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Public Impact
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A blueprint for Wandsworth

Unlocking the potential of children's social care

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Introduction

This blueprint is the product of eight months work by practitioners and leaders in the Evolve team in Wandsworth. Throughout, they have been supported by Crescendo – a collaboration between social workers and UK charity the Centre for Public Impact – which helps reimagine children’s social care to enable better relationships between practitioners and the children and families they support.

Evolve is a team based in the London Borough of Wandsworth that offers intensive support to young people (up to age 25) who are at risk of or affected by:

- going missing
- child exploitation
- gangs
- serious youth violence

This blueprint outlines a different approach for how Evolve could work. An approach that could unlock the potential of children’s social care in Wandsworth and enable practitioners to spend more time with children and families. By allowing more time and better relationships to be built with children and families, it could transform outcomes in Wandsworth.¹

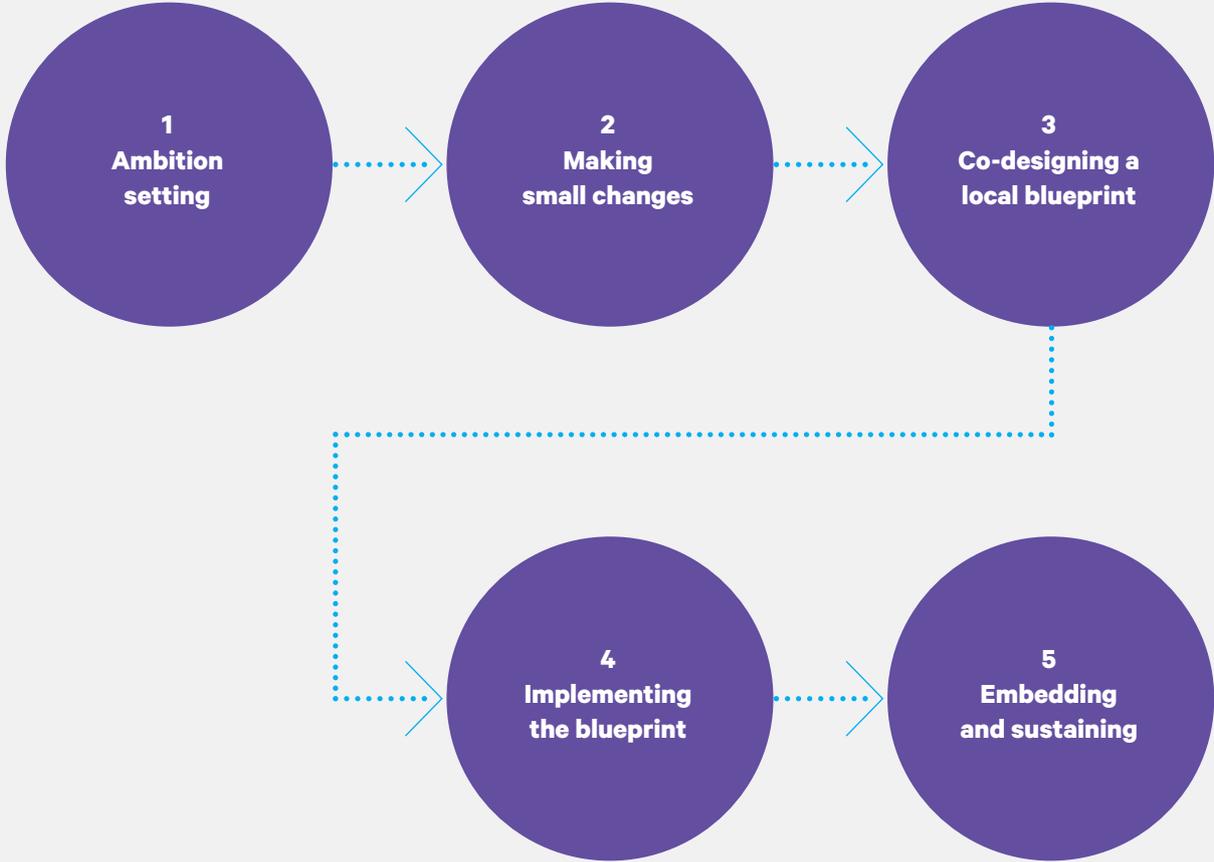
This plan aims to change two specific working practices that Evolve practitioners have identified as creating barriers to spending more time with young people and their families; meetings and recording practices.

Outlined here is a plan for change. It does not attempt to describe an exact roadmap or an end state – an impossibility in a complex environment like children’s social care. Instead, it tries to capture ideas from practitioners and leaders about what would make a difference to the amount of time they spend with children and families. It also outlines what that change could look like in Wandsworth local authority.

¹ The final report on Round 2 of the Department for Education’s Children’s Social Care Innovation Programme (September 2020) concludes that the most effective social work practice is relationship based and holistic. By enabling more time to be spent with children and families, outcomes could be improved.

Background

Evolve and Crescendo have been working together through a five-phase approach to design and implement a blueprint for Evolve. One that is centred on practitioners' experiences and enabling them to spend more time with young people and families so they can do their best work. This is part of a more extensive programme where Crescendo, supported by the UK social work charity Frontline, has been working with three local authorities to explore this approach to making a change that centres practitioners' voices and experiences. The participating local authorities are Wandsworth, Tower Hamlets, and Warrington.



Evolve began their journey with ambition setting. They set a vision for how they wanted to work to enable them to spend more time with young people and families, and do their best work. This formed the north star for any change Evolve were to make going forward. There were several ideas, but clear themes included: the importance of being non-judgmental and anti-oppressive, feeling connected as a team, and working smartly together to do their best for young people.

Background



Background

As part of the ambition setting, Evolve then considered the barriers that get in the way of making this vision a reality. A number of clear themes emerged. These included: difficulties working with multi-agency partners, a need for clarity with the Evolve practitioner role, and the issues facing the young people they work alongside, i.e. being stereotyped or discriminated against.

These barriers formed the focus of 'small changes' for Evolve, the next stage of Crescendo's approach. Small changes occupy the space between making no change and complete system change. They are experiments, based on ideas from the ground up on how to do things differently, to enable more time to be spent with children and families.

Making small changes are an essential step in the design of any blueprint. Not only do they chip away at the barriers preventing more time spent with young people, but they also serve as a vehicle for a more significant change. Making small changes begins to change the culture within a local authority.

Since they are centred on practitioners' experiences and enable them to be heard, they inevitably support local authorities to become more practice-led. They also foster a culture where practitioners are enthusiastic and committed to change and believe this change can be led by them.

Small changes are a critical starting point in a greater transformation effort, and this work draws on research into [Human Learning Systems](#). This is an approach to public service that enables the transformation of outcomes across local authorities and sectors that the Centre for Public Impact is exploring. By making small changes, we can begin to uncover larger system barriers to change in a local authority context. We can also identify the blockers that need to be resolved for wider scale change to take place that benefits children and families, and the practitioners they work with.

Evolve's small changes

The Evolve team identified four small changes to focus on. These addressed key barriers that were getting in the way of them spending time with young people and their families, which would make a big difference in enabling them to do their best work. Below we outline the small changes, the barriers they were addressing, and the progress made against each as part of this programme.

Creating a charter for Evolve

Capturing our successes: case studies/storytelling of Evolve's work

Changing our approach to meetings

Having young people part of panels and decision making

Evolve's small changes

Small Change 1: Creating a charter for Evolve

The Evolve team felt that their work and approach was often misunderstood by professionals and those within their organisation. This often led to staff members spending valuable time clarifying their roles, and undertaking activities that were not in the remit or mission of their position. To change this, Evolve decided to create a charter which set out their approach to working with young people.

This charter outlined who Evolve was, their ambition, their way of working with young people, and the remit of their work, for example, the importance of spending the majority of their one to one time with young people offering both practical and therapeutic support. Since developing the charter, the service has started to create a clearer, more distinct identity within the local authority. This has supported how Early Help collaborates with other services to keep young people safe. It has also helped the team consider their achievements and brought them together, creating unity and a culture of collaboration.

Small Change 2: Changing Evolve's approach to meetings

Practitioners in the Evolve team noticed they were spending a lot of time in meetings. This was diminishing their ability to do direct work with young people. It had become default practice to invite all practitioners to any meeting where a young person was being discussed. This was regardless of whether there was any need for their presence, and they often had little to contribute.

To rebalance their roles towards direct practice, Evolve decided to reserve 12.30-5 pm everyday for direct work with young people on their caseload. Afternoons were key times to spend with young people, because from experience this was often when young people wanted to meet as it suited their routine and lifestyle.

To implement this, Evolve gained the buy-in of senior leaders in the local authority. They supported the change because Evolve were able to show that time spent in meetings was taking away from their ability to spend time doing direct work. The practitioners also signposted the new working style in their email signatures. These noted that they were only available for meetings between 9 am-12.30 pm, and that the remainder of their time was reserved for direct work with young people. This informed anyone communicating with the service of Evolve's priorities and new working style.

Since the change has been implemented, practitioners have reported that they're spending more time undertaking impactful direct work with young people. Where internal meetings are taking place, there's now a clear purpose to their attendance.

Evolve's small changes

Small Change 3: Celebrating success

Evolve spoke about wanting to both celebrate their successes and create a culture where they celebrated one another. Despite the busyness in the team, they were keen to make time to pause, reflect, and celebrate. This was identified as important to building relationships with young people and families because it allowed the team to engage with the impact of their role.

It was felt that prioritising reflection would enrich their practice and foster a learning culture where the team could use one another's strengths. Practitioners created spaces and opportunities for the team to share positive feedback, for example, in team meetings. The team found that taking time to celebrate one another brought them closer together.

