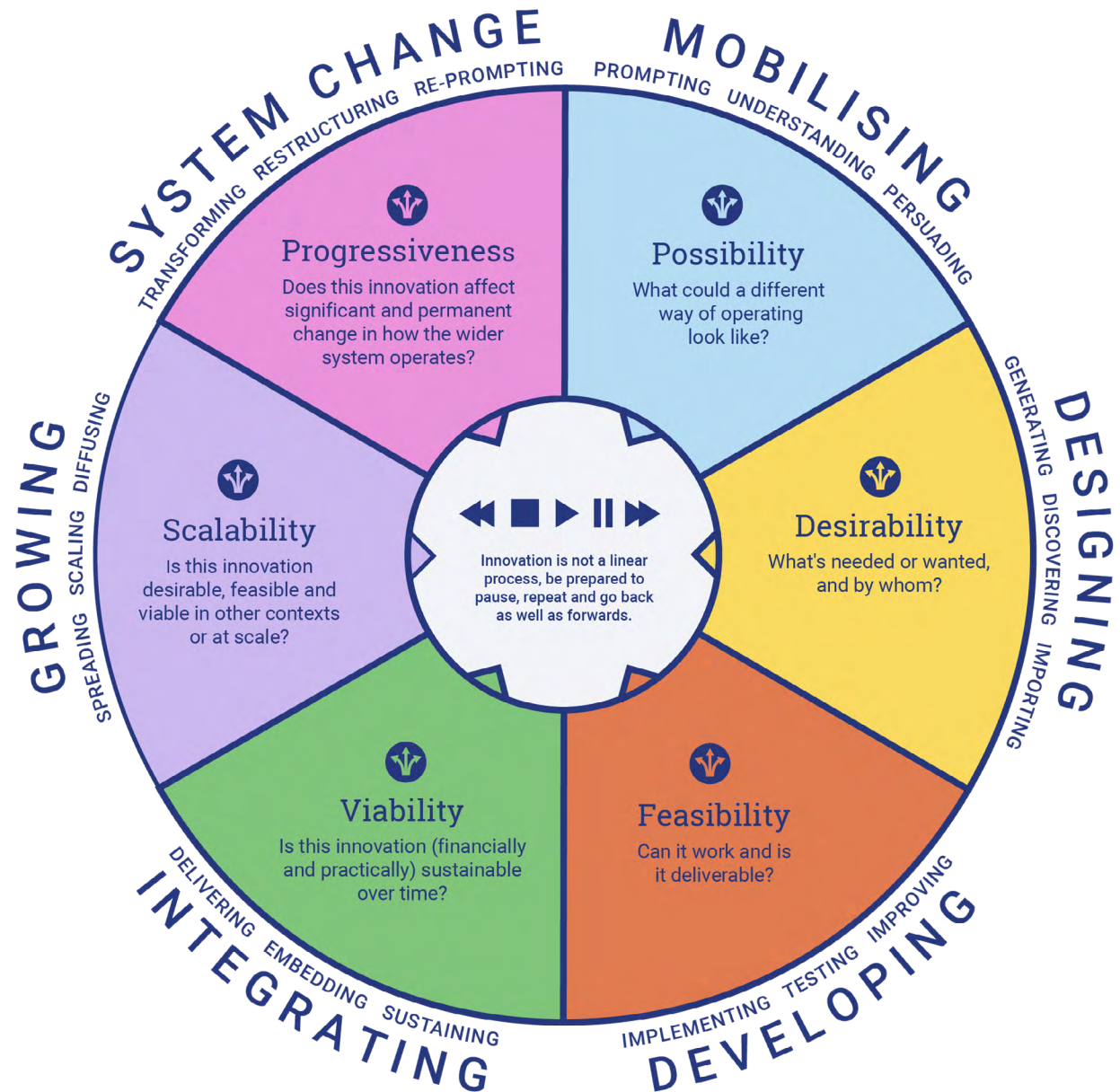


A guiding framework for the stages of innovation in children's social care

Introduction

The Innovate Project's review of innovation in social care found that despite there being a proliferation of models of the innovation process available in the innovation literature, none were readily transferable to children's social care settings because:

- i. Unlike economic or social innovations that operate outside of existing structures and force change in from the margins, innovation in children's social care (and other public service settings) by contrast operate within existing structures, highly regulated structures and need to force change from within.
- ii. Innovation models are highly context dependent and do not account for the specific characteristics of work in children's social care, especially issues of power, risk, and relationships.
- iii. Stages or activities detailed in existing models need adapting to manage the particular needs of children, young people



A new guiding framework drawn from the best of existing models

This framework has six stages – Mobilising, Designing, Developing, Integrating, Growing and System Change. They are drawn from existing models to produce a framework which best reflects and guides the processes of innovation that take place in children’s social care settings

Our framework is illustrated as a wheel because we want to stress that innovation is not a linear process and can unfold in unexpected and unpredictable ways in a service, organisation or system.

