

Figure 15. Proportion of closed clients who completed the COMT at baseline and final.

6.1. Clients were receptive to filling out the COMT questionnaire during our interviews

Clients who took part in the provider and client interviews in late 2019 were asked to complete the COMT questionnaire towards the end of the interview.

All clients were receptive to completing the COMT questionnaire and enjoyed discussing their progress with the interviewer. A few interviewed clients disclosed they were unable to read or write, however, felt confident enough to complete the COMT questionnaire with the interviewer reading the questions.

Clients had mixed views on the COMT questions. Some thought they were easy to understand and captured what they wanted to say about their progress, whereas others found the questions difficult and prescriptive.

If they could get client voices to be more user friendly. (Christchurch financial mentor)

I think all those questions are pertinent and go to the heart and the crux of the matter. (Auckland client 2)

No, they're hard to answer. They are too 'feeling in control of debt' it could be reworded differently; they seem very cold. (Northland client 1)

When we interviewed clients, we asked them to reflect on how they would have scored themselves at their first BFC service appointment and where they felt they were at the time of the interview. Having a visual aid meant clients could sit and reflect on their journey and share stories about the changes they had made. When clients reflected on their changes, they often shared their lack of knowledge and education around money and debt and compared how much they had learnt in their time at the BFC service.

When I was in the car it was all zero because I didn't have the basic needs, I didn't have a house, I didn't have control of my debt because I wasn't receiving an income, I didn't know where to start, I was lost totally. It was a total difference to where I am today. Now all tens. I feel heaps better. Every day I wake up and think thank you. Northland Client K3)

I feel 100% in control of [my debt]. Before I entered the BFC service it was all pretty low. I'm certainly on track... I got into a situation where I have to set goals. I know where I'm headed, I know what I'm doing and I know exactly how much a week I get, so it's up to me to make the most of that and make it work for me. (Northland Client K2)

[Looking at the COMT questionnaire now and reflecting on how far I've come] it is a massive shift. In three months, I have made these changes and it's because of one person that sees me every week. (Northland Client K4)

6.2. Providers reported challenges in using the COMT questionnaire

Although the COMT is a way to continuously track progress, there have been challenges in using the measurement tool. Providers and clients discussed the challenges with the COMT. These included:

- The COMT questionnaire did not reflect positive change for clients who have expenses well beyond their income. Some clients COMT scores will not change, because their expenses are simply too great. Capturing the clients' wellbeing and the state of their *whare tapa whā* may be more beneficial when assessing changes with this client group.

The outcomes differ as well, some clients – from clients I've got, particularly ones receiving work and income benefit, my experience we could get things sorted and they are on a very limited budget, doing everything right. But their living expenses are so high and their income so low that from beginning to end, the answers on that page are not going to change. (Christchurch financial mentor)

- Some providers did not feel it was appropriate for clients to complete the COMT when they were in a very emotional and stressful state. Providers were solely focussed on getting to know their client, listening to their story and putting their worries at ease.

If we've had a really bad session, we're not going to say, 'hey we're going to do a survey' and they're in tears. (Auckland financial mentor)

It depends on the client as not all want to complete the questions; some clients don't even want to sign the privacy waiver. We need to understand the client where they're at this moment. (Auckland financial mentor)

- Confusion about the use of COMT and completion intervals

When we first started using that [the COMT] we didn't understand how it was meant to be used. We thought it was meant to be used when we first met them and then when we finished working with the client. But when we had our meeting with [the Ministry of Social Development] they said we are meant to use the 10 questions after each session. So that they see the change. (Auckland provider manager)

- Some providers had their own way of measuring client changes and often opted to use their in-house measurement tools.

We use a survey with similar questions. We have a survey that does all our services. Our staff will write notes in regard to if [clients have] achieved being out of debt then that becomes an outcome for us. We look at it as an outcome rather than financially debt free. (Wellington provider manager)

- The level of literacy and confidence of some clients meant that the questionnaire was sometimes misinterpreted, and the answers did not accurately reflect the client's situation.

I don't really use that because my clients don't know how to answer it - like one client circled 9. She didn't understand it. (Auckland financial mentor group)

Yes, we fill those out but it depends on the client. Most of the ones over 50 it's too much for them. We just say to them well how do you feel now? (Auckland financial mentor group)

Most of them don't know, we have to tell them. It really depends on their level of literacy. There are some who I have to read the questions for them. Some are accurate and some are not. Most of them don't answer (Hamilton financial mentor 2)

The relationships between the financial mentors and clients was predominantly an open and honest relationship. By working closely with their clients, financial mentors were able to see whether their clients understood the COMT questions. Some providers considered that reading and discussing the questionnaire was a way to authentically capture the progress of the client without confusing them with the paperwork and wording of questions.

Everybody needs to have them explained. One problem is that not all clients can read, so there are literacy problems right from the start which means I have to read everything out. I think these questions are pretty vague. They could be worded more differently. (Top of the South financial mentor)

Our staff ask the questions instead of making the client fill in the form. (Christchurch provider manager)

Yes and no. We've always done that, but we haven't asked them to fill in a form, and some clients don't want to. Particularly at a first session. They don't know you, they don't trust you, what is this all about? They are vulnerable and are you pushing their buttons? I have given staff the permission to not physically use it, but to ask all those questions. The final one at the end, our clients don't want to do that. We ask them the verbal questions instead. (Christchurch provider manager)

Considerations and recommendations

The COMT data was intended as an outcomes measure for the evaluation. MSD has not prioritised redeveloping or promoting the use of the COMT resulting in a challenge in the quantitative measurement of BFC outcomes. However, outcomes can be estimated using COMT for those providers using COMT more frequently.

7. Differences BFC has made for people, families, whānau experiencing hardship

Summary of findings

The differences BFC support has made for clients were considered using the COM-B framework.

Capability:

Interviews, information from Client Voices about engagement with BFC services and evaluation of BFC initiatives demonstrate that BFC support, financial mentoring and other BFC initiatives such as MoneyMates have built their clients' financial capability.

Not all clients have improved financial capability and some require intensive and ongoing support for financial capability and other health and social challenges in their lives and the lives of their whānau.

Opportunity:

Financial mentors advocated for clients to reduce debts and repayments by negotiating with lenders. This enabled clients to make changes to their financial behaviors and reduce stress by being able to make affordable repayments towards their debts.

Financial mentors helped clients identify employment opportunities and home ownership schemes. Some clients used KiwiSaver funds to reduce debt. Generator initiative provide opportunities to develop business ideas.

Some clients have limited opportunities to make many changes as their basic needs exceed their income and their living situation limits changes to increase their income.

Motivation:

Engagement with financial mentors resulted in a positive impact on client wellbeing. Clients felt supported and empowered through the financial mentor's advocacy and mediation and client-centred focus. Changes in holistic wellbeing underpinned increased motivation.

