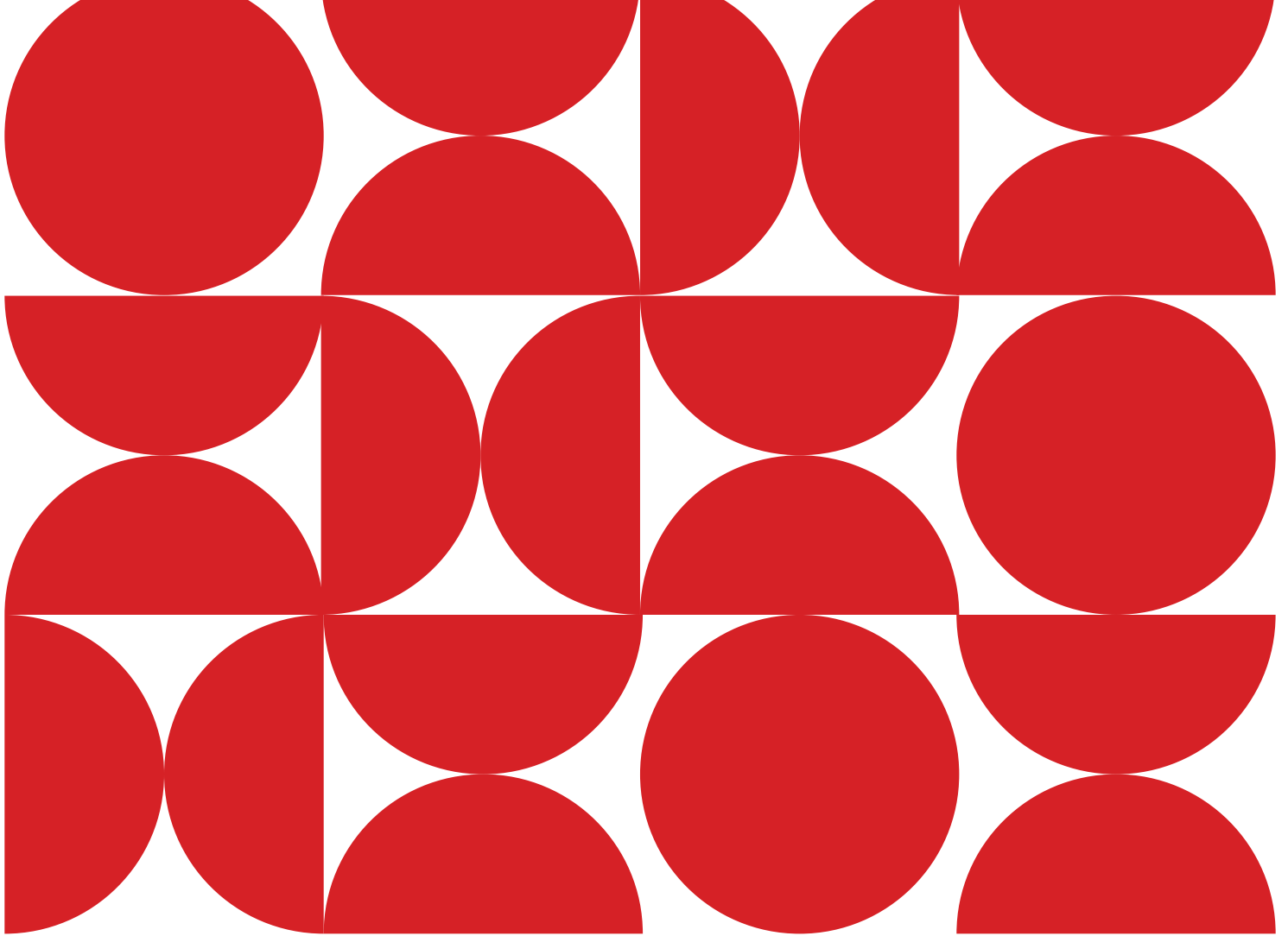




Building Trust, Brokering Change: An Independent Economic and Process Evaluation of The Social Brokers: Executive Summary

Dr Susan Giles & Emma Kirby

Report produced for The Social Brokers, April 2026

For further information about the content of this report, please contact Dr Susan Giles (s.p.giles@liverpool.ac.uk), University of Liverpool, Department of Psychology, Eleanor Rathbone Building Bedford Street South, Liverpool, L69 7ZA. Full evaluation available [here](#)
More Information: www.thesocialbrokers.com

FOREWORD

By Lord John Bird

Founder of The Big Issue



The Big Issue's core mission has always been to eradicate poverty by creating opportunity. Over the past 35 years, you will have seen our presence most notably through our magazine sellers – most of whom have come through a childhood of trauma, misfortune and disadvantage. Along the way we have come across many organisations up and down the country who fundamentally share our vision and do great work to support people struggling with the challenges of modern-day life. However – once in while we come across a group that make us stand for a moment, take real notice of how tackling poverty upstream can be delivered.

