Sustaining and replicating effective practice

Key factors to consider...

Partnership working

Flexibility

Resources

Operational model

Impact

Appropriate 'buy-in'

Use **proven practice** to challenge and create a new ongoing cycle of **cultural change**

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Key factors to consider...

- Partnership working
- Flexibility
- Resources
- Operational model
- Impact
- Appropriate 'buy-in'

Use **proven practice** to challenge and create a new ongoing cycle of **cultural change**

Cultural change

A change in culture is key for a programme to succeed

- Make sure all staff understand:
  - the reasons for change
  - the aims of the programme.
- Motivate staff to inspire and engage them
  - for example, by giving them ownership of particular aspects of the work.

'If you're going to change ways of working, then obviously you have got to take people with you and to do that, they've got to believe in the work they're doing and the model that they're working with. They then can see the impact…and that is a really great motivator'.

Partnership working

- collaborative working
- develop partnerships
- shared knowledge

The benefits of partnership working include:

- drawing together a range of skills and knowledge in order to meet the needs of the client group
- providing access to funding and resources
- raising the profile of the programme
- providing credibility – partners can help raise awareness amongst potential stakeholders
- preventing duplication of effort.

"…you're not starting from a standing still position…people know each other – a lot of joint working, particularly when you're developing things [are] around personal relationships and a willingness to work together to do things differently."

CASE STUDY

The benefits of partnership involvement in sustaining a resource centre

A resource centre was set up with the aim of providing a range of support for children with disabilities and their families. Services are offered *'… on a universal basis right up to the specialist and targeted working with more complex needs'*. Through consultation with parents, the centre develops a diverse range of resources that are flexible, creative and responsive to the needs of families.

The centre works with a **range of partners** including:

- The Primary Care Trust (PCT) which reviews care plan processes. Centre staff attend medical reviews alongside looked-after reviews or service-planning reviews. Prior to the resource centre opening, parents reported that they were attending a number of meetings and information was duplicated from a range of agencies. Therefore, this approach is considered a useful way in which to share information across agencies and prevent duplication of effort.

- The education services, including schools and speech therapists to enable consistent approaches to, for example, meeting young people's targets and sharing information with regard to how the centre works with a young person. The voluntary agencies such as Action for Children sit on the centre's resource panels where they assess children's needs in order to determine the types of services families require.

The involvement of partners was perceived to have sustained the resource centre as it provides a more comprehensive range of resources to meet the needs of children with different support requirements. Moreover, it was felt that partnership working helped to facilitate replication of another centre locally.

Other considerations include:

1. Partnerships built on a history of existing relationships can achieve faster progress.
2. The development of informal contact can enhance partnerships.
3. More formal communication such as regular meetings are key to sustaining partnerships.
4. Shared knowledge and how this serves to benefit all partners is also important.

For example:

The benefits of shared knowledge amongst agencies

One project offered holistic support services for offenders serving community sentences. The project provided a range of support in terms of, for example, identifying stable accommodation, entry to employment (E2E), benefits and back to work support and signposting to other agencies. The programme was embedded locally with all key organisations involved and informed. Such engagement ensured not only that **knowledge was shared** but also that efforts were not duplicated.

Possible limitations of partnership working include where:

- a single agency approach could be more appropriate. For example when:
    - looking to achieve a focused outcome
    - partners are not considered critical to implementation
    - suitable partners cannot be found

- the number of agencies involved in a programme can become too large.
    - A 'tipping point' can be reached where the programme becomes too broad
    - and one can lose sight of the objectives.

Flexibility

- core principles
- knowledge of local need
- external forces

Although it is not always clear whether a programme is transferable until it has been implemented, situations and context that are similar can help to facilitate replication. How to adhere to the core principles of a programme, while being flexible, also need to be considered.

Knowledge of local need when replicating a programme is key. Local factors such as whether a programme is based in an urban or rural location can impact on sustainability and replication. For example, issues in a rural area (where the focus is likely to be county working) might include:

- travel
- cost of transportation
- lack of cross-borough working.