Behaviour change:

Clients were educated and equipped with the resources and tools to confidently prioritise and manage their finances. Clients described changes such as making informed decisions to stay out of debt, better understanding of their entitlements, healthy money management behaviours. Clients shared what they had learnt with their children and whānau.

Outcomes were examined using information from baseline and subsequent COMT measurements.

Qualitative data from the community case studies and initiative evaluations showed BFC providers, Work and Income staff, providers of other financial and social services and community leaders considered building clients' financial capability and resilience was a more effective approach than budget advice alone. Initiative evaluations found BFC had enabled providers to implement and/or strengthen a holistic, client-centred approach to support clients.

Interviews with clients as part of the community case studies, the BFC Plus evaluation and the Work and Income evaluation showed clients were very positive about the support they received from BFC services. They talked about the differences improved financial capability made to their lives.

7.1. Changes in capability

Confidently manage finances

The third COMT question asks clients how confident they are to manage their finances on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is the most positive score. Around half (43%) of clients had ratings of 4 or below at entry, suggesting a high level of need.

Results for all closed clients with at least two completed assessments showed improvement from 4.8 to 6.6 across the 2019 calendar year. Overall, 3,090 clients (62%) improved, 1,261 (26%) stayed the same and 602 (12%) decreased (Figure 16). The size of the average improvement was consistent quarter to quarter.

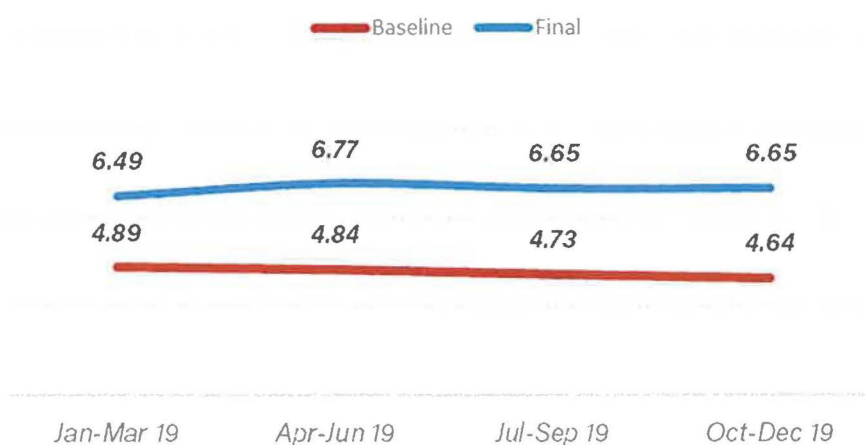


Figure 16. How confident clients were in managing their finances from their COMT ratings (n = 4,622)

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of those who had a low COMT rating (0-4) at baseline had improved their ratings to 5 or above (Figure 17).

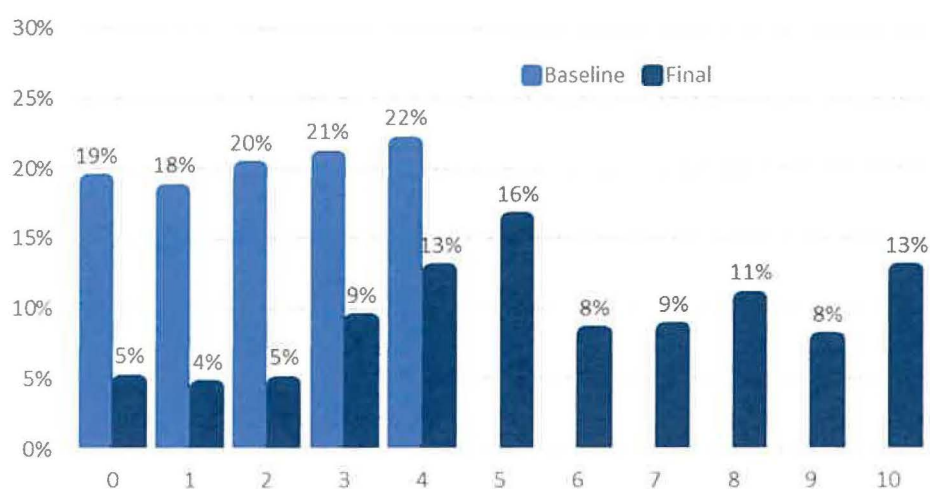


Figure 17. Baseline and final COMT ratings for clients with a low rating (0-4) at the time of their baseline assessment.

The largest changes in ratings for how confident clients are with managing their finances were for Asian clients along with engaged clients (3+ sessions), high-need, high-need/engaged clients and high need/one-off clients (Table 6).

Table 6. Baseline and final ratings with the average change for clients with different characteristics for COMT question: confidence in managing finances

Client group	Baseline	Final	Change
All closed clients	4.8	6.6	1.8
Beneficiaries	5.0	6.6	1.6
Māori	4.9	6.6	1.7
Pacific	4.9	6.6	1.7
Asian	4.5	6.4	1.9
One-off	5.1	6.3	1.2
Engaged	4.8	6.8	2
Clients with high-needs	2.9	5.7	2.8
Engaged clients with high-needs	2.8	6.1	3.3
One-off clients with high-needs	3.0	5.2	2.2

Meeting basic needs and obligations

Prior to engaging with the BFC service, clients lived a lifestyle that they had become accustomed to over the years. Significant changes in their lives resulted in loss or decreased income, job loss and for some transitioning to a benefit. Clients who transitioned to a benefit found it difficult to manage on a smaller income. Clients were generally not meeting their basic needs and obligations upon entering the BFC service, however, as they

continued to engage in the service, they were able to implement a budget enabling them to meet their basic needs.

The budget has helped me stay within my food limits, they've brought it right down just for me, they've taught me how to do that. (MidCentral Client 3)

I was spending like I was making a thousand dollars a week [with my benefit income] and then I was finding it hard at the end of the week, so I had to find help and my key worker was the perfect one for me. All of the budgeting was perfect. Alright now there's \$20.00 [in my wallet], and it wasn't happening before. (Northland Client 4)

The first COMT question asks clients how they rate their ability to meet their basic needs and obligations on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is the most positive score. Just under half (42%) of clients had ratings of 4 or below at entry, suggesting a high level of need.

Results for all closed clients with at least two completed assessments showed improvement from 4.9 to 6.7 across the 2019 calendar year. Overall, 2,986 clients (60%) improved, 1,303 (26%) stayed the same and 664 (13%) decreased.

The size of the average improvement was consistent quarter to quarter though there was some fluctuation in baseline and final ratings (Figure 18Error! Reference source not found.).

