

What Works Centre for Children's Social Care: e-Newsletter No 1

15 November 2017

Many thanks for your interest in the development of the **What Works Centre for Children's Social Care**, and welcome to the first update from the development team. As you will know, the future Centre will help to improve the lives of children, young people and families. It will support social workers, their managers, practice leaders and their colleagues across the range of children's services. The aim is to provide ready access to trustworthy, useful evidence about what works in children's social care practice and systems.

Progress so far

The Development Team, led by Nesta and its Alliance for Useful Evidence, together with the Social Care Institute for Excellence, FutureGov and Traversum, has already started work. In this initial phase, we are focused on engaging with the sector and carrying out rapid research to look at the evidence and research landscape and policy environment. So far we have:

- arranged a series of four practitioners' events in December and January – bookings are now open (see below)
- started to arrange a children, young people and families' event in January
- begun working with several local authorities to map and develop a deep understanding of social work practice, including how social workers, their managers and colleagues operate, and what their information, evidence and data needs are in order to improve practice and outcomes
- met with a range of key stakeholders including: the Association of Directors of Children's Services, the Local Government Association, the British Association of Social Workers and the What Works Network
- invited key stakeholders to join an Advisory Group to support the development of the future Centre

And of course we are in very regular contact with the Department for Education who commissioned us to help set up the Centre.

Practitioners' events: Book now for December 2017 and January 2018

We are now inviting practitioners from across children's social work and social care to come to one of our events. To be genuinely useful, the future Centre must be based on a rigorous and thorough understanding of everyday practice and what enables well-informed decisions.

At these events, we will work with delegates to help us gather detailed information and perspectives on:

- the key tasks and activities that social workers and colleagues perform
- how data and evidence might be made more readily accessible
- how you can get involved with the establishment of the Centre

Delegates will also hear from sector leaders, young people, and our early practice fieldwork on how the use of evidence can make a difference to the lives of children and young people.

11 December 2017 – Leeds

14 December 2017 – London

18 January 2018 – Bristol

29 January 2018 – Coventry

Please share this information with your practitioner colleagues. The events are aimed at:

- Children's social work practitioners such as frontline social workers, team managers, principal social workers, senior managers, practice leaders (e.g. Heads of Service and Assistant Directors)
- Other practitioners in the children's social care system (e.g. non-qualified workers in residential care, family support workers, personal advisers and independent advocates)
- Practitioners in other services relevant to vulnerable children and young people (e.g. education, health, youth work, and the youth/criminal justice system).

If you cannot attend, or if you are not a practitioner, don't worry. There will be other ways to get involved in the development of the Centre, including events for children, young people and families, and practitioners' panels. We will let you know about opportunities through this regular update.

Research Partner awarded to Cardiff University consortium

The Department for Education [has named Cardiff University](#) as the research partner for the What Works Centre. Professor Donald Forrester will lead the research partnership.