INNOVATION INSIGHTS FROM CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Learning from the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme

SPRING CONSORTIUM | Department for Education

The Children's Social Care Innovation Programme seeks to support the development, testing and sharing of effective ways of supporting children, young people and families.

The Innovation Programme is not just a carefully selected portfolio of well-designed innovation projects. It is a strategic intervention intended to introduce a step change in the way Children's Social Care is designed, delivered and evaluated across the system. It recognises that long-term problems cannot be tackled in isolation and that the causes are complex and multifaceted, so solutions are likely to be too. Each of the projects being supported has the potential to generate valuable learning for the system as a whole and to significantly improve outcomes for children locally.

These boards capture insights from the projects' perspectives about how innovation in Children's Social Care is being done, which methods people are finding helpful and the conditions required for innovations to thrive, together with illustrative examples of projects from the programme in their own words.

They offer an introduction rather than a 'how to' guide, so if you would like to know more about any of the methods, practices or projects referenced in any of the boards, or to join others in learning together about innovation, please follow the links or contact Spring Consortium for more guidance and information.

The final 57 project evaluations from the first round of the Innovation Programme are being published on the Spring Consortium website on a rolling basis until summer 2017.

INNOVATION INSIGHTS BOARDS

1. **THE VALUE OF INNOVATION** IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

2. **INNOVATION METHODS** IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

3. **ADOPTING AND ADAPTING INNOVATION** IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

4. **SCALING AND SPREADING INNOVATION** IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

5. **CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR INNOVATION** IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

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THE VALUE OF INNOVATION
IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

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What do we mean by innovation?

Innovation describes a new practice, model or service that transforms mainstream ways of doing things. While improvement focuses on achieving better outcomes through more efficient use of the same resources, innovation looks to achieve better, *different* outcomes using new resources (or using existing resources in new ways).

The choice in children's social care is not one of improvement or innovation: both are essential. Achieving the scale of transformation needed to give all children the life chances they deserve cannot be achieved through steady improvement *or* step-change innovation alone. This is often called a 'split screen' approach: striking a balance between improving services for young people in the system now and enabling the radical shifts that will achieve dramatically different, better outcomes in the future. New approaches need to be tried at every level, in big and small ways: **practice innovation** that rethinks what happens at the interface between practitioners and families; **service innovation** that rethinks provision and pathways; and **system innovation** that rethinks how organisations in a system operate as a whole.

The most powerful innovations in the programme are rooted in a clear vision and principles that set a shared purpose for the work. These include **high aspirations for every child** that are long-term and set ambition as high as possible; **putting people and relationships first**, ahead of structures, systems or processes; and **working and learning together** in open and honest ways.

Insights from the sector

Practice Innovation

DOING WHAT COUNTS AND MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

Islington Council is transforming its social work practice to make it more skilled, purposeful and collaborative. Two strands of work are key to this vision: 'Doing What Counts' by embedding Motivational Social Work (MSW) to ensure social workers are focused on supporting change; and using values-based tools to make sure practitioners and heads of service are 'Measuring What Matters' to children and families. Growing this work has meant embedding MSW principles in everything from working with families to supervision and meetings, supported by monitoring and evaluation frameworks that include families themselves in the assessment of practice.

Read more in the project storyboard springconsortium.com/isling/story/ and Programme Directory springconsortium.com/isling/dir/

PROJECT CREWE: a 'pod' support model for children in need

Catch22 and Cheshire East have piloted a 'pod' model of support for families in Crewe. Led by a social work consultant who holds statutory responsibilities, differently qualified family practitioners provide day-to-day support alongside peer mentors and volunteers. All staff are trained in solution-focused, strengths-based interventions to provide flexible, personalised support, with the family's own approach to addressing risks and needs at the centre of each support plan.

Read more about Project Crewe in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/crewe/dir/

Service Innovation

NO WRONG DOOR: flexible residential support for complex adolescents

North Yorkshire's No Wrong Door model aims for permanence in a family setting for all adolescents. It creates bespoke placements to support stability at home or in foster care under the principle of 'no move until it's the right move'. Two hubs bring together a variety of accommodation options, a range of services, specialist practitioners and outreach support under one management umbrella. A single team of multi-agency specialists and a committed residential team work together with a shared practice based on Signs of Safety. The team wraps around young people and stays with them throughout their journey, providing essential consistency and building trusting relationships.

