



Children's Social Care Innovation Programme

Alternative delivery models event: What we heard

Thursday 20th October 2016

This document provides a record of the conversations and discussions from the workshop that focused on the opportunities and challenges related to alternative delivery models. The below information is a reflection of the views and opinions of those who attended the event and do not necessarily reflect the Department for Education (DfE) policy position. Any organisations interested in submitting an Expression of Interest on alternative delivery models should refer closely to scope set out in the [policy brief](#).

On 20th October the Innovation Programme held a workshop in Leeds to discuss alternative delivery models (ADMs) in Children's Social Care. The aims of the workshop were to:

- Examine policy priorities and contribute significantly to policy development in relation to alternative delivery models in Children's Services
- Spark new ideas for new structures
- Provide insight on the risks and benefits of alternative structures
- Consider, explore and shape local ideas
- Shape future departmental funding and support for organisational and structural innovations

34 people attended the event, with representation from 24 organisations, including local authorities (LAs), providers and the charity and social enterprise sectors.



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1. Overview of the day

- a. Paul Kissack, Director General of Children's Services at DfE, began by setting out the Department's position on alternative delivery models, emphasising that although the Department recognises the financial pressures local authorities are under, the principal driver for this is improving the quality of provision, not cost savings.
- b. Brendan O'Keefe, Managing Director of Epic CIC, described the benefits and challenges of setting up a staff-led spin-out to provide a range of youth services in Kensington and Chelsea.
- c. Nick Whitfield, Chief Executive of Achieving for Children, gave an overview of his organisation, formed from a merger of the Children's Services departments of Kingston and Richmond councils in London.
- d. Roundtable discussions were held focusing on the risks, opportunities, key considerations and barriers associated with setting up ADMs. We discussed the models that seemed most appealing and feasible, as well as some of the sector wide barriers to developing these in a context of increased demand and financial pressure.
- e. Nick Whitfield and Brendan O'Keefe were joined by Colin Hilton, Chair of Doncaster Children's Services Trust and Julia Yong from DfE for a Q&A panel to discuss some of the points raised throughout the day.



2. Overview of discussions: what we heard

Overall, the event participants, both local authorities and voluntary sector organisations, said that they could see the promise and ambition of alternative delivery models. The emphasis from DfE on outcomes was welcome, and the potential for the Innovation Programme to support local authorities to kick-start the process was seen as exciting and appealing.

The key benefits of ADMs were discussed as being:

- a. A chance to develop ambitious practice with children and families at its heart.
- b. Creating new cultures: an autonomous, flexible and supported workforce, with a more business-oriented culture and a sole focus on children.
- c. Flexibility for leadership to set vision and focus on children's outcomes without the complexity and bureaucracy of local authority structure.
- d. Governance arrangements framed as partnership relationships rather than procurer/supplier.

However, it can be hard to see how to get from the current position to the potential vision that ADMs offer. We heard that this can be a long, complex and exhausting process.

The risk, complexity and unknown structural practicalities, coupled with uncertain and unproven benefits, means it is difficult to make the leap.

A key question that came out of the day was whether there is any *intrinsic* value to ADMs. We heard that the core ingredients of a successful new model can be, should be and are possible within local authority structures. At their best, alternative delivery models can be an enabler of those ingredients. However, the models themselves are not a paradigm nor are they sufficient to ensure service transformation without other key conditions. In addition, participants agreed that it was not yet clear which kinds of models are or aren't suitable in different contexts, including size of authority, demographics, geography, range of need, etc.

There was recognition that this is a new area and there is a lot still to discover - and that the sector can only learn by doing. However, making the case for doing things differently was seen as being hard - financially, practically and politically. The value of new approaches has to be demonstrated. It was agreed that there is a need for the sector to share and learn in detail about those models that are operational elsewhere, particularly those in very different local contexts, and that support from DfE to do so would be highly valued.



3. The day in detail

Paul Kissack, Director General of Children's Services at DfE began by setting out the Department's position. He emphasised that the most important agenda is the quality of provision for children and the leadership of local authorities, both corporate and practice leadership. While the financial backdrop is challenging and savings are clearly important, the driver for considering alternative delivery models is firmly one of improving quality. He acknowledged that there has been a culture within the sector of disempowerment, partly due to the government's previously prescriptive approach. Since the reform agenda began, the Department has tried to put power back into the hands of local authorities. He viewed change in legislation to allow local authorities to delegate to third party service providers as a step towards that.

Paul highlighted two possible arrangements for ADMs, but acknowledged there are many others:

1. A combined services approach, as seen in Triborough or between Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. This policy is mirrored in the adoption agenda, where the aim is to have fewer than 150 agencies through a regional or sub-regional approach.
2. An arm's length delivery model, in which local authorities can delegate case-holding responsibilities to third party providers, with political accountability remaining with the authority. Among other models, the Department is keen to explore the idea of care leavers' trusts.

He stressed that it is still early days but these models have shown a promise and it is an exciting area for the government to explore further.

Paul was also clear on what the Department **isn't** saying. In particular, the Department:

- Is not implying that local authorities cannot deliver excellent Children's Services – they can and do, as demonstrated by the large number of local authorities taking bold new approaches as part of the Innovation Programme.
- Is not suggesting that ADMs are the only answer, but rather that they are an option within a mixed landscape of service provision. It is still early days for new models and there is a need to explore them further to test how appropriate they are in a variety of contexts.
- Will not delegate powers to profit making companies. This is against the law and not an area that the Department is considering changing. The intention is to allow local authorities to delegate powers to the charitable, statutory and not-for-profit sectors.
- Is not suggesting that it has in mind a blueprint for what the system should look like. The Department is open to ideas and wants to learn from the sector about what works and what doesn't.

Building on the last point, Paul stated that the Department is open to ideas on what the Innovation Programme could fund. The Department is keen to facilitate and support what local authorities want to do, and through this to build stronger partnerships between local authorities and central government in terms of funding, support and collaboration.



Finally, Paul acknowledged that this is a highly risky area of public services. Delegating case-holding responsibility comes with high liability and is a test of the voluntary sector appetite to take on this risk. Partly due to this reason, it is a challenge to encourage local authorities and service providers to try out potential new models. The intention is that the Innovation Programme will be able to reduce some of the risks inherent in setting up these new ventures, in addition to supporting the sector to learn about what works.

Brendan O’Keefe, Managing Director of Epic CIC, spoke of his experience of running an organisation that strives to put its staff in control of decision-making. Epic CIC provides a range of youth support and alternative provision education services for 13-19 year olds, and for young people who have a learning difficulty or disability up to the age of 25. Brendan was Head of Service at Kensington and Chelsea until January 2014, when he was asked to set up Epic CIC to provide the borough’s young people’s services. He described the new culture and ways of working that being a separate organisation can bring, including one of innovation and a clear purpose of designing and providing better quality services. Employees having a stake in the organisation was critical to this, with their new autonomy, responsibility and freedoms backed up by a new role of management to guide, support and encourage. He also discussed the pros and cons of being more business minded - the impetus that can give to try new things and strive to improve, alongside the real risks inherent in relying on contracts to be viable as a business.

See Brendan’s presentation [here](#)

Nick Whitfield, Chief Executive of Achieving for Achieving for Children (AfC) talked about the journey that his organisation had been on in the last three years. AfC is a social enterprise company created by the Royal Borough of Kingston and the London Borough of Richmond to provide Children’s Services across both boroughs. AfC has a ‘hub and cluster’ model. Though owned jointly by the two local authorities, it has the same beliefs in staff engagement as a mutual organisation. Nick stressed the importance of having autonomy as a leader and for practitioners to design, commission and deliver services. He also described the ‘sole focus’ of AfC as being beneficial, freeing him up from many of the organisational responsibilities of a DCS within a local authority.

He also emphasised that, though the merger of the two Children’s Services teams had been prompted by a need for improvement in Kingston, it was not the case that Richmond had ‘taken it over’; it was a genuine partnership, with Richmond gaining and learning an equal amount.

See Nick’s presentation [here](#)

Roundtable discussions were held focusing on the risks, opportunities, key considerations and barriers associated with setting up ADMs. A number of local authorities shared their ideas and plans for setting up ADMs across a range of areas, from high to low need. We discussed the models that seemed most appealing and feasible, as well as some of the sector-wide barriers to developing these in a context of increased demand and financial pressure.

Colin Hilton, Chair of Doncaster Children’s Services Trust and **Julia Yong from DfE** joined **Nick Whitfield and Brendan O’Keefe** on a **Q&A panel** to discuss some of the points raised in group discussions.



4. Key themes, discussion and questions

A. The ambition and vision of the DfE and of the local authorities leading the way

Ambition vs pragmatism: innovation vs improvement

We heard that, though the bold ambition of ADMs is exciting, it is difficult to make the leap from the current context to the vision demonstrated by those who have made ADMs a success. In particular, we heard that:

- It is refreshing to see such a focus (from DfE, local authorities and the voluntary sector) on innovation and learning. It is motivating and interesting that DfE is being so clear that this is about quality first and foremost, especially for a local authority which is struggling and under pressure to improve.
- It is encouraging and welcoming that the sector can use the Innovation Programme to test new models and have some leeway to try things out, with a reduced risk of implementation costs. However, even small innovations feel like a huge leap from current practice.
- It is difficult to manage risk in a statutory environment. There is a perceived risk of innovating and of losing the balance between change, new approaches and getting the basics right.
- There are elements of existing regulation that are experienced as stifling innovation, and what the 'right' balance is between the innovation and improvement agendas isn't always clear. Is innovation only for those either in crisis or doing well? Is improvement only for those in the middle?

Lack of confidence in making the leap

We heard that some local authorities feel they lack the confidence and capacity to make a leap to new delivery models. This included:

- The risk that the *process* of developing an ADM (not only the new model itself) might be a distraction from good practice, and have a knock-on impact on the capacity to deliver.
- The risk that an unsuccessful or underperforming ADM would put a DCS in a vulnerable position, holding responsibility but at arm's length from delivery.
- The more general risk of how to cope with the potential failure of unproven, structural change.
- The challenge in being able to see long-term change when faced with daily short-term firefighting.

However, those in the room who had been on the journey were clear on the ability of staff to make large-scale change happen once given the right support and responsibility.



“Local authorities will be surprised with the capacity in people to innovate when given the freedom to do so.” Workshop participant.

The context in which local authorities are operating

“As much as we might want to do this, the immediate financial challenges have to take precedence.” Workshop participant

There was discussion about whether the ambition of ADMs was realistic, given the context of demand and financial pressure in which local authorities are operating. Key points included:

- Though it was refreshing to hear about the focus on quality rather than financial savings, the reality for some councils is that savings need to be part, and sometimes the majority, of the rationale. Making the case without this element is hard.
- There was a perception that policy is driven by the last big failure in Children’s Social Care, not by excellence or best practice.
- It can feel impossible to innovate given the increase in demand coupled with pressure on spending.
- Even with senior leaders on board, changing the prevailing staff culture is hard when for so long the focus has been on avoiding failure.

“I interviewed someone for a role a couple of months ago and they didn’t talk about being an inspiring leader or doing the very best for children. All they talked about was how not to fail.” Workshop participant

“We can’t underestimate how the workforce has been locked in a mentality for years and this goes against it.” Workshop participant

Breadth of potential models available is exciting but hard to navigate

We heard from DfE that it was looking at vertical and horizontal integration, i.e. both at amalgamating whole Children’s Services in trusts *and* at specific clusters around parts of services including adoption, care leavers and fostering. We heard from participants that the wide scope was exciting, but for a local authority, it is very difficult to navigate. In particular we heard:

- Though it feels like there is a lot of scope to try out different models, it is very hard to get a feel for which packages might make most sense for different local authorities in different contexts, and what the offers might be from providers.
- There has been discussion about the benefits of spinning out provision versus spinning out assessment. These are very different scenarios for different cohorts of young people. What works well in one context may not in another.



