

Funded by



Department  
for Education

# FDAC model aims to deliver



# Better justice theory

## Values

Court as an agent of change

Collaborative, less adversarial, approach

Parents gets a fair chance to be heard, and 'trial for change'

Strong relationships built on:

- empathy
- honesty
- mutual trust and respect

Clear focus on the child's needs and timescales, with a preference for children being brought up safely in their family of origin, wherever possible

## Inputs

Clear, firm and consistent expectations and consequences

Opportunity to build a working relationship with the judge based on:

- judicial continuity
- fortnightly non-lawyer hearings

Judges encourage parents' active participation and collaboration through:

- motivational interviewing
- problem solving approach

FDAC intervention team gives parents every possible help to overcome their problems and meet their child's needs in a timescale compatible with those needs

## Outcomes

*'I was treated like a human being.'* (parent)

*'I always felt I was listened to and heard.'* (parent)

*'I was taken seriously and not judged.'* (parent)

*'I have never heard parents speak so openly in court as they do in FDAC. I think it's really healthy. Their confidence develops. They move from rigidity to feeling more relaxed and you see them build a relationship with the judge.'* (social worker)

*'We don't want to see lots of different judges, we want one person directing things all the way. Otherwise they don't know what's going on. That's important because the judge makes the decision at the end of the day so it's really important he gets all the information.'* (parent)

*'It is effective, it is how care proceedings ought to be. If parents have all the services they need offered to them, but still cannot control their substance misuse, this helps them accept that they cannot care for their child.'* (family lawyer)

*'This is what I went into social work to do.'* (FDAC team member)

# Better outcomes theory

## Values

A belief that parents can change

*'FDAC gave me hope when I had none'*  
(parent)

*'Honest', 'strict', 'fair', 'supportive', 'kind'*  
(parents)

*'FDAC has helped me be the sort of person I want to be. It's helped me remain focused and motivated and instilled in me a real sense of achievement and confidence.'*  
(parent)

## Inputs

Comprehensive assessment of the risks and the strengths

'Trial for change', involving:

- a problem-solving family court
- a designated treatment team
- other local support and treatment services

Regular reviews of:

- timescales
- risks
- strengths
- interventions

Continuous:

- monitoring of service outcomes and feedback
- service improvement and

Temporary removal of children to prevent further harm to the child

Support and treatment to repair harm to children

Support and treatment that where possible promotes parental:

- organisation and self-discipline
- sensitive responsiveness
- reflective capacity
- child-centred lifestyle

Support and treatment that where possible helps parents to overcome:

- substance misuse
- anxiety, depression & PTSD
- domestic abuse
- housing and debt
- other solvable problems

## Outcomes

Better child health and development because of EITHER:

- parents able to meet their child's needs in a timescale compatible with those needs, OR
- timely permanence elsewhere

Better parental health and well-being

Increased parental participation in education, training or work

Reduction in parental antisocial behaviour and crime

# Value for money theory

## Values

'How would you feel about telling a child you weren't prepared to pay £12,000 to see if they could grow up in their own family?'  
(AD, Children's Services )

## Inputs

Better coordination of services, avoiding delays, gaps and duplications, and increasing effectiveness

Better outcomes for children and families

Timely decision making if parents are not able to change

Continuous evaluation, improvement , innovation

## Outcomes

Reductions in cost and volume of present and future:

- care proceedings
- child protection

Reduction in cost of parental antisocial behaviour and crime

Increased parental participation in education, training or work

Reduced health costs for child and parents

Reduced cost of school problems and child antisocial behaviour and crime

# FDAC National Unit's theory of change

## Values

*'One approach to change: creating demonstration projects at the local level, finding out what works and what doesn't, and then disseminating new ideas and new practices more widely.'* (From the Ground Up' Centre for Justice Innovation)

*'The ideas that have successfully moved from a single programme to broader implementation can usually point to hard data and robust independent analysis, not anecdotes, as one of the key forces behind replication.'*

*'Allowing mission creep and attempting to solve too many problems across too many areas can dilute the impact of a programme and undermine the distinctive nature of a project.'*

## Inputs

Intensive personalised support for the new FDAC sites, to establish new FDACs this year

A website, publications, conferences and individual meetings for:

- interested areas, to identify future FDAC sites
- others keen to learn about FDAC

Continually collecting and evaluating data to test:

- our better justice theory
- our better outcome theory
- our value for money theory
- what works best for whom
- Fidelity to the model

Modest adaptations to the FDAC model, to accommodate regional variations

Substantial evidence-driven developments of the FDAC model to address:

- specific problems (e.g. repeat removals)
- new scientific findings
- changes in the Family Justice system

## Outcomes

FDAC available to more children and families

The settings and contexts in which FDAC does and doesn't work are established

Deeper theoretical understanding of the critical child protection problems and most effective child and family justice solutions

Evidence-led development and practice

A model that adapts and evolves in a changing scientific and policy environment

Wider application of new ideas about justice that arise from the FDAC project

## **How we demonstrate better justice, outcomes, value for money**

- Qualitative feedback from families and professionals
- Quantitative dataset of families using FDAC
- Follow-up of the independent evaluation cohort, to track longer-term outcomes for children and parents, including improved health and well-being and safe and sustained return home
- Help local authorities have a more accurate view of their spend on care proceedings and use the value for money model to predict and measure improvements in value for money with FDAC
- Study the implementation process to scrutinise resilience of the model in different settings
- Build evaluation into new developments, as in the 'Early FDAC' service

© Crown copyright 2018

This publication (not including logos) is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

To view this licence:

Visit: [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3)

Email: [psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gov.uk)

Write to: Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU