

# What Works Centre for Children's Social Care

## Community Care Live, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2018

Sir Alan Wood, Founding Chair, WWC

Anna Bacchoo, Practice Development Manager, WWC Development Team

Isabel Vanderheeren, Transformation Lead, Walsall Children's Services



**FUTUREGOV**



# Community Care Live Session

- **What gets in the way of using evidence in practice?**
- **Overview – about the WWC and development so far**
- **Partnership working case study – working with Walsall**

- What gets in the way of evidence in practice?

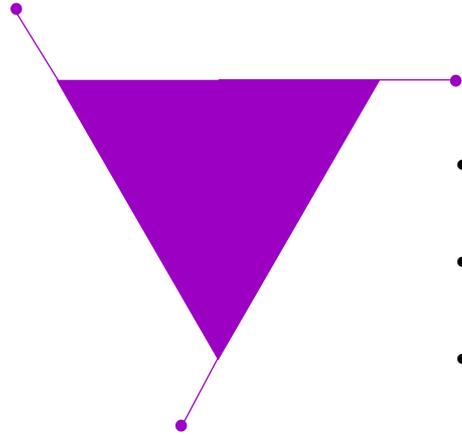
# What gets in the way?

- **There's too much evidence.**
- **There's not enough good evidence.**
- **The evidence doesn't quite apply.**
- **People are trying to mislead you.**
- **You are trying to mislead you.**
- **The side effects outweigh the cure.**
- **Stories are more persuasive anyway.**

## What is a 'What Works Centre' and why have one for children's social care?

### What?

An organisation that will create and share high quality evidence



### How?

- Collate and share existing evidence
- Develop the evidence base
- Translate into easily accessible guidance and resources

### Why?

- To improve services for children, young people and families by supporting practitioners and managers
- To create a culture of learning and evidence-based practice

Adds to an existing network of What Works Centres including:

- Early Intervention Foundation
- Education Endowment Foundation
- NICE

## About the WWC for Children's Social Care

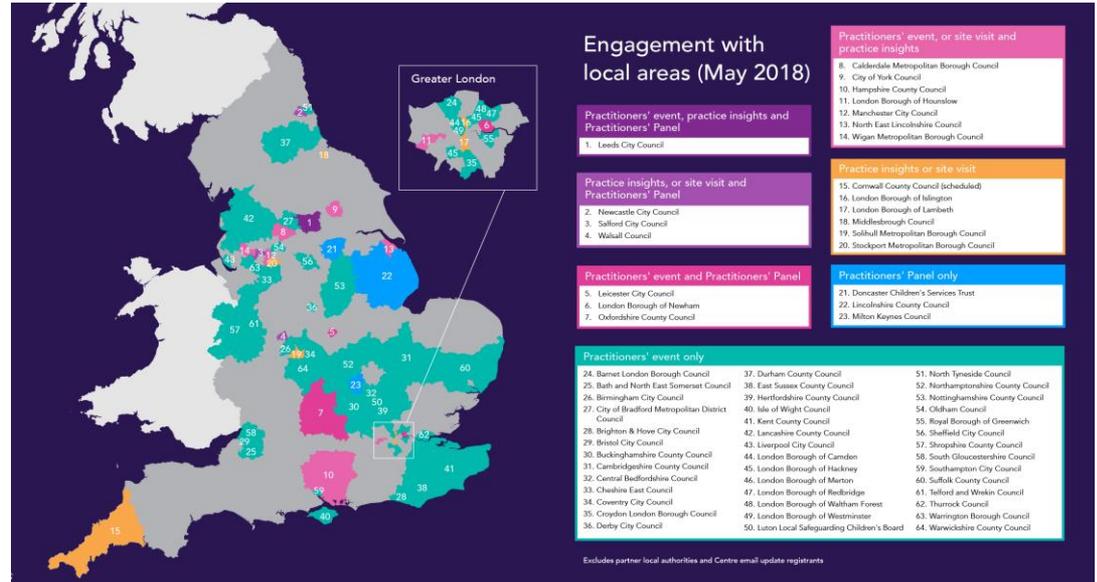
- The WWC seeks better outcomes for children, young people and families by bringing the best available evidence to practitioners and other decision makers across the children's social care sector.
- Scope of the Centre covers from referral at 'front door' to care leavers
- Funded by DfE, the Centre is being set up by a development team (led by Nesta) and its research partner (led by Cardiff university).
- The Centre is currently engaging and co-designing with the sector, and will be fully independent by 2020.
- The Centre will:
  - Identify gaps in the evidence, and create new evidence through trials and evaluations
  - Collate, synthesise and review existing evidence
  - Develop, test and publish tools and services that support the greater use of evidence and inform the design of the future Centre
  - Champion the application of robust standards of evidence in children's social care research