Small Change 4: Having young people as part of panels and decision-making

Co-production and anti-oppressive practices came out as important values for the team in enabling relationships with young people. Evolve practitioners were keen to build on recent good progress to have young people more involved in the procedures and policies that shaped their work. Evolve decided to focus on enabling young people to be part of decision-making forums and panels, which led to a greater focus on co-production within the team. There has recently been success with creating a space for parents in the evenings where they have built relationships with Evolve practitioners.

Evolve identified these small changes as the things that would make a big difference to their ability to spend time and build relationships with young people and families. These small changes are currently being implemented by Evolve and are beginning to build the culture of change needed for larger transformation in Wandsworth, which is centred on practitioners' experience. Please see the appendix for practitioner testimonies detailing their experiences of making small changes.

Building system change from small changes

Making small changes helped the Evolve team and leaders further understand the system they work within. It also exposed the more challenging systemic barriers for practitioners to build relationships with children and families and live the vision they outlined. The next stage for Evolve was to consider what a local blueprint could look like from these small changes.

The rest of this document outlines a local blueprint for Evolve in Wandsworth. The blueprint is a dynamic plan for learning and experimentation, outlining changes to structures, processes, and cultures that are needed to create the enabling conditions for continuous learning with practitioners around these experiments. Crescendo has drawn from the [Human Learning Systems approach to public management](#) to develop this blueprint with Evolve, taking into account the unique context and culture of Wandsworth.

The focus of Evolve's blueprint

The Evolve team have chosen two pillars for their local blueprint, to focus on driving system change:

- Changing their approach to meetings
- Developing innovative approaches to recording

At the heart of these pillars, like the small changes to date, are the following commitments:

- Everything is centred around improving support for children and families through enabling relationships
- Enabling practitioners to spend more time with children and families so they can give them the right support, at the right time

Below outlines a plan for learning and experimentation within these two pillars. These plans draw on [Human Learning Systems: A Practical Guide for the Curious](#).

Pillar 1: Changing their approach to meetings

Where are we now?

The making small changes phase allowed the Evolve team to start creating a new story for how they approach meetings. With permission from the Head of Service and Service manager levels, the team began to push back gently with partners, challenging the need for Evolve to attend some meetings. Evolve practitioners and managers found themselves being invited to an abundance of meetings both internally and when working with professional networks. They found that they were often not needed in these spaces and they were needlessly taken away from spending time with young people and families.

Where do we want to be?

The team have started to experiment with changing their approach to meetings, but they want this to be more consistent across their team, and something they can look at leading across children's social care in Wandsworth. The Evolve team recognises that relationships with other teams are paramount for this change to be sustainable and successful. Partners and colleagues will need to be on board with prioritising time spent with children and families.

The focus of Evolve's blueprint

Steps we could take to experiment within this pillar:

- **Conduct a stocktake of current meetings** – It is essential to gather data on what meetings Evolve practitioners and managers are invited to and attending, and why. Practitioners must reflect on which meetings they feel they do not contribute to. A stocktake would identify the types of meetings which are specifically problematic. Once those meetings are identified, practitioners and managers can focus on creating a different approach and incorporating effective learning from meetings.
- **Communicate changes to partners and get their buy-in** – It is important to be collaborative in the approach with partners and colleagues. Implementing this change with the consent of and in collaboration with partners will help alleviate tension in the social care system, and avoid friction regarding meetings. If partners are aligned, it is more likely that changing the approach to meetings will be a journey rather than a battle. It could be useful to hold a roundtable event with partners and social work colleagues on meetings and direct work time. Taking a multi-agency approach could lead to greater change. It could consider not only the timing of meetings but also how meetings are conducted, ensuring the most effective use of everyone's time.
- **Create a framework to understand and assess meeting effectiveness** – Meetings are often time-consuming, can be longer than needed, and can lack purpose, focus, and direction. Through a joined-up approach with partners, Evolve can be trailblazers and the leading voice in shaping a new approach to meetings system-wide. Evolve could take the lead and work alongside willing partners to consider meeting structures, formats, and chairing, to ensure time is saved where possible.

How could we evaluate experiments within this pillar:

Evaluation is key to learning about any changes made. Data will need to be collected from Evolve, and those they work with regularly, and reflected on together to see how changes are:

- Enabling Evolve to spend more time with young people
- Enabling effective working with partner agencies and any other partners within Wandsworth local authority

This enables the following cycles to be enacted:

The focus of Evolve's blueprint

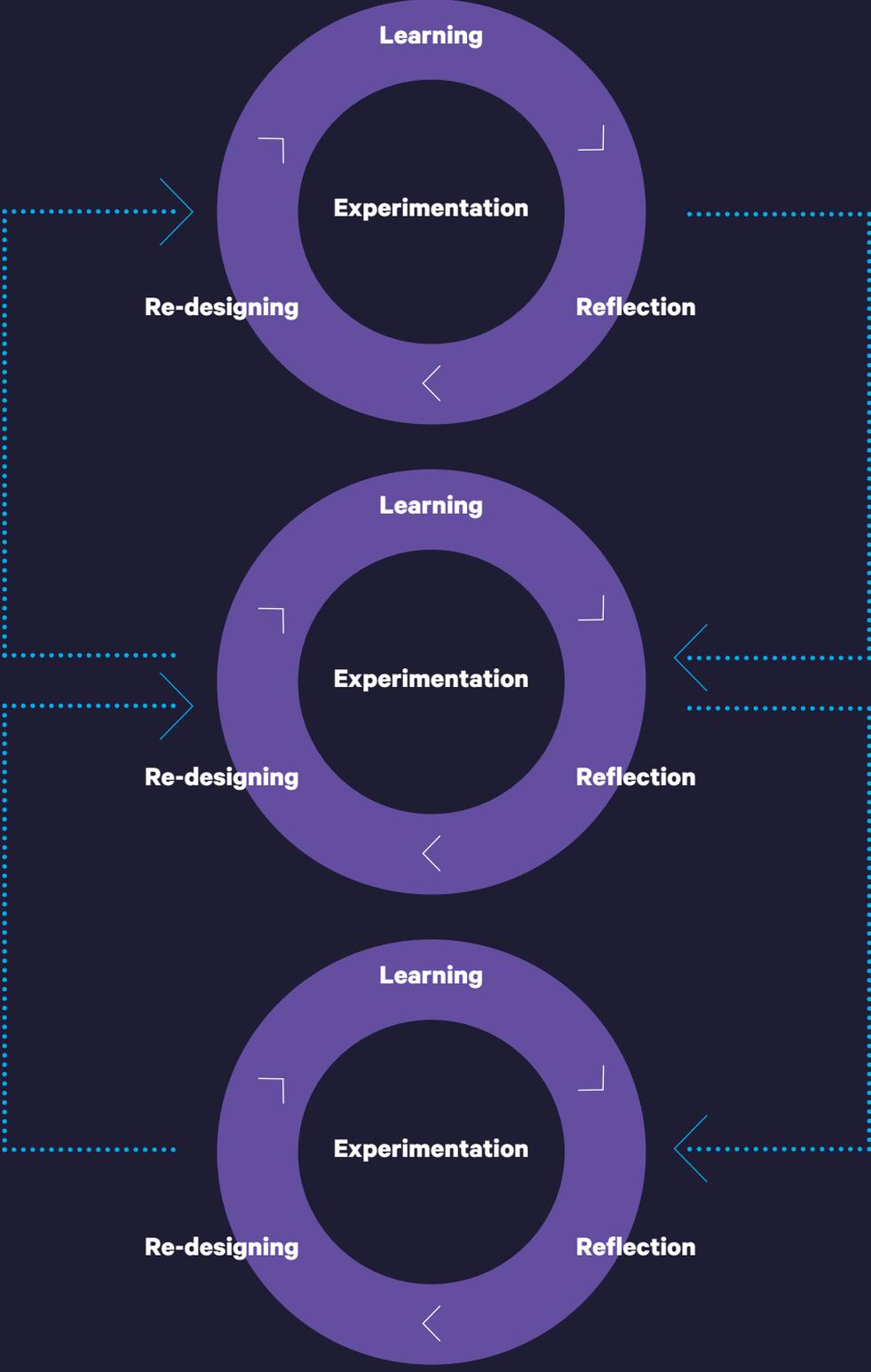


Figure taken from [Human Learning Systems research](#)

The focus of Evolve's blueprint

In terms of the data to collect and reflect on, Evolve could collect survey/interview data monthly, and could survey partners every other month. They could also run focus groups to capture experiences of change. Data points collected could include:

- Interviews with practitioners:
 - Whether, and how, the meetings they're attending have become more purposeful.
 - How their relationships with partner agencies and services (internal and external to the local authorities) have changed.
 - Whether, and how, their direct practice with young people has changed, and whether they've noticed any change in outcomes.
- Focus groups/surveys with partner agencies:
 - Whether they still feel like they're able to fulfil their functions effectively despite the reduced number of meetings/reduced intensity of administrative recording.
 - Whether they have learnt any lessons for their service.
 - Whether Evolve's changes have been communicated effectively.
 - Whether they feel the changes have been done 'with' or 'to'.

In addition to these data points, Evolve could also create an 'experience log' open to the team at all times so reflections can be recorded after meetings.

How this data is used is also critical for learning. The Evolve team and leaders should then review this data periodically to enable sensemaking around how this is going and what changes are needed as a result of learnings. It is only through sensemaking that learning is gained on how this affects practitioners' time.

Pillar 2: Developing more innovative recording practices

Where are we now?

Evolve practitioners and leaders have identified that even with the progress made by small changes, the barriers to recording significantly impact the time they can spend on direct practice. There is a lack of clarity on the purpose and value of the current approach to recording. It is felt that everything has to be recorded, including phone calls and emails, which takes a significant proportion of time. The Evolve team feel this is indicative of a defensive approach to practice, rooted in fear and anxiety due to a culture of "if it isn't written down, it didn't happen". There are glimmers of hope with direct work being uploaded as evidence of intervention, but there is an opportunity for significant improvement.

Where do we want to be?

Evolve want a tailored and creative approach to recording that fits with their practice approach. Evolve would like ownership and influence about what is recorded and how this is done. They are curious about using videos, voice notes, and art to make recording less arduous and time-consuming. The team recognises that there are strengths with their current recording practices, which they would like at the heart of any changes.

The focus of Evolve's blueprint

Steps we could take to experiment within this pillar:

- **Develop clear expectations/practice standards around recording** – Evolve could work with senior leaders to develop clear expectations/practice standards of what needs to be recorded, what doesn't, and what the purpose of recording is. This could be across children's social care or tailored more to specific teams. For example, clarity over phone calls and emails may lead to reduced time spent on administrative tasks as clarity of what is recorded will enable a focus on how recording is done. Evolve may want to consider developing a clear rationale and purpose for the team's approach to recording. Once this is in place, the team could experiment with how they use case note summaries. The summary could be a live account of the current intervention with all relevant information included. Evolve may need to involve Mosaic colleagues, and trial a leader/practitioner co-collaboration of what the summary could be.
- **Pilot a new approach to supervision recording** – Evolve leaders and practitioners have commented that supervision recording could be improved to free up time. The team have shared an interest in taking a more creative approach to supervision recording. Evolve may want to develop a consistently used supervision template that addresses issues identified by the team whilst achieving the key supervision tasks. In addition, they may wish to develop a more arts-based and reflective approach to recording supervision i.e. the use of drawings and images. This may lead to positive outcomes other than just freeing up time. For example, practitioners and leaders may see improvements in the extent to which they enjoy supervision, or how effective it can be in fostering reflection, curiosity, and practitioner development. Evolve can draw upon the [What Works for Children's Social Care's research review around supervision](#). This found that workers' critical thinking skills, staff retention and job satisfaction were all improved by good-quality, regular supervision (albeit based on low-strength evidence).
- **Experimenting with different media: video and voice** – Building on a GoPro pilot, Evolve could explore using video and voice notes for recording. Evolve could consider doing this on a small scale with half the team or may wish for the whole team to try this. Evolve would likely need to consider the logistics of this with the IT department, for example, where the media will be stored i.e. SharePoint. Evolve could consider drawing on the [findings from a pilot evaluation](#) that What Works for Children's Social Care conducted into dictation software to reduce the administrative burden on social workers, as part of their Happier Healthier Professionals (HHP) project. The research found that there were promising signs that the software significantly saved time for participants. However, it required some upfront investment to get used to, and the report's authors provided some recommendations for implementation.

The focus of Evolve's blueprint

How could we evaluate experiments within this pillar:

Learning and iteration could be enabled by collecting data from practitioners and leaders trialling new methods of recording practices. When implementing a new practice, data could be collected on:

- Practitioners' experience using that new method: what does it enable / what does it prevent?
- Leaders' experience of practitioners using that new method: what does it enable / what does it prevent?
- The young person or families' view on their case recording; do they feel it represents their situation and what support they need?
- Are young people more likely/better incentivised to contribute to their case summaries when they're given the option of doing so through dictation software?

Data could be collected each time this new method was used and on a recurring monthly basis from practitioners, leaders, and young people and families. Practitioners and leaders in Evolve would then come together bi-monthly. They could reflect on what they are learning about this new recording system and what they need to iterate on to make it work better for practitioners, so they can spend the requisite time on recording but it need not jeopardise their ability to prioritise direct work.

Further evaluation and learning considerations for any experiments

The pillars, outlined above, are an articulation of what Evolve staff feel sits in the way of their ability to spend time with young people and families. Experimenting and learning around these pillars are critical components of this blueprint. The pillars focus on reducing the time burden on Evolve practitioners around tasks that do not directly contribute to good outcomes for young people. Namely, administrative work, such as case recording, and attending multiple meetings. It's important that, in addition to effecting change, Evolve makes the best use of data-collection. This will enable them to investigate how and the extent to which these experiments are achieving their aim of increasing the amount of time practitioners are spending with young people and their families, and decreasing the time they're spending on all other tasks. Further advice on data gathering to enable reflection around these experiments is detailed below.

Investigating a change in the proportion of time practitioners spend on direct practice

There are a few methods through which Evolve could investigate whether the implementation of the local blueprint, and staff's experience of delivering small changes, is leading to practitioners spending a greater proportion of their time with children and families. These methods are listed below in order of increasing rigour and complexity:

Further evaluation and learning considerations for any experiments

Method	Advantages	Drawbacks
<p>Self-reporting through surveys – asking practitioners to report the proportion of time they spend with young people and families, compared with other tasks. Captured through baseline, mid-point, and end-line surveys.</p>	<p>This would be the least time-intensive method of capturing this data, and would not require practitioners to spend much additional time on reporting.</p>	<p>Practitioners may struggle to accurately reflect the proportion of time they spend undertaking different tasks. Furthermore, because this survey would only be issued at a few key milestones, they may overrepresent their division of tasks within a period that's not representative of their role overall; during an Ofsted inspection, for example.</p>
<p>Self-reporting through time-sheets – practitioners completing time-sheets at the end of every week throughout the implementation of a local blueprint, outlining the number of hours they spend on different tasks (direct practice, travel, admin, meetings, etc).</p>	<p>If practitioners are regularly reflecting on how they're spending their time, the end dataset has a greater likelihood of being representative of their working habits across the full timeframe. Furthermore, an analyst could investigate wider changes in working habits, which would be helpful for a more exploratory evaluation.</p>	<p>This method still relies on self-reporting, and practitioners may be incentivised to report their time inaccurately, to meet the expectations of their team and management. Furthermore, this would be an additional reporting task for practitioners to complete, which would run counter to the values of small changes.</p>
<p>Downloading data through digital calendars – practitioners using their calendars to rigorously schedule their time, colour-coding blocks across broad categories (direct work, admin, meetings, travel).</p>	<p>To an even greater extent than using timesheets, this method would be more rigorous in accurately capturing how social workers are spending their time, as it would be closer to 'live-reporting', rather than asking practitioners to report on periods in the past.</p>	<p>People tend to book calendar time in large blocks of 15/30/60 minutes which may be an unrealistic reflection of a practitioner's role if they're frequently switching tasks and priorities (this could be mitigated by practitioners using just two colour-codes for their calendar holds – one for direct work, and another for all their other areas of work). Furthermore, aggregating the data would either be time-intensive (if an analyst manually calculates the time spent across weeks and months) or require sophisticated software or coding skills.</p>

Further evaluation and learning considerations for any experiments

Regardless of which method Evolve employs to capture the changes in time spent with children and families, they could also consider conducting greater scoping to investigate whether factors other than the implementation of the local blueprint could have affected practice. These could be:

- The introduction of a new practice model across the service.
- Substantial changes to the Senior Leadership Team of children's services, which may shift expectations around reporting.
- A significant increase or reduction in average caseloads; practitioners may find that an increasing caseload disproportionately expands the time spent on administrative tasks and in meetings.

Interviews with practitioners should also be conducted to get a better sense of how the blueprint is working in practice, and to investigate whether there are signs the experiments are working as intended. Below are a series of questions that interviewers could ask practitioners to get a sense-check on implementing the blueprint. An analyst could run [a thematic analysis](#) on the responses to understand the blueprint further, particularly the variance in how different stakeholders are experiencing it.