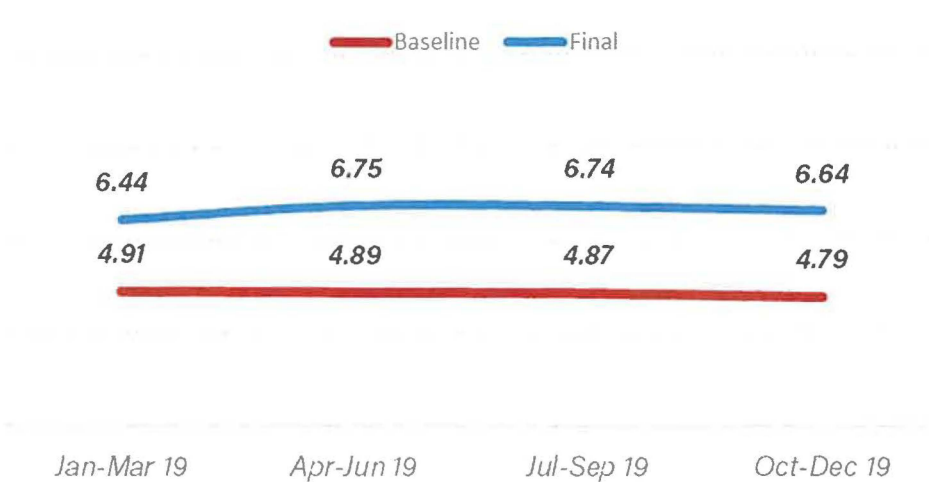


Figure 18. Clients' scores for their ability to meet their basic needs and obligations from their COMT ratings (n = 4,621)

Close to three-quarters (73%) of the high-need clients had improved their rating to five or higher out of ten by the time their cases were closed (Figure 19Error! Reference source not found.).

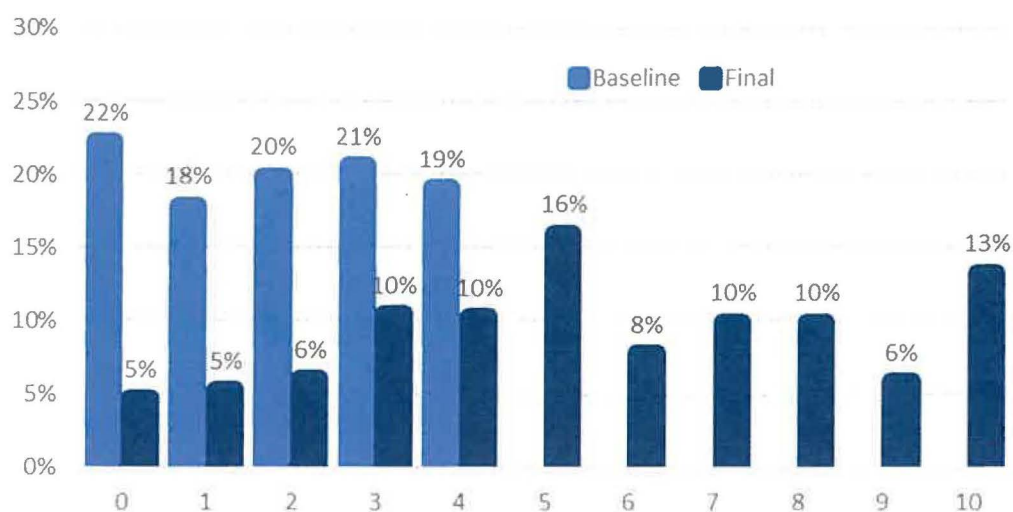


Figure 19. Baseline and final ratings for clients with a low COMT rating (0-4) at the time of their baseline assessment.

Comparison of results across different groups of clients highlighted some differences. Asian clients, engaged clients (3+ sessions), clients with high-needs who were engaged or one-off clients showed the greatest improvements. While there was positive change for one-off clients, the difference between baseline and final assessments was smaller than for those who engaged for longer (Table 7).

Table 7. Baseline and final ratings with the average change for clients with different characteristics for COMT question 1 (basic needs and obligations)

Client group	Baseline	Final	Change
All closed clients	4.8	6.6	1.8
Beneficiaries	4.8	6.5	1.7
Māori	5.0	6.6	1.6
Pacific	4.8	6.4	1.6
Asian	4.6	6.4	1.8
One-off	5.4	6.5	1.1
Engaged	4.9	6.9	2.0
Clients with high-needs	2.8	5.7	2.9
Engaged clients with high-needs	2.8	6.2	3.4
One-off clients with high-needs	3.0	5.2	2.2

Some clients could not meet their basic needs and obligations despite engaging with the BFC service and using budget worksheets, for example due to high rents or supporting whānau.

What do they do with minimal income that doesn't even meet living needs, let alone trying to balance getting kai when they're couch surfing or having to go to ad hoc accommodation that is costing them \$60 a night when they get \$120 a week. (MidCentral provider manager)

Control of debt

The second COMT question asks how in control clients feel of their debt on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is the most positive score. Half (50%) of clients had ratings of 4 or below at entry, suggesting a high level of need.

Results for all closed clients with at least two completed assessments showed improvement from 4.2 to 6.5 across the 2019 calendar year. Overall, 3,179 clients (65%) improved, 1,177 (24%) stayed the same and 569 (12%) decreased. The size of the average improvement was consistent quarter to quarter (Figure 20^{Error! Reference source not found.}).

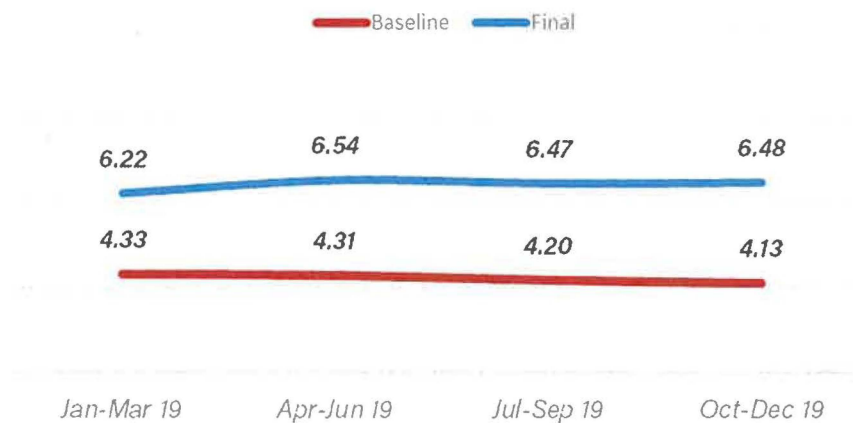


Figure 20. How much control clients feel they have on their debt from their COMT ratings (n = 4,592)

Nearly two-thirds (65%) of those who had a low rating (0-4) at baseline had improved their ratings to 5 or above (Figure 21).

