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Developing a Social Pedagogy for UK foster care: emerging findings from a UK study

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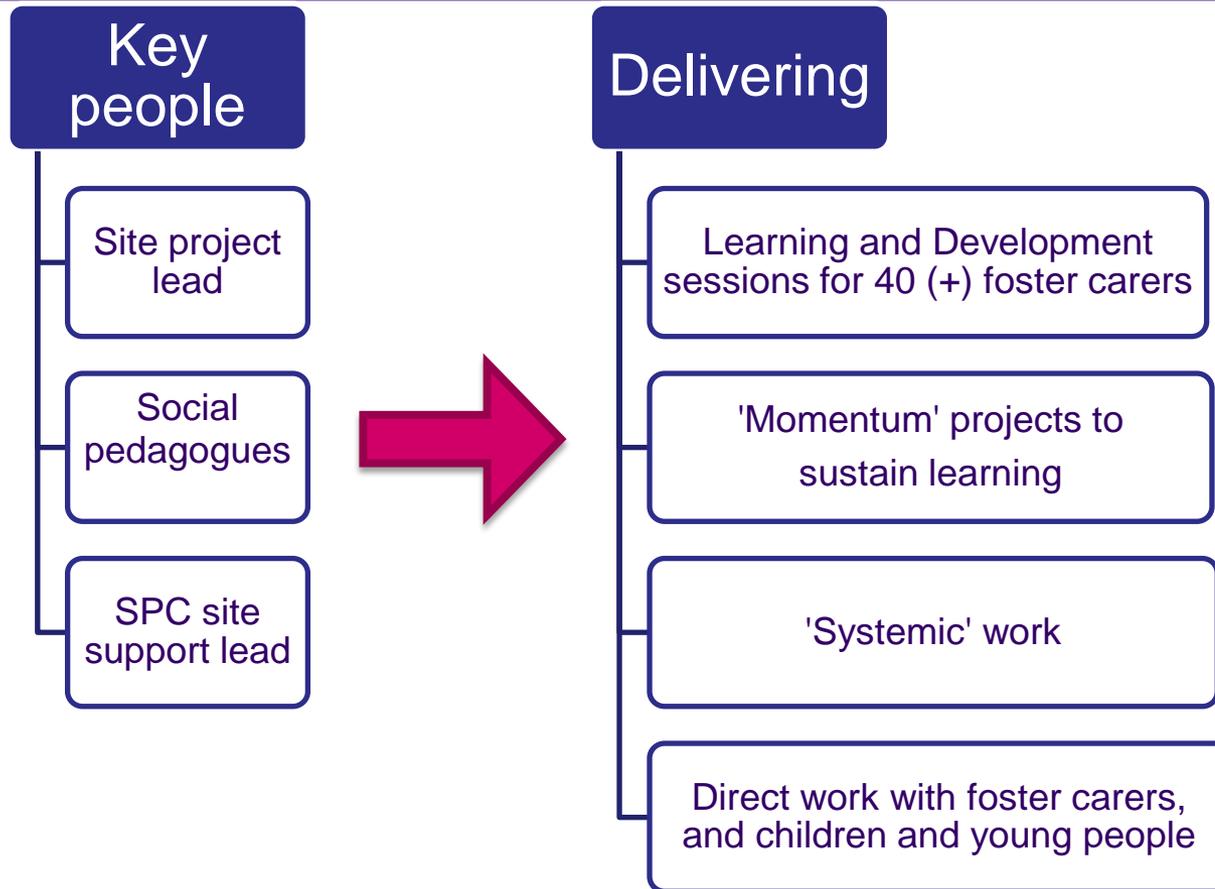
Setting the scene: Social Pedagogy in the UK

- Social pedagogy is unfamiliar in the UK
- Government funded pilot in Residential Care (2009 – 2011)
- Small scale individual projects
- Interest among researchers and academics
 - Centre for Understanding Social Pedagogy, Institute of Education
 - Some social pedagogy modules on social work training courses
- Increasing interest in Social Pedagogy in children's social care
 - Move away from a 'tick box' culture or focus on the task
 - Focus on relationships – notions of upbringing

Head, Heart, Hands: Introducing Social Pedagogy into UK foster care

- Aims to:
 - Introduce social pedagogic principles into UK foster care
 - Demonstrate the impact on:
 - Outcomes for children in foster care
 - Foster carers' status, skills and confidence
 - Cultural and systemic context to support a social pedagogic approach
- Delivered by The Fostering Network with support from the Social Pedagogy Consortium
- Seven fostering services “Demonstration sites”
- Independent Evaluation Team

Head, Heart, Hands: Introducing Social Pedagogy into UK foster care



Overview of the evaluation

- Complimentary and overlapping modules
- Baseline and two follow up data collection points
 - **Module 1: Impact on children and young people**
 - Face to face interviews children and young people (n=60 and n=30)
 - Analysis of management information systems data and additional case file information
 - **Module 2: Impact on foster carers and on practice**
 - On-line survey and telephone interviews with foster carers
 - Chaired group discussions with practitioners
 - Face-to-face interviews with social pedagogues
 - **Module 3: Implementation process, outcomes and changes in the system**
 - Interviews with programme managers
 - On-line survey with practitioners
 - Case studies (includes face-to-face and telephone interviews)

Progress to date

- Completed the first two stages
- Two site case studies
- Scoping costs work
- 24 Interviews with children and young people
 - Life maps
- Survey of foster carers who had attended the Learning and Development courses (n=98)
- Face to face and telephone interviews with 55 foster carers (22%)
 - Small, 'snap shot' sample at this stage

Emerging Findings: Foster Carer receptiveness

- Three ideal types
 - Engaged Adopter
 - Cautious Optimist
 - Defended Sceptic
- Factors
 - Resonance with existing values or approaches
 - Receptiveness of the 'system'

Introducing social pedagogy into the UK: Conceptualising Social Pedagogy

- Distinguishing Social Pedagogy from ‘good quality foster care’
- ‘Doing it already’
 - Both positive and negative
- Is social pedagogy something that can be ‘done’?
- Two discourses:
 - Tools
 - Approach
- Increasing use of the approach discourse over time
 - Underpinned by tools

Introducing social pedagogy in the UK: Haltung and reflections on the self

- Haltung
 - Limited attention paid to the self in current approaches to fostering
 - Consideration to the self and biographical narratives through reflection is permissive
 - Provision of a language or a framework to 'go deeper'
- Acknowledgement of own 'stance' and of others' 'stance'
 - Foster carer's approach to care
 - Reflecting on young person's perspectives
 - Reflecting on supervising social workers' perspectives

Introducing social pedagogy in the UK: Social pedagogy and the wider system

- How 'ready' is the wider system for social pedagogy
- System understood by foster carers as being bureaucratic and risk averse
 - Concerns that system will be resistive to the foster carers exercising agency
 - 'Get into trouble'
 - Limit the impact of social pedagogy
- Social pedagogy as a way to change the wider system
 - 'Everyone should do it'
 - Concerns about reach

Next Steps: Sustainability

- Moving into independence
 - Momentum Groups
 - Social Pedagogues
 - Reach
- Resource allocation
 - Core and Variable components
 - Potential costs avoided

For more information

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