Read more about No Wrong Door in the project storyboard springconsortium.com/nwd/story/ and Programme Directory springconsortium.com/nwd/dir/

RIGHT HOME: supporting young people at risk of homelessness

Calderdale's Right Home provides a tiered range of accommodation combining a short stay service (Sleep On It) for young people on the edge of care with supported housing options. All services are accessed through their 'one stop shop', the Vulnerable Young People's Panel, which develops and manages packages of support and creates alternative interventions.

Read more about Right Home at calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/family/children-incare/right-home.html, in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/cald/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/cald/eval/

System Innovation

FAMILY VALUED: creating a restorative system

Leeds' Family Valued programme is embedding restorative practice as the ethos of children's services, while developing Family Group Conferencing as a core offer to families in circumstances including domestic violence. All families who are subject to an Initial Child Protection Conference are offered a Family Group Conference, with 660 conferences held in 2016. Leeds' restorative practice team has delivered training to over 5,000 practitioners across the children's workforce and beyond, including the NHS, police, schools, youth offending teams, housing, social work and in voluntary and community organisations. Weekly data on progress is displayed visibly across the council to inspire and motivate staff.

Read more about Family Valued in the project storyboard springconsortium.com/leeds/story/ and Programme Directory springconsortium.com/leeds/dir/

ACTIVE AGENTS FOR CHANGE: rethinking the system response

Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are developing a suite of approaches to early intervention, looked-after children and child protection, including multi-practitioner Family Intervention teams; developing 220 family support volunteers; specialist responses for missing young people; children's services surgeries to offer advice to agency partners; and developing a fast-track route to social work with the University of Winchester.

Read more about Active Agents for Change in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/hamp/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/hamp/eval/

CORE PRINCIPLES OF INNOVATION IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

High aspirations for every child

Services, practices and systems that are focused on long-term aspirations for children.

Service outcomes that balance attention to immediate risks and short-term needs with a holistic view of a child's assets, long-term wellbeing and future ambitions.

Asset-based and child-centred approaches to care planning, safeguarding and assessment.

People and relationships first

Innovations that recognise, enhance and strengthen the children's relationships.

Services and systems that enable professionals and service users to learn, relate and thrive.

Systemic approaches that reduce the complexity and multiplicity of relationships in children's lives.

Working and learning together

Approaches that bring professionals and families together using common practice and common language.

Collaboration across agencies, sectors, services and teams.

Co-designing services and co-producing outcomes with young people and families.

Introducing disciplined innovation

Innovation in public services is too frequently seen as a purely inventive or creative process, and at worst a laissez faire, 'let a thousand flowers bloom', approach in lieu of robust systems and processes.

Disciplined innovation brings about step changes in outcomes and performance by applying low risk, inexpensive and manageable innovation methods. There is no limit to the use of these methods. They can support rapid re-design of children's services under pressure to cut costs and improve performance, or can support whole-system transformation towards dramatically better outcomes for children.

The right processes take the mystery out of innovation, turning new insights into great ideas and making great ideas real. Critically for children's social care, disciplined innovation has been used in the Innovation Programme to create safe spaces for development, using a 'split screen' approach to balance 'business as usual' with genuine leaps into the unknown. Applying a robust theory of change that connects new activity to transformed outcomes gives structure to the process and maintains focus on what really matters. Gathering new insights through research into the lives, experiences, needs and ambitions of children and families has stimulated ideas and created compelling evidence for the impact of new approaches.

Three methods have proven to be particularly powerful in children's social care. New ways of understanding data that help to match the experience of young people to the processes and practices that work best. Co-design with young people and families that creates new perspectives on problems and solutions, shifting the relationship between services and people. And iterative cycles of prototyping and piloting that support leaders and practitioners to better understand and embrace risk, safely.