# The foundation for our work: engagement with the sector

- Engagement with 77 local authorities including:
  - Practice insights research
  - Site visits
  - Regional events
- Meetings with LGA, ADCS, SOLACE, Ofsted and BASW
- Engagement with VCS organisations via forum with 16 members
- Twitter (1900 followers in three months)
- E-newsletter (over 1000 subscribers)
- Events
  - BASW Standing Committee
  - NCASC
  - Frontline Fellows

# Programme of engagement and communications

- Additional visits coming up
  - Bexley
  - Darlington
  - Kent
  - Lincolnshire
  - Liverpool
  - Merton
  - Tower Hamlets
  - Wiltshire



# Fulfilling the requirement: two big challenges

Our engagement with the sector so far suggests there are two big challenges:

- **Big challenge #1:** finding out what works and generating the evidence
- **Big challenge #2:** ensuring the WWC 's research activity leads to change on the ground

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# Challenge # 1 – Finding out what works

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# The research programme – key areas

- Easily accessible **summaries of existing evidence** in an online ‘Evidence Store’ – first 6 to be published by end of the year
- **New research projects** designed to address practice challenges and questions, co-produced with the sector
  - **Priority topic:** Safely reducing the need for children to enter care
  - **Development topics:**
    - Supervision and decision-making
    - The “front door”( local authorities’ arrangements for responding to safeguarding concerns)
    - Workforce well-being, retention and turnover.
- Working together with the sector to **develop solutions and implement evidence findings**

# Standards of evidence

- The Centre will use evidence standards to ensure evidence:
  - Has demonstrated that approaches are helpful for children and families
  - Is useful for decision-makers and practitioners – how will I apply this in my own context?
- Standards will be used to consider existing evidence and shape new research carried out by Centre and others
- We plan to use the **EMMIE Framework** for the standards which consider the:
  - **Effects** of an intervention/approach
  - **Mechanisms** – how does it work?
  - **Moderators** – in what contexts do they work?
  - **Implementation** – what is know about how to implement the intervention
  - **Economic** impact, including the cost implications

# Outcomes framework

- We are developing an outcomes framework to support the sector in understanding what we mean by ‘good practice’ and ‘good social work’
- The framework is being developed in consultation with children and young people, families, practitioners and managers
- The outcomes framework will be to ensure that children’s social care research is focused on the issues that really matter and what we mean by ‘good’ practice
- The framework will aim to emphasise the importance of quality and of people’s lived experience of the children’s social care system, as well as outcomes achieved

## Potential outcome areas – initial thinking

- Welfare outcomes for children and young people
- Welfare outcomes for carers and families
- Proportionate involvement
- Service quality
- Workforce stability
- Costs and benefits

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# # 2 – Ensuring WWC activity leads to change

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# Practitioner Panel

The panel includes principal social workers, lead practitioners, frontline social workers, and voluntary sector practitioners from across the country.

The following organisations are represented on the panel:

- Brighton and Hove City Council
- CoramBAAF
- Doncaster Children's Services Trust
- Leicester YMCA
- Lincoln FAST
- NSPCC
- Leeds City Council
- London Borough of Newham
- Newcastle City Council
- Salford City Council
- Oakhill Secure Training Centre, Milton Keynes
- Oxfordshire County Council

# Engaging children and young people

- 20 young people involved, 2 panel meetings
- Commitment and enthusiasm!
- Panel have talked about: areas of focus for the Centre (“what social workers need to know more about”), outcomes framework, how children and young people should be involved in the future
- Involved in recruitment of centre staff – young people could have an opportunity to feed into some of the questions when recruiting staff for the centre or sit on panel



## Family panel

- First meeting took place on 19 September
- 18 members of Family panel and Kinship panel from the Family Rights Group
- Ambition for a range of events working with families who have experience of adoption, special guardianship and fostering.
- Aim is to hear families' lived experience of CSC, and for families to be involved in a range of strategic questions including selecting priority areas for the Centre, and in developing outcomes framework.

