

Social Work Academy

By Gloucestershire County Council

Launched in 2019, Gloucestershire's Social Work Academy has established itself as **a hub for professional development, supporting children's social workers and allied professionals across the county**. The Academy's mission is to cultivate a learning culture that nurtures outstanding practitioners and leaders who can drive positive outcomes for children, young people, and families in Gloucestershire.

The Social Work Academy was designed to inspire, challenge, and support practitioners at every stage of their professional journey. Its comprehensive learning programmes

address local practice needs, role-specific requirements, and broader professional development goals. By prioritising a culture of continuous learning, the Academy empowers social workers and other professionals to reach their full potential and make a meaningful impact.

The Academy offers a variety of bespoke learning opportunities tailored to Gloucestershire's unique practice needs. It also provides access to external learning experiences, enriching the breadth and depth of professional development. A key partnership with Research in Practice grants eligible staff access to evidence-based resources and events, ensuring that practice is informed by the latest research and insights.

To further enhance practice, Gloucestershire partnered with the Centre for Systemic Social Work to roll out systemic practice training. This initiative introduces a transformative approach to social work, equipping practitioners with tools to better understand and support families within their broader contexts.

Through its dynamic learning programmes and strategic partnerships, the Social Work Academy exemplifies Gloucestershire County Council's commitment to raising the standard of children's services. By fostering an environment that values professional growth, the Academy is paving the way for more effective social work practices across the county.

Coram Innovation Incubator's Ignite Programme

By Coram, a registered charity

Ignite Leadership Programme: A Catalyst for Innovation in Children's Services

Transforming Challenges into Opportunities

The Coram Innovation Incubator (CII) Ignite Leadership Programme is a short course designed to equip professionals in children's services with the confidence and tools to develop, pilot, and implement innovative projects within their organisations. By combining design thinking, coaching, and peer support, Ignite empowers participants to tackle complex challenges, identify user needs, and create impactful solutions.

North Yorkshire Council: A Case Study in Innovation

North Yorkshire Council, with support from the Coram Innovation Incubator, Microsoft, and funding from the Department for Education's Children's Social Care Digital and Data Solutions Fund, used Ignite as a springboard for new ideas. They have been exploring a technological solution to consolidate and analyse data from various sources, enabling social workers to access critical information about a child instantly. By using analytics tools to map the significant people and places in a child's

life, the council aims to identify support networks and potential risks, leading to more informed and proactive decisions to safeguard children.

Key Benefits of Participating in CII Ignite

- Address specific organisational challenges and improve outcomes for children and families.
- Master design thinking, business experimentation, and evaluation techniques.
- Deepen insights into user experiences.
- Benefit from increased networking and peer support across the children's services sector.
- Space for reflection and self-development
- Two coaching sessions with a professional design thinking coach

Ready to Ignite Your Potential?

Don't miss this opportunity to develop your innovation skills and drive positive change in children's services.

To register your interest or for further information about Ignite 2025, please email innovation@coram.org.uk.

"Working together with partners like Coram-i facilitates the development of new and effective technical solutions."

– North Yorkshire Council

Participant Testimonials

"I learned how to define a problem by seeking to understand staff, service and user experiences rather than the single person or management perspective/assumption. The seeking of solutions and ways forward was therefore shaped by shared understanding, ownership and motivation."

"I'm constantly looking at how to improve practice, and the [course] has given me much more confidence at being able to do this without being overwhelmed by more structural or financial barriers."

"It made me feel like innovation is not limited to a set department or those in the upper echelons of practice...I really feel like anybody can bring innovation to their practice and in a multitude of ways."