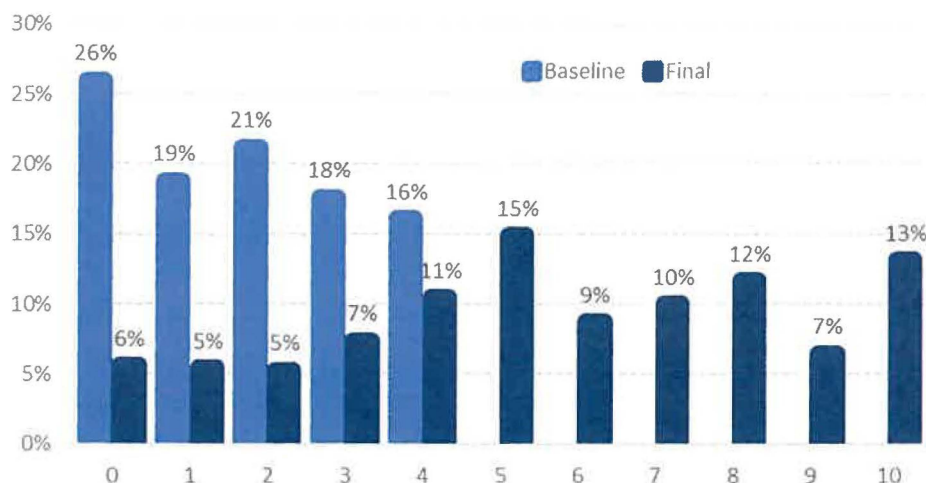


Figure 21. Baseline and final COMT ratings for clients with a low rating (0-4) at the time of their baseline assessment.

Māori clients, Asian clients, engaged clients (3+ sessions), engaged, clients with high-needs who were engaged or one-off clients showed the greatest improvements. While there was positive change for one-off clients, the difference between baseline and final assessments was smaller than for those who engaged for a longer (Table 8).

Table 8. Baseline and final ratings with the average change for clients with different characteristics for COMT question 2 (feel in control of debt)

Client group	Baseline	Final	Change
All closed clients	4.2	6.5	2.3
Beneficiaries	4.4	6.4	2.0
Māori	4.0	6.4	2.4
Pacific	4.5	6.4	1.9
Asian	4.0	6.3	2.3
One-off	4.6	6.0	1.4
Engaged	4.2	6.7	2.5
Clients with high-needs	2.5	5.7	3.2
Engaged clients with high-needs	2.5	6.2	3.7
One-off clients with high-needs	2.4	4.9	2.5

7.2. Changes in motivation

Engagements with financial mentors were client-led. Financial mentors supported clients to set goals, to make habitual changes and be involved in decision-making. Engagement with financial mentors resulted in a positive impact on client wellbeing. Clients felt supported and empowered through the financial mentor's advocacy and mediation and client-centred focus. Changes in holistic wellbeing underpinned increased motivation.

You don't realise the impact it can have on your life. You think a spreadsheet some numbers, might attend an appointment but actually it gets a bit more than that, it teaches you and gives you some life skills, so it is a pretty cool service (MidCentral client 4)

For clients, engaging in BFC services:

- Enabled whānau to engage and talk about their financial situation

We've only started promoting more and more within our hapū level. What we've found is that our people are quite whakamā to say I've got some financial issues. That is something that they delay with themselves. (Northland provider manager)

- Built their self-confidence and self-efficacy

They even advocated to get my rent lowered, and then it built confidence for me to start standing up for myself and for me to do those things. (MidCentral client 4)

I used to stress a lot with paying a lot of bills but now no more. I've set my goals and I manage financially. (Auckland Client 1)

- Cultivated a positive outlook on life and to be proactive

My whole demeanour has improved, instead of sitting back and letting things sort themselves out I'm proactive...[Before] I got into a state of depression and I wasn't even opening the envelopes, so I was at the point of having water cut. (Auckland Client 3)

- Helped regained their pride and identity

[Client's] behaviour when she first came, she was so down and out, she was lost. However, she's slowly gathering her mana, she's getting the strength to build her life back up. (MidCentral provider manager)

- Improved their physical health

[Client] couldn't sleep because the headaches because she was trying so hard to negotiate her bills and none of them came down, [I worked with her] and her payments come right down, then when she came again I couldn't recognise her [she looked amazing]. (Auckland financial mentor)

Clients felt more *financially stable*, and for many it was the first time they had disposable income to contribute to their *savings*.

I got my job; we have some money left over now and I know how to save my money for my kids. (Auckland Client 1)

I got a job working on the roads, from \$30.00 to nearly \$900.00 it's a huge difference my savings is looking great. (Wellington Client 3)

Financial stability helped clients feel liberated and no longer feeling diminished and *living in fear from debt (collectors)*. It *planted seeds* of empowerment and nourished their *grow*.

I was really messed up... She's an angel, if she hadn't stepped in, I don't think I'd be alive now, that's how important it was to me. (Auckland Client 7)

7.3. Opportunities to change

Financial mentors increased their clients' opportunities through BFC. This included:

- Employment opportunities by assisting clients to be work ready and have work experience.

[My financial mentor gave] me a job [for] seven hours a week to maintain [the office space] it increased my finances, so I'm a lot happier, I can afford a little bit more. So, I'm the cleaner here. (Northland Client K3)

She encouraged me to get into a job, so now I'm nearly there with a full-time job. I rang [work and income] today to cancel my benefit...and see how it goes if I get a full time or not. (Auckland Client S1)

I'm healthy, wealthy and I have my kids. Everything that I didn't have I have now. I got a job working on the roads, from \$30.00 to nearly \$900.00 it's a huge difference my savings is looking great. (Wellington Client 3)

- Home ownership opportunities by informing and preparing clients for home shared ownership schemes.

There are some clients who don't know how close they are to getting their foot into the door to owning their own home and knowing there are programmes like shared ownership that they can be homeowners. [Clients] have limited themselves, but no one has talked to them. (Auckland financial mentor)

Clients experienced a range of barriers and challenges which impacted on their financial opportunities. Some challenges included:

- Not having enough to meet basic needs

We try to look at, you're coming in every week, what are we doing with you. Sometimes they have no choice but to come in every week, because really, they don't have enough income to meet their basic living standards. Therefore, we know that is the cycle. (MidCentral provider manager)

- Clients who were on parole or relocated

Obviously, it depends on their individual circumstances, in my client's case they get arrested or they get recalled to prison. Just when things are going well, they're gone. (Top of the South financial mentor)

With the domestic violence clients, often they are relocated to other areas for their own safety.... (Top of the South Financial Mentor)

- Lack of transport or means to attend appointments for job interviews and to attend the BFC service

A lot of our clients have problems just getting to appointments. We do home visits for our clients for a whole variety of reasons. They might not be able to come in here because they don't have a car, they can't afford petrol, they've got six kids. (Top of the South financial mentor)

7.4. Behaviour change

Clients were supported to change in their financial circumstances. As a result of engaging with BFC services, clients:

- Made informed spending decisions to stay out of debt

She stopped us from getting loans out, she encourages us to pay off all our debt. I make payments towards my debts every week so I'm never behind. (Auckland client S1)

That is what worries me with some of our whānau, because once you reduce one debt, they pull up another debt and that is that motivation, the commitment to stay away, not to do another one it's trying to change that behaviour. (Wellington provider manager)

- Were aware and understood their entitlements such as their ability to access KiwiSaver funds as an immediate financial relief.

