

## Case study

In the first three years of supporting one local authority, the average time an adopted child had spent in care fell by nearly 250 days. In addition we increased the number of children placed for adoption over the course of three years by 138%. This equated to this local authority avoiding at least £1.6m in expenditure on those children after counting the cost of Coram's support. We believe a similar impact can be made for other local authorities.



## Contact details

To find out more, or to commission this or any other Coram-i service:

**Coram-i**

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# coram·i

Insight • Innovation

## Improvement services



## About our improvement work

Coram-i can work with your organisation to improve its performance in delivering permanence for looked after children. We have already used our specialised improvement framework, costs-avoided methodology and uniquely designed tools to make significant performance improvements in over 20 local authority adoption services. We can help you to:

- achieve better performance against Government scorecards and Ofsted inspection judgements;
- increase staff productivity and satisfaction;
- reduce the resources spent supporting looked after children as a result of earlier permanence placements;
- have access to more accurate, timely management information to help managers track the performance of their staff and service;
- increase user satisfaction at important points in the adoption journey; and progress complex cases with our multi-disciplinary expertise.

## What we do

Coram-i's team can provide varying degrees of support, depending on your needs. These include:

- Diagnostics
- Deep Dives
- A subscription offer, providing access to our unique performance management tool and thematic events
- Improvement support

**Adoption service diagnostics:** We use the diagnostic to identify differences in the types of children under the responsibility of the local authority; drift in children's adoption journeys and analyse the possible reasons for long care journeys; drift in adopters' journeys and possible reasons for delays; calculate the productivity rate of service in placing children and recruiting adopters; and calculate unit cost of placing a child for adoption.

**Legal deep dive:** The aim of the legal deep dive is to provide a quantitative analysis of care planning and court processes for young children in a local authority. From this we develop hypotheses about the reasons for blockages and delay, and suggest areas of improvement in social work and legal planning.

**Our performance management tool** will give managers and staff meaningful data that will help them manage their cases and keep track of performance. It has been designed through our improvement support work to meet the needs that existing ICS do not. It will complement any ICS and so will be particularly invaluable to any agencies that are integrating their services.

**Improvement support** from Coram-i consists of one-off consultations or longer term support. Our approach is tailored to your needs and we offer a full range of solutions. The table sets out the different types of improvement support we provide.

<b>Specialised consultations</b>	<b>Support and coaching</b>
<p>Our experienced multi-disciplinary team, including social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists, can provide one-off, case-focused discussions to enable agreement on care plans; or advice about the way forward in complex cases, such as sibling separation or placement of older children who have suffered disruption. We can also conduct audits of case files.</p>	<p>Working with staff, we will introduce new ways of operating that will improve performance in line with the national agenda. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- re-design of processes and services;</li> <li>- introducing detailed case tracking and regular reviews of cases to eliminate delays in decision-making and actions.</li> </ul>
<b>Embedded team</b>	<b>Managed service</b>
<p>Our staff will work within your service to support its delivery and role model how to work more effectively. This approach leads to faster improvements than our support and coaching model. Our success with one authority using this type of support led to Coram-i managing the service on their behalf.</p>	<p>By taking on the management of a particular service within the local authority, Coram-i will share responsibility for the service. This is the fastest way to realise sustained improvements within the service.</p>
<b>Delivered service</b>	<b>Integration Services</b>
<p>Providing the delivery of a service on behalf of a local authority – for example we have been providing domestic adoption for one authority since 2006, recruiting and assessing prospective adopters and finding families for children with a plan of adoption.</p>	<p>Helping with the integration of multiple agencies, based on what we have learnt from the creation of agencies such as the Coram Cambridgeshire Adoption Agency. We can support the transition/merging of services so that there is minimum disruption to stakeholders, provide legal support to ensure that suitable contractual arrangements are in place and help ensure that the new agency retains the good practice of each partner agency to deliver a high quality service for looked after children.</p>

## The way we work

Our approach is data-led, analysing performance data to identify problems and practice-based, drawing on our wealth of experience of improving the lives of vulnerable children, to identify and deliver solutions to address these problems. We deploy multi-professional teams of experts in social care, management consultancy and data analysis to tackle problems at a case level, determining whether the problems are isolated or systemic. It is this ‘bottom-up’ approach that we believe makes our offering unique and provides us with insight into the wider challenges that are facing looked after children’s services today.

Our impact is assessed according to our quality-assured methodology for calculating costs avoided, developed in conjunction with the Centre for Child and Family Research at Loughborough University. We use data on improvements in timescales and outputs to work out how much expenditure has been avoided as a result of children being placed and adopted faster.