B. Value proposition: the potential benefits of new models

Autonomy and ability to set up a new culture

“That statement of commitment to staff and children allows better recruitment of people who want to go on the journey with us. We can recruit for people with the right passion and attitude, rather than those who tick the right boxes on paper. We can teach them the rest.”

Brendan O’Keefe, Epic CIC

“We could be more fleet of foot and more in control.” Workshop participant

We heard from those who have already implemented ADMs of the value of creating a new organisational culture, and the value of autonomy away from the constraints of local authority structures. This included:

- A perception of agility and autonomy within ADMs, particularly over workforce.
- The positive effect of a new ethos and culture, particularly around a sense of ownership in the model, on the ability to recruit and retain staff.
- The opportunity to look again at first principles, clustering the strengths of different organisations and setting a clear, shared purpose.
- Questions about whether autonomy and arms-length might also mean less influence - Is there a risk of losing the ‘direct link’ into council decision-making processes?

Being more ‘business minded’

“For the first time I really feel responsible for the lives and careers of all my staff. We’re only ever one business decision away from going under. It’s not that it didn’t matter in the local authority but the responsibility was dissipated across so many people, which also made it hard for any one person to take hold of everything.” Brendan O’Keefe, Epic CIC

We heard of the advantage to being more business focused and able to make financial decisions as a separate entity rather than under a council budget line. This included:

- Operational independence from the council, with this freeing up time spent by DCSs and ADs on bureaucracy and internal process.
- Freedom at a practice level would be particularly welcomed. For example, it is difficult to give social workers budgets within local authorities due to the corporate spend limits imposed by some councils.
- The ability to respond to changing needs quickly, design/commission new kinds of provision and forge new relationships.
- The positive pressure on ADM organisations to be quicker and leaner, and to build the business case for any new provision to test its value, feasibility and viability.
- The ability to co-design provision with strategic partners and get them and staff involved early in the process. A new model can give space and opportunity to do this.

In addition, there were two clear risks to being a separate, independent business:



- If entirely spun-out, there is no obligation for a local authority to commission services from the new organisation. Some models are more diversified to spread
- risk; some are entirely local authority commissioned but with joint governance structures to mitigate against pressure to undercut other providers.
- Fully independent models have to operate within budget or face failing. This raises the stakes and might also put the organisation under the pressure to lower costs.

Avoiding duplication and making efficiency savings

For some authorities, savings will have to be part of the package. We heard from Achieving for Children of the efficiency savings made through merging the departments of Richmond and Kingston. Merging can reduce duplication of staff and provision; combine back-office functions; and allow the commissioning of larger contracts for economies of scale.

In addition, there was a clear consensus that these efficiencies should only be made if they are enabler of better practice and improved outcomes, rather than being the primary driver for an ADM.

Challenge: is there any intrinsic value to ADMs?

“We’ve heard about effective leaders, leading people effectively. It’s not clear that the models have done this. It’s the people.”

“The question should be, ‘how do we harness passions and have these freedoms within the local authority?’”

Throughout the day a challenge was raised as to whether there is any intrinsic value to alternative delivery models (or to any one model in particular). We heard clearly that these models are only valuable in as much as they are catalysts for change, and enablers of good leadership, culture and practice.

We also heard that it is possible to make this kind of change, improvement and innovation happen within a local authority. Could local authorities be given the same freedoms to innovate *within* the local authority structure? Participants suggested that the sector should look to bring the lessons of ADMs into local authorities, in addition to spinning provision out.

