

## **Hampshire County Council Children's Services (Hampshire)**

### **Information Use Project**

#### **Summary:**

The Information Use Project (IUP) in Hampshire has 6 main aims:

1. To use data analytics to understand and provide insight into the changing circumstances of young people (aged 13-18) and their families and, as a result, identify the risk factors that provide the strongest indication of escalation of need, for the purpose of providing help earlier, preventing the need for social care intervention.
2. To create a single view of the young person within an automated information dashboard that brings together real-time data and voice from different sources (children's services, health, education, police).
3. To draw on the findings of the data analytics to produce 'risk flags' in individual young people's dashboards, that can inform the conversations practitioners have with families.
4. To provide guidance for practitioners on how to interpret and use the dashboards.
5. To identify opportunities for additional voice-based information from young people, families, and practitioners to appear in the dashboard.
6. To test how the information may be used ethically, accurately and effectively by practitioners in their decisions on when and how to intervene earlier.

To date, activities with key stakeholders from Hampshire have been used to:

- Refine and finalise the scope of the IUP.
- Construct a theory of change for the IUP, which maps out the assumed difference that it will make to young people, families and services.
- Identify a number of key information topics relating to young people's pathways into and through early help (EH) and children's social care (CSC), e.g. education, poverty, health, where it would be important for practitioners to have information.

Forthcoming activities will:

- Map existing pathways in the collection, collation, analysis and use of data and voice information relevant to the IUP.
- Identify information gaps and to suggest areas for improvement in the next iteration of the IUP.
- Transform the existing datasets so they can be used for data analytics.
- Build, test and deploy the first iteration of a 'risk factor model' using the existing datasets.
- Build the first iteration of a data dashboard bringing together information on social care and education for individual young people.
- Create a short guidance document on how to use and interpret the dashboards.
- Pilot the dashboards with a small group of practitioners.

- Consult with young people, families and practitioners about how their data are used.

### **IUP vision:**

#### **1. Well specified in terms of the five practices:**

##### **a. Data (including the collection, linking and analysis of statistics)**

- The IUP will identify how data about young people in receipt of EH and CSC services are currently collected, collated, analysed, and used.
- Hampshire has identified a number of information topics (such as education, health, and family context) that are potentially key to young people's pathways. As part of the mapping process, the IUP will explore which of these are already represented in the data that are currently analysed, and where there are opportunities to link data from other sources to provide information on these topics.
- The IUP will involve the development and implementation of analytical data models to identify 'risk flags' that are displayed within operational dashboards for use by early help and social care practitioners. This will be informed by existing literature on the theoretical and conceptual understanding of risk.
- The dashboards will present information at both the aggregate level, for use by Hampshire, and the individual young person level, for use in day-to-day practice with families.

##### **b. Voice (the views, perspectives and experiences of children, families, practitioners, professionals, and wider community organisations)**

- The IUP will identify whether and how the voices of young people, families and practitioners are represented in current information systems.
- The IUP will identify opportunities for additional voice-based information (e.g. in case files) to be integrated into the dashboard.
- The IUP will also consult about how data are analysed, interpreted, and used.

##### **c. Ethics (how principles of individual privacy, social justice and public good are applied to data and voice work)**

- Ethical issues are at the forefront of this IUP project on data analytics to ensure transparency and trustworthiness about the collection and use of data, through a collaborative process with different stakeholders.
- The IUP will include engagement with young people and families to discuss how their information is coded, shared, and used to inform services. This part of the work is especially important because of the potential to misuse analytical models if they are applied without context or without properly understanding their limitations.
- Where the voices of different stakeholders are included in the IUP, the possibilities and boundaries of their influence in decisions will be discussed and identified in advance with senior Hampshire officials, and this will be clearly communicated to all those involved. This will help to ensure that their participation is transparent and meaningful, with clear pathways of influence.
- On-going review of the IUP will ensure a focus on how the data analytics enhances rather than limits young people's and families' access to appropriate services and avoids stigmatising already marginalised groups.

- The IUP will follow the UK Government's Data Ethics Framework.
- d. Information use (how data and voice are used in practice to inform and shape policy and practice)**
- The theory of change outlines the pathway(s) through which information will be used. At an **individual** level, it will inform how practitioners work with families, leading to more meaningful interventions and better young person-worker relationships
  - At an **aggregate** level it is likely to include informing commissioning of services/allocation of resources/training of staff
- e. Learning (testing and evaluating how new initiatives are working)**
- Evaluation is intrinsic to the IUP, with a focus on multiple uses of evaluative data to inform operational practice, strategic planning and decision making and to also provide externally facing evidence about the impact of the IUP. This will include mechanisms for internal reflection and over time the application of more formal evaluation of impact and value.

## **2. Has relevance and traction locally**

The IUP fits within the strategic context in Hampshire and its review of Early Help services that sits alongside the associated recommendations of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (IRCSC) for a 'revolution' in family support.

Additionally, in 2019, Hampshire introduced an internal Data Analytics and Reporting Excellence (DARE) programme to transform the collection, analysis, and reporting of data. This aims, amongst other things, to automate the collection and dashboarding of data so that it is near to real time, releasing analyst capacity to undertake more diagnostic and analytical modelling that provides insights and support problem-solving to achieve better and more cost-effective outcomes and experiences for children, young people, and families.

The IUP will build on DARE's existing analytical investment, and augment this with lessons from academic theory and evidence on risk and need. Additionally, the IUP will provide investment in participatory and engagement activity to test data uses with care experienced people, wider communities and practitioners. We will look at how local authority (LA) and local partner data and voice information can be used to help children's social care services more effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of young people and families.

The IUP will build on this work. A range of key stakeholders have been involved in shaping and planning of the IUP, including the Principal Social Worker, Head of County Services, Data & Information Team Manager, Nuffield Project Senior Data Scientist, Senior Legal Advisor, and a representative group of early help and social care practitioners

## **3. Has feasible impact on lives and experiences**

The theory of change outlines how improvements in the collection, collation, analysis, and use of information are hypothesised to impact on the lives of young people and families. This focuses on improving the ability of practitioners to make informed and timely decisions to intervene earlier and provide services, making for more meaningful interventions and relationships, and in turn facilitating de-escalation of need.

#### **4. Stable and deliverable**

The project has buy-in from key stakeholders in Hampshire, including the Director of Children's Services, Deputy Director, Children and Families, Assistant Director (Transformation), Assistant Director (Education and Inclusion), and has been discussed with the larger group of team managers in Hampshire.

Hampshire has provided project management resources and specific funding for the project is being used to cover an embedded Senior Data Scientist within Hampshire, to enable the delivery of the data analytics.

The project team will support the site in engagement work with young people and families. Practitioners have been involved in the development of the project theory of change to ensure that activities and anticipated outcomes are realistic; they will be involved in subsequent phases in an effort to minimise any additional burden to LA staff of implementing the IUP.

#### **5. Includes improved voice and data information relative to baseline**

The IUP will see the research team working with the local authority to identify a broader and more timely range of data than is currently used by practitioners – data that includes the voices of diverse groups of young people, wider family members and practitioners – for analysis and presentation through dashboards,

#### **6. Of wider policy interest**

The IUP fits within the national context of the IRCSC. It is anticipated that this IUP will provide key findings about the use of data analytics and information dashboards in practice, and how and whether this impacts on the use of Level 3 Family Help and Level 4 Safeguarding services and young people's and families' well-being. This has potential implications for policy around the allocation of resources and the use of Early Help services, as well as valuable guidance on data ethics.

#### **7. Having a whole child approach**

The information topics identified by the LA will provide a broad view of the factors that might predict service use. Opportunities will be explored both within existing information (e.g. the school and children in need censuses) and through the possible linking of data from other sources (e.g. police, health records and youth justice).

#### **8. Has plans in place for substantial development for the enhanced pilot to follow**

The automated collation of data from a range of sources to create a single view of the young person, represents a significant development both in technology and practice. The collation of information is currently triggered by a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) referral; it relies on manual effort, and information is not always updated in real-time. The new dashboards will bring this combined information together with the enhanced voice of young people, families, and practitioners.

The use of historical and contemporaneous data to identify the strongest risk factors for escalation of need also represents a substantial development. It will provide 'risk flags' in both individual dashboards, with the aim of better informing practitioners' decisions, and in aggregate dashboards, with the aim of informing strategic decisions such as the effectiveness of interventions and commissioning. The dashboards will supplement, rather than replace, the practice expertise that is highly valued by Hampshire. Whether this works in practice as modelled in the theory of change will be examined in the project evaluation.