They went for their KiwiSaver to get a car, they got money for that. Even though it wasn't for their everyday living, it changed their whole outlook on life. The [client] couldn't use public transport, doing something beneficial to their mental health and relationship. (Christchurch financial mentor)

I didn't realise I had a KiwiSaver, I didn't even know I had this existing money that sat there. Until I come to this place and she showed me I had so many thousands. We were able to utilise some of that. (Northland Client W3)

- Formed healthy spending and money management behaviours:
 - Some clients despite their limited income were able to prioritise where and how they spent their money.

I'm still not getting enough but now I'm managing. I'm finding that I'm prioritising what I'm spending on but before I couldn't. (Auckland Client W6)

You can set goals, its taught me about the necessities, pay your rent, pay for your power, allocate some money for food. (MidCentral Client 4)
 - Shifted their focus from wants to needs.

I've become more money conscious; I wouldn't just go out and spend, I have a booklet of what I buy, and what we need. I differentiate between wanting and needing things. (Wellington Client 1)
 - Clients were more mindful about the impact their financial decisions had on their wellbeing.

I'm so careful with my money. There are so many things I don't do today. Not just for the sake of money but for my health and my mental well-being. (Hamilton Client 1)
 - Consistently paying debt and bills in advance.

[I'm] in credit with stuff... with the power [and] the phone. (Bay of Plenty client 1)

I learnt how to budget my money and reduce my debt and now I'm happy to pay all my bills, now I'm never behind in my bills. (Auckland Client S1)

Clients' increased client financial capability:

- Enabled them to support and teach their children about the value of money

I used to have a habit of every pay day buy my kids McDonald's. I chopped that, I told them if you want money you can work for pocket money. Teaching them, money doesn't grow on trees. (Hamilton Client 2)

I've learnt so much through my budgeting, it's made homework with kids like maths easier. (Bay of Plenty client 2)
- Supported whānau to collectively set goals

A long [term] goal [is] when I'm ready to go back to work and my wife finishes study, my kids will be working that time - we're talking now [about] buying our own house. (South Auckland Client S2)

The case studies below provide examples of client journeys. All names and other details have been changed to protect client anonymity.

Case Study: Aroha

Aroha was a mother of six tamariki working full time in a professional job. Her partner unexpectedly stopped working a few years ago due to his health. When Aroha became the sole provider for her whānau, her income alone was not enough to support the needs of her whānau and as a result she slowly went into debt.

Aroha and her BFC mentor set up a budget spreadsheet. At first, Aroha did not understand the spreadsheet as she had not thought about saving monthly or yearly. But once she began seeing how her expenses added up, she realised how useful the budget was.

It was good to see that I was spending too much, ticking up too much. Grabbing me back to reality... I want to be able to live comfortably and provide enough for my kids weekly, so for that I need help. I still don't have enough incoming for my outgoing, so learning how to prioritise where I'm putting my money, what's a need, what's a want.

Since joining the service, Aroha gained a greater awareness of money and her spending habits. Aroha's budget advisor set her up with lower, regular payments on her Visa card and assisted Aroha to access her KiwiSaver hardship fund.

I want to stay out of debt, because I got into an overdraft. My goal for this year is to stay out of debt so I can (Hire purchase) car next year.

Case study: Jane

Jane had just been through a divorce and discovered she had unknowingly inherited a large amount of debt over the course of her marriage. Jane went to Work and Income who suggested she try out a budgeting service. She found the budgeting service to be helpful in assisting her to apply for a no asset procedure (NAP), as well as wrap-around support for her and her children.

I got four kids so as you could imagine that is always interesting, they've helped out with me on so many levels, food parcels from time to time, helped get me in touch with some counselling services for my kids as the divorce was quite messy.

For Jane, her appreciation of the budgeting service came from the social connection she received from the staff there. Her financial situation had not changed as she was awaiting surgery so she could return to work part-time. But the support she received from the service helped her manage her mental health and the stigma she felt about her position in life.

When you're at the bottom you feel you just get walked on, these guys help you not feel like that so much.

The small budgeting tips the service provided to Jane which she called “trimming the fat” helped her think outside the box and save money. Things like bus tickets and carpooling to get her four children to school and identifying luxuries and necessities.

Case Study: Henry

Henry was having trouble with two different overdrafts he owed to the bank. He heard about the budgeting service through his depression support network. Henry did not know how to deal with his current debts and found he would overspend during manic episodes of his bipolar disorder.

Henry's BFC worker visited him frequently and helped him to keep on top of his debts. He appreciated her understanding and patience. Henry had no-one in his life to talk to about his financial and mental problems, having his BFC worker there for him was important to Henry.

... (BFC worker) is visiting me all the time, sorting out my money – we have a good chat, I find her excellent myself, she has a good calm personality and she knows where I'm at.

Since beginning the service, Henry reduced his debts a significant amount and is close to having them fully paid off. Henry no longer has a VISA and has stopped making visits to the bank for loans/overdrafts. When Henry is experiencing a manic episode now, he does not go and spend his money.

...and I think that's because I've had someone there to help understand my money better

7.5. Clients' progress towards achieving goals

The fourth COMT question asks clients whether they are making progress towards achieving their goals on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 is the most positive score. Around half (46%) of clients had ratings of 4 or below at entry, suggesting a high level of need.

Results for all closed clients with at least two completed assessments showed improvement from 4.6 to 6.8 across the 2019 calendar year. Overall, 3,119 clients (65%) improved, 1,128 (24%) stayed the same and 545 (11%) decreased.

The size of the average improvement was consistent quarter to quarter (Figure 22).

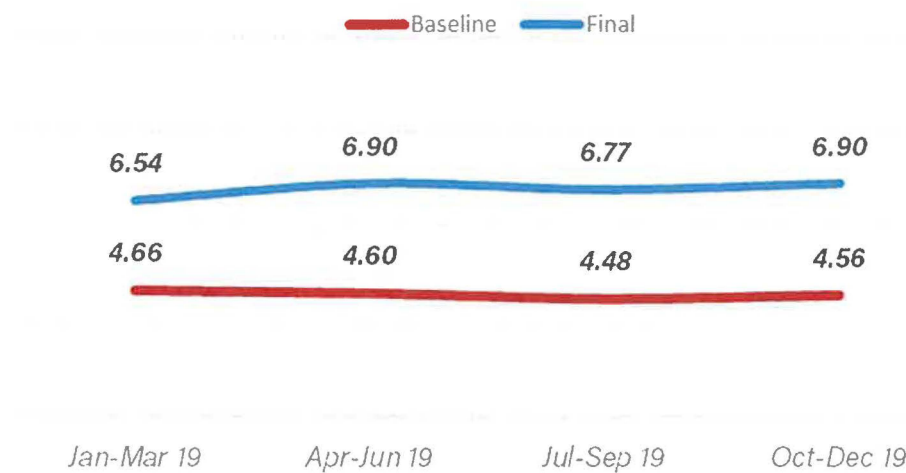


Figure 22. How on track are clients in achieving their goals from their COMT ratings (n = 4,469)

Two-thirds (66%) of those who had a low COMT rating (0-4) at baseline had improved their ratings to 5 or above (Figure 23).

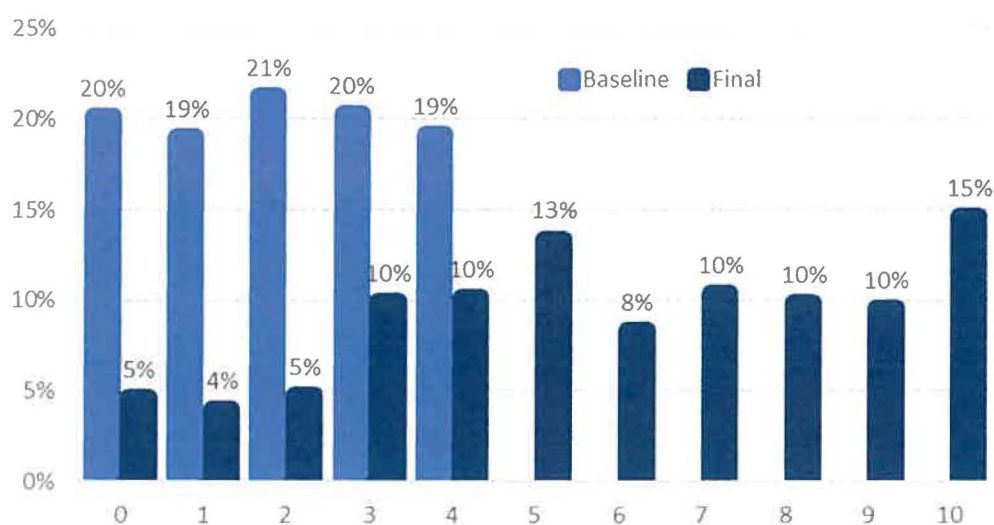


Figure 23. Baseline and final ratings for clients with a low rating (0-4) at the time of their baseline assessment.

Results were consistent with the other questions, highlighting Asian clients along with engaged clients (3+ sessions), high-need, high-need/engaged clients and high-need/one-off clients (Table 9). High-need clients who attended 3 or more sessions had a much larger difference in ratings than high-need/one-off clients.

Table 9. Baseline and final ratings with the average change for clients with different characteristics for COMT question 4 (progress towards achieving goals)

Client group	Baseline	Final	Change
All closed clients	4.6	6.8	2.2
Beneficiaries	4.8	6.8	2.0
Māori	4.9	6.8	1.9
Pacific	5.1	7.0	1.9
Asian	4.2	6.7	2.5
One-off	4.9	6.2	1.3
Engaged	4.6	7.1	2.5
Clients with high-needs	2.8	6.0	3.2
Engaged clients with high-needs	2.6	6.6	4.0
One-off clients with high-needs	2.8	5.0	2.2

7.6. Modelling improvement in the COMT questions

We estimated the probability of scores improving for each of the four COMT questions controlling for the range of characteristics recorded in Client Voices (Table 10). We found that engagement, income, location, and number of dependents significantly influenced improvement on the COMT questions. Specifically, not engaged clients compared to clients who were engaged for 3+ sessions and one-off clients compared to those who were not-one off were significantly less likely to improve on all four COMT questions.

We also found that clients in Auckland compared to those in the rest of the country were significantly more likely to improve on all four COMT questions. In addition, clients with no dependents were more likely to improve on three of the four COMT questions than those with one dependent and clients on \$30 to 50k were significantly more likely to improve on the COMT question regarding confidently managing their finances than those on an income of less than \$20k.

Table 10. Linear probability model coefficients for each of the four COMT questions (July 2017 to December 2019).

Reference category	Category	COMT questions – coefficients (standard errors)			
		Meet basic needs and obligations	In control of debt	Confidently manage finances	On track to achieve goals
Engaged for 3+ sessions	Not engaged	-0.0628** (-0.02)	-0.0914***(-0.02)	-0.0763***(-0.02)	-0.0769***(-0.02)
	Zero sessions	0.01 (-0.04)	0.01 (-0.04)	0.02 (-0.04)	0.00 (-0.04)
Not one-off	One-off	-0.168***(-0.03)	-0.154***(-0.03)	-0.132***(-0.03)	0.00 (-0.03)
	Māori	-0.02 (-0.02)	-0.01 (-0.02)	0.04 (-0.02)	0.01 (-0.02)
New Zealand European	Pacific Peoples	0.03 (-0.03)	0.02 (-0.03)	0.02 (-0.03)	-0.04 (-0.03)
	Asian	-0.03 (-0.09)	0.01 (-0.08)	0.01 (-0.08)	-0.05 (-0.08)
	M/E/L/A	0.02 (-0.08)	0.01 (-0.08)	0.05 (-0.07)	0.10 (-0.08)
Salary/wage earner	Beneficiary	0.03 (-0.03)	0.03 (-0.03)	0.01 (-0.03)	-0.02 (-0.03)
	Other	0.05 (-0.05)	0.03 (-0.05)	0.03 (-0.05)	0.04 (-0.04)
	20-30k	-0.01 (-0.03)	-0.03 (-0.03)	0.01 (-0.03)	-0.01 (-0.03)
	\$30-50k	0.02 (-0.03)	0.02 (-0.03)	0.0569* (-0.03)	0.04 (-0.03)
Income <\$20k	\$50-\$70k	-0.07 (-0.04)	-0.04 (-0.04)	0.01 (-0.04)	-0.01 (-0.04)
	\$70-100k	-0.05 (-0.06)	0.08 (-0.05)	0.09 (-0.05)	0.05 (-0.06)
	\$100k+	0.08 (-0.07)	0.01 (-0.08)	0.06 (-0.08)	0.01 (-0.08)
Not in Auckland	In Auckland	0.146***(-0.02)	0.108***(-0.02)	0.154***(-0.02)	0.140***(-0.02)
	Two	0.00 (-0.04)	0.04 (-0.04)	0.03 (-0.04)	-0.01 (-0.04)
	Three	-0.06 (-0.04)	0.01 (-0.04)	-0.02 (-0.04)	0.00 (-0.04)
One dependent	Four or more	-0.05 (-0.04)	-0.02 (-0.04)	-0.03 (-0.04)	-0.03 (-0.04)
	None	0.05 (-0.03)	0.0605* (-0.03)	0.0766** (-0.03)	0.05 (-0.03)
	Self-referral	-0.02 (-0.03)	0.01 (-0.03)	0.01 (-0.03)	-0.01 (-0.03)
Work and Income referral	CAB referral	0.06 (-0.04)	0.119** (-0.04)	0.0927* (-0.04)	0.08 (-0.04)
	Government	0.07 (-0.05)	0.06 (-0.05)	0.08 (-0.05)	0.08 (-0.05)
	Private referral	0.03 (-0.04)	0.05 (-0.04)	0.03 (-0.04)	0.04 (-0.04)
	Other referral	-0.02 (-0.03)	-0.03 (-0.03)	0.00 (-0.03)	0.01 (-0.03)
Constant		0.605*** (-0.05)	0.636*** (-0.05)	0.549*** (-0.05)	0.657*** (-0.05)
Adjusted r ²		0.05	0.05	0.05	0.04
N		2,384	2,368	2,377	2,238

*p < 0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Table 11. Linear probability model coefficients for each of the four COMT questions (January 2019 to December 2019).

Reference category	Category	COMT questions – coefficients (standard errors)			
		Meet basic needs and obligations	In control of debt	Confidently manage finances	On track to achieve goals
Engaged for 3+ sessions	Not engaged	-0.06** (-0.02)	-0.10*** (-0.02)	-0.05*** (-0.02)	-0.0474* (-0.02)
	Zero sessions	0.27 (-0.18)	0.22 (-0.19)	0.28 (-0.18)	0.27 (-0.18)
Not one-off	One-off	-0.159*** (-0.04)	-0.155*** (-0.04)	-0.138*** (-0.04)	-0.156*** (-0.04)
	Māori	0.00 (-0.03)	0.01 (-0.03)	0.05 (-0.03)	0.04 (-0.03)
New Zealand European	Pacific Peoples	0.04 (-0.04)	0.02 (-0.04)	0.02 (-0.04)	-0.04 (-0.04)
	Asian	-0.08 (-0.09)	-0.03 (-0.08)	-0.04 (-0.09)	-0.05 (-0.09)
	M/E/L/A	0.02 (-0.11)	0.02 (-0.09)	0.00 (-0.1)	0.04 (-0.1)
Salary/wage earner	Beneficiary	0.02 (-0.03)	0.02 (-0.03)	0.01 (-0.03)	-0.02 (-0.03)
	Other	0.05 (-0.05)	0.05 (-0.05)	0.07 (-0.05)	0.05 (-0.05)
	20-30k	-0.03 (-0.03)	-0.05 (-0.03)	0.01 (-0.03)	-0.04 (-0.03)
	\$30-50k	0.01 (-0.03)	0.01 (-0.03)	0.0677* (-0.03)	0.04 (-0.03)
Income <\$20k	\$50-\$70k	-0.08 (-0.05)	-0.03 (-0.05)	0.04 (-0.05)	0.01 (-0.05)
	\$70-100k	-0.03 (-0.06)	0.02 (-0.06)	0.05 (-0.06)	-0.01 (-0.06)
	\$100k+	0.01 (-0.08)	-0.03 (-0.09)	0.01 (-0.09)	0.00 (-0.09)
Not in Auckland	In Auckland	0.172***(-0.03)	0.123***(-0.03)	0.177***(-0.03)	0.123***(-0.03)
	Two	0.03 (-0.05)	0.06 (-0.05)	0.06 (-0.05)	0.02 (-0.05)
One dependent	Three	0.00 (-0.05)	0.04 (-0.05)	0.00 (-0.05)	0.01 (-0.05)
	Four or more	-0.02 (-0.05)	-0.01 (-0.05)	0.04 (-0.05)	0.00 (-0.05)
	None	0.06 (-0.04)	0.0761* (-0.03)	0.104** (-0.03)	0.0738* (-0.04)
	Self-referral	-0.02 (-0.03)	-0.01 (-0.03)	0.00 (-0.03)	0.00 (-0.03)
Work and Income referral	CAB referral	0.04 (-0.05)	0.07 (-0.05)	0.05 (-0.05)	0.06 (-0.05)
	Government referral	0.02 (-0.06)	0.01 (-0.06)	0.03 (-0.06)	0.07 (-0.06)
	Private referral	0.01 (-0.05)	0.02 (-0.05)	0.00 (-0.05)	0.04 (-0.05)
	Other referral	-0.01 (-0.04)	-0.03 (-0.04)	-0.02 (-0.04)	0.01 (-0.04)
Constant		0.611***(-0.06)	0.662***(-0.06)	0.531***(-0.06)	0.643***(-0.06)
Adjusted r ²		0.06	0.05	0.05	0.03
N		1,603	1,598	1,599	1,544

*p < 0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001

Appendix 1: Evaluation details

Evaluation logic model

We developed an overarching logic model for BFC services to provide a theoretical foundation for the evaluation.

An important component of the evaluation logic model was the agreement with MSD to use the COM-B model as a framework for understanding behaviour change for BFC clients. The COM-B model considers the interaction between **C**apability, **M**otivation and **O**ppportunity as levers for **B**ehaviour change. Changes for individuals are expected to result in behavioural changes that lead to population level outcomes.

The BFC initiative includes a mix of BFC initiatives such as MoneyMates, MoneyMates Funds, Savings trial, the Generator. The activities and achievements of the different BFC services and products can be mapped to the COM-B model and will provide insights into where changes are being achieved and identify potential gaps.

The COMT outcome tool was developed by MSD, prior to the evaluation, as the way client engagement with providers and outcomes would be assessed.