Other considerations include:

- If a model becomes too diluted, the aims of what the programme set out to achieve can become less clear. The following approach is suggested:

  1. identify the core principles in your programme
  2. consider local needs and how transferable the core principles are
  3. tailor the programme to need but within a framework, using the core principles to help guide the decisions made
  4. consider the extent to which the model is workable for each individual context.

- Flexible approaches need to consider external forces at a local and national level such as the political and economic climate, as these can have an impact on factors such as availability of funding, staffing and partner engagement. Practitioners need to:

  - be adaptable to local circumstances and to wider changing prevailing situations
  - consider potential alternative ways of working.

> "It's about replication not duplication...there will be local differences...you can't take something and say this will work as it is here...you need to look at what you've got already...and adapt to local circumstances...it's not an off-the shelf product."

Resources

- secure resources (e.g. expertise)
- cost/benefits analysis
- resourceful joined-up funding

'Joined-up' resources

A joined-up approach is suggested in order to take full advantage of current resources. For example, one headteacher from a high-performing school who was tasked with raising key stage 2 results in a lower-performing school observed that costs could be 'spread' if distributed over a longer time period and over more institutions by schools working together in a federation.

Initiatives can be beneficial and costs potentially mitigated if they are:

- used as 'natural extensions of work already done'
- incorporated into existing job roles
- self-funded.

> *Some of the most innovative projects are low cost or no cost.*

Funding

While funding may be required to, for example, set-up projects and for subsequent planning, it is not always the most essential consideration.

Nevertheless, it is important to:

- ensure adequate resources, for example, to buy time for leading the programme for meetings and training
- maximise existing resources
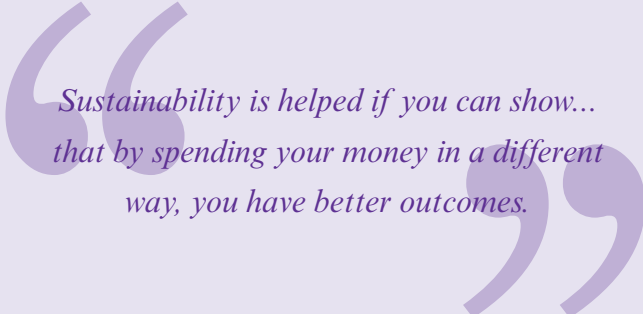- ensure that costs are not prohibitive.

Additionally, early financial planning is essential to the sustainability of a programme.

> *Staff lose momentum if they are unsure whether their job is going to be kept going.*

Cost/benefit analysis

Cost benefit analysis is important in order to demonstrate:

- that investment in a programme will increase quality of life and/or result in a reduction in costs in the future (in terms of money and longer-term cost benefits of investing in a programme.

*Sustainability is helped if you can show...
that by spending your money in a different
way, you have better outcomes.*

The importance of cost/benefit analysis

The Children and Families Enterprise (CAFÉ) was commissioned to provide support for families of offenders by, for example, providing stable accommodation and back-to-work support. Cost benefit analysis revealed that the successful completion of community orders by CAFÉ clients was 90 per cent compared to 50 per cent for the county. Additionally in 2009/10, 73 per cent of CAFÉ clients found suitable or settled accommodation after living in poor or temporary housing. Furthermore the analysis showed that the ability of CAFÉ families to maximise income and manage debt after intervention was 92 per cent. This analysis contributed to the continuation of the programme.

Operational model

- clear plan
- embedded
- documented system

Defining the stages of the operational process and recording the process are key to success.

At the outset it is important to have a clear plan which sets out the:

- objectives of the programme or initiative
- targeted outcomes
- timeline in which they should be achieved.

Furthermore, having a documented process is key in order to:

- facilitate the monitoring, recording and reviewing of progress against outcomes
- assess the operational side of the programme
- assess the degree to which the programme may need revision.

An assessment system can help ensure that:

- developments take place
- provision is adapted to the needs of the target group
- regular meetings with clear agendas and documented outcomes happen.