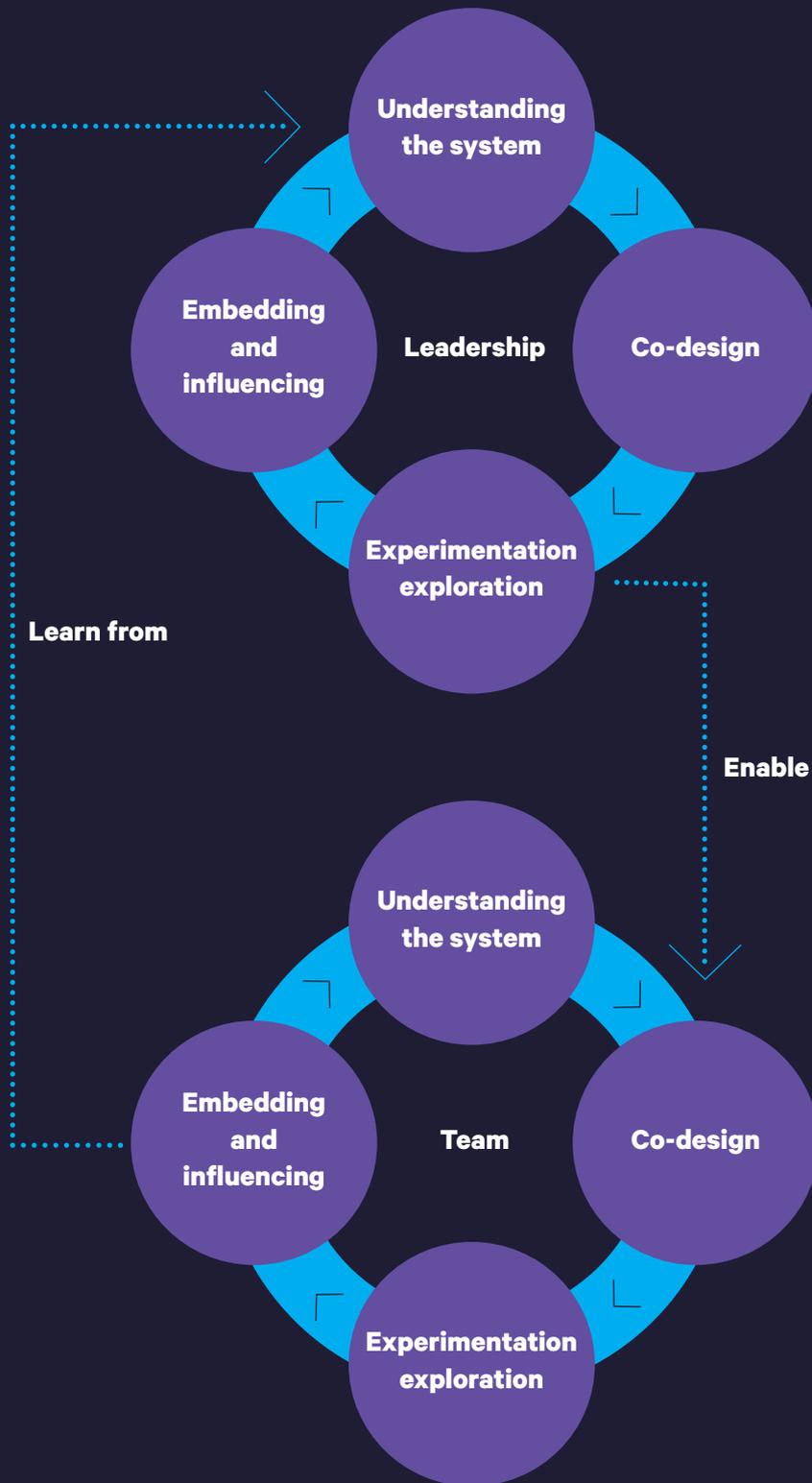
Further evaluation and learning considerations for any experiments

Theme	Question	Why are these questions useful?
Meetings and admin	<p>How, if at all, has the purpose and nature of the meetings you attend changed since the introduction of the blueprint?</p> <p>Have you been able to receive and share the same quality of information regarding young people you work with, since the implementation of the blueprint?</p>	<p>These questions will help you to gain a better sense of the extent to which fewer unnecessary meetings are being held, and whether the quality of information-sharing between agencies and services is suffering or has improved as a result.</p>
Relationship with partner agencies	<p>How, if at all, has your relationship with internal partner agency services changed since the implementation of the blueprint?</p> <p>How, if at all, has your relationship with external partner agency services changed since the implementation of the blueprint?</p>	<p>Questions along this theme will help you to understand the extent to which practitioners believe that partner services, both internal and external to Wandsworth, feel like they have been brought 'with' Evolve on this journey, and whether they may have learned from Evolve's example.</p>
Practice and supervision	<p>How, if at all, has your direct practice with young people changed since the blueprint was implemented?</p> <p>How, if at all, has supervision with your manager changed since implementation of the blueprint?</p>	<p>This theme helps understand whether greater time spent with young people, and embedding a culture of experimentation, is showing signs of improving relational practice between practitioners and young people, and between practitioners and their managers.</p>
Culture and morale	<p>Do you feel better able to carry out the purpose of your role, and effectively support good outcomes for young people, since the introduction of the blueprint?</p>	<p>Questions around culture and morale will allow you to test whether practitioners' experience implementing the blueprint has helped them expand their leadership capabilities and be more effective in their practice, which our approach assumes will support improvements to staff sickness, absence, and retention rates.</p>

Embedding a cycle of testing and learning

Lastly, these experiments will only enable greater change if leaders in Wandsworth are committed to allowing Evolve to create the change they have identified as necessary. The Evolve team will experiment with different meetings and case recordings approaches. However, leaders in Wandsworth need to create what the Human Learning Systems approach to public management calls ‘Learning Cycles’ around the practitioners’ experiments. These ensure that leaders learn from what is coming out of these experiments and are committed to unblocking barriers that arise from them. The diagram below from the [Human Learning Systems: Public Service for the Real World report](#) shows what these learning cycles look like. It also illustrates how leadership levels should consider their role in ‘learning from’ and ‘enabling’ any experimentation going on at the team level. Leadership commitment to learning and enabling will also be critical in ensuring that learning from these experiments is scaled across Wandsworth so other teams can learn from Evolve’s experiences.

Embedding a cycle of testing and learning



Conclusion

This blueprint attempts to capture ideas from Evolve that could transform the time they can spend with young people and families, ultimately improving outcomes. As stated above, this blueprint is not a static model to be implemented. It is a plan for learning and experimentation around central pillars the Evolve team have identified as being critical for changing how things are in Wandsworth. Crescendo are committed to supporting Evolve implement and embed this blueprint, and creating the infrastructure needed to meaningfully learn and iterate it.