Insights from the sector

Insight gathering and understanding data

FAMILY INSIGHTS: segmenting based on need

Newcastle's Family Insights programme is a new approach to social work with an ambition to reduce bureaucracy, increase opportunity for direct work and increase confidence and ability to effect lasting change with families. At the core of the model is a needs-based segmentation: a restructuring of social work units to focus on children and families with similar characteristics, based on data already collected by partner agencies. Data analysts are embedded in teams to enable effective use of research and information, generating insights that support practice and improve social workers' understanding of the circumstances in which particular interventions are most effective for different families.

Read more about Family Insights in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/new/dir/

ACHIEVING EMOTIONAL WELLBEING: ethnographic research with children in care

In 2015 NSPCC undertook qualitative research to consolidate and apply the evidence base for achieving emotional wellbeing for looked after children. Working with four local areas in the UK, it conducted ethnographic research and interviews with 42 children in care and care leavers, in addition to 56 foster carers and 80 practitioners. Interviews with young people included visual materials to map their journeys through care and their networks of support.

This project was not part of the Innovation Programme. Find out more about NSPCC's work on the emotional wellbeing of children in care at www.nspcc.org.uk

Co-designing with young people and families

STOKE'S HOUSE PROJECT: a housing 'co-operative' for care leavers

The House Project is a collaborative business, in which young people and adults work co-operatively to manage their own housing in order to create stable homes for as long as they need them. In its pilot phase, ten young people aged 16 and over have refurbished homes leased from Stoke-on-Trent City Council and co-designed all aspects of the business, supported by facilitators, a clinical psychologist and social care practitioners. The project was co-designed from the beginning, with young people leading the governance group - creating a service around their needs while building ownership, responsibility and agency.

Read more about the House Project at www.thehouseproject.org, in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/stoke/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/stoke/eval/

ACHIEVING CHANGE TOGETHER: co-designing a CSE pathway

Achieving Change Together is part of Project Phoenix, a programme to tackle child sexual exploitation across Greater Manchester. It aims to avoid referrals to secure accommodation for those at risk, by focusing on a social care - rather than criminal - response. Its commitment to putting the design of services in the hands of young people has included ethnographic research and working with 30 young people who have experienced CSE to co-design a pathway for new cases.

Read more about Achieving Change Together in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/phoenix/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/wigan/eval/

Prototyping and piloting

FIRSTLINE: prototyping practice in social work training

Firstline is a tailored leadership programme designed to develop the leadership skills of social work managers so that they can be influential and impactful leaders. Led by Frontline, the programme is designed specifically for the social work context and encourages managers to lead in a way that enables social workers to shape and improve their local system. During the prototype cohort the Frontline team worked closely with eight LAs and 37 social work managers, testing and iterating the approach and programme model in real time, allowing learning to be embedded quickly.

Read more about Firstline at www.thefirstline.org.uk, in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/first/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/first/eval/

PAUSE: adapting to local contexts

Pause works with women who have experienced - or are at risk of - repeated pregnancies that result in children needing to be removed from their care. Pause is currently being delivered in seven areas and is rolling out to a further nine Pause Practices over the next six months. All Practices receive ongoing support from the national team, including regular training, supervision and practice tools. Each area has a local Pause Board, and a contractual 'Pledge' between each Pause Practice and the national Pause team exists to ensure fidelity and integrity to the model, while ensuring learning is shared and used to influence and have impact across the wider system.

Read more about Pause at www.pause.org.uk, in the project storyboard springconsortium.com/pause/story/ and Programme Directory springconsortium.com/pause/dir/

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL INNOVATION

Apply disciplined methods

Use as disciplined, planned and thorough an approach to innovation as you would to implementation.

Adopt project management and leadership processes that are flexible, responsive and collaborative, but with no less rigorous outcomes and milestones.

Ensure continuous learning processes are embedded at all levels, to evaluate and learn as a team in real time.

Take a 'split screen' approach

Balance innovation with 'business as usual', ensuring that current provision is improved at the same time as new approaches are tested.

Give dedicated time, resource and authority to the innovation process, so that it is not an extra activity on top of day jobs.

