



ADCS

Leading Children's Services

Learning from LGR



**Northamptonshire
Children's Trust**

3 times!!!!

2021

2009

1974

Learning from LGR

Key things to be aware of:

- Support services arrangements
- Well intentioned ideas before the split
- Lots of consultants
- MTFP - finances over outcomes
- Borough / District / County deficits and risk of a Section 114 notice
- Short term Financial understanding
- Impact on workforce
- Impact on outcomes for children, young people, families and care experienced young adults.





Don't

- Start with the view that children's services are a costly department in the LA
- Take a steer from people who have not delivered improvement in children's services
- See demand cost challenges as purely as a failure of children's services
- Assume that replacing senior leadership of children's services will solve the challenges you face
- Take a preferential view of one LA service over another, look at the system and benefits for all services and people.

But imagine... through LGR you could create a specific housing pathway for care experienced young adults based on their needs from aged 16 or younger.

Do

- Focus on a systemic LA approach to children's services based on the journey of the child
- Create and maintain meaningful, strength-based partnerships across the system
- Think carefully about any proposed shared services, they almost always disaggregate within a few years of LGR
- Replace judgement with curiosity
- Create a culture of psychological safety that takes your workforce on the journey with you
- Embrace the change and opportunity that LGR gives you to improve systems and services.



Risk Register - Children's Services LGR

Risk scores: 1 – Low 5 – High. All of the risks outlined below should be addressed in the maturity matrix analysis

Risk No.	Risk	Description	Likelihood	Impact
CLGR1	Leadership continuity	LGR often results in senior leaders across the LA(s) leaving, retiring or in some cases being made redundant	5	5
CLGR2	Workforce alignment	LGR can lead to a split of countywide children's services. In many cases this leads to the workforce having to choose an LA. This often leads to the at least one continuing authority having a less experienced children's services leadership team and wider workforce,	5	5
CLGR3	Financial Sustainability	Ineffective financial planning around the whole LA system that supports effective children's services and service reductions can lead to significant, unexpected additional costs such as children's home provision, housing for care experienced young adults, workforce pay and reward offer, early help provision. Cross boundary delivery models also rely on LA investment into the infrastructure.	5	5
CLGR4	Equality, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging	Much work has been done across the Children's Services / LA sector to embed EDIEB, however there is still a lot to do. Commitments to EDIEB can become disjointed and dissipate, when considering LGR they can be less of a consideration. EDIEB should be a priority consideration in all LGR plans.	5	5
CLGR5	Corporate parenting	The moral and statutory requirement for LAs to be the best possible corporate parents for children in care and care experienced young adults. Corporate parenting commitments can become disjointed and dissipate, when considering LGR they can be less of a consideration. Corporate parenting should be a priority consideration in all LGR plans.	5	5
CLGR6	Shared support service proposals	Whilst the logic of shared services can make sense as separate LAs evolve post LGR a disconnect between continuing LAs almost always occurs over a period of years, despite the good intentions at inception. This most often applies to 'support services' such as IT, Housing, Transport, HR, Finance, Communications & Marketing and Training.	4	5
CLGR7	Corporate leadership	Lack of experience or willingness to consider experienced views in Children's Services can lead to ill-informed decision making. This is often short term financially led decision making with long term impact.	4	5

Risk No.	Risk	Description	Likelihood	Impact
CLGR8	Political leadership	Lack of experience or willingness to consider experienced views in Children’s Services can lead to poor advice to elected members from senior officers leading to ill-informed decision making.	4	5
CLGR9	Children’s Services leadership	Poor leadership of children’s services gives poor advice to corporate and political leadership leading to ill-informed decision making. Often this can be a serial interim with little no track record as a DCS or in some cases an inexperienced DCS	4	5
CLGR10	Recruitment and retention of children’s Service workforce	Significant structural change can unsettle the workforce and can lead to an exodus if plans are not clear or well communicated.	4	5
CLGR11	Services for children	Significant structural change can lead to an inexperienced workforce which has a negative impact on services for children.	4	5
CLGR12	Delivery of the DfE Families First Partnership reforms	The DfE FFP reforms are to be implemented by 31 March 2027 with signifncat planning and pilots required across the partnership. Attention can be focused on LGR, this should be considered as part of the discussions.	4	5
CLGR13	Partnership relations	Relationships with partners can suffer as a result of new structures to understand and changes in workforce and new structures. This specifically impacts on how the safeguarding partnership arrangements and ‘front door’ arrangements work. Important to consider health and police structures and how they align with LGR.	4	5
CLGR14	Creation of an Alternative Deliver Model (ADM) eg Children’s Trust	Whilst the logic of shared services can make sense as separate LAs evolve post LGR a disconnect between continuing LAs almost always occurs over a period of years, despite the good intentions at inception. Children’s Trusts have a strong track record of improving services under DfE statutory intervention but in all but one case this is an intervention rather than a strategic LA decision. Having Children’s Services outside of the LA can often lead to ‘blame’ and criticism from the LAs involved which de-stabilises Children’s Services	4	5