

### Why should we think about adopting and adapting?

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

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

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

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

### Insights from the sector

#### Learning from elsewhere

##### MORNING LANE ASSOCIATES: supporting the implementation of Reclaiming Social Work

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

 Read more about Reclaiming Social Work in the Programme Directory [springconsortium.com/mla/dir/](http://springconsortium.com/mla/dir/)

##### WEST BERKSHIRE: applying the lessons of restorative practice

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

 Building Community Together is not part of the Innovation Programme. Read more at [community.westberks.gov.uk](http://community.westberks.gov.uk)

#### Adapting from elsewhere

##### MOCKINGBIRD: adapting a US fostering model

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

 Read more about the Mockingbird model in the Programme Directory [springconsortium.com/fost/dir/](http://springconsortium.com/fost/dir/) and evaluation summary [springconsortium.com/fost/eval/](http://springconsortium.com/fost/eval/)

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

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

#### Helping others to adopt innovation

##### NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION SERVICE: embedding tried-and-tested practice

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

 Read more about NIS in the Programme Directory [springconsortium.com/nis/dir/](http://springconsortium.com/nis/dir/) and evaluation summaries [springconsortium.com/nis/adopt/eval/](http://springconsortium.com/nis/adopt/eval/); [springconsortium.com/nis/keep/eval/](http://springconsortium.com/nis/keep/eval/); [springconsortium.com/nis/result/eval/](http://springconsortium.com/nis/result/eval/)

##### DAYBREAK: embedding Family Group Conferencing across England

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

 Read more about Daybreak at [www.daybreakfgc.org.uk/](http://www.daybreakfgc.org.uk/) and in the Programme Directory [springconsortium.com/day/dir/](http://springconsortium.com/day/dir/)



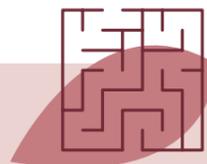
### HOW TO ADOPT AND ADAPT INNOVATION SUCCESSFULLY

#### Broker partnerships and share personnel

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

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

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



#### Understand the innovation

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

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

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



#### Understand the new context

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

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

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



#### Balance fidelity with flexibility

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

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

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