Ensure appropriate (and different!) governance, management, leadership, and accountability are in place for both improvement and innovation.
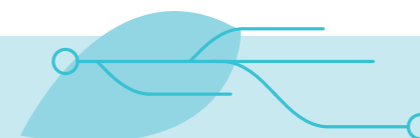
Use a robust theory of change

Develop and share a compelling theory of change so that new activities are always connected to the outcomes we want to see for children and families.

Identify interim indicators that let you know you are on track, and share these openly and honestly.

Be prepared to adapt to data and insights developed along the way - accepting criticism, letting go of what doesn't work and constantly creating new ideas.

Gather new insights

Use blended research methods, including quantitative data analysis, to build a rich picture of the system, and qualitative methods like ethnographic research to dig deeper into the experiences of children, families and practitioners.

Challenge and test assumptions and orthodoxies by comparing multiple perspectives and bringing varied voices into the conversation.

3 ADOPTING AND ADAPTING INNOVATION
IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Why should we think about adopting and adapting?

Adoption and adaption are not straightforward processes, and the history of innovation is littered with promising new approaches that failed to demonstrate impact outside their original context.

Knowing how to take new approaches to new contexts is essential for successful scaling and critical to the Innovation Programme's ambition of whole-system transformation. Many innovations in and outside the Innovation Programme originated in a different organisation, place or even country. Likewise, new approaches developed in one place through the programme are now being adapted for use elsewhere.

Learning from the innovation of others - in children's social care and beyond - is a powerful way to stimulate and guide the development of our own work, and to this end publications, toolkits, events and visits are helpful. However, adapting a new practice or system innovation from elsewhere, or helping others to adopt something you have developed, requires more intensive engagement and careful thought. **Working in partnership** with the original team and **sharing key personnel** between old and new sites or organisations is often an essential component to success.

These relationships can help in **understanding the original innovation**, the problem it is trying to solve, and what really makes it work in its context. This includes interrogating the evidence for the model. It is also essential to **take account of the new context** - the assets, constraints and relationships in play - and how these might affect the model. Together, this understanding supports those taking on innovation in children's social care to **balance fidelity with flexibility**, keeping what is essential to the success of the new way of doing things, while adapting to local needs.

Insights from the sector

Learning from elsewhere

MORNING LANE ASSOCIATES: supporting the implementation of Reclaiming Social Work

Morning Lane Associates (MLA) is supporting five local authorities to adapt and implement the Reclaiming Social Work approach developed in Hackney. The work focuses on overcoming systemic and organisational barriers. Initiatives include working with teenagers on the edge of care, training and coaching 30 consultant social workers to lead RSW units, child protection and LAC services and helping LAs to think through how to reduce the bureaucratic burden. Key to MLA's support has been 'narrowing the tramlines' of what fidelity to the model comprises, better defining the must-haves that every LA must prioritise. Project leads have met at monthly governance boards to share progress, experience and learning.

Read more about Reclaiming Social Work in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/mla/dir/

WEST BERKSHIRE: applying the lessons of restorative practice

West Berkshire's Building Community Together programme aims to support communities to do more for themselves. The ethos of restorative practice - working with, not doing for or to - is at the heart of the initiative. Working closely with Leeds and the New Zealand founders of restorative practice, West Berks has trained over 1,000 staff and over 400 young people. The approach is embedded in five services areas, including Family Group Conferencing and a Tier 2 Emotional Health Academy for young people and families, co-designed with partners.

Building Community Together is not part of the Innovation Programme. Read more at community.westberks.gov.uk

Adapting from elsewhere

MOCKINGBIRD: adapting a US fostering model

Working with six LAs and two independent fostering providers, The Fostering Network has brought the Mockingbird model, developed in the US, to the UK system. The model, based on the idea of an extended family, clusters trained foster and kinship carers in 'constellations' around a hub carer who provides respite, supervision, training and shared activities. In the first phase, 18 constellations were developed, comprising 252 carers and 189 children and young people. The Fostering Network have developed a formal partnership with the Mockingbird Family Society as the UK's licensed provider, sharing learning and supporting fostering services through the accredited Mockingbird implementation process.