Appendix

Stories from the team

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Taking part in small changes has really helped give us hope that we can change our sector for the better. It's not unusual to hear "Wow, we can really do that!?" when we're in team meetings now; there's a sense of disbelief that the changes we want to make are possible, and that changes to the service can benefit direct practice, and not just reporting to management. Change finally means refocusing our roles towards practice! This project helped us critically think about 'why' we're doing the work that we're doing on any given day; why are we discussing this young person abstractly in a meeting rather than going out to see them? The Crescendo team have been integral to this; they've been so attentive, supporting and encouraging, providing encouragement, clarity of thought and a listening ear, which has helped us to feel like our voices and investment are important. That's helped us to reflect on our involvement with young people, and how we can lift them up to help them feel empowered in their lives.'

Beth & Elisha, Wandsworth

George's story

What do you think about the process of making small changes?

'I think it's a really interesting concept. It's not one that I had considered before, but it has universal appeal because not only are we looking to make small changes in our practice, but I'm also trying to get my cohort of young people to think about small changes.'

'This is great for the team because when I started a year ago I didn't meet any of my colleagues for ages. I just had to go with what I had in terms of how our team functions - which is very unique. I had to use autonomy and my experience to try to focus my practice in a new role. That changed with time as I got used to the way the team works, but this was possibly how they'd done things for a long time. So, this opportunity came at a good time, enabling me to sharpen my skills and the team to refresh their approach.'

Have you enjoyed it?

'I have enjoyed it because it's brought me closer to my colleagues. With a small group, I'm focusing on making a charter for Evolve. We can now communicate the good work we're doing, not only internally within the local authority, but also to the community we serve. When I applied for the job, there was very limited information about what the team did and what the daily practice looked like. Through this work, we can better inform people about what it involves. We've got a few exciting ideas to put those small changes into practice to achieve that aim, and bring it in line with what other groups are doing.'

Appendix

Stories from the team

What are your hopes for the project?

‘To have a lasting impact. We’ve all done things in our careers where new ideas are brought in, and then the priority changes for whatever reason, whether due to funding, personnel or bureaucracy. But with this, we need to make sure it’s not just something we do and then it’s done. A year or so down the line, we need to evidence and reflect how those small changes morphed into bigger changes, and for there to be continuity.’

What small changes are you interested in that your local authority is focusing on?

‘I’m interested in the changes that the other groups within my team are making. They’ve been thinking about how we try to prioritise front facing work with young people, and in doing so reducing the amount of meetings and things that get in the way with that direct contact.’

‘The charter I mentioned before would certainly be in it, but we want to always prioritise front facing work. At the start we were asked “honestly speaking, how much of your time is spent face-to-face with a young person?” and no one was able to say more than 50% of the time. This isn’t great when the sole purpose of our work is engagement with young people.’

‘Another thing is getting young people’s voices into how the service is run, and making it easier for people to see what we’re doing. One idea was to have a card with a QR code so people can scan and view videos, for example introducing the team. It would be great for the community to look at what our specialism, ethos and purpose is.’

Appendix

Stories from the team

Mariam's story

What do you think about the process of making small changes?

'I think it's a good idea. In our field, you never have enough time – it's so fast paced and you're always rushing. So it's nice to reflect, share your views, articulate it and actually make it into a plan. It's also nice to just have space to be so open and honest. So I think [this initiative] is definitely needed in order to make changes. In order to make a big change we need to start from the beginning, no matter how small that is.'

What small changes are you interested in that your local authority is focusing on?

'The project I'm involved in relates to young people's voices and how to make them more effective and part of the process. I've become really interested in it because most of the time you speak for young people, but it's also important to let them speak and truly be heard in a bigger forum. With Evolve, we're very fortunate to work in different ways, to not be constrained and be able to champion young people's voices – we're quite unique and that's one of the reasons I joined.'

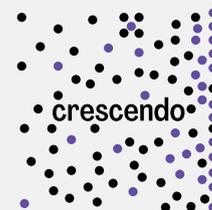
What do you think that small changes could achieve, and why does that matter to you personally?

'All the different changes are important because they're going to help the service evolve in a better way. And on a larger scale, that hopefully results in better outcomes for young people and their families and communities.'

'I think that's important because you can only get so far on your own. Collectively, you have to think of the bigger picture. Children always deserve to be safe irrespective of where they're from or who they are. Violence is not inevitable, but I believe is preventable.'

What has your journey with Crescendo been like?

'It's been interesting and insightful. It's also been reflective and a bit patient. We can't always make every meeting but it's been adaptable to us because they really know the work that we are doing. Even if you've missed a few, you can check in with your team members or Crescendo, and they can help you start on the foot that you were on and keep going, and that's been really helpful for me.'



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