Welcome to the Children’s Social Care Innovation Programme’s first newsletter!
In this edition, we discuss:
- funding available through the programme
- the outcome of our expression of interest process
- the first projects approved for funding
- how to be a part of our learning programme
- getting involved in other Department for Education initiatives

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£100m funding available for lifespan of programme
Edward Timpson MP, Children and Families’ Minister, recently announced in his speech at the NCAS conference and for National Care Leavers’ week that we are increasing the money that’s available through the programme from £30m this year to a total of £100m. This will enable us to support more of the strongest proposals that have been submitted to the programme. Speaking earlier today the Minister said:

“I invited you, last year, to get involved and the way that you’ve stepped up is nothing short of phenomenal - almost 300 bids from all areas in England that span everything from the redesign of frontline services to small-scale projects targeting specific groups of children or areas of service.

*Inspiring, adventurous, imaginative ideas that could revolutionise the way that children’s services are delivered.*

*Be inspired by No Wrong Door, Signs of Safety, Pause and Triborough and really go for it - not just through the programme, but in everything you do.*

*Because we need you to continue digging deep. Thinking radically. Coming up with ideas that break the mould."

A copy of the full speech can be found [here](#)

Almost 300 expressions of interest to the programme were received
The programme has sparked great interest and we were delighted to receive a high volume of expressions of interest (EOIs) from a large variety of organisations.

In total we received over 280 EOIs. Following a robust assessment and decision-making process, we are inviting around 60 applicants to work with us to develop a full proposal for consideration by the programme investment board. These ideas constitute a diverse portfolio of innovation across the entire social care system.

We will be contacting all applicants about the outcome of their expression of interest next week.
We have been pleased with the level of response to the programme. At this stage we have no plans to hold a further stage of EOI.

First projects funded by programme

We are delighted to announce that four projects have now been approved for funding through the programme:

1. **Triborough**
   Professor Eileen Munro and others have established that the model of social work practice developed over the past 20 years has seen the domination of case management at the expense of building relationships and effective intervention. Social workers are frustrated by the increased burden of administration, families are not getting the support they need, and outcomes for children and young people are not as good as they should be.

   The ‘Triborough’ of Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster have developed a model which will create time for social workers to work intensively with families, develop their expertise, confidence and problem solving skills, and most importantly elevate the status of practice above that of management and process accountability. This will be enabled by a new culture of learning where practitioners are coached to improve their practice, and where leaders begin to change incentives and permissions to support behaviour change. This system transformation is designed to lead to a radically different relationship between practitioners and families and to enable more children to grow up safely.

2. **Pause**
   Pause is a programme which provides therapeutic, behavioural and practical interventions to address the problem of women having multiple children taken into care following short interval pregnancies. A pilot has been running in Hackney for around 10 months.

   Through the Innovation Programme, Pause will extend the pilot into four new areas, and enhance the Hackney pilot to work earlier with women who may be at risk of having further children removed. Pause provides intensive and holistic support to women to help them get their lives back on track, and at the same time requires them to access Long Acting Reversible Contraceptive (LARC) in order to create a ‘pause’ in their chaotic lifestyle and allow them time to stabilise their lives. Tested with 20 women in Hackney who had two or more children removed, the pilot achieved a number of positive outcomes, including no further pregnancies, increased confidence, and greater take-up of education and voluntary or paid work opportunities. The Hackney team will test this successful model in four other local authorities in England and gather evidence on the impact of the programme.

3. **North Yorkshire County Council – No Wrong Door**
   Adolescents entering the care system are at increased risk of experiencing multiple placements, cycling in and out of care and experiencing poorer outcomes when they leave care. Those placed in residential care often have higher levels of need and little support to re-engage in family relationships. North Yorkshire County Council has developed a new model that supports adolescents through a consistent, supportive team as they move through the care system, and as they move out of care.
The “No Wrong Door” model is constituted by a multi-disciplinary team including clinical psychologists, speech therapists, family circle workers, education training and employment support, placement support and homelessness support. These practitioners work together in a single space with a common theory of practice. Whether young people choose to live independently or try a family placement, they are supported by their key worker and the hub continuously to ensure a smooth transition as they move through and out of care. The model is being tested in two hubs in North Yorkshire and evidence will be gathered to spread the learning and practice in the region and nationally.

4. Munro Turnell Murphy - Transforming Children’s Services through Signs of Safety
Developed in Western Australia in the 1990s and currently used in some 100 jurisdictions in 13 countries, the Signs of Safety model has a strong evidence base. In Western Australia, the number of children removed from home reduced by 24% in the initial years following the implementation of Signs of Safety, for example.

Signs of Safety goes beyond standard risk assessment to encompass the strengths and insights of the family. The social worker works in partnership with the family to determine their key concerns and what is working well, so they can build a shared understanding of what needs to change and what they can build on. The assessment is based on a simple protocol which includes the voice of children and families and reduces the administrative burden at the same time.

Signs of Safety is not new to the UK - 41 local authorities are already engaged with the model. Yet the model is not reaching its full potential because it is often embedded in a culture of compliance. This is what Munro, Turnell, and Murphy aim to tackle. They will work with 10 local authorities in England to implement the model with fidelity and with attention to the organisational and cultural change required for it to flourish. They will also identify what system conditions need to change nationally for the model to generate greatest impact for families and to empower social workers to deploy the model confidently.

There will be opportunities to learn more about each of these projects through the programme website from next week: www.springconsortium.com

Be part of our learning programme
December 2014 will see the formal launch of the learning strand of the innovation programme. As projects begin in earnest and their work progresses through the programme, there will be a range of opportunities to connect with and learn from project teams through online webinars, regular blogs and articles and regional events. Many learning activities will be open to anyone in the sector, whether or not you have been successful in securing funding.

Our aim is to create a vibrant learning community committed to innovation in children’s social care, and to learn together about what it really takes to change systems, structures and practice to deliver the best possible outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.
The learning programme, which draws and shares insights from the work of participants in real time, will complement the work of programme evaluators, who will be generating longer term data about the impact of funded projects.

Dates and topics for events and webinars will be notified shortly on the Spring Consortium website: [www.springconsortium.com](http://www.springconsortium.com). Look out for future issues of this newsletter that contain blogs, articles and reports that will keep you up to date with learning as it evolves.

Suggestions for topics for discussion in webinars and online discussion are welcome. Some of the questions and issues identified through the application process include: What governance arrangements are most conducive to innovation at the same time as holding projects accountable? What new metrics do we need to measure the effects of new approaches? What are the implications for workforce development?

For further information or to suggest a topic, contact the Spring Consortium Learning Team at innovation@springconsortium.com.

**Other DfE and Government initiatives**

Through the **National Prospectus Grant Programme** DfE wants to help improve outcomes for children and young people (particularly those who are disadvantaged) and support for their families. The DfE has identified seven policies themes it wishes to fund through this National Prospectus. Bids must be made specifically in support of one, or more, of the following seven policy themes.

The deadline for application is 12 noon on 21 November. More information on the National Prospectus Grant Programme can be found [here](http://www.springconsortium.com).

The **Public Services Transformation Network** is an open network aimed at driving the transformation of public services and supporting innovation. The latest edition of its newsletter is can be found [here](http://www.springconsortium.com).

**Questions?**

If you have any questions or would like further information about the programme, visit our website: [www.springconsortium.com](http://www.springconsortium.com)