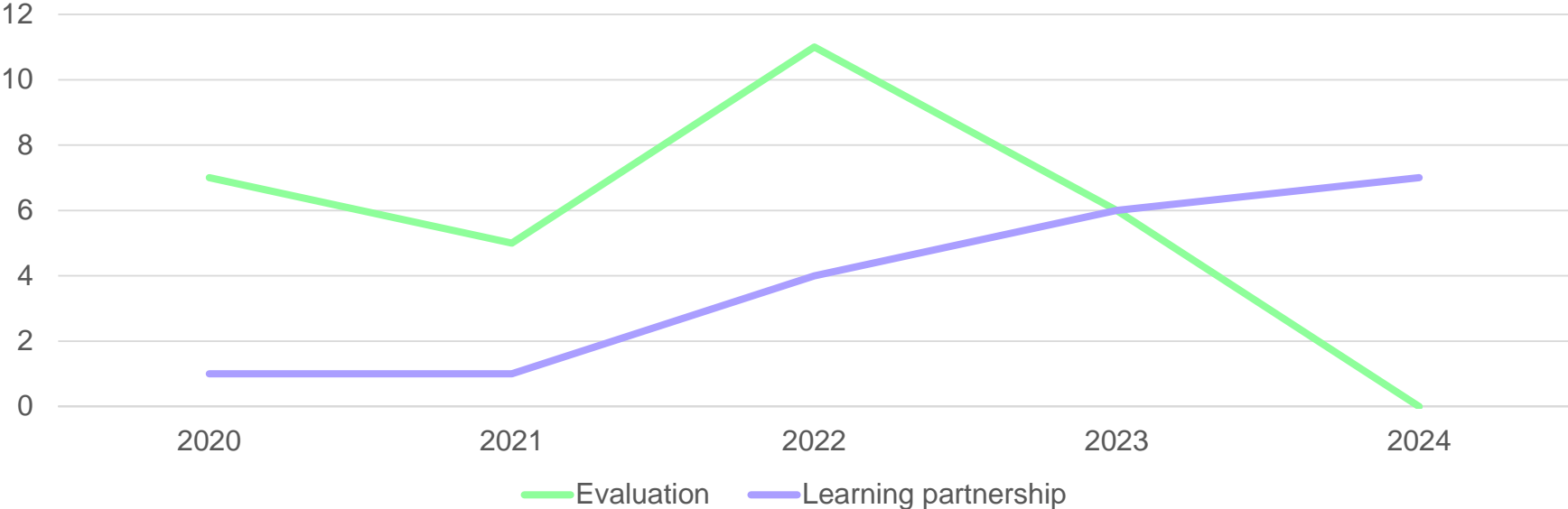


Needing to evaluate complex (systems) change interventions/partnerships (multi-year, multi-site), recognising social problems can be 'wicked'

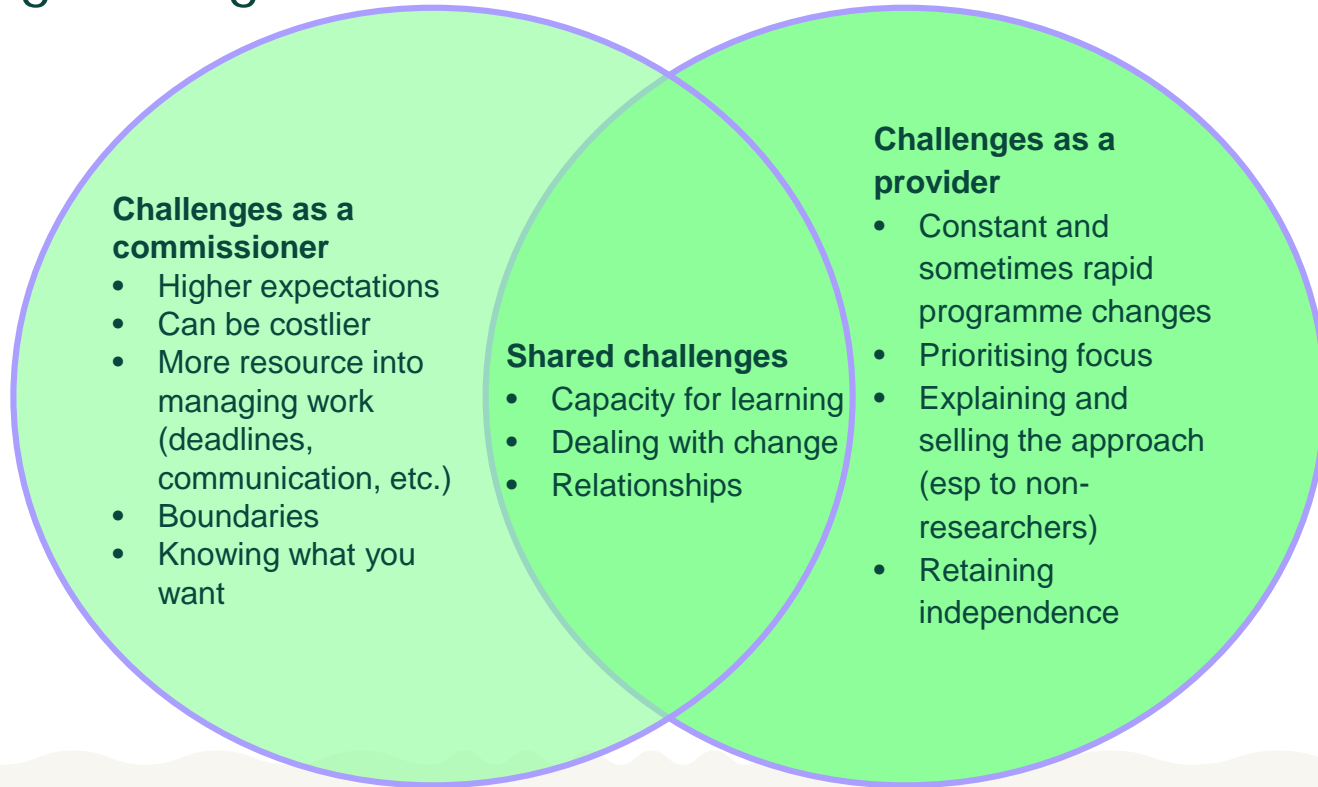


Seeking more value from evaluative work (helping to deeply understand problems and embed change) as you go – not waiting for a 'final report' to drop

Applications to Barnardo's research ethics committee



So far, so good...right?



Some thoughts and provocations on navigating partnerships

- **Not evaluation but just with more terms and conditions!**
 - Distinct characteristics of learning partnerships
 - Not just asking for more under the same old terms
- **Is it enough to be a good researcher/evaluator to also be a good learning partner?**
 - What skills and principles do we need?
 - What is the *role* of the partner?
- **Keep a focus on continuous learning, so decision-making is responsive and relational**
 - How do you maintain open and honest dialogue when you are deeply embedded in teams?
 - Getting the right balance between independent and partner

Some thoughts and provocations on navigating partnerships

When should you chose an evaluation versus a learning partner?

- Is there room for a blended approach?
- Not 'flip flopping' between the two

Do they work better in some settings than others?

- Yes, they probably do!

Who should shape, commission and manage a learning partnership?

- Given it isn't a *pure* evaluation, should research teams still 'own' this space?
- Yes...we are good gatekeepers!

What are the results you would really value?

- Outputs, outcomes and impact of the partnership



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Questions?

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