To respond to this challenge effectively, innovators need to be flexible and be prepared to pause the process, rewind to an earlier stage, or even stop the innovation where necessary.

Our framework does not provide a check list of tasks but instead sets out the focus and purpose of each stage, key questions for innovators and suggestions for how success could be measured.

WHO IS IT FOR?

The framework is designed to help policy makers and politicians, innovation designers, senior or strategic leaders, and operational managers, who:

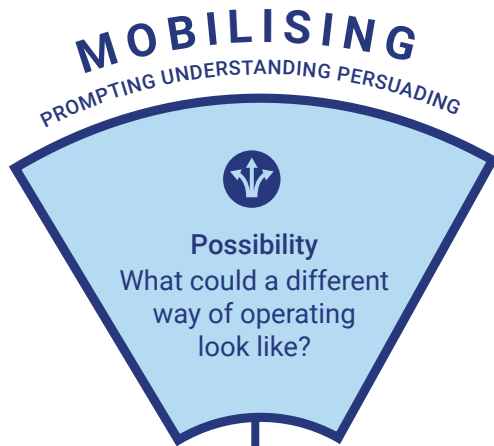
- Want to know a more about the stages or process of innovation in children’s social care;
- Want to put a structure around a complex and iterative process;
- Need to monitor or track the development of an innovation being implemented in a service, organisation or system or in different parts of a service, organisation or system;
- Would find it useful to have a common language to use with others involved in the innovation as the process takes place;
- Need help ‘de-risking’ innovation by breaking down complex processes into things that are manageable and can be learned about and tested in discrete ways.

HOW TO USE THE FRAMEWORK

We suggest bringing together professionals from different levels and parts of the service to reflect regularly on your planning, implementation and review processes.

Consider whether you have mechanisms in place to measure success at each stage. This will enable you to recognise when the innovation is near to or is moving from one stage to the next, whether it is appropriate to do so, and what adaptations need to be made to what you are going to reflect the new stage of the process.

Remember, it is unlikely that there will be a neat fit with the model as different parts of a service, organisation or system can be at different points in the innovation journey.



FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THIS STAGE

The initial diagnoses, evidence or triggers that generate discussion, stimulate ideas and highlight the need for innovation.

Responding to the push and pull factors that drive innovation, both positive and negative.

SUCCESS MEASURED BY...

Engagement measures that demonstrate awareness, understanding and acceptance of the issue and possibilities for change among key organisations, people or networks.



FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THIS STAGE

Identifying, understanding and defining the issues at hand and their interplay with the local context.

Developing proposals and ideas and understanding the range of approaches that might be suitable for the context.

Designing and/or sourcing potential new models to test.

SUCCESS MEASURED BY...

Short-term process measures that demonstrate work has been done to ensure the innovation is desirable and feasible and is likely to be well suited to the local context.



FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THIS STAGE

Piloting and testing new methods, tools, narratives and systems in a bounded environment to demonstrate proof of concept and learn what works.

May include trials. Improving and iterating to better fit local context and understand effectiveness and the wider service or system changes needed in the long term. Working version of the approach incubated.

SUCCESS MEASURED BY...

Short-term progress measures that demonstrate the innovation is feasible and has the potential to be viable under the right conditions.

INTEGRATING

DELIVERING EMBEDDING SUSTAINING



Viability

Is it (financially, practically) sustainable?

FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THIS STAGE

Understanding and building the capacity to implement the approach.

Implementing the model in its entirety as standard practice.

Integrating it into mainstream organisational context and service/ delivery processes. Continuing to gather data and evidence of effectiveness.

SUCCESS MEASURED BY...

Medium-term local impact apparent. Evidence that the service works efficiently, staff have self-efficacy, and system is feasible and viable in the medium term. Early indicators of improved service experiences and outcomes for end users.

GROWING

SPREADING SCALING DIFFUSING



Scalability

Is it desirable, feasible and viable at scale or in other contexts?

FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THIS STAGE

Scaling-up within local organisational or system context.

Transferability to other organisations/ services beyond local context open to testing.

Diffusing across national system to become a widespread and accepted standard.

SUCCESS MEASURED BY...

Long-term change embedded, clear evidence that outcome indicators are met, transferability to other systems achieved.

SYSTEM CHANGE

TRANSFORMING RESTRUCTURING RE-PROMPTING



Progressiveness

Does it effect significant and permanent change?

FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THIS STAGE

Permanent shifts across every part of the social care system, in relation to assumptions, cultures, paradigms and practices.

Changes to policy, practice guidance or regulatory framework may stimulate new prompts, ideas and designs.

SUCCESS MEASURED BY...

Permanent transformation of macro systems, with new approach embedded in policy, practice guidance or regulation. A step-change in positive outcomes for service user group.