

## **Q2 ARE YOU INVOLVING THE RIGHT PEOPLE FROM THE START, TO GIVE YOU THE BEST CHANCE OF A GOOD START?**

### **Think about local champions**

You need two local champions: one influential person from the local authority children's services, preferably the Director or Assistant Director for children and families, and one from the court, preferably a Judge. Ideally, they will be co-leaders at the planning stage and become joint chairs of the Steering Group (see Q3).

These will be key people to promote the idea of FDAC to a wide audience, keep up enthusiasm, support those implementing it, and lead on a proactive approach to anticipating and solving problems as they arise.

They will also have an important role in fostering momentum, commitment and interest during what can be a protracted and frustrating process of partnership development, joint commissioning, and tendering and procurement of the service model.

Champions will ensure that the right local authority and court staff are on board with the development and understand the importance of communicating effectively with one another.

### **Think widely, in terms of potential partner agencies and people**

Others to enthuse and include in early discussions are:

- Local authority and private practice lawyers.
- Cafcass – Guardians and their managers will need to understand the different approach required and to facilitate discussion about the potential value of a dedicated pool of guardians for FDAC cases.
- Adult substance misuse treatment service providers and commissioners.
- Adult social care.

- Public Health representatives from the local authority. They will have expertise, and access to information, about the financial benefits of tackling public health problems, including substance misuse. They will be the commissioners of adult substance misuse services, as well as having responsibility for public health services for children, including those with young parents and parents with mental health problems. They will be involved with the local Health and Well-being Board, including its work developing the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – a possible extra information source about the extent of parental substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse problems and the range of services available.
- Clinical Commissioning Groups – given their responsibility for commissioning child and adolescent mental health services.
- Representatives from local authority and voluntary organisations involved in other relevant projects, such as reducing the number of mothers experiencing the removal of successive children in care proceedings and intensive support via the Troubled Families and Family Nurse Partnership initiatives.

### **Remember the advantages of early involvement in developing a new idea**

As in other work, involving people from the start will increase your chances of harnessing their ownership, commitment and good ideas. General experience points to the value of involving people who are already working together in some relevant way, rather than trying to start a new project from scratch. But, if in doubt, invite people to your preliminary discussions: you won't be sure what they can offer unless you invite them to contribute.

Bear in mind that FDAC should be regarded as a mainstream service, part of the whole system that exists to support families locally, including those going through the court process. So engage early with local authority and other colleagues who are responsible for developing strategies, re-designing services and making commissioning decisions in the longer term.