## Developing and testing with the sector

- We are working with local partners to co-design and test a range of promising approaches to generating and sharing evidence
- Following a strong response to the formal application process, we are working with 21 local authorities and trusts during this first wave of activity to December 2018
- We are working to create the opportunity, capability and motivation to use evidence to improve practice and outcomes; to bring ways to support evidence use to scale

*"We are looking forward to working in partnership with the centre to explore how data analysis can be used to help authorities make important decisions which affect the lives of children and young people across the country."*

*Nikki Edwards, Director of Children, Young People and Learning, Bracknell Forest Council*

# Working with local areas

Promising approach	Purpose	Local authorities
Helping children's services directorates become more evidence-minded	Using a tool to enable LAs to assess how well they are using evidence to inform operations and practice with children and families	Walsall, Greenwich, Doncaster, Leeds and Oxfordshire
Self evaluation tool	To enable local authorities to undertake their own evaluations of projects, by developing a self-evaluation tool	Wigan
Helping children's services better use data	Helping local authorities take insights from their existing data sources	Bracknell Forest, Bradford, Newcastle, Surrey
Evidence store	Making sure the evidence we produce is accessible to CSW professionals	Coventry and West Sussex
Peer-to- peer Networking	Supporting CSW professionals to network with each other, and to use each other's expertise	Cambridgeshire
Masterclasses	Helping local authorities develop their skills in using evidence	

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# Partnership Working with Walsall

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# Organisational Development Prototype

- We think that an evidence-informed organisation has two key elements:
- **A. Evidence-informed strategic decision-making**
  - Research evidence
  - Views of children, young people and carers
  - Data e.g. performance data, audit
  - Complaints and SCRs
- **B. The conditions for evidence-informed direct social work practice**
  - Evidence-informed supervision
  - Celebrating good practice
  - Learning from mistakes
  - Peer-to-peer support and information sharing

# Hypothesis Statements

- **We think** organisational leadership and culture is key to ensuring that organisations use evidence for their own decision-making, and to creating the conditions for evidence-informed direct practice.
- **We think that** there are many sources of useful evidence: performance data, audit and quality assurance, research evidence, external knowledge and expertise, service user feedback, learning reviews and SCRs, national agenda/DfE
- **We think that** a diagnostic tool will provide novel insight and awareness for local authority leaders into how they currently use evidence.
- **We think that an organisation with a strong learning culture will be best placed to adopted new evidence of what works in children's social care.**

## Assumptions to be tested...

- Do you agree with our definition of evidence-minded organisations?

We think that an evidence-informed organisation has two key elements:

A. Evidence-informed strategic decision-making

B. The conditions for evidence-informed direct social work practice

## Assumptions to be tested...

- Do you agree with our definition of evidence and its sources?

We think that there are many sources of useful evidence:

- performance data
- audit and and quality assurance
- research evidence
- external knowledge and expertise
- service user feedback
- learning reviews and SCRs
- national agenda/DfE

# Support in becoming an evidence minded organisation...

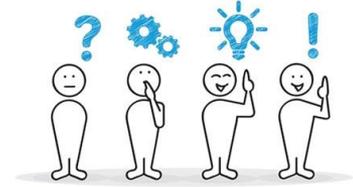
Our experience to date:



Walsall Right for Children



What Works Centre for Children's Social Care



# Prototyping

- By early November:
  - Feedback to Walsall and think about development plans moving forward.
  - Begin the second iteration of the prototype in Greenwich.

## Next Steps for WWC

- A second call for Wave 2 partners is planned for later in 2018. Look out for information
- Sign up to our newsletter for the latest information or follow us on Twitter: [@whatworksCSC](https://twitter.com/whatworksCSC)

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