> *In the past the danger was that outcomes would be achieved and not recorded and things would move on.*

> *Having things in writing definitely helps to embed practice.*

> *'Having a documented action plan which is modified and monitored regularly' [can help to embed an operational model].*

Impact

- dissemination
- evidence of impact

It is recommended that outcomes and impact are evidenced, where possible, through:

- systematic evaluation
- the provision of 'robust' evidence such as 'statistical data'.

Evidence of impact is vital for sustaining and replicating effective practice because it:

- shows that the validated practice has worked
- motivates staff
- can be a 'powerful tool in training'.

> *Without evidence of impact you wouldn't be able to create an argument for funding and you wouldn't be able to ensure you had appropriate 'buy-in'.*

> *If organisations are not delivering in terms of outcomes then local authorities should be decommissioning service providers.'*

CASE STUDY

The importance of evidencing impact

A project called 'Holding Families' emerged from the Hidden Harm agenda which recognised the damaging impact on families of substance abuse (alcohol or drugs) by parents. It was acknowledged that while parents might get treatment for addiction, there was a need to take the whole family through the process in order to support and move them forward.

The project highlighted the need to not just consider and record the short-term outcomes in terms of the successful treatment of an adult for substance abuse but also how early intervention yields successful longer-term outcomes for the family. The programme was evidenced to be cost-effective and enhanced outcomes of the children and young people were shown to be greater. Key to the continuation of the project was the demonstrable impact of the programme.

Furthermore, dissemination of effective practice is vital to the sustaining and/or replication of a programme. Suggested methods of dissemination include:

- via the internet on, for example:
  - websites such as the C4EO website
  - the local council intranet homepage
  - the use of weblinks
  - online booklets, guidelines and case studies
- national, regional and local conferences
- open days, local authority visits and buddying between local authorities
- an evidence base where good practice can be exchanged:
  - at community or regional level
  - between statistical neighbours.

Appropriate 'buy-in'

- local knowledge and credibility
- key individuals
- leader with drive and dedicated time

Appropriate 'buy-in' from 'key' individuals at strategic and operational levels, and other parties (such as, in the example below, the family) is needed to sustain a programme.

It is essential that key individuals have:

- local knowledge
- the ability to influence
- strong personal attributes (e.g. leadership skills)
- understanding of the programme or initiative.

Sustainability and replication is further facilitated by the 'buy-in' from:

- volunteers, who are passionate about a programme or initiative, and what it can achieve
- champions who drive the programme forward and ensure that practice is kept on the agenda.

> *You're asking people usually to do over and above their day job or to be seconded...to do a particular development task. In order to agree [with] that, they have to buy into it.*

CASE STUDY

The importance of ensuring engagement from key stakeholders

A family support model involving a multi-agency partnership approach to the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda comprised a set of arrangements, common terminology, policy, procedures and documents that are used by a wide range of agencies to improve and aid integrated working for children who need multi-agency support. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and preventative work (outside of the social care remit) relies wholly on engagement with partners at the outset.

All partners in the family support model understand the benefits of engaging with the process and how it could enhance their own service or practice. This sustained buy-in was achieved by partners because they appreciated how the support model would benefit them as well as the local authority. 'Key' partners were engaged at all levels and felt they could influence developments. This has ensured that systems are flexible enough to meet their own needs and those of all stakeholders. Furthermore, stakeholders have taken ownership of the processes. If the project had been imposed by the local authority, it was felt that it would not have met the needs of all the partners and it would have limited their engagement, so mutual benefits would not have been so extensive.

Further considerations in terms of 'buy-in' include:

- succession planning – who will take the programme forward?
- capacity building – ensuring there are enough staff at appropriate levels to take the programme forward
- the availability of time, in order to undertake such tasks
- appropriate local partners – needs are likely to differ at various levels (locally, regionally and nationally), so it is essential to ensure that appropriate local partners are involved and consulted.

> *Unless a few key people see it as a key part of what they are doing to drive it forward, the risk is that it gets lost under the weight of all the other things that people have to do.*