During a trip to the University of Liverpool in 2025, I was caught completely off guard. Not just by the incredible work happening in one of North Liverpool's toughest neighbourhoods, but because the very concept of "Social Brokers" was an idea I had dreamed up in New York over 20 years ago. While The Big Issue's rapid growth meant we never got round to launching our own version, lo and behold, those ingenious Scousers went and did it in their own unique way.

What makes The Social Brokers truly remarkable is how they connect with the community at every generational level. Based on the footprint of a Primary school they engage with children and residents in a way that builds deep trust and confidence, while never failing to make them laugh. Humour is beautifully embedded in the fabric of this community, and that vibrant warmth shines through every page of this evaluation.

From a standing start in February 2024, they have managed to put £1.8 million back into the pockets of local residents. They've created brilliant, child-led hope projects and produced their unique 'More than an ESOL course', a scouse programme aimed at breaking down language barriers and keep families safe.

Backed by heavyweight partners like the University of Liverpool, Cadent, Merseyside Fire & Rescue, and the Liverpool FC Foundation alongside the Steve Morgan Foundation, they have built an unshakeable foundation. The Big Issue is proud to stand with them. We have a moral obligation to ensure poverty is not a burden we pass on to future generations, and The Social Brokers are leading the charge in Liverpool.

Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of an independent economic and process evaluation of The Social Brokers model, a place-based, community-led initiative operating in Kirkdale, Liverpool. The evaluation was conducted by the University of Liverpool and draws on:

- i) Interviews and engagement with stakeholders across delivery, strategic and partner organisations, alongside community members
- ii) Monitoring and case data provided by The Social Brokers
- iii) Economic modelling informed by published literature and established valuation approaches.



Background

Health and social inequalities remain deeply entrenched in England, following a persistent social gradient in which disadvantaged communities experience poorer health outcomes and reduced life expectancy. National policy and public health practice have increasingly responded to this challenge through place-based approaches, which emphasise locally embedded partnerships, cross-sector collaboration, and coordinated action to address the wider social determinants of health.

Within Liverpool, this policy direction is reflected in the City Council's neighbourhood model and the wider Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, both of which promote locally grounded, partnership based responses across institutional boundaries. The Social Brokers NW CIC, based in Kirkdale, Liverpool, exemplifies this approach through a community-embedded brokerage model that combines direct service delivery with strategic brokerage across public, third, private, and academic sectors. Its aims are to reduce inequalities, build community capacity, and contribute to the mitigation of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

The intervention logic aligns with ecological and systems-based perspectives, which emphasise that outcomes are shaped through interactions across family, school, community, organisational, and wider social systems. These perspectives support whole-system, context sensitive responses that work across multiple levels of influence rather than relying solely on individual-level intervention.

Alongside this, policy and sector guidance increasingly highlights the role of community-led delivery, particularly through third sector organisations, including Community Interest Companies (CICs), which are positioned to operate flexibly across organisational boundaries, nurture trust, support co-production, and respond to locally identified need. These features are particularly relevant in communities experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage.

This is especially pertinent within the literature on Adverse Childhood Experiences, where evidence demonstrates strong associations with poorer health, educational, and behavioural outcomes across the life course, alongside growing recognition of

intergenerational transmission and the importance of trauma-informed, trust-based support. Place-based, community-led approaches are theorised to offer advantages through service integration, strengthened relationships between schools, families, and communities, and locally tailored early intervention.

However, despite strong policy and theoretical support, the evidence base for place-based approaches remains mixed, with prior reviews highlighting substantial methodological challenges, including heterogeneity in intervention design, variation in outcomes, and difficulties evaluating complex interventions delivered within dynamic local contexts. These limitations reinforce the need for well specified, context-sensitive and evaluable delivery models, providing the rationale for the present study and the methodological approach set out in the report.



Kirkdale Context and The Social Brokers Model

Kirkdale, in North Liverpool, is an area of significant socioeconomic disadvantage, with higher levels of fuel poverty, poorer health outcomes, lower life expectancy, and increased educational and community safety challenges compared with the wider Liverpool population. Children and families experience intersecting pressures across health, education, and social domains, alongside indicators of sustained disadvantage. At the same time, the area has strong local assets, including schools and community organisations, providing a foundation for place-based, community-led approaches.

In response, The Social Brokers NW CIC delivers a community-embedded model in Kirkdale, **combining direct support with partnership brokerage to improve coordination across services**. Initially embedded within Kirkdale St Lawrence School in April 2024, delivery expanded into a community hub on the school site in April 2025, enabling integrated work with pupils, families, and local residents.

Funded by Cadent Gas, the Safer Homes, Stronger Families programme adopts a public health approach to reducing inequality. Safer Homes focuses on fuel poverty, income maximisation, and loneliness through outreach, practical support, and partnership delivery, including collaboration with the charity RAISE. Stronger Families focuses on children and families, providing early help, educational support, and enrichment activities, alongside relational family support and school engagement.