Read more about the Mockingbird model in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/fost/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/fost/eval/

RETHINKING SOCIAL CARE IN BRADFORD: combining tried-and-tested models in a new context

The city of Bradford's aim is to reinvent care provision for its 900 looked-after children. It is working closely with North Yorkshire County Council and the Fostering Network to adapt, adopt and combine innovative approaches that have been tried and tested by those organisations: the 'No Wrong Door' model of support for adolescents and the Mockingbird fostering model, respectively. A senior member of staff from North Yorkshire sits on Bradford's innovation programme board to support adaptation to the Bradford context over the next four years.

Helping others to adopt innovation

NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION SERVICE: embedding tried-and-tested practice

The National Implementation Service (NIS) enables implementation of evidence-based programmes across the UK to radically improve the lives of vulnerable children and their families. Its mission is to develop, replicate and take to national scale programmes that deliver measurable outcomes and value for money. In 2016 it partnered with 52 LAs to deliver and evaluate proven interventions (including multisystemic therapy and KEEP foster carer training) and new programmes including AdOpt for adoptive parents and RESuLT training for residential teams. NIS also adapted and evaluated MST FIT and trialled TEND, a video coaching intervention for foster carers.

Read more about NIS in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/nis/dir/ and evaluation summaries springconsortium.com/nis/adopt/eval/; springconsortium.com/nis/keep/eval/; springconsortium.com/nis/result/eval/

DAYBREAK: embedding Family Group Conferencing across England

Daybreak is a national voluntary organisation that supports the delivery of Family Group Conferencing, currently working with 12 LAs to run FGC child welfare and safeguarding programmes. In addition to training, capacity building and programme accreditation, Daybreak works with partners to develop new approaches and the use of FGCs in new contexts. With Wiltshire County Council and the London Borough of Southwark, it has been testing a model of delivery aimed at placing children on the edge of care within their family network.

Read more about Daybreak at www.daybreakfgc.org.uk/ and in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/day/dir/
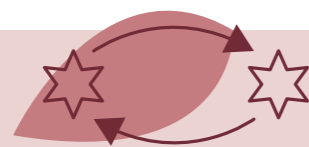
HOW TO ADOPT AND ADAPT INNOVATION SUCCESSFULLY

Broker partnerships and share personnel

Broker partnerships with other sites doing similar work to enable expertise to be shared.

Bring people who really understand the innovation to work to adapt and create the version that will work for the new locality.

Consider secondments and staff exchanges to enable key personnel to immerse themselves in the practice and culture of the original innovation.
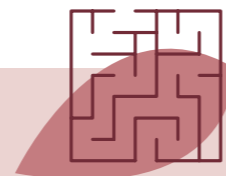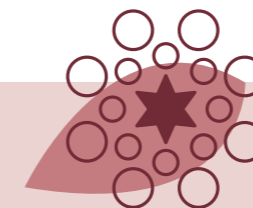
Understand the innovation

Codify what really matters in ways that can transfer, e.g. through training and coaching programmes, toolkits and materials, products that people can use and apply.

Understand the context of the innovation: the constraints and the assets that are in play and the problem being solved.

Explore the less tangible elements of the innovation (culture, values, leadership) that might be contributing to its success.

Understand the new context

Diagnose the constraints and assets in the new context, and compare them to those from the originating site.

Prepare the ground to ensure the right conditions are in place for the innovation to be successful, e.g. workforce, permissions, partner agency relationships.

Pay close attention to culture - how close are the new ways of working to existing cultural norms?
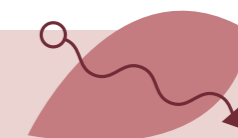
Balance fidelity with flexibility

Ensure adherence to the core aspects of the new way of working, especially where this requires difficult changes to systems or processes.

Be prepared to adapt some aspects of the new approach to the specific needs and assets of the new environment.

Adopt a learning model of implementation to enable lessons to be learned in real time and adaptations to be made quickly. Don't wait for an evaluation to tell you it wasn't right further down the line.

SCALING AND SPREADING INNOVATION IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

INNOVATION INSIGHTS FROM CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Learning from the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme

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What do we mean by scaling and spreading?

