

Improving Outcomes for Looked After Children and Children on the Edge of Care and Supporting Families with Multiple Problems



Improving Outcomes for Looked After Children and Children on the Edge of Care



Knowledge Reviews

- Improving Educational Outcomes
- Improving Emotional & Behavioural Health & Well Being
- Increasing the number of Care Leavers in Safe & Settled Accommodation

Research + Data + Validated Practice + User/Provider Views
= WHAT WORKS

What works:

Improving Educational Outcomes

- High proportion of children & young people see entry into care as beneficial to their education
- Policy, legislation & national initiatives
- Development of strategic roles: VSH, DT
- Use of Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- Data Collection
- Compensatory interventions
- Direct work with children & young people
 - school based & extra curricular

Examples of Validated Local Practice

- A virtual school , Kensington & Chelsea
- Summer Reading Challenge, Hertfordshire
- Holding the Space
- Blueprint Project, Kirklees
- Dreamwalls, Southampton
- AMASS- MST, Islington

Increasing the Number of Care Leavers in Safe & Settled Accommodation

Being in settled, safe accommodation is the outcome of a process for young people:

- Choosing when to leave care
- Being well prepared
- Having a choice of accommodation
- Being safe
- Being supported
- Having an income / financial support
- Being involved

Promising Practice Example

Young People's Housing Hub Service Hull

Multi-agency approach to supporting Young people 16+

Supporting Families with Multiple Problems



C4EO Research priorities for families, parents and carers

- Physical and mental health of parents and carers
- Strengthening couple relationships
- Supporting mothers, fathers and carers of vulnerable children

Physical and mental health – what works

- Identify and intervene early
- Provide flexible, tailored support
- Avoid stigmatisation
- Use multi-systemic therapy

Strengthening couple relationships – what works

- Telephone helplines
- School or community based support
- Multi-agency holistic interventions
- Support and training on Domestic Violence for professionals
- Easy accessed confidential services
- Co-located and joined-up multi-agency working
- Well trained workforce

High risk factors for families

- History of maltreatment or unstable care
- Obsessional highly controlling personalities
- Domestic abuse
- Communication difficulties
- Low social support
- Aversion to external intervention
- Poor housing and financial difficulties
- Premature or underweight births
- Siblings or family members engaged in risk taking behaviour
- Maltreated children returning home

What works (1)

- Stop that shake, babies break- Staffordshire
- Right response, right service, right time –early intervention/multi-agency working - Hertfordshire
- Teens and toddlers projects -Birmingham and Manchester
- Westminster families project
- Using family group conferences - North Somerset
- Building bridges- early intervention potential – (mental health focus)

What works (2)

- Families and schools together-to enhance family functioning and improve parental engagement with schools and education processes-FAST
- Holding families- Bury- (substance misuse)
- Risk management group for young people- Northumberland
- Holding the space- a radical approach to work with trauma and abuse -Sunderland
- Adolescent multiagency response- LAC Islington
- Keys to the future-Bristol- Homelessness

Children on the Edge of Care: What works

- Interventions that support parents & carers
- Effective family support – based in communities & in schools
- Fear of stigmatisation is a significant barrier
- Timely assessments + good analysis
- Timely & effective interventions, especially for children with additional needs
- Proactive Early Intervention

The Case for Early Intervention

- An increase in demand for all "front door" child protection services, across all age groups
- 52.3% increase in referrals due to suspected abuse/neglect
- An overall increase in children becoming looked after, across all age groups
- 63.3% increase in children under the age of 1 with a child protection plan
- An increase in the numbers of 16 year olds requiring child protection services, including becoming looked after.

ADCS Sept 2010

Placement Prevention in Context

- Placement prevention as a single, short term outcome must be seen in the context of addressing often long standing, complex and cross generational issues with hard to reach families
- Need a continuum of support services to improve child and family functioning, not a short term focus on placement prevention
- Important to be wary of 'crude' emphasis on cutting numbers, placement may be the optimal outcome for some.
- Concentrate efforts on avoiding the need for care, except for those who truly need its support.

(Children on the edge of Care: Intensive Family Preservation Services and family Intervention Projects, June 2007)

What Works – Reduce Entry to LAC System

- Family group conferences: Leeds
- Empowering kinship networks: Wandsworth
- Specific targeted parenting education

What Works – Analyse Pressure Points

- Wandsworth: make use of short breaks and respite provision
- Multi disciplinary support teams
- Proactive use of team around child
- Effective transfers between teams

What Works – Shared Multi-Agency Processes, Supported Through Co-location

- Southend: four staged integrated, targeted process of intervention delivered through three localities
- All partners including third sector signed up

What works – Robust Risk Management

- Islington: culture change in organisation regarding risk
- Lewisham: risk management of cases and decisions to accommodate taken by Care
- Northumberland RMG

What Works – Invest in Kinship Care Services

What Works – Tracking Children in the System

Islington: Rigorous tracking meetings

Systematic reviews of next steps

What Works – Reduce Time LAC are Accommodated

Active promotion of alternative legal orders

What Works – Robust Care Planning

Rigorous case monitoring and reviewing

Characteristics of promising approaches

- Authoritative, knowledgeable and appropriately empathetic workforce
- Case regularly reviewed and intervention adapted to (changed) needs
- Multi-systemic team around the child
- More complex problems cannot be resolved through single simple intervention and causal links harder to evidence
- Assessments of children's needs include evidence from all other professionals working in their lives
- Commissioners are aware of the causes of maltreatment and risk trends in their area and target intervention to meet these needs
- Intervention sustained to secure improvement
- Evaluations seek evidence of effectiveness beyond satisfaction ratings and attendance rates

Factors that help

- Positive confident practitioner engagement
- Genuine parental engagement
- Practical help which empowers not de-skills
- Stable relationships with committed carers
- Honest and transparent communication between families and professionals
- Attitudes and behaviours of professionals
- Effective management and supervision of practitioners
- Active engagement of young people

Cross-cutting Themes

- Separate elements of care interact with each other
- Listening to young people & implementing what they say can produce improvements in provision
- Positive impacts of policy & practice developments
- Successful transitions to adulthood
- More knowledge about complex learning & emotional needs of LACYP
- Family support & early intervention
- A skilled & confident workforce
- Removing stigma

For further
information visit

www.c4eo.org.uk