A core feature of the model is brokerage, through which The Social Brokers connects residents with services and coordinates activity across statutory, voluntary, private, and academic partners. Overall, the model combines direct provision, relational support, and partnership working within a defined local area, reflecting an ecological, place-based approach to addressing inequality.

Evaluation Rationale and Aims

There remains limited empirical evidence explaining how place-based, community-led models operate in practice and through what mechanisms they generate change, particularly in early implementation where impacts are emergent and occur across multiple domains. Traditional outcome-focused evaluations are often insufficient for capturing how local context, relationships, and system dynamics shape delivery, and are less suited to novel interventions without an established theory of change.

This evaluation adopts a theory-driven process evaluation approach, informed by developmental and realist principles, to examine how the The Social Brokers model operates within its local context and the mechanisms through which activities are expected to influence outcomes for children, families, and the wider community. This is complemented by a cost-benefit-informed economic analysis, enabling consideration of both fiscal impacts and wider social value.

The evaluation focuses on the first 16 months of delivery, spanning school-based provision and the early development of the community hub. It examines processes, outcomes for children, families, and the wider community, changes in relationships and indicative system-level developments, and the social and economic value generated during this period.

Accordingly, this report draws on economic and process evaluation methods to address the following questions:

- 1. To what extent do the anticipated benefits of the intervention outweigh its costs?**
- 2. What outcomes have been observed, and what outcomes are anticipated, as a result of The Social Brokers' delivery?**
- 3. What mechanisms facilitate or hinder success, and why?**
- 4. How are the intervention effects shaped by setting and context, and what implications does this have for scaling or replication in other areas?**
- 5. What implications do the evaluation findings have for sustainability and the development of a business case beyond Cadent Gas funding?**



Methodology

Given the evolving nature of the intervention, the approach focused on understanding implementation, context, and mechanisms of change rather than establishing causal impact.

A constructivist grounded theory approach was used to develop an initial programme theory. This was informed by baseline interviews with The Social Brokers staff and partners, followed by a second phase of interviews with staff, partners, and community members to refine the model over time. In total, 25 participants contributed to the process evaluation, including delivery staff, partner organisations, families, and The Junior Social Brokers.

Qualitative findings were used to develop a theory of change, supported by context-mechanism-outcome configurations, providing an explanatory framework for how activities contribute to outcomes within the local context.

The evaluation also incorporated a cost benefit-informed economic analysis, drawing on service data, internal records, additional stakeholder interviews, and published evidence to estimate social and economic value. Sensitivity analysis was applied to ensure conservative and robust estimates.

Overall, the evaluation combines qualitative insight, theory development, and economic modelling to provide an early assessment of delivery, outcomes, and value. Given the developmental stage of the programme, findings should be interpreted as indicative, with a focus on learning, emerging outcomes, and future development.

**“£9 of value
for every £1
invested”
(SROI)**

Economic Evaluation

The economic evaluation assesses the value generated by The Social Brokers during its first 16 months of delivery (April 2024 to July 2025), combining observed outcomes with conservative estimates of benefits expected to develop over time. This period includes early investment in trust, infrastructure, and partnership-building. School-based outcomes are well captured within the evaluation window, while community-level benefits are likely to be under-represented and expected to increase as delivery matures.

Total resources required to deliver the model were estimated at **£652,809**, including direct funding and in-kind contributions.

A cost-benefit-informed approach was used to estimate social and economic value across multiple beneficiary groups, including individuals and families, education, health services, children’s social care, criminal justice, and the wider economy.

Benefits were categorised to reflect different types of value and how they are distributed across the system. For individuals and families, this included direct financial gains such as income maximisation and reduced household costs, alongside improvements in wellbeing, including reduced loneliness, increased confidence, and improved safety. Within education, benefits included avoided programme costs, improved efficiency, and reduced demand on school resources. For health and children’s social care, value was captured through reduced demand on services, including avoided appointments, referrals, and statutory interventions. Criminal justice benefits reflected avoided escalation, including reduced arrests and police involvement. Wider economic benefits included increased productivity, enhanced employability, and the value of volunteering and skills development.

The evaluation presents a range of scenarios. The conservative estimate indicates that The Social Brokers generates approximately **£9 of value for every £1 invested**, providing the most appropriate basis for commissioning decisions. An adjusted estimate suggests a return of £39.18 per £1 invested, while a higher unadjusted estimate (£81.52) is presented for transparency but is not considered realistic.

**The majority of
value generated
is attributable to
improvements in
wellbeing, alongside
financial savings
for households and
reduced demand on
public services.**

Individuals and families benefit most directly, with additional gains observed across health, social care, education, and wider economic outcomes.

Overall, the findings indicate that The Social Brokers delivers strong economic value during its early phase, with further benefits likely to accrue over time as the model becomes more fully embedded within the community.

A photograph showing a diverse group of people, including men, women, and children, gathered in a narrow outdoor space. On the left is a tall green metal fence. On the right is a building with a wooden facade and a sign that reads 'Social Workers'. The people are mostly seen from the back or side, looking towards the building. The sky is overcast.

**“...they don’t just listen and
[...] walk away, they’ll listen
and take action”.**

– Kirkdale Resident



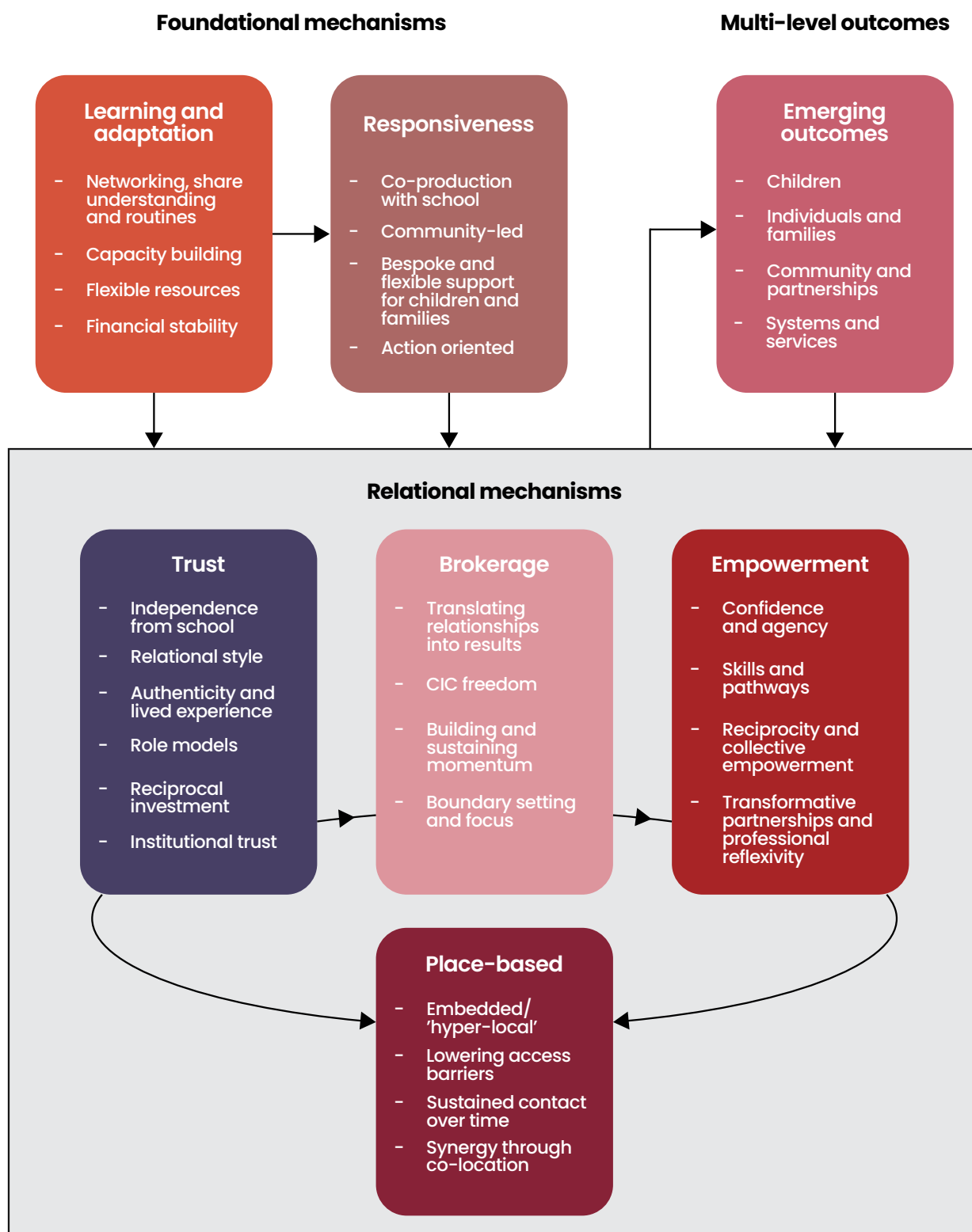
Process Evaluation

Theory of Change

The refined theory of change demonstrates how outcomes are generated through the interaction of multiple mechanisms over time, rather than through single activities or linear pathways. Foundational processes of learning and adaptation, and responsiveness operate within an embedded, place-based context to enable relational mechanisms such as trust, brokerage, and empowerment.

These mechanisms reinforce one another as The Social Brokers become a visible and trusted presence within the community. As a result, outcomes are gradual and cumulative, reflected in increased confidence, engagement, coordination, and agency across children, families, and partner organisations. The model highlights how change strengthens over time as these mechanisms become embedded within relationships, local practices, and systems of support.





Mechanisms and accumulate and interact over time, producing developmental rather than immediate outcomes

Figure 1: Refined Theory of Change informed by developmental realist process evaluation

Foundational Mechanisms

Learning and Adaption

Early implementation was supported by extensive networking, which helped to build awareness of the model, establish connections with partners, and develop a shared understanding of how the approach would operate in practice. Alongside this, time and effort were invested in developing staff roles, ways of working, and partner engagement, contributing to increased confidence in delivery over time. Resources were used flexibly throughout this phase, with roles and activities adapting as the model developed. Initial funding provided the stability needed to support this process, allowing time to establish the model and build relationships without immediate pressure on delivery.

