4 SCALING AND SPREADING INNOVATION IN CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

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.