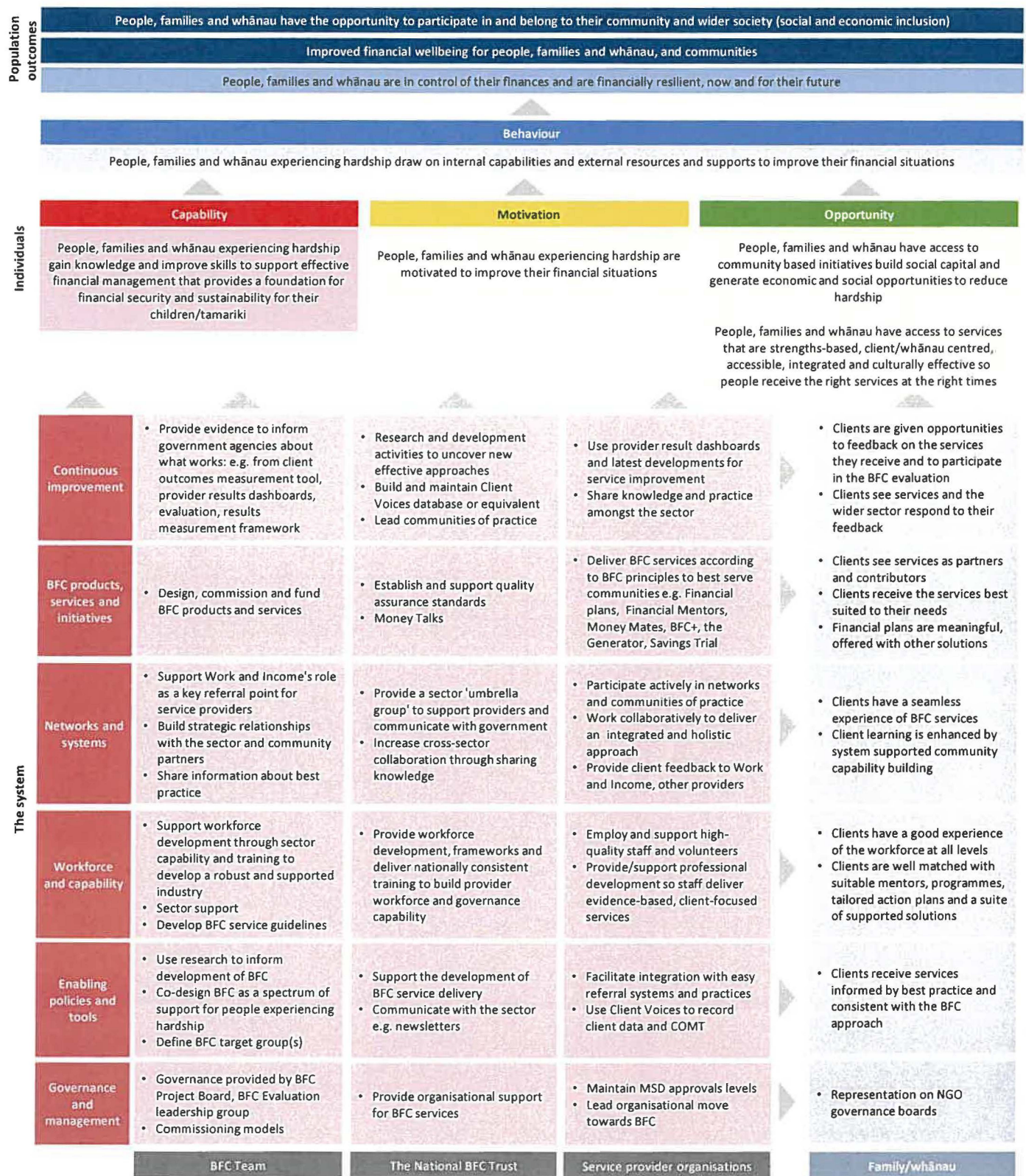


Figure 24. The BFC evaluation logic model

Overview of evaluation activities to date

A breadth of evaluation activities has informed the BFC evaluation overview in this report:

Understanding how BFC services are delivered – client and provider perspectives:

- Community case studies: Visits to four communities with data collection from agency staff, BFC and other community service providers, clients and other stakeholders. Community case studies provided an overview of how BFC, Work and Income and other services interacted in a community.
- BFC Plus: Literature review, phone interviews with 50 provider staff from 38 providers, interviews with six representatives of Disabled People's Organisations and site visits to four providers with 25 client interviews provided insights into pathways of support for BFC Plus clients.
- An evaluation with Ngāti Kahungunu ki Poneke Whānau Services (KWS) of their Mauri Oho initiative provided insights into a kaupapa Māori model of support for whānau with complex needs.
- Work and Income practices: Development of logic model, evaluation framework and first report based on interviews with 30 clients provided insights into clients' understandings after they were referred to BFC services by Work and Income.
- BFC workforce surveys: The first survey was completed in 2019 and *preliminary* results from the second survey of BFC provider managers are included in this report. We received responses to the second workforce survey of managers from 152 of 198 providers (160 were MSD funded providers) - a response rate of 77%. A survey of BFC provider staff is currently in the field.
- BFC provider and client engagement interviews in late 2019 and early 2020 included:
 - Forty-seven Clients
 - Sixteen individual staff – a mixture of financial mentors and provider managers
 - Seven staff focus groups with two or more staff present.

Interviews took place in: Kaitia, West Auckland, South Auckland, Hamilton, Eastern Bay of Plenty, Whanganui, Wellington, Nelson and Christchurch.

Monitoring progress and identifying who has been reached and supported by BFC services:

- National provider results dashboards: drawing on the data recorded by providers in FinCap's Client Voices tool (122 providers) and Salvation Army administrative data collection tool (24 Salvation Army providers). The dashboards provide ongoing information to MSD, FinCap and BFC providers about the number and profiles of BFC clients. Feedback and consultation with providers improved the production of the dashboards to reflect provider use of Client Voices more accurately. Data from

the Salvation Army has been incorporated into the dashboard production but is not included in this overview report.

Evaluation of BFC initiatives and programmes

- MoneyMates and Financial Mentors: Phone interviews with 50 providers including a mix of providers delivering one or both services, and site visits with six providers enabled understanding of BFC service delivery from provider perspectives.
- BFC Fund (BFCF): review of eighteen BFCF reports, and six MMF provider reports that were not submitted in time for inclusion in the previous MMF evaluation report. The review also included interviews with frontline staff, managers and community partners involved with four BFC fund initiatives and two MMF initiatives.
- The Generator: Formative evaluation comprising development of a logic model and evaluation framework, interviews with Generator staff and analysis of administrative data.
- MoneyTalks: MoneyTalks replaced the National Building Financial Capability (BFC) Helpline. It offers email, text and online messaging (through the MoneyTalks website) in addition to continuing the toll-free phone line. We completed a small formative evaluation that drew information from interviews with MoneyTalks staff (8), clients (13) and stakeholders (6) including BFC services, banks and other creditors as well as analysis of MoneyTalks administrative data.

Client outcomes

Client Voices analysis of COMT data

FinCap operates the Client Voices system providers use as a client management and assessment platform. FinCap provides us with extracts from the system to produce monitoring dashboards for individual providers¹⁰ and for the sector. A new Client Voices platform is being released and client results will be based on information from the new platform.

The dataset used to inform the analyses in this report covers the July 2017 to December 2019. Reporting on clients refers to two main groups:

- All clients: All clients with a record in Client Voices.
- Closed clients: All clients enrolled since July 2017 who have been 'closed'.

We have taken three main approaches to the statistical analysis of the Client Voices data:

- Descriptive analysis: We described each individual's:
 - Characteristics – for example, age, gender, ethnicity and income

¹⁰ Who have consented

- Participation in BFC – for example, referral source, number of sessions attended, engagement
 - Outcomes – for example, improvements in the Client Outcomes Measurement Tool (COMT) ratings.
- Bivariate analysis: We then examined the main variables of interest (engagement and outcomes) to explore differences in participation in the service or outcomes for people with different characteristics.
- Regression: Finally, we estimated linear probability models to see how people's characteristics and participation in BFC affected the outcomes achieved with the service after controlling for all the contributing factors.

Client interviews

- Interviews with 47 clients as part of the evaluation of BFC initiatives and the provider engagement study and clients self-assessments how they would have rated themselves using COMT before they were supported by their BFC service and how they rated themselves at the time of the interview.