The projects in the Innovation Programme have been learning about what is required to embed innovation, to help it flourish sustainably and to grow it at scale so greater impact can be achieved.

Scaling up an innovation entails taking an idea, model or practice that is working at a small scale and helping it to grow. Spreading an innovation elsewhere means replicating an existing model in multiple locations or contexts. Achieving either means supporting others to put in place the practices, processes and frameworks that allow successful growth. Fundamentally, successfully growing innovation is as much about relationships as it is about processes: strong and honest partnerships between organisations, practitioners and communities, and a commitment to learning and doing together.

As in other sectors, successful scaling and spreading in children's social care relies on making the case and creating demand for new approaches, including children, families and the whole workforce in the process of evaluating and demonstrating the success of the model. Defining a set of core principles and ways of working help to make sure that models can flex to suit local contexts without losing what makes them work. It requires building communities of practice and learning at every level of the system who will be the driving force for new ways of working. And it requires creating powerful narratives and useful tools that set a clear vision for the future and explain clearly what this new world will look and feel like.

Insights from the sector

Scaling up

FOCUS ON PRACTICE: embedding purposeful practice in three London boroughs

Focus on Practice is an ambitious programme to develop purposeful social work practice and effective interventions. Led by the boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster City Council and Kensington & Chelsea, it builds on the knowledge, confidence and expertise of practitioners. Now in its second year, systemic ways of working are embedded across the service with the majority of staff now trained in systemic practice and systemic groups operating in teams. New staff members are placed on the systemic practice course and 60 staff are working on their second year of systemic training. Satisfaction rates from participants are high and there is a 15% drop in Looked after Children numbers and improved staff retention.

Read more about Focus on Practice in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/tri/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/tri/eval/

BRIGHTER FUTURES: scaling up across the system

Ealing's Brighter Futures programme initially focused on reshaping support to adolescents, including devolved decision-making closer to the young person; small, multi-skilled teams offering intensive family intervention; and training advanced foster carers alongside social work teams to look after the most vulnerable young people. This was underpinned by a practice model bespoke to Ealing. Following positive results, Brighter Futures has been scaled up across the system over the last 12 months; it is now the way that children's social care is delivered in Ealing.

Read more about Brighter Futures in the project storyboard springconsortium.com/ealing/story/, Programme Directory springconsortium.com/ealing/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/ealing/eval/

Spreading elsewhere

BARNAHUS AND CHILD HOUSE: spreading across countries

Child House is a child-centred response to sexual abuse. Developed in 1998 in Iceland as *Barnahus*, it has been since been adopted in Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Iceland has seen compelling results – a trebling of perpetrators charged, a doubling of convictions, and improved therapeutic outcomes for children and families. In 2017 it will be piloted in London by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime. The model will bring the NHS, social care, police, criminal justice and third sector services together under one roof to provide comprehensive support. The UK pilot will test proof of practice in the English judicial and care systems, establishing a learning strategy, interagency links and funding arrangements to support scaling.

Read more about Child House at www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/uks-first-child-houses-to-launch

FAMILY DRUG AND ALCOHOL COURT: implementing across 12 local authorities

A Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) is a problem-solving court that supports parents to overcome the problems that are placing their children at risk. Developed in the US, the Tavistock & Portman NHS Trust and Coram set up the first FDAC in London in 2008. A new FDAC National Unit has led phased piloting and roll-out of the model in 13 settings in the UK, linked to 16 courts and serving 21 local authorities. This community of practice has created a detailed picture of family outcomes and agency costs across the country.

Read more about FDAC at fdac.org.uk and in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/fdac/dir/

Supporting others

SIGNS OF SAFETY: a unifying cross-agency practice framework to support change

Signs of Safety was developed in Australia to support social workers to better assess risk and safety and to make practice more accountable. The framework has been brought to the UK by Munro, Turnell and Murphy as a response to the organisation-wide problems identified in the Munro Review, aiming to provide tools and training for local authorities to improve the quality of their service to children and families. The team is currently supporting ten LAs to build capacity and align policy and procedures within the Signs of Safety framework.

Read more about Signs of Safety in the Programme Directory: springconsortium.com/mtm/dir/

CORAM-i: data-led tools to enable permanence

Coram-i is a data-led improvement framework which seeks to eliminate delays in a child's journey through care. It is supported by a web-based tracking tool to manage day-to-day performance, and an Adoption Module to the cost calculator for adoption services, developed alongside Loughborough University. New diagnostic tools analyse LA data to provide an assessment of the performance of adoption services and special guardianship orders. Together, this gives LAs an overview of both the impact and cost of their services.

Read more about Coram-i in the project storyboard springconsortium.com/coram/story/, Programme Directory springconsortium.com/coram/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/coram/eval/

KEY ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL SCALING AND SPREADING

Make the case and create demand

Generate compelling evidence that the innovation works. This might include business cases and using measures and metrics that capture the outcomes that matter to children and families.

Stimulate demand with a case for change that helps commissioners, practitioners and communities understand the need for a new way of doing things. Engage with young people, carers, social workers and the wider workforce to influence and lobby for the change they want to see.

Define core principles

Codify the core principles and practices that are fundamental to the model's ethos and culture.

Identify the operational elements that are essential to the model succeeding and sustaining.

Understand what can be flexed or adapted, and where these elements must be closely adhered to.

Building communities of practice and learning

Build communities of practice, engagement, interest and learning that will take on the job of making the innovation work. Identify the people, roles, relationships, networks and support they will need to perform these functions well.

Understand what it will take to move people from interested, to engaged, to active practitioners. This might include large-scale training to shift cultural norms; or individual conversations with interested sceptics.

Create powerful stories and useful tools

Develop a compelling narrative that helps everyone understand the vision; the route to get there; and the part they can play in its success.

Create tools, guides and materials that help people understand what the innovation looks like in practice and how it will affect them.

What does it take for innovation to flourish in children's social care?

Creating new services and practices in isolated pockets will not create the step-change required of children's social care system to deliver dramatically different, better outcomes for children and families. For the best new approaches to be embedded, sustained and scaled, we must also change the local and national system conditions that enable, and constrain, innovation.

True partnership working across organisations with a shared vision and common values can support whole-place approaches. Training, data capture, budgets and risk can be shared across the statutory, private and third sectors; across local authorities and regions; and between practitioners, families and young people.

New commissioning, funding and delivery models allow joint commissioning across agencies, new cultures where innovation can thrive, and incentives for providers to innovate. This includes alliance contracting and social impact bonds; trusts, mutuals and Community Interest Companies; and spin-outs.

Building the capacity to innovate across the sector requires local authorities, agencies and organisations to commit to learning together. This means everyone working on behalf of the whole sector; supporting one another to innovate, evaluate and build the evidence base, test and take risks collectively. Crucially, it means learning about what doesn't work, as well as learning from success, and understanding better how to ask for and provide help.

All of the above both require and enable a renewed focus on the outcomes that matter, co-producing these with young people and families, involving them in every stage of this process.

Insights from the sector

Partnership working

FAMILY SAFEGUARDING: multi-disciplinary teams to tackle the 'toxic trio'

Hertfordshire County Council has created 22 co-located, multi-disciplinary Family Safeguarding Teams to tackle the toxic trio of domestic abuse, substance misuse and parental mental ill-health. The Family Safeguarding Partnership is part of a whole-system change approach in Hertfordshire, and includes the county council, CCGs, police, probation, Recovery Service and Mental Health Trust. Adult specialists operate under a unified management structure, with posts funded by all partners. Teams share Motivational Interviewing as a core practice, and information sharing between agencies is enabled at strategic and operational levels. Hertfordshire is now helping four other councils to implement the model.

Read more about Family Safeguarding in the project storyboard springconsortium.com/hert/story/ and Programme Directory springconsortium.com/hert/dir/

GROWING FUTURES: thinking differently about tackling domestic abuse

Doncaster Children's Services Trust has developed Growing Futures, an approach to domestic abuse that focuses on delivering therapeutic practice to all family members, including perpetrators. The programme's success is underpinned by broad and deep partnerships between the Trust, council, police and probation, housing, VCS providers, NHS trusts and CCGs, and the University of Central Lancashire. New Domestic Abuse Navigators deliver effective therapeutic interventions and act as whole-system enablers to affect whole-family joint working across relevant agencies.