“There’s not a community meeting that The Social Brokers don’t attend.”

– Partner

Responsiveness

Responsiveness describes The Social Brokers’ capacity to align delivery with the needs of schools, families, and the wider community through listening, flexibility, and co-production. Work with the school was shaped through ongoing collaboration, enabling solutions that responded directly to identified pressures, including the development of family support roles and targeted educational provision. More broadly, delivery was guided by community-identified need, with services, activities, and the community hub offer evolving in response to feedback and emerging issues, rather than following a fixed programme.

Support for children and families was highly tailored, with The Social Brokers responding to individual circumstances in real time and adapting their involvement as needs changed. This was coupled with a strong action orientation, characterised by a focus on practical problem-solving, coordination, and follow-through. Rather than referring issues on, The Social Brokers worked to resolve them directly or mobilise the right support, contributing to a model that is perceived as immediate, pragmatic, and grounded in local need.



Place-based working

Place-based working reflects a hyper-local, embedded approach in which The Social Brokers operate from within the school and wider community, creating visibility, accessibility, and familiarity. This proximity enables a deeper understanding of local needs and allows support to be delivered within the everyday settings where children and families live and interact.

This embedded presence lowers access barriers, making it easier for individuals to engage informally and seek support without navigating formal referral pathways. Regular contact at the school gate and within the community creates ongoing opportunities for engagement, allowing relationships to develop over time and enabling timely follow-up and support.

Co-location further strengthens this approach by bringing services, partners, and community members into a shared space. This enables multiple needs to be identified and addressed more quickly, often within a single interaction, while also improving access for partner organisations to reach communities they may otherwise struggle to engage. Together, these features support a more continuous, accessible, and coordinated model of support grounded in local context.

Relational mechanisms

Trust

Trust emerged as a central relational mechanism, developing as The Social Brokers became a familiar and credible presence within the community. A key factor was their independence from the school, with the community hub providing a separate, non-judgemental space where families could engage openly and seek support, while also enabling an advocacy role between families and schools where needed.

Trust was further strengthened through a distinct relational style characterised by warmth, empathy, and genuine regard for people's wellbeing, creating an environment in which individuals felt comfortable, respected, and able to engage. This was reinforced by the authenticity of the team, whose local knowledge, professional experience, and use of lived experience contributed to their credibility and relatability within the community.

The Social Brokers were also viewed as positive role models, particularly for children and young people, contributing to both trust and aspiration. Trust operated as a reciprocal process, with the team investing time, belief, and responsibility in others, which in turn fostered confidence, engagement, and a sense of possibility among community members. As trust deepened, it extended beyond individual relationships to partner organisations, supporting increased engagement with services and strengthening collaboration. In this way, trust functioned as both a foundation for individual support and a mechanism through which wider participation and coordination across services could develop.

Brokerage

Brokerage represents the point at which trust and responsiveness translate into coordinated, practical action. It involves translating relationships into results by connecting families to support, linking organisations, and mobilising resources to address needs in real time. This is achieved through hands-on coordination and a pragmatic approach that focuses on resolving issues rather than referring them on.

A key enabler of this mechanism is the flexibility afforded by The Social Brokers' position as a Community Interest Company, allowing them to operate across organisational boundaries, access diverse funding streams, and engage with statutory, voluntary, and private sector partners without the constraints of traditional service models. Brokerage also involves building and sustaining momentum over time, maintaining relationships with partners, and creating new opportunities for collaboration and resource mobilisation. This ongoing coordination supports continuity of support and enables the model to extend its reach beyond individual cases to wider community and system level activity.

As the model has developed, greater emphasis has been placed on boundary setting and maintaining focus, ensuring that activity remains aligned with core aims and does not become diluted. Together, these features position brokerage as a central mechanism through which relationships, resources, and action are brought together to deliver coordinated and sustained support.

“They create a real sense of family and community within that space. They really make people feel heard and valued”

– Partner

“To be able to mobilise all of the resources of, like a private company like Cadent Gas... and turn that opportunity... into a social justice enterprise, is genius.”

– Partner

Empowerment

Empowerment represents the point at which earlier mechanisms translate into increased confidence and agency among individuals, families, and partners. For many, this was experienced as a psychological shift, with people beginning to see themselves differently, express aspirations, and move beyond immediate challenges toward longer-term goals.

This growing confidence was accompanied by the development of skills and pathways, including opportunities to take on new roles, access training, explore employment, and engage in enterprise. Support moved beyond immediate needs to creating routes into participation and economic activity within the community.

Empowerment also became collective, with individuals who had received support beginning to contribute to others, share ideas, and take on informal leadership roles. This shift from participation to contribution reflected a growing sense of ownership and community capacity.

