

Project management

The overall project management within Coram-i will lie with Kevin Yong. Other members of the team include social work-qualified members of our Improvement Team, a solicitor and analysts.

Cost

The cost for this project is £12,500 excluding VAT, reasonable travel and accommodