

LEARNING FROM INNOVATION

**A summary of lessons learned from the
children's social care Innovation
Programme**

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INTRODUCTION

The Department for Education launched the children's social care innovation programme in 2014. The programme aimed to:

- improve the life chances for children who receive help from the social care system
- encourage innovation by experimenting and replicating successful new approaches
- create better incentives for innovation and ways of sharing what works
- create a strong evidence base
- get better value across the children's social care sector.

Over 100 interventions were funded between 2014 and 2020, as the programme progressed through various different rounds. The interventions funded were highly variable, in terms of what outcomes they targeted, what issues they addressed, who they involved and what they consisted of. The learning that was obtained varied depending on the design and purpose of each particular intervention, as well as on the strengths and limitations of evaluation reports. All interventions involved some type of change to business as usual within the area they were implemented. In this report, we are using the term “intervention” to refer both to very specific, well-defined programmes, as well as to more complex projects and changes to the way of working.

Foundations has reviewed the evaluation reports of individual interventions funded by the programme. If you are interested at looking at the full list of the reports click [here](#).

The methodological limitations of many of these evaluation reports, mean that we aren't able to tell what works to improve outcomes from this group of reports. However, the various reports highlighted a range of barriers and enablers to successful project management, intervention design, and delivery which we have summarised.

Even though these insights aren't based on the evidence of impact or 'what works' it is useful to summarise these 'lessons learned' and make them available for those who are innovating in children's social care in the future.

The Innovation Programme has generated learning regarding barriers and enablers to making change on the following themes:

- Set-up and management of service design, development and testing
- Intervention design
- Supportive interactions
- Evaluation.

For each theme we highlight some of the lessons described across the evaluation reports and provide a summary box that sets out what these insights might mean for future intervention design, delivery and evaluation.

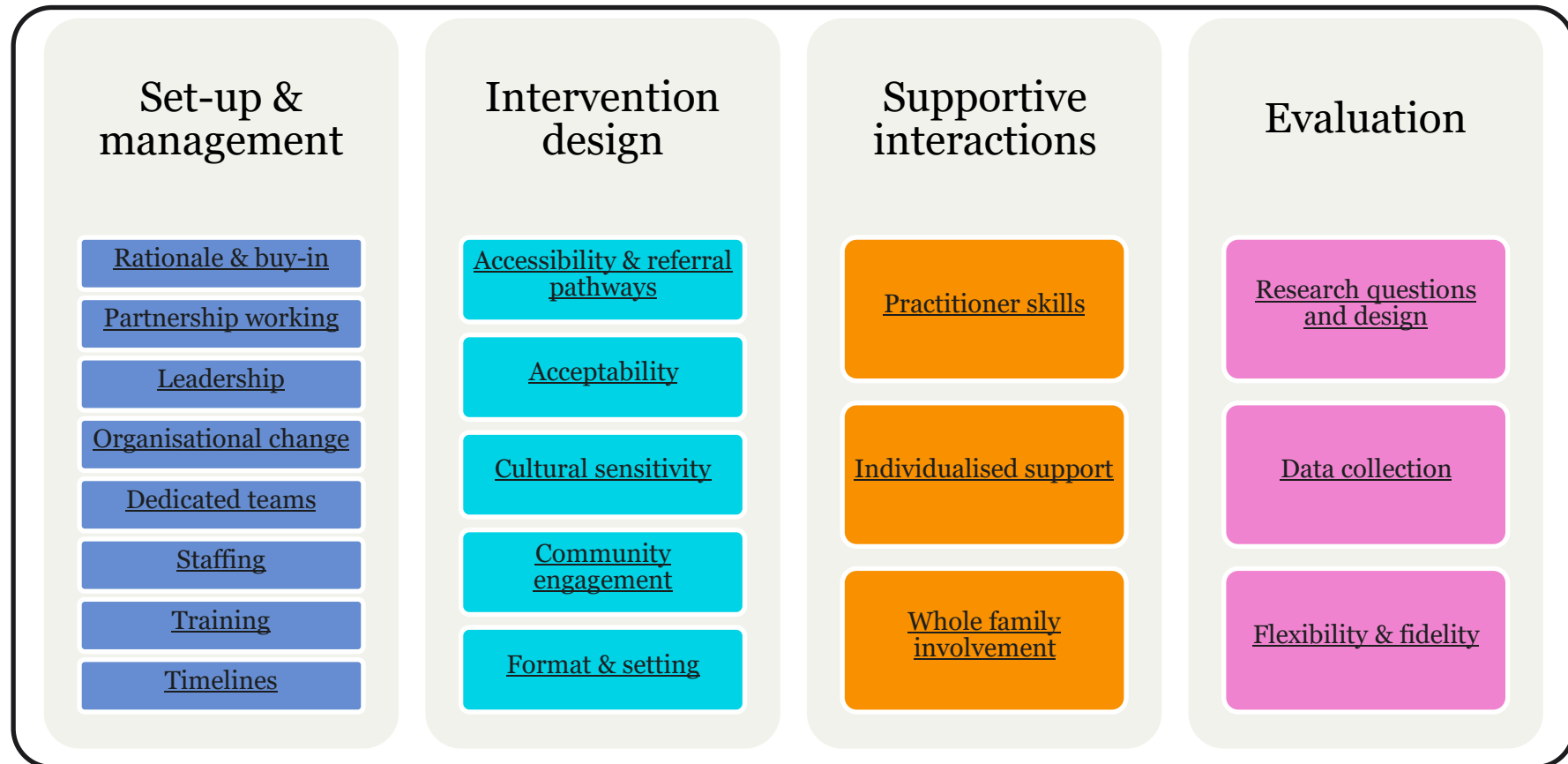
These insights might be particularly relevant for commissioners of services, or those involved in designing and delivering new interventions. Having a detailed understanding of the enablers and barriers to successful delivery of something new is equally important to those who fund such projects, as well as to those who seek to deliver or evaluate such projects. Therefore, reviewing the



information here may be helpful to any practice leaders, commissioners, and funders wanting to introduce new interventions to local areas, as well as to evaluators researching these changes.

LEARNINGS FROM THE INNOVATION PROGRAMME

Click on any of the boxes below to find out what we learned in each area from the Innovation Programme:



1. What have we learned from the Innovation Programme regarding the set-up and management of innovation projects?

Rationale: Having clear plans, that set out why the intervention is needed, what it entails and what it will achieve is essential

- Having a dedicated scoping phase to develop appropriate plans was identified as necessary in several reports; a few reports also highlighted that their Innovation programme activities built on earlier learning and initiatives. Indeed, some discussed that among multi-stranded projects the ones building on earlier iterations tended to be delivered more successfully.
- Having a framework that allowed different stakeholders to adapt the intervention to their local context was seen as helpful, although some reports also highlighted that there need to be clear parameters to this, as ‘adaptability’ might otherwise open the door for mission creep.
- To secure buy-in from regional stakeholders, some innovation services were overseen by joint boards. Other sites created forums to exchange ideas and support communication. In several reports the role of value-for-money was discussed and how the availability of funding was conducive to building agreement – however, as there were questions regarding the sustainability of funding, participation/involvement was often still seen as an investment – securing the buy-in from key stakeholders sometimes took much longer than expected.
- Having a clear rationale and feasible plans was seen as critical in securing buy-in from stakeholders at different levels of seniority and across different partner organisations. It helped if plans set out clear targets and objectives and were aligned with organisational priorities. In some sites, new ‘innovation services’ were seen as over-resourced; in other sites, sufficient capacity was not available to progress work on ‘innovation services’, due to Ofsted inspections and other demands on local services.



What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

Developing a theory of change that sets out why change is needed, what it does, and what it will achieve is a way to set out a clear rationale for your plans – discussing your assumptions with other stakeholders will enable you to understand where views differ. Building a strong rationale for your plans will help build a shared commitment to the plans and help these remain consistent as the programme develops. Building on an agreed theory of change, specifying plans, thinking carefully about timelines, scope, and resourcing will shed light on what is feasible and how the plans could be delivered.

If you are developing, funding, or evaluating a new programme, you could set out:

- Why is this programme needed?
- What does the programme consist of?
- What will the programme achieve?

If you have a high-level understanding of the rationale for your project, consider specifying project plans and review what is feasible in your context.

Partnership working: Multi-agency working was generally seen as positive, but comes with its own challenges

- Reports highlighted how multi-agency working had improved the reach of services, as different teams were in closer contact with some families than others. Stakeholders also felt, through partnership working, they were better to provide better support (see: [individualised support](#)), and improve referral processes (see: [accessibility and referrals](#)).
- Several reports discussed challenges in partnership working, e.g. where some organisations or teams felt there was an imbalance, and took on more control than others expected or were less involved than others hoped.
- Partnership working was enabled through the set-up of:
 - Regular ways to communicate, e.g. discuss cases, share learning
 - Appropriate governance structures, such as joint boards with clear terms of reference
 - Effective coordination, such as a central support team.

What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

The project plan could include an overview of key stakeholders and their involvement in the project, or their view of the project. You could conduct a stakeholder analysis:

Who has an interest in the work?

Who has influence on this matter?

How will different parties be involved?

How will the different stakeholders work together?



You can use your stakeholder analysis to get clarity who to engage with, thinking about stakeholders' respective interest and influence in the work. You can also ensure to make plans early on to decide how you will engage different stakeholders at different stages of the work.

Leadership: Effective leadership at all levels is essential to project success

- Stakeholders involved in implementing interventions highlighted the need for leaders to feel ownership of 'innovation services', and advocate for change. In some instances, senior leaders had received training in new ways of working which they were subsequently able to role-model and champion within their organisations.
- Stakeholders stressed that leaders need to be credible (for example through experience on the ground), as well as well-connected with partners, teams and other stakeholders, and communicative - i.e. listen to and consult with the right people.
- Leadership turnover affected the successful delivery of a range of interventions funded through the innovation programme.

What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

Who could lead the work, and do they need any support to be seen as:

- committed & focused?
- credible, connected, and communicative?

If you have a project lead in post, consider whether they would benefit from additional support, as well as how you could mitigate any risks related to possible leadership turnover.

Organisational change: Structural changes affected project delivery

- Depending on the complexity of the innovation projects, stakeholders sought to bring about culture change, establish new governance structures, introduce new infrastructure, or restructure teams.
- Leadership was highlighted as a potential enabler and source of stability (see: [leadership](#))
- Barriers included a reluctance to embrace change, a lack of training to support new ways of working, and a lack of certainty about individual prospects and job stability.
- The introduction of new IT systems was often highlighted as burdensome, however, many reports stressed that new systems enabled new ways of working. In some reports, new IT systems weren't available, couldn't be accessed by some people or didn't work at all, which affected project delivery.



What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

It is important to recognise the context within which you are trying to implement change, and to be realistic about the challenges or opportunities this might present. If you are designing, commissioning or funding family support services, consider:

- Does the delivery of your plans mean there is a need for organisational change? Is this ambition of this realistic within the project funding/timescales?
- How can you support a smooth and successful transition to new ways of working, if necessary?
- Have you accounted for the time it may take to build and test new infrastructure?

Dedicated teams: Project delivery benefitted from having dedicated project teams

- Project teams were often multi-disciplinary, and stakeholders highlighted this equipped the team to be more responsive to service user needs. (See: Individualised support) Moreover, staff were able to learn from each other.
- Some reports highlighted that some training to establish a shared understanding of key principles had been useful to support shared ownership of project activities.
- Various reports stressed the need for clear roles and responsibilities across project teams.
- Good and frequent communication was highlighted as another enabler to team working.
- In some reports there was a question whether multi-agency project teams would be able to work better if the project team became independent or if each team member stayed with their original organisation.
- Several reports highlighted that having a dedicated project lead was essential in delivering the overall project, however staff turnover was recognised as a challenge alongside this. (See: Staffing)
- Capacity was a very common issue, with practitioners having busy caseloads and sometimes limited time for project work. Conversely, where staff were working predominantly on innovation projects, some had questions about the security of their job beyond the innovation programme period.



What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

Having staff with the capacity to deliver any change projects is crucial – whether this means reducing the caseloads of staff who will be involved in the project, or whether this means recruiting project delivery staff. In many cases, multi-disciplinary teams may be best placed to deliver complex work programmes. However, it is essential to ensure that staff in project teams have the necessary infrastructure in place to work well together – whether this means the co-location of staff from different teams and organisations, or the introduction of new IT infrastructure.

If you are designing, commissioning, or funding family support services, consider:

- What skillsets and experience do team members need to have?
- To what extent do all team members need to have the same understanding of core principles?
- What infrastructure will the project team need to work well together?
- How will the team communicate?

Staffing: Issues related to recruitment and retention affected programme delivery in many sites

- Staff turnover was one of the most commonly cited reasons for overall project delay.
- Staff turnover was in some cases linked to questions about job security beyond the innovation programme, agency workers seeking permanent employment, or staff feeling stressed in their roles.
- Where project teams had vacancies, this often caused delays, and sometimes recruitment efforts failed altogether, as applicants didn't have the right expertise.
- Some reports also flagged that with staff members moving on a lot of institutional knowledge had been lost – they stressed that for the viability of innovation efforts, it is important that there is wider buy-in, and the relevant information is shared with the right people.



What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

Recruitment and retention are at the heart of successful project delivery. Numerous reports found that difficulties in recruitment and retention led to overall delays. Where the right people aren't in post, timelines should account for recruitment during the set-up phase. Moreover, staff may decide to move on for a variety of reasons – project knowledge should be recorded, and the ownership of innovation projects should be shared beyond individuals.

If you are designing, commissioning or funding family support services, consider:

- Which roles will you need to recruit for before starting project delivery?
- Does your project plan include appropriate timelines for this recruitment?
- How will you record project-related decisions to ensure your organisation is not overly relying on individuals?

Training: Training can help lay the foundations to improve practice

- Several reports discussed the role of successful workforce training in delivering innovation projects. Other reports explained that some stakeholders found the training they received insufficient, or even inappropriate.
- Several reports also discussed how some staff had found it difficult to make the time to attend the training.
- A number of reports also discussed ways stakeholders were seeking to embed the training in practice.

What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

Adequate training is crucial to equip practitioners with the right knowledge and skills to deliver (new) services.

If you are designing, commissioning or funding family support services, consider:

- What knowledge and skills do practitioners need to deliver the service?
- Who will need to receive relevant training?
- How and when will practitioners receive any necessary training?
- How and when will you review the suitability of the training?
- How will you support practitioners to embed the training into practice?



Timelines: Realistic timelines are crucial to successfully deliver new interventions

- Many reports discussed how their projects were delayed and couldn't deliver the expected impact. Key phases of the project often took longer than anticipated, which affected overall project success.
- Projects were delayed due to difficulties in:
 - Recruitment – difficulties recruiting into key posts was one of the most common reasons for overall delays. (see: Staffing)
 - Procurement – several projects experienced delays due to procurement, especially in relation to buildings.
 - Set-up – many reports highlighted there had been delays related to making the project operational, for example, securing stakeholder commitment, agreeing a commissioning framework, identifying potential referrers, creating referral processes and operating protocols, exploring community needs, developing new practices, and revising protocols and materials. (see: O)
 - Delivery – delivery was affected by delays related to recruitment and setup; but there were additional barriers to delivery, including a lack of time for communication between team members, lack of time for frontline staff to engage with and understand the changes being implemented, a need to go live during not after the set-up of new management structures and the development of protocols or case management systems. Indeed, a lot of innovation projects were not fully implemented by the time corresponding reports were written.
- Several projects were discontinued or adapted after the initial implementation phase.
- Covid disrupted the delivery of some of the later projects.

What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

A successful Innovation Programme (or project) bid does not equal a project plan ready to be operationalised. Project plans need to allow sufficient time for each project phase. The time needed to recruit into relevant posts, and to set up the wider project should not be underestimated, as these will affect further delivery – either through delays if timelines are subsequently adjusted, or in terms of the quality of the implementation if project teams are rushing to meet unrealistic deadlines. If you are designing, commissioning, or funding family support services, consider:

- What are the key stages your project will need to go through?
- What are key milestones along the way?
- What are the dependencies between the different activities?



2. What have we learned from the Innovation Programme regarding intervention design?

Accessibility & referrals: Ensuring new services are accessible and used by the target population is essential

- Some reports highlighted the importance of practical barriers, such as geographic location, and the availability (or lack) of childcare, and service users' work hours.
- Several service offers weren't taken up as readily as anticipated, sometimes despite a high prevalence of presenting problems. In several cases, innovation projects had more capacity than required, which sometimes led to resource sharing with underfunded services.
- Some fostering projects could not be delivered at the intended capacity, due to difficulties recruiting foster families.
- In many cases, various organisations referred children, young people and families into new services, however, many innovation projects were affected by ineffective referral processes, relating to:
 - Not all relevant practitioners being aware they could refer into the new service
 - Not all relevant practitioners understanding what the intervention does and who it might work for
 - Slow referral processes, leading to practitioners later not referring into the new service
 - Lack of clarity around referral criteria, leading to some unsuccessful referrals, and practitioners subsequently not trying to make further referrals.
- Onwards referrals were sometimes difficult as well, meaning service users sometimes stayed in services for longer than anticipated.

What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

When planning new services or interventions, consider what you know about local needs. You may wish to consider undertaking a population needs assessment, or consider documents such as your local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment to collate some of this information.

- How much capacity will the new service need?
- How can you ensure children, young people, and families are empowered to access the new service?
- How can you ensure referral processes in and out of the new service are effective?

Acceptability: Interventions need to be acceptable to children, families and practitioners

- Some innovation projects turned out to be unsafe or otherwise inappropriate.



- Some innovation projects involved the delegation of statutory duties, which more often than not proved to be very challenging to agree. In several cases there was tension between statutory obligations and innovation project plans.
- Some innovation projects turned out to be not liked by some or all of the target group (e.g. an intervention that aimed to support young people to move from residential care to foster care faced challenges in identifying young people who also wanted this to happen)

What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

For interventions to be effective, they need to be successful in engaging the target audience. If you're designing or delivering a new service or intervention, consider:

- Is the proposed service or intervention... safe? ... ethical? ... in line with statutory obligations? ... in line with the needs and wishes of children, young people and their families?
- Is the proposed service or intervention suitable for the target population in terms of age, accessibility, and cultural fit?
- How do you know?

Cultural sensitivity: Designing equitable services is key for engaging and supporting all community members

- Some innovation projects highlighted the importance of ensuring that the planning and delivery of support and prevention efforts reflect the cultures and practices of local service users.
- Cultural competence among practitioners was highlighted as a key enabler to successfully engaging and supporting local families.
- Some innovation projects lacked cultural sensitivity and had to be rescoped or amended – this included changing information sheets and intervention materials as well as changing how practitioners approach sensitive conversations with service users, by avoiding unnecessary questions and avoiding making assumptions.



What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

If you are designing or funding a new service, or are reviewing existing arrangements with the possibility of tweaking or improving these, consider who your target group is, and how your services can be inclusive of multiple cultures.

- Avoid making assumptions or reinforcing stereotypes in service design, outreach, or delivery.
- Reflect on who is designing or delivering the services, and what cultural norms they might be taking for granted.
- Reflect on the assumptions underlying the new service: Does why it is needed, what it does or what it can achieve vary for different ethnic or religious groups?
- Consider the power of language: Through language we can unintentionally reinforce stereotypes and prejudice – conversely, through thoughtful use of language, we can contribute to a more equitable support experience.
- Review the intervention materials: Do leaflets, websites, handbooks, etc. reflect the diversity of local communities?
- Consider who is delivering services: Are they representative of the diversity of local communities? Have they recently participated in training on equality, diversity, inclusion and equity? Do they have the support that's needed to embed the learning on inclusivity in practice?
- Consider engaging with the local community to help design or deliver inclusive services, or to gather feedback on the suitability and fit of existing services (see: community engagement)

Community engagement: Involving community members in service design and/or delivery can help remove barriers to engagement

- Several innovation projects gathered feedback from community members on existing services or consulted community members on preferences for new services, through surveys or interviews.
 - Some reports highlighted difficulties identifying potential interview participants or getting community members to engage with surveys and consultation sessions.
- Some innovation projects also found it difficult to recruit community members with the right characteristics to get involved in service design. Moreover, some had difficulties involving young people throughout the service development process, despite the intention to co-design services.
- Various projects engaged successfully with community members in service design, including:
 - Involving community advocates in decision-making
 - Involving young people as researchers and inspectors
 - Involving care leavers as well as young people in care in the development of services for young people in care
 - Supporting youth-led activities, such as set up of social media page.



- Several innovation projects involved community partners in the delivery of interventions. Reports explained that the involvement of volunteers or community representatives/advocates helped to improve provision, to normalise engagement with support services, and to reach diverse groups. Reports explained that community representatives that had experienced challenges first hand were sometimes well-placed to connect with families.
 - Several reports discussed how the role of stigma and misconceptions might affect how services and families interact.
 - Some reports highlighted the need for services to allow time to address anxieties and build relationships.
 - Some reports explained that it is important that families recognise the need to receive support.
 - Reports also highlighted the need for services to work with children/young people/families rather than impose decisions upon them.

What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

If you are designing or funding a new service, consider where, when and how community members could or should be involved in the development of plans. Consider which community members you need to engage, referring to your needs assessment if you have one. Consider reaching out actively to those who are often underrepresented in service design and planning, such as male parents or carers, LGBTQIA+ people, minority ethnic children and families, or those with special educational needs or disabilities. Consider inviting the involvement from people with relevant lived experience when designing targeted services, such as young people in care and/or care-experienced young people, foster carers, or victim survivors of domestic abuse, or female genital mutilation, etc.

When collecting feedback, consulting community members or co-creating with children, young people and parents, ensure your approach is accessible; you proactively reach out to diverse community members to ensure wide representation; offer a safe space for engagement; share insights with those that can take action; ensure participants understand the process and any resulting actions.

- Is there any feedback from community members regarding existing services and potential gaps or limitations?
- Can community members help develop additional services or comment on the fit of plans?
- Are there community led, by-and-for initiatives that you could collaborate with?

Also consider where, when and how community members could or should be involved in the delivery of plans – could some community members help you reach the wider community?



Format & Setting: Intervention format and setting can influence reach and engagement

- Some innovation projects were successfully delivered in group settings. In some projects, service users viewed group sessions as boring or raised concerns about the behaviour of others in the group.
- Some innovation projects were delivered in schools; however, recruiting schools wasn't always straight-forward as schools sometimes had existing policies (e.g. on behaviour management) that weren't aligned with innovation programme activities.
- Some innovation projects included virtual or digital delivery of services, which was seen as an added degree of flexibility. However, there were questions regarding the quality of online provision, how to maintain confidentiality, and ensure the support is seen as human. Some service users that had previously received face-to-face support felt the digital delivery was inadequate by comparison.

What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

If you are designing or funding a new service, consider where, when and how and it can be delivered.

- Consider consulting with potential partners (such as schools) early on to understand whether they would be appropriate partners.
- Also consider whether the programme (or elements of the programme) is better delivered to individuals or groups – and if the latter, consider what a good group size would be, whether the group should be reserved for particular age groups, and how practitioners can support positive behaviours in the group.
- Also consider carefully what the strengths and limitations of virtual or digital delivery are, and whether delivering (parts of) the programme through virtual or digital delivery would add value.
- Some parents or young people might be more open to engaging in groups or through virtual/digital services than others; consider whether the new programme should or could be offered in different variants.



3. What have we learned from the Innovation Programme regarding supportive interactions?

Practitioner skills: The relationship between children/young people and practitioners was seen as a key factor in successful intervention delivery

- It is well recognised that the quality of the relationship between practitioners and service users is at the heart of effective services. To support practitioners in developing positive relationships, some innovation projects included training covering topics such as strength-based or trauma-informed approaches. Other key factors that affected the quality of therapeutic relationships included:
 - Taking a judgement-free approach
 - Having confidence and a good understanding of interventions
 - Having knowledge and skill related to the intervention focus (e.g. domestic abuse; mental health)
 - Taking sufficient time to build strong relationships
 - Listening actively to service users
 - Being curious, but not pry
 - Being empathetic, reassuring, and positive
 - Being consistent, and regularly present
 - Being flexible regarding where and when to meet
 - Being able to provide practical support, e.g. to arrange childcare.
- Many reports highlighted that caseloads were a key factor in whether practitioners could build trusting relationships with service users; some reports explained that project team members' caseloads had been lowered which enabled them to provide better support; others explained that they had limited time to build relationships with each service user.
- Staff wellbeing was another important theme. Working with children, young people, and families can be emotionally draining, and practitioners will often be exposed to sensitive matters, and hear about cases of abuse and neglect. Several reports recognised the need to ensure staff wellbeing is appropriately supported.
- Some reports highlighted that some practitioners struggled to set boundaries and got drawn into areas outside of their responsibilities, particularly where they built a strong relationship with service users.
- Several reports highlighted the importance of regular supervision – to support practitioners implement the training, discuss any arising questions, and offer any support that's needed.
- Some reports that assessed innovation programmes which aimed to improve efficiency, found there is a risk that work would be too process driven, and quality would be sacrificed in the process.



What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

Whether you're designing a new service or are reviewing existing arrangements, consider how practitioners in your area or organisation are supported to deliver the highest quality support:

- Do you set clear expectations regarding the interactions between practitioners and service users?
- What training do practitioners have or need?
- What support can practitioners access to improve their practice?
- What support can practitioners access to set boundaries and prioritise their own wellbeing?
- What arrangements are in place to hold practitioners accountable?
- What do you know about current practitioner workloads?
- What do you know about the overall quality of provision within the new project?

Individualised support: Several innovation projects were designed to be more flexible and responsive to individual needs

- Several innovation projects included the tailoring of support – to varying degrees. Ways of providing a greater level of individualised support included:
 - Matching of practitioners and service users
 - Creating individual plans and agreements with individual service users
 - Updating plans based on feedback after support sessions.
- Reports highlighted that providing holistic support and collaborative working enabled lead practitioners to signpost service users to additional services, and to advocate for service users within services. Social workers collaborated with various providers, including Education, Mental Health, Housing services. Having a single point of contact was seen as beneficial to service users. Having access to a range of coordinated services was a way to provide user-centred support.
- Several reports highlighted that giving children, young people, and families control over their support plans enhanced trust. Key enablers to sharing ownership of support plans included communication between service users and practitioners, as well as service users recognising the need for support or actively seeking support. In some cases, practitioners were in disagreement with service users regarding their support needs and felt the degree of decision-making power given to service users prevented them from providing the best support.
- Setting up and maintaining multi-agency ways of working came with a number of challenges, and some reports highlighted ways to improve collaboration. (See: [partnership working](#))
- Some reports found that even collaborative multi-agency approaches sometimes weren't prepared to support the complex needs of some children, young people and families.



What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

When developing family support services, consider whether service user experiences and outcomes might improve if the service is designed to be more flexible and tailored around individual needs. Consider whether collaborating with other services might be a way to meet the diverse needs of local community members without duplicating efforts.

Being clear from the outset, how practitioners and service users will work together can create clarity, and where service users have a say in how their support is delivered this may increase trust, and hence engagement with service components.

If you are designing, delivering, or funding support, consider:

- How much ownership can the target group have over their support?
- What support may children, young people, or families need to make empowered decisions?
- Where practitioners and service users have differing preferences regarding next steps, how will this be resolved?
- Does the support rely on any key ingredients that every service user should receive?

Whole-family: Several interventions sought to involve the wider family

- In some innovation projects, there was a focus on encouraging parents to be more involved in exploring the needs of young people that informed the support plans but found they were reluctant to engage – in these cases, where parental involvement was mandatory or seen as helping with child protection cases, parents were more likely to engage.
- Several reports highlighted that providing support to the wider family meant families had a shared understanding of key concepts and were able to support one another. In some cases where interventions relied on family members supporting each other, families felt left alone.
- In some innovation projects focused on domestic abuse, having different caseworkers working with different family members was seen as more acceptable than having the same caseworker support both victim survivors and perpetrators.
- Some reports explained the need to engage men and boys in service design and delivery, and to ensure services are relevant to male children, young people and families, and that outreach focuses on fathers, too.



What does this mean for future innovation in social care practice?

When developing family support services, consider who the new intervention should be delivered to and how. For example, it might be appropriate to have individual and joint sessions for young people and their siblings, and their parent figures respectively.

- Consider how each family's unique situation may affect how the different family members engage with the service, and with each other.
- Consider carefully what ways of working are acceptable and appropriate for families. These considerations will vary depending on the focus of your intervention or service.
- Remember that family comes in many shapes and patterns, so avoid making assumptions about family structures and consider how your service makes space for this.



4. What have we learned from the Innovation Programme regarding evaluation in children's social care?

Research questions and design: Is the aim to understand what works?

- Many of the innovation programme evaluations provide insights regarding the implementation and process of the new project, but are not able to provide conclusions on the effectiveness of new services.
- Setting up randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs (QEDs) can be challenging. Some challenges encountered during the innovation programme included:
 - Difficulties setting up a QED and selecting a suitable comparison group;
 - Spillover, where the intervention was offered to the comparison group before the evaluation ended.
- Some effects may only become evident after a longer period of time, and timelines didn't always allow for implementation, which could have prevented services from making a difference within the given timeframe.

In many cases, qualitative and mixed-methods research involving a single group is appropriate, for example to understand:

- Whether the intervention is acceptable to children, young people and families, and how they feel about participating;
- Whether practitioners are well-equipped to deliver the intervention, and what they view to be strengths and limitations of the approach;
- Whether the intervention is reaching the expected number of families;
- Whether referral pathways are functioning as expected;
- Whether individual children or families achieve the desired outcomes or need additional support.

These and many other questions may be answered by analysing and interpreting data from interviews, focus groups, surveys, or administrative data.

To understand whether the interventions 'work', trials need to consider what difference interventions make – and they need to rule out other factors that could influence outcomes. Randomised controlled trials and quasi experimental research designs are methods used to figure out how much an intervention truly causes change. They do this by comparing two groups of people who are very similar in most ways. No two people are the same, so we can't observe what happens to the same participant with and without the intervention. However, working with two groups that are similar on average is a way to understand whether interventions actually work.



What does this mean for funders and evaluators of social research?

- Funders and evaluators of social research should be clear whether they seek to understand the effectiveness of interventions and therefore need to undertake impact evaluations or whether they need to investigate other questions about new programmes first. This may mean feasibility studies are more appropriate (i.e. research that considers whether it is possible to deliver programmes; whether participants engage and experience them positively) than going straight to a full evaluation.
- Not every intervention is ready for a rigorous trial. If there are questions around the acceptability of the intervention or the feasibility to deliver the intervention successfully, it is highly unlikely that a rigorous trial could be conducted successfully.
- Both feasibility studies, and impact evaluations need appropriate resourcing and realistic timelines to ensure valuable findings can be generated. Evaluators should work closely with intervention developers and those implementing interventions to understand implementation timelines.
- It might be appropriate to take measurements at various time points, including at baseline, post-intervention, and a long-term follow-up; however, how much time is appropriate between these measurements will vary depending on the project parameters and research aims.
- Longer trials are more resource intensive. However, trials that aren't planned around realistic timelines are unlikely to yield useful insights regarding what works, for whom and under what circumstances.

Data collection, data sharing and ethics: Evidence generation relies on getting good data

- Data collection was sometimes difficult, especially where this included new data sharing systems or the collection of additional data, or linking existing datasets.
- Some evaluators had difficulties getting informed consent from prospective participants.



What does this mean for funders and evaluators of social research?

- Accurate data collection is essential for any evaluation. Ensuring those collecting data have the time, training, and support to collect data is critical. Using validated measurement tools to understand outcomes is crucial to have a valid and reliable view of the distance participants have travelled. However, using additional measurement tools is a burden to those collecting data and to those providing responses.
- Linking various data sets requires appropriate data sharing arrangements and technical expertise, and time needs to be factored in to set this up and test.
- Ethics is key to doing social research. It is important that prospective participants understand the purpose of the research, what their involvement would look like, and that their participation is voluntary – this might also mean that many prospective participants choose not to be involved.
 - It is critical to think carefully about the characteristics and skills of those doing the research and conducting any interviews; when they will contact prospective participants and how they will explain the research aims.
 - Working with peer researchers can be a way to build trust between researchers and participants, however, it is important that peer researchers adhere to the same ethical standards regarding informed consent and have the relevant training and support to conduct research.
 - Peer-researchers may also be able to coach and support the research team, and support recruitment, while the main data collection is undertaken by experienced researchers.
 - Member-checking interim findings can be a way to increase engagement with the research.
 - In some cases, offering incentives to thank participants for their involvement may be appropriate.

Flexibility and fidelity: Understanding intervention effects where delivery is flexible

- As many intervention projects were designed to be delivered flexibly, some evaluators found it difficult to establish what constitutes fidelity in what practitioners delivered, or specify what dose each participant should receive.



What does this mean for funders and evaluators of social research?

- To support the evaluation of flexible interventions, variations in fidelity and how much of the programme participants engage with can be considered in evaluations.
 - Define engagement levels: Consider recording engagement in an appropriate way, for example total number of hours support taken up; or where interventions consist of multiple components, a categorical approach might work best.
 - Explore whether the amount of support that participants engage with affects the impact the interventions has. Also consider how this might vary depending on external circumstances, such as the level of need, or other personal characteristics.
- An alternative approach would be to consider the impact of the availability of the flexible intervention, which is in line with intention-to-treat models. In this case you should still record how much of the intervention each participant takes up and what their feedback is on the different components as this will be useful to inform future implementation and evaluation of the approach.



APPENDIX

Tables and links to the reports

This summary is based on lessons learned that were reported in over 100 evaluation reports.

To capture relevant learning from the Innovation Programme, we have sought to include all projects funded, delivered, and evaluated as part of the Innovation Programme. As the Innovation Programme was such a complex programme, it was difficult to get a comprehensive overview of relevant projects.

- The Innovation Programme website lists most, but not all of the funded projects and corresponding publications. We have included all project specific evaluation reports, but not the related reports (e.g. on partners in practice).
- We have asked the Department for Education (DfE) who financed the Innovation Programme, to review whether our list includes all relevant studies. The DfE provided copies of a small number (n=11) of to-date unpublished evaluation reports. These evaluation reports were included to avoid introducing bias based on publication status.
- A small number of drafts is still in progress at the time of writing, so in the absence of a final draft, we were unable to include these (exact number unclear).
- The publicly accessible DfE website on the Innovation Programme lists a number of projects that were discontinued. For two of these, we were not able to identify evaluation reports.
- There is a small number of projects that appears in a project directory, but not on the DfE website (n=5).
We have not included these, because individual evaluation reports weren't available for four of these. The fifth one has been identified in an archive, but only after the list of included studies had been finalised.

Research consultants appraised all studies using the MMAT (Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool) and extracted information from each study.

The variability between the intervention designs and research designs made it difficult to appraise all evaluation reports consistently, hence, after careful consideration, we have decided not to publish individual appraisal scores. Overall study quality was relatively low, owing to the nature of the innovation programme (see: [evaluation](#)). Individual study appraisals can be shared upon request with the caveat that only a subset of appraisals has been moderated.

Due to the overall limited strength of the evidence, in this summary, we refrain from making statements about 'what works', and focus on the valuable insights on successful implementation and on qualitative findings regarding implementation design, as well as reflections about evaluation.

Below, you can find overview tables of included interventions by theme.

The innovation programme supported a number of projects related to 13 themes.

To read more about the individual interventions funded through the Innovation Programme, please click on any of the 13 themes to find an overview of interventions and corresponding studies.

Adolescents facing complex risks (n=8)

Alternative delivery and finance models (n=8)

Care leavers and Staying Close (n=14)

Child sexual exploitation or abuse (n=4)

Edge of care and children in need (n=13)

Female genital mutilation (n=2)

Fostering and adoption (n=6)

Looked-after children (n=8)

Residential care (n=2)

Social work systems and practice (n=16)

Support for parents facing complex risks (n=12)

Young people's mental health (n=7)

Young people with disabilities (n=2)



Interpreting these tables

Check marks regarding the research type (impact evaluation, implementation or process evaluation, cost analysis) refer to the aim of the research and do not confirm whether the research design was able to answer this question.

- **Impact Evaluation:** The research aims to understand what impact the intervention had
- **Implementation or Process Evaluation:** The research aims to understand how the intervention was implemented, whether it was acceptable or accessible, or how the practitioners and families or other stakeholders involved felt about the intervention
- **Cost analysis:** The research sought to understand total costs, or whether the intervention was cost-effective.

Adolescents facing complex risks

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Achieving Change Together	Aims to introduce new approach to safeguarding young people at risk of exploitation using a complex safeguarding framework.	North West		✓	✓	Quantitative	<u>Achieving Change Together</u>
B Positive Pathways	Aims to provide integrated, multi-agency specialist care to children in residential care, and to introduce the Mockingbird fostering model for children in foster care.	Yorkshire & the Humber	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>B Positive Pathways</u>
Community Adolescent Service	Aims to support young people at risk of gang involvement, child sexual exploitation and youth crime through a single integrated service.	North West		✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Community Adolescent Service</u>
Contextual Safeguarding Project	Aims to reduce extra-familial risk or harm to young people outside the family home, in both virtual and real world spaces.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Contextual Safeguarding Project</u>



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Family and Adolescent Support Hub	Aims to increase face to face working with families, utilise whole family approach, integrate planning and review by highly skilled social workers, draw in other disciplines such as learning mentors and youth workers.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Family and Adolescent Support Hub</u>
Gloucester's Hire Innovation Project	Aims to support adolescents through a unified approach, with dedicated multiagency teams using restorative practice and focussing on attachment theory.	South West		✓	✓	Qualitative	<u>Gloucestershire Innovation Project</u>
Inside Out	Aims to support looked after young people through coaching. Coaches also work with other professionals to ensure support is consistent, joined up and working towards a common goal.	East of England	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Inside Out</u>
No Wrong Door	Aims to provide a multicomponent integrated service that provides residential support, outreach, speech and language therapy and life coaching to support young people.	Yorkshire & the Humber	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>No Wrong Door</u>
Right Home	Multiagency approach that aims to address a provision gap for young people on the edge of care or at risk of being homeless by providing flexible accommodation options and a individualised package of support.	Yorkshire & the Humber	✓	✓		Mixed Methods	<u>Right Home</u>



Alternative delivery & finance models

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Achieving for Children	Aims to improve outcomes for families through intensive direct work using Signs of Safety.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Achieving for Children</u>
Camden Digital Innovation Project	Aims to adapt working through the COVID19 pandemic.	Greater London	✓	✓		Mixed methods	Unpublished
Future Social	Aims to support quality of practice and career progression of children's social work professionals through the development of a shared, regional workforce development infrastructure.	West Midlands		✓		Mixed Methods	<u>FutureSocial</u>
Making Integration Happen	Aims to achieve greater integration of health, social care and education services, to further improve support for families.	South West		✓	✓	Mixed Methods	<u>Making Integration Happen</u>
Slough Children's Service Trust Transformation Programme	Aims to embed Sign of Safety to ensure a "team around the child" approach.	South East	✓	✓	✓	Mixed Methods	<u>Slough Children's Service Trust Transformation Programme</u>
South East Together Dynamic Purchasing System	Aims to establish a Regional Dynamic Purchasing System ¹ (DPS) to support the commissioning and procurement of placements in Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS) and independent children's homes	South East		✓		Qualitative	<u>South East Together Dynamic Purchasing System</u>



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
North-East London Commissioning Partnership	Aims to ensure that there is availability of high-quality residential placements for children, testing the use of block provider contracts to commission 35 residential placements for young people	London		✓		Qualitative	<u>North-East London Commissioning Partnership</u>
North of Tyne Collaboration	Aims to explore the feasibility of integration across three neighbouring local authorities to achieve improvements in the areas of 1) Looked After Placements 2) Workforce and practice and 3) Shared services.	North East		✓		Qualitative	<u>North of Tyne Collaboration</u>



Care leavers and Staying Close

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Care Leavers Partnership	Aims to improve services for young people by reshaping the service delivery model, unlocking capacity in the community and co-designing solutions.	Greater London	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Care Leavers Partnership</u>
Derby City Council Local Area Coordination for Care Leavers	Aims to support the development of relationships to nurture resilience and local solutions with a focus on helping young people to stay strong independently, rather than be dependent on services.	East Midlands	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Derby City Council Local Area Coordination for Care Leavers</u>
Shared Lives Care Leavers	Aims to reduce challenges young people face when leaving care by moving to live with a Shared Lives carer.	Multiple/ Nationwide	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Shared Lives Care Leavers</u>
Staying Close, Bristol City Council	Aims to provide greater support to young people moving out of residential care homes.	South West	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Staying Close, Bristol City Council</u>
Staying Close, Elm House North Tyneside	Aims to provide greater support to young people moving out of residential care homes.	North East	✓	✓		Qualitative	<u>Staying Close, Elm House</u>
Staying Close, Fair Ways, Portsmouth	Aims to provide greater support to young people moving out of residential care homes.	South East	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Staying Close, Fair Ways, Portsmouth</u>
Staying Close, North East Lincolnshire	Aims to provide greater support to young people moving out of residential care homes.	South East	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Staying Close, North East Lincolnshire</u>



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Staying Close, Portsmouth City Council	Aims to provide greater support to young people moving out of residential care homes.	South East	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Staying Close, Portsmouth City Council</u>
Staying Close, St Christopher's Creating Brighter Futures Ealing and Hounslow	Aims to provide greater support to young people moving out of residential care homes.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Staying Close, St Christopher's Creating Brighter Futures</u>
Staying Close, Staying Connected Norfolk and East Cambridgeshire	Aims to provide greater support to young people moving out of residential care homes.	East of England	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Staying Close, Staying Connected</u>
Staying Close, Leaving Care doesn't mean care leaves you, Suffolk County Council	Aims to provide greater support to young people moving out of residential care homes.	East of England	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Staying Close, Suffolk County Council</u>
Workplace Innovation Project	Aims to support care leavers to development employment skills	North East	✓	✓		Mixed methods	Unpublished
The House Project	Aims to support young people in care into independent living.	West Midlands	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>The House Project</u>



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
The House Project (Psychological Framework)	Aims to support young people in care into independent living.	Multiple/Nati onwide	✓	✓		Qualitative	Unpublished

Child sexual exploitation or abuse

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Aycliffe Secure Centre	Aims to provide specialist support to victims of child sexual exploitation within a secure centre.	North East	✓	✓	✓	Quantitative	<u>Aycliffe Secure Centre</u>
Safe Steps	Aims to provide intensive support and supervision to keep victims of child sexual exploitation safe outside a secure setting.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Safe Steps</u>
South Yorkshire Empower and Protect	Aims to support victims of child sexual exploitation to remain safely at home, rather than needing to be moved to secure or out of area homes.	Yorkshire and the Humber	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>South Yorkshire Empower and Protect</u>
Lighthouse CSA Training Programme	Aims to support victim of child sexual abuse and exploitation through a range of intervention strands.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Lighthouse CSA Training Programme</u>



Edge of care and children in need

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Brighter Futures	Aim to provide multiagency intensive support to children and families.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Brighter Futures</u>
Compass Services	Aims to provide multidisciplinary package of support to ensure that children and young people could remain with the family wherever possible and be reunified at the earliest opportunity.	East of England	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Compass Services</u>
Coventry Children in Need Innovation Programme	Aims to improve service provision and outcomes through a more personalised and intensive model of support.	West Midlands	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Coventry Children in Need Innovation Programme</u>
Creating Strong Communities	Aims to provide a transformative cultural change for children's social care by implementing interventions including signs of safety and restorative practice.	East Midlands	✓		✓	Mixed methods	<u>Creating Strong Communities</u> <u>1</u> <u>Creating Strong Communities</u> <u>2</u>



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Face to Face Pathways	Aims to embed systemic social work practice across the care pathway for young people on the edge of care, in care or leaving care	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	Face to Face Pathways
Families Achieving Change Together (formerly called Project Crewe)	Aims to improve the outcomes for CIN by offering a more personalised and intensive model of support	North West	✓			Mixed methods	Families Achieving Change Together (formerly called Project Crewe)
Family Group Conferencing Pilot	Aims to support families to create their own support plan before care proceedings are initiated.	Multiple/ Nationwide	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	Family Group Conferencing Pilot
Family Learning Intervention Programme (FLIP)	Aims to provide intensive support to families to strengthen their long term resilience, raise aspiration, and empower and enable parents to parent effectively.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	Family Learning Intervention Programme (FLIP)
Multi-systemic Therapy for Child Abuse and Neglect (MST-CAN)	Aims to support parents to overcome various personal challenges (e.g., substance abuse, depression, PTSD) and to develop their understanding so they can better meet the needs of their children.	Yorkshire and the Humber	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	Unpublished



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Right Balance for Families	Aims to provide intensive multi-practitioner support, a family group conference, and support including mentoring for the child in need.	Greater London	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Right Balance for Families</u>
Safe Families for Children	Aims to provide respite for the children to live away from home for short periods; friendship for the main carer, usually the birth mother; and resources to help make the family home a healthy environment for children.	North East	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Safe Families for Children</u>
Step Change	Aims to provide therapy to support children and families.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Step Change</u>
North Tyneside - Understanding Excellence Project	Aims to provide support and strategies to young people to help them cope with challenging situations. The service also aims to provide support to parents and/or carers to help them successfully manage issues within their own family network.	North East	✓	✓		Mixed methods	Unpublished



Female genital mutilation (FGM)

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
FGM Early Intervention Model	Aims to provide specialist support to women who have undergone FGM.	Greater London	✓	✓		Mixed methods	FGM Early Intervention Model
National Female Genital Mutilation Centre	Aims to achieve system change in the provision of services for children and families who are affected by Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Harmful Practices (HPs) by embedding specialist FGM and HP workers in the local authorities to support and manage cases of FGM, breast flattening and child abuse linked to faith and belief.	Multiple/ Nationwide	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	National female genital mutilation centre: 1 National female genital mutilation centre: 2

Fostering and adoption

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
AdOpt	Aims to help parents understand and respond to the complex needs of their adopted children.	Multiple/ Nationwide	✓	✓		Mixed methods	Ad Opt
Better By Design	Aims to bring young people in 'out of borough' residential care back to local foster carers in	Greater London		✓	✓	Mixed methods	Better By Design



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
	the London boroughs of Richmond and Kingston upon Thames.						
Cornerstone Adoption Support Programme	Aims to enhanced existing practice of recruiting, approving and supporting parents through the adoption process.	South East	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Cornerstone Adoption Support Programme</u>
Permanence Improvement Project	Aims to reduce delayed in achieving permanency for children who will be fostered long term.	Multiple/ Nationwide	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Permanence improvement':1</u> <u>Permanence improvement':2</u>
Supporting Long-term Foster Placements	Aims to improve the structural relationship between local authorities and independent fostering providers.	West Midlands	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Supporting Long-term Foster Placements</u>
TACT Peterborough Permanency Service	Aims to improve fostering, adoption and permanency services by commissioning an external trust to provide these services.	East of England	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>TACT Peterborough Permanency Service</u>



Looked after children

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Children Looked After Project	Aims to standardise best practice for looked after children across 8 London boroughs.	Greater London		✓		Qualitative	<u>Children Looked After Project</u>
Digital Platforms in LAC Reviews	Aims to introduce virtual LAC Reviews due to the COVID19 pandemic.	Greater London		✓		Qualitative	Unpublished
Hampshire County Council's Modernising Placements Project	Aims to improve services for looked after children by improving relationships between children, families, social workers, foster carers and residential staff.	South East		✓		Mixed methods	<u>Hampshire County Council's Modernising Placements Project</u>
Lifelong Links	Aims to identify relatives and other key adults willing to offer a lasting positive support network to children and young people in care and as they transition into adulthood.	Multiple/ Nationwide	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Lifelong Links</u>
Mockingbird Family Model	Aims to support foster carers and children in their care through bringing together "constellations" of foster households, supported by "hub carers".	Multiple/ Nationwide	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Mockingbird Family Model</u>
New Orleans Intervention Model	Aims to improve outcomes for babies and young children in foster care using an infant mental health approach.	Greater London		✓		Qualitative	<u>New Orleans Intervention Model</u>



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
North London Children's Efficiency Programme	Aims to provide intensive therapeutic support to young people at risk in short term residential units, with the support of a regional placements team and joints commissioning.	Greater London		✓		Qualitative	<u>North London Children's Efficiency Programme</u>
Improving Family Time	Aims to improve the relationships between foster carers and birth parents to benefit the child.	Yorkshire and the Humber	✓			Qualitative	Unpublished

Residential care

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Building My Future	Aims to improve a number of outcomes for young people with additional needs (wellbeing, education and participation) and to prevent the use of expensive and potentially unsuitable specialist school provision.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Building My Future</u>
TBAP (The Tri-Borough Alternative Provision) Residence	Aims to support vulnerable young people whose education was at risk of being disrupted by difficult home circumstance and who were in need of a respite package of crisis placement.	Greater London	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>TBAP (The Tri-Borough Alternative Provision) Residence</u>



Social work systems and practice

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Active Agents for Change	Aims to create the right conditions and capacity for professionals to work as effectively as possible with vulnerable children and families.	South East	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Active Agents for Change</u>
Doing What Counts: Measuring What Matters	Aims to improve the impact of direct social work practice with children and families referred for a statutory assessment of need through a model of Motivational Social Work.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Doing What Counts and Measuring What Matters</u>
Families First	Aims to improve relationships between children, their families and social services, improve social work practices in Durham and reduce the costs of children's social care.	North East	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Families First</u>
Family Insights	Aims to improve outcomes for children and families through a whole-systems change.	North East	✓			Mixed methods	<u>Family Insights</u>
Firstline	Aims to improve leadership in children's social care through a tailored training programme.	Multiple/Nationwide	✓		✓	Mixed methods	<u>Firstline</u>
Focus on Practice	Aims to improve social work practice through four different elements: skills development, embedding learning, systems change and use of data.	Greater London	✓			Mixed methods	<u>Focus on Practice</u>
Learning Into Practice	Aims to enable better use of learning from serious case reviews.	Multiple/nationwide		✓		Qualitative	<u>Learning Into Practice</u>



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Reinvigorating Social Work	Aims to improve social work practice through a workforce development initiative.	South West	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Reinvigorating Social Work</u>
Scaling and Deepening the Reclaiming Social Work Model - longitudinal follow-up	Aims to improve services for children and families through embedding systemic practice across five local authority areas.	Multiple/Nationwide	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Scaling and Deepening the Reclaiming Social Work Model - longitudinal follow-up</u>
Signs of Safety	Aims to improve services for children and families through use of a strengths-based, safety-organised approach to child protection casework	Multiple/Nationwide	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Signs of Safety</u>
Slough Children's Service Trust	Aims to improve practice across two elements: a Domestic Abuse, Assessment, Response and Recovery workstream and the Innovation Hub.	South East	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Slough Children's Service Trust</u>
Stockport Family Model	Aims to transform the culture and ways of working within children's services in Stockport, with the ultimate goal of improving outcomes for children and families, and reducing the number of family breakdowns.	North West	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Stockport Family Model</u>
Supervision Pilot in Lewisham	Aims to improve social work practice through developing managers supervision skills.	Greater London		✓		Qualitative	Unpublished



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Children's Services							
Trauma Informed Approach	Aims to support professional to use a trauma informed approach in their work.	Greater London		✓		Mixed methods	Unpublished
Integrated Adolescent Approach Project	Aims to build resilience in hard to engage young people using strengths-based, trauma-informed systemic methods.	Greater London	✓	✓		Mixed methods	Unpublished
Our Way of Working (OWOW)	Aims to improve services for children and families through whole systems change.	North West	✓	✓		Mixed methods	Unpublished

Support for parents facing complex risks

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Culturally Attuned Family Support	Aims to provide culturally attuned family support and early help within two specific communities, in order to prevent statutory intervention being required.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Culturally Attuned Family Support</u>
Family Drug and Alcohol Courts	Aims to improve outcomes for children and families by providing an alternative way of working with parents involved in care proceedings who are experiencing substance misuse.	Multiple/Nationwide	✓			Qualitative	<u>Family Drug and Alcohol Courts</u>



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Family Safeguarding Hertfordshire	Aims to reduce the number of children at risk of harm through a multi-agency and multi-disciplinary approach.	East of England	✓			Mixed methods	<u>Family Safeguarding Hertfordshire</u>
Family Valued	Aims to improve services for children and families through wide-ranging systems change.	Yorkshire and the Humber	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Family Valued</u>
Growing Futures	Aims to improve outcomes for victims of DVA and their children through improving multi-agency cooperation, challenging practice cultures, and reforming public and professional perceptions of services.	Yorkshire and the Humber	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Growing Futures</u>
New Beginnings	Aims to support parents through a mentoring programme, with the aim of improving their parenting.	North West		✓		Qualitative	<u>New Beginnings</u>
NewDay	Aims to provide a whole-family approach to support families experiencing domestic abuse.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>NewDay</u>
Positive Choices	Aims to provide specialist support to vulnerable first time parents using a model of early, systemic evidence and trauma informed intervention.	Yorkshire and the Humber	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Positive Choices</u>
SafeCORE	Aims to reduce the number of re-referrals for families experiencing domestic abuse by taking a whole-family approach.	Greater London	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>SafeCORE</u>



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Caring2Learn	Aims to improve outcomes for looked after children through supporting schools and foster carers.	East Midlands	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Caring2Learn</u>
Future4Me	Aims to support young offenders through multi-agency support.	East Midlands	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Future4Me</u>
Pause also known as: Creating Space for Change	Aims to support mothers at risk of repeat child removal to prevent this cycle continuing.	Multiple/ Nationwide	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Pause</u>

Young people's mental health

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Belhaven Services	Aims to provide an integrated residential home, bringing together health, social care and education together.	East of England	✓	✓		Mixed methods	<u>Belhaven Services</u>
Cambridge Multisystem Therapy Services	Aims to protect local services from cuts by moving to a model of mutual delivery.	East of England	✓	✓	✓	Qualitative	<u>Cambridge Multisystem Therapy Services</u>



Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Exploring How Technology Can Support Young People in Care	Aims to explore uses of technology to support young people in care.	South East		NA. Exploratory co-design sessions; evaluation of codeign process		Co-design & qualitative feedback on codesign	<u>Exploring How Technology Can Support Young People in Care</u>
Extended HOPE Service	Aims to provide out of hours support services to young people experiencing mental health crisis.	South East	✓			Mixed methods	<u>Extended HOPE Service</u>
Multisystemic Therapy for Family Integrated Transitions(MST-FIT)	Aims to support young people returning home to their families or long term carers using multisystemic therapy.	Multiple/ Nationwide		✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Multisystemic Therapy for Family Integrated Transitions (MST-FIT)</u>
Specialist Health and Resilient Environment (SHARE)	Aims to provide additional support to young people experiencing complex mental health needs to reduce the requirement for statutory care services to become involved.	North West	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>SHARE</u>
STEPS-B (Multisystemic Therapy for problematic adolescent sexual behaviour)	Aims to support young people presenting with problematic sexual behaviour using multisystemic therapy.	Multiple/ Nationwide	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>STEPS-B (Multisystemic Therapy for problematic adolescent sexual behaviour)</u>



Young people with disabilities

Project name	Aim	Region	Impact Evaluation	Implementation or Process Evaluation	Cost analysis	Methods	Publications
Residential Migration	Aims to provide specialist placements and use co-produced care plans to allow young people with disabilities transfer to local foster care from out of area placements.	Multiple/Nationwide		✓		Qualitative	<u>Residential Migration</u>
Social Care Assessments for Disabled Children	Aims to develop and test new approaches for assessing disabled young people and children, through the Council for Disabled Children's Learning Model.	Multiple/Nationwide	✓	✓	✓	Mixed methods	<u>Social Care Assessments for Disabled Children</u>