At the same time, partner organisations described changes in their own practice, with increased confidence to work more flexibly, collaboratively, and in ways more closely aligned to community needs. In this way, empowerment extended beyond individuals to influence how professionals and organisations engaged with the community.



Multi-level Outcomes

The Social Brokers model is generating outcomes across children, families, communities, partnerships, and the wider local system. These outcomes appear to reflect the cumulative effect of multiple interacting mechanisms over time, rather than the impact of any single activity. In the short term, the clearest changes are relational and stabilising, including increased trust, emotional safety, confidence, communication, and connection to support. Over time, these early gains are beginning to translate into wider social, educational, health, and organisational benefits.

For children, the strongest early outcomes are increased feelings of safety, support, confidence, emotional regulation, and engagement with learning, with emerging signs of improved attainment, agency, and aspiration. For individuals and families, the model is associated with reduced crisis, greater emotional safety, improved confidence and parenting capacity, and better financial stability, alongside early movement toward participation, volunteering, and longer term empowerment.

At community and partnership level, the model is beginning to reduce pressure on schools, strengthen school-family relationships, improve coordination between organisations, and increase community connectedness. At system level, there are early indications of improved service coordination, earlier intervention, and reduced escalation into crisis or statutory responses, although these developments remain emergent.

These findings draw on process evaluation data and service monitoring, with outcomes presented across short, medium, and longer term timeframes, reflecting a combination of observed outcomes, emerging patterns, and anticipated longer-term change. Taken together, the findings suggest a coherent pattern in which early relational stabilisation creates the conditions for later functional and structural change, indicating that The Social Brokers is laying the foundations for more coordinated, preventative, and sustainable support within the local area.

Context–Mechanism–Outcome Configurations

The Context–Mechanism–Outcome configurations show how The Social Brokers model works in response to the specific conditions of Kirkdale, including deprivation, fragmented services, and unmet need. They highlight that impact arises not from isolated activities, but from how trust, responsiveness, place-based delivery, brokerage, and empowerment interact with local context. This suggests that the model's transferability lies not in replicating a fixed set of activities, but in applying the same mechanisms in ways that are responsive to the needs and assets of different communities.

Lessons Learned and Participant Recommendations

Participants consistently emphasised continuity as the primary priority, with the current model viewed as effective and requiring only modest, practical refinements. The focus was on sustaining quality through stable funding, staffing, and gradual, organic growth, recognising that meaningful change, particularly in prevention and health, develops over time.

There was strong support for extending the model to other areas, but with a clear distinction between replication and expansion. Participants stressed that scaling should involve reproducing the core features of the model in new locations, rather than stretching the existing team, in order to protect delivery quality and fidelity. Adaptation to local context was seen as essential, with implementation guided by local need, existing provision, and partnership structures.

Maintaining flexibility while setting clear boundaries was identified as critical to avoiding dilution of the model. This includes ensuring appropriate scope, managing demand, and evolving the staffing model as delivery shifts from school-based work to broader community provision. Strengthening family support and early help capacity was highlighted as a key requirement for sustainability and impact.

Participants also suggested a number of practical refinements to delivery. These included improving communication and accessibility of the community hub, ensuring inclusive reach across different groups, maintaining low-threshold access to support, and making minor adjustments to programme design such as session pacing, drop-in frequency, and targeted provision within schools. Opportunities to expand health-related partnerships and community activities were identified, alongside the importance of recognising the time and coordination required from partners during initial implementation.

Overall, the findings suggest that the priority is not redesign, but sustaining and carefully extending a model that is already perceived as effective, while remaining responsive to local context and need.

Summary

Overall, the findings indicate that The Social Brokers has established a strong foundation for place-based delivery within Kirkdale. The model is characterised by high levels of trust, sustained engagement, and the ability to respond flexibly to locally identified need. Rather than operating as a discrete service, The Social Brokers appears to function as a connective layer within the local system, linking schools, families, community provision, and partner organisations.

1. To what extent do the anticipated benefits of the intervention outweigh its costs?

The economic evaluation indicates that The Social Brokers model delivers strong early value for money, even under conservative assumptions. Across the first 16 months of delivery, the programme generated an estimated £9 of value for every £1 invested, with higher returns observed under adjusted scenarios.

These findings should be interpreted within the context of a developmental phase, in which substantial early investment was directed towards relationship building, infrastructure, and partnership development. As such, some benefits, particularly those relating to community engagement and wider system change, may emerge more fully over time.

The distribution of value reflects the model's preventative and relational focus, with the greatest gains experienced by individuals and families, alongside measurable benefits to health services, children's social care, and education.

2. What outcomes have been observed, and what outcomes are anticipated, as a result of The Social Brokers' delivery?

The evaluation indicates that The Social Brokers is generating outcomes across multiple interconnected levels, including children, families, schools, the wider community, and the local system.

The clearest early outcomes relate to trust, confidence, stabilisation, and improved access to support. Families described support with housing, benefits, finances, and wellbeing, alongside reduced crisis and greater stability. Within the school, participants described stronger engagement, improved readiness to learn, and growing confidence among children, alongside early indications of educational benefit through one-to-one tuition.

At community level, there was evidence of reduced isolation, greater access to resources, and emerging participation through volunteering and informal mutual support. At system level, the model appears to be improving coordination, enabling earlier access to help, and reducing fragmentation across organisations.

Longer-term outcomes, including sustained empowerment, stronger community infrastructure, and more preventative system functioning, remain emergent rather than fully realised, although the evidence suggests their foundations are being established.



“We’re trying to empower the residents who are... they’re stuck psychologically, mentally, physically, from doing anything and disengaged from the school... we want to be creating jobs for them and roles for them, jobs that don’t exist now.”

3. What mechanisms facilitate or hinder success, and why?

The process evaluation suggests that the effectiveness of the model is shaped by a set of interdependent mechanisms operating within the local context.

Learning, adaptation, and responsiveness helped the model remain aligned to local need. Place-based working increased visibility, familiarity, and accessibility through trusted everyday settings. Within this context, trust was built through sustained presence, practical follow-through, warmth, honesty, and local credibility.

Brokerage appears to be the mechanism through which trust and responsiveness were translated into coordinated action, including advocacy, persistence, and active coordination across organisational boundaries. Over time, these processes began to support empowerment, with children, families, volunteers, and partners describing growing confidence, participation, and future orientation.

Potential risks include overextension, unclear boundaries, insufficient capacity, and wider system fragmentation, all of which may weaken relational depth and responsiveness if not carefully managed.

4. How are the intervention effects shaped by setting and context, and what implications does this have for scaling or replication in other areas?

The findings indicate that outcomes are strongly shaped by local setting and context. In Kirkdale, deprivation, economic insecurity, service fragmentation, and mistrust of statutory provision increased the importance of trusted, community-based support.

The evidence suggests that The Social Brokers should not be viewed as a fixed package of activities to be replicated unchanged elsewhere. What appears transferable are the underlying mechanisms: trust-based engagement, responsiveness to local need, place based accessibility, active brokerage, and empowerment-oriented practice.

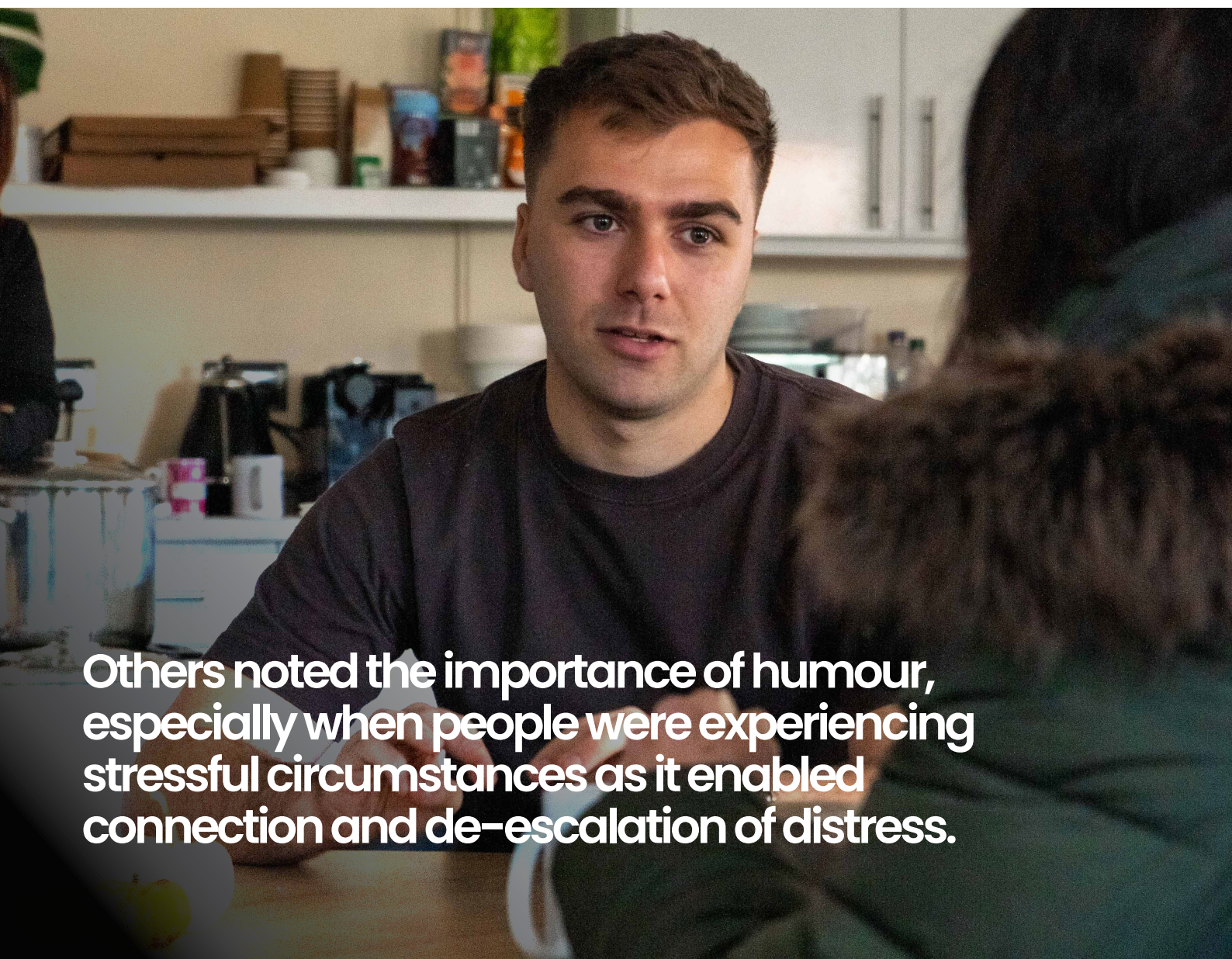
Successful replication is therefore likely to require adaptation to local needs, relationships, community assets, and service landscapes, while preserving the core features that appear to drive impact.

5. What implications do the evaluation findings have for sustainability and the development of a business case beyond Cadent Gas funding?

The evaluation findings support a credible business case beyond Cadent Gas funding. The model appears to generate value across multiple stakeholder groups, including children, families, schools, community partners, health services, and the wider local system.

The findings suggest that The Social Brokers functions as preventative capacity by enabling earlier engagement, reducing escalation, and coordinating support before needs intensify.

Given that benefits appear to be distributed across several sectors, future sustainability is likely to be strongest where funding is multi-year, multi-agency, and aligned to shared outcomes. A blended model combining commissioning, partnership funding, corporate investment, and selective income generation may offer the most resilient route forward.



Others noted the importance of humour, especially when people were experiencing stressful circumstances as it enabled connection and de-escalation of distress.

Recommendations

A. Protect what makes the model effective

A1. Clarify and articulate the distinctiveness of the Social Brokers model

Clearly define the model's core principles and delivery methods, emphasising trusted relationships, embedded presence, responsiveness, and brokerage. Use this consistently in branding, commissioning discussions, and future replication planning.

A2. Prioritise and protect relational infrastructure in funding and growth

Recognise trust-building, responsiveness, and sustained presence as core value generating functions. Future growth should protect these features through appropriate staffing, recruitment, training, succession planning, and role clarity.

A3. Embed delivery within trusted community settings and adapt carefully when extending or replicating the model

Maintain delivery through trusted, high footfall settings such as schools and community hubs. Where extending geographically or through outreach, ensure that visibility, continuity, and relationship-building are preserved.

A4. Maintain adaptive delivery while establishing clear boundaries

Retain flexibility and responsiveness, while clarifying remit, referral thresholds, case management expectations, and step-down arrangements to avoid drift, dependency, or overstretch.

B. Strengthen system contribution and evidence

B5. Invest in brokerage as a coordination and efficiency mechanism

Recognise brokerage as a core function that improves coordination, reduces fragmentation, and enables earlier access to support. Consider explicit funding for this role.

B6. Strengthen early family support to maximise impact

Maintain the integrated school-family community model, including strong school links, dedicated family support, and continuity through the community hub.

B7. Strengthen The Social Brokers' strategic position and systems insight within the wider local and regional landscape

Develop stakeholder and systems mapping, capture learning from frontline practice, and strengthen capability in systems thinking and partnership leadership.

B8. Strengthen the economic evaluation framework to capture system-wide and long-term value

Improve routine outcome measurement, access linked data where feasible, and capture longer-term outcomes and system efficiencies more consistently.

C. Build sustainability through aligned growth and funding

C9. Strengthen future evaluation through developmental monitoring, systems change assessment, and proportionate comparison

Use evaluation methods suited to a relational, evolving model. Track short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes, assess system change, and use proportionate comparative approaches where feasible.

C10. Extend brokerage to support community skills, roles, and economic participation

The Social Brokers should build on emerging empowerment outcomes by creating stronger pathways into volunteering, training, mentoring, and employment through local partnerships, helping to increase longterm opportunity, participation, and community capacity.

C11. Develop a blended funding model aligned to where value is created

Pursue a multi-year, multi-agency funding model combining public sector commissioning, partnership funding, corporate investment, grants, and selective income generation.

Conclusion

Taken together, the findings suggest that The Social Brokers is a promising and locally valued place-based model whose strength appears to lie in the combination of trusted relationships, embedded presence, flexibility, and active brokerage through which support is organised and delivered. Accordingly, future development should focus on protecting and strengthening these relational, structural, and system-level conditions, ensuring that any growth remains aligned with the principles that appear to underpin the model's success.





 The SocialBrokers

The Social Brokers Elevate and Support Communities, Children, and Families in Deprived Areas by Partnering with Universities, Local Authorities, and National Organisations

connect@thesocialbrokers.com

0151 440 2400

Opening Times

8:30am – 4pm
Monday – Friday

The Social Brokers,
Fonthill Road,
Kirkdale,
L4 1QD