Read more about Growing Futures in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/don/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/don/eval/

Commissioning and delivery models

IT'S ALL ABOUT ME: social investment to de-risk the adoption process

It's All About Me (IAAM) is a ten-year scheme to find permanent homes for harder to place children. IAAM is the first provider-led social impact bond in the UK, delivered by a collaboration of Voluntary Adoption Agencies. The bond is designed to pay out more up-front: as the process of adoption nears successful completion, the local authority repays the investment funding via its contract with the Voluntary Adoption Agency. This means that the social impact bond takes the initial risk of non-completion and gives Voluntary Adoption Agencies additional up-front resources to recruit adoptive parents for these children.

It's All About Me is not part of the Innovation Programme. Find out more at data.gov.uk/sib_knowledge_box/node/183

ACHIEVING FOR CHILDREN: spinning out for increased autonomy

Achieving for Children is a social enterprise created by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames to provide children's services across both boroughs. Though owned jointly by the two LAs, Achieving for Children has the autonomy, for both leadership and practitioners, to design, commission and develop services to deliver their contract with the councils. This includes Better by Design, an intervention framework founded on social learning theory and systemic practice.

Read more about Achieving for Children in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/afc/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/afc/eval/

Learning together

COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN: structuring learning to test new solutions

CDC worked with five LAs, each committed to embedding a culture of co-production and learning, to design and test new practice in assessing disabled children and their families. A structured learning model created a supportive framework for LAs to co-design approaches to pre-assessment preparation, peer support and self-assessment, building social work capacity, workforce development and volunteer training, including using parents as project managers. Every local model was informed by the work of the group but tailored to context and need, with LAs coming together throughout the process to share learning and engage in peer support.

Read more about the work of Council for Disabled Children in the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/cdc/dir/

SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS: synthesising learning alongside professionals

NSPCC and the Social Care Institute for Excellence are testing mechanisms to enable better learning from serious case reviews and improve their quality. A synthesis of 38 recent SCRs on the effect of inter-professional communication and decision-making has supported training for lead reviewers and a pilot for centrally commissioning SCRs. This includes creating materials alongside professionals and testing with three Local Safeguarding Children Boards, training lead reviewers and piloting the central commissioning of five SCRs.

Read more about Serious Case Reviews at nspcc.org.uk, the Programme Directory springconsortium.com/nspcc/dir/ and evaluation summary springconsortium.com/nspcc/eval/

KEY ENABLERS FOR SUCCESSFUL INNOVATION

Focus practice on strong relationships and shared decision-making

Balance safe placements with supportive and secure relationships: reducing placement moves, providing consistent key workers and prioritising the existing bonds in children's lives.

Develop personalised interventions and solutions: finding new ways to listen to children and families, generating a shared understanding of need and responding with flexible models of support.

Change culture to create an enabling environment for professionals

Build a supportive environment for professionals and practitioners: integrated, interdisciplinary and cross-agency teams; rethinking roles and career paths for social workers; and thinking differently about recruitment and retention.

Adopt evidence-based practice across the whole workforce: better use of evidence and data, cultures of learning and new models of training.

Lead and govern in partnership with a shared, practical vision

Articulate a clear and shared vision, purpose and set of values that is championed by leaders but owned by everyone, aligning values across organisations and bringing together teams from multiple agencies.

Translate this into governance, structures, partnerships and ways of working, including multi-agency governance groups and distributing leadership.
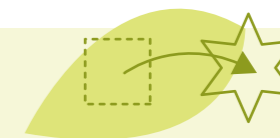
Change whole systems to enable new approaches to embed and scale

Design new models of commissioning, funding and delivery: build cross-agency partnerships to enable joint commissioning, create alternative funding and delivery vehicles and decommission what does not work.

Balance fidelity and flexibility at scale: scaling models across multiple locations, implementing evidence-based programmes that have been developed elsewhere and helping others to learn from innovative practice.