“A group focused entirely on children has the opportunity to be more entrepreneurial. There are things about the structure that make that easier, but nothing wrong or special about being in or out of a local authority.” Nick Whitfield, Achieving for Children

C. What kinds of models are relevant to different local authorities and local circumstances?

The impact of size and scale

We heard that there is a need to explore the impact of size and scale of a local authority on which kinds of models are appropriate. Key questions included:

- The models we see are often either in London or small unitary authorities. How applicable are these to the county level?



- Is there an 'ideal' size of Children's Services department? (By number of children, families, staff or budget?)
- Do combined authorities only make sense for small local authorities? (What might be the advantages, for example, for Kent in doing this?)
- Achieving for Children stated that they were considering capping their model at five councils; Manchester devolution, in contrast, is 10 authorities. What are the different structures that will allow large mergers to operate at scale?
- The sector should keep a close eye on Birmingham, as a huge authority with many localities within it. How can we learn about what's happening there and share across the sector?

Under what circumstances might an ADM work better than the existing model?

We heard that it was clear how alternative models can work in two situations: for a high-performing authority wanting increased freedom, and in the case of government intervention. Participants were less clear on whether ADMs are appropriate for the bulk of local authorities in the middle. Concerns raised included:

- Are there funds to support this group of good local authorities?
- It is important to understand regional contexts, including different funding pressures, different demographics, and devolution deals.
- Might ADMs *never* be the right solution for local authorities of particular sizes, scales or geographies?
- How should a local authority assess which model might be right for them? It feels that we are a way away from being able to match circumstance to solution.

D. What's needed to develop and implement a successful model?

"The ingredients for success are leadership, workforce culture and practice. They are all interconnected." Workshop participant

Throughout the day, key enablers were discussed across four levels of the system:

Bold practitioners

ADM's can provide the chance to develop ambitious practice with children and families at its heart. This requires bold, highly-experienced practitioners who are willing to go above and beyond. However, there is a perceived lack of debate within local authorities around alternative practices and innovation in Child Protection. The focus is on best practice, not the step-change needed. There has to be room for both when thinking about brand new models.

Workforce culture

All the examples showed that empowering staff in decision making was key. ADM's might provide the opportunity to create new cultures in partnership with staff: an autonomous, flexible and supported workforce, with a more business-oriented culture. For Achieving for



Children, there was an initial loss in staff (those who felt the change was not right for them), but when the new culture set in, those who stayed were much happier with the new model.

Brendan O'Keefe, Epic CIC, stressed the importance of putting rhetoric into action: *"If you say you're going to let staff decide, you have to actually follow through on that."*

Leadership & governance

"I thought it would take about six months. I told them I'd extend my contract for six months, thinking it'd be done by then. It took three years and we're still not completely there." Nick Whitfield, Achieving for Children

Ambitious, inspirational leaders are essential to set vision and carry through implementation. They and the organisation need to have *boldness*: the culture and appetite to take the risk to make this work. They also have to have a dogged determination to make it work.

We heard that the first step had to be setting a clear purpose and redefining the process based on outcomes rather than a desire to change for change's sake. This vision, the new structures and governance arrangements must all be clear on the drivers for change: whether it is improvement- or finance-led. It might transpire that the best model to meet these outcomes is within the local authority.

We also heard that this shared core mission had to be coupled with personalised messages for commissioners, members and providers so that everyone can see what will change for them and what the benefits will be.

Local system conditions that enable new approaches

We heard the importance of cross-sector learning and partnership working between agencies. The ability to support each other through change and to genuinely work together is crucial. This means creating and fostering a culture of collaboration, not competition for dwindling pot of resources.

E. Challenges in implementing new models

New cultures don't form themselves

"It's the same staff, different ethos. That's really hard." Workshop participant

We heard that culture change has to be an active process. New structures will not, in themselves, create new cultures, ways of working, relationships, and better outcomes. But they can be an enabler of this.

We also heard that not all staff will like the new model or enjoy having greater autonomy/empowerment/responsibility. Participants discussed tactics for bringing staff on board through training, support and involving them in the process right from the beginning to build ownership.

Recruitment and retention of social workers

"We are losing social workers because not they are not paid enough and the workload is too high." Workshop participant



Though Paul Kissack had noted that there is no overall shortage of registered social workers, participants countered that it does not feel like that on the ground. There is a supply and demand issue both across different practice/cohort areas and in different areas of the country, with no agreement across the country on salary bands.

We heard a strong desire for social workers to have equal/fair caseloads, be treated properly, feel safe and supervised and be paid enough. The consensus was that this is not a question of organisational structure but a basic offer across the board.

F. Barriers and challenges within the sector

Wider political contexts can help or hinder change

We heard that the wider political contexts and the risk of changing political will/landscape/ideologies – both national and local - cannot be ignored. In particular, participants discussed:

- How can new/emerging ventures be protected from political change? For example, if they have become the flagship policy of one party.
- How to convince Members of the value of new models? The consensus was that this was about finding the stories that will best fit with their interests. For example this often meant a commercial angle for Conservative Members and a cooperative angle for Labour.
- How to balance the complicated context of public and media opinion - that of zero tolerance for failure (or perceived risk-taking) but little appetite to see what's deemed to be privatisation?

Local contexts and operating environments differ widely

Participants discussed some of the complexities in local authority operating environments, including:

- Devolution is having an effect on the capacity of local leadership, with fewer people managing larger areas and more diverse populations.
- Sustainability and Transformation Plans are perceived as being very adult focused, with less opportunity to work in partnership with Children's Services.
- The voluntary sector market is shrinking and so is its capacity. There is a misconception that the big four voluntary sector organisations are sponges for all the funding, which is not conducive to forming committed partnerships.
- There is a question on the 'ideal' geography and the scale of local authorities when trying to bring authorities together (e.g. Birmingham is already too big to bring other local authorities into the fold).

Making the case: value for money plus improved outcomes

We heard that what allows a service to be spun out is everyone seeing a valuable tangible benefit. The view was that this is really hard - and harder in Children's Social Care than in other sectors where different models have been tested. Considerations included:



- How to generate political will and local appetite without a crisis imperative, e.g. a middling performer. What's the 'burning platform' that will engage people in a common cause?
- It was noted that Achieving for Children, Epic CIC and Doncaster Children's Services Trust had a local context which meant something had to change. What is the driver to take the risk if this is the not the case?
- Everybody is looking for efficiencies through necessity to keep services running. The cost of anyone falling through the gaps is very high, which puts pressure on any case for change to be watertight.

Conflicting views on whether a 'sole focus' is beneficial

We heard from some participants about the benefits and freedoms of the new organisation having a sole focus, either on Children's Services as a whole or a more specific aspect.

For some participants who have or are setting up alternative models, the sole focus meant freedom from layers of additional bureaucracy and the ability to set a clear focus and vision. Paul Kissack also noted that in testing new models it felt sensible to start small, for example delegating responsibilities for care leavers, to test the feasibility for the local authority and the risk appetite of providers.

However, other participants were concerned with the structures 'left behind' and a local authority's ability to maintain a corporate parenting focus when services are at arm's length. There was a concern that sole focus could mean narrow focus, limiting the ability to bring in a wider group of services/directors to act strategically. There was an imperative not to lose connections to other departments and services.

Others were simply unconvinced that a focus on quality and practice necessitate a sole focus on children and families.

Nick Whitfield from Achieving for Children argued strongly against external organisations 'hiving off' the more straightforward packages of care, leaving the local authority with the highest risk, highest cost services and no pooled budget.

"What is a local authority for? If you take everything out then what is left? Who is the glue in the local authority if you take all the structures and capacity out?" Nick Whitfield, Achieving for Children

Practicalities and required functions

We heard that, even with ambition, staff support and political will, some decisions just come down to practicalities:

- Structural decisions might be led less by the ideal form and more by VAT, insurance, pensions, statutory responsibilities, etc.
- Some local authorities lack the financial enablers (reserves and working capital) for the double counting required while getting a new venture set up and transferring responsibilities and people.

More clarity was needed on where the statutory responsibilities sit for different models. Is, for example, seconding in a DCS a way of managing this?



A lack of commissioning capacity/capability in local authorities

We heard that many local authorities are good at procurement but not commissioning. They are often used to lots of small contracts involving monitoring. The view was that commissioning/procurement processes can hinder delegation. Brendan O'Keefe, Epic CIC, noted that commissioners need to approach the relationship with new models/providers as if they are *investing* in those companies. And they must avoid loading so many liabilities (including pensions) onto the new organisation that it will fail.

Existing working cultures

We heard about the 'paradox' of an existing working culture being a barrier to creating a new culture. This required strong mechanisms for co-producing the change with staff (not just 'consulting' or 'engaging'). We heard that these mechanisms often don't exist and have to be set up from scratch. It can be a good opportunity to do this, but a hindrance in organisations who don't have them.

Participants also noted that, even with the most enthusiastic and hard-working staff, it takes a huge investment to get staff ready to innovate and through a change process. It's an exhausting and complex process.

The strength of relationships and partnerships within and between agencies

"It's the personal relationships that make it work - not (just) the governance and accountability structures." Workshop participant

"There's no bit of partnership working that you can't make work as long as you've got the will to try it." Workshop participant

We heard that spinning out successfully requires shifts to partnerships and relationships - essential when operating outside the usual hierarchy of organisations. If these good relationships don't exist, how do you set them up while spinning out?

One participant described partnerships as "relationships plus governance plus operating protocols" and noted that all of these levels are essential. Communication channels within and between organisations need to be in place. These don't happen naturally and require work to make sure they exist and are positive.

Capacity and involvement of the voluntary sector

We heard a desire for more collaboration from and within the voluntary sector. It was noted that there is a reliance on the voluntary sector to come together to combine their services, but that local authorities needed to be much more proactive in building the case for smaller organisations to join together to deliver provision and supporting them to do so. Local authorities can be good market shapers, not just commissioners, and this relies on strong relationships between sectors.

G. Appealing models and ingredients of models

We heard a range of approaches, in the pipeline and being implemented, from local authorities and providers. These models and their ingredients included:

- A Trust that is spinning out and taking back-office Council functions with it.



- Multiagency work across a mixture of districts and unitary authorities.
- Providers who have negotiated to provide whole-city services.
- A spin-out with a five-year commissioning term, with the option of being brought back in house and integrated into the local authority at the end of the term.
- Independent Trusts that are wholly commissioned by local authorities but owned by Directors.
- Limited companies that are council owned but operate as arms-length bodies.
- Councils who are looking to commission special purpose vehicles for Lot 19 provision through a community asset transfer.
- A council that is establishing a Community Interest Company to hold responsibility for every service except school admissions.
- Two councils joining up emergency responses to provide intensive support for children in need.
- Four districts councils jointly delivering accommodation services for care leavers.

H. Asks of DfE to support change

Finally, we heard some ways in which the sector would like DfE to support these change processes. These included:

- The need to ensure that Ofsted is bought into the ADM agenda. There is a will from DfE to work with Ofsted to be a stakeholder not a blocker, which is welcomed.
- Clarity would be appreciated around the funding available and the level of resource required to successfully access this. An example was given of social impact bonds, the process for which is deemed to be laborious and expensive.
- Support with cross-sector learning. Is there an overall role for DfE (or, for example ADCS) on this? It would also be helpful for staff in local authorities to be able to network with similar roles elsewhere, not just at DCS level, but also service leader and practitioner level. This would be particularly useful if looking to set up an ADM in a specific area, e.g. services for care leavers.
- Support to manage the limited evidence base for these models and enable ongoing learning.
- Finally, support to help the sector learn together from past models, such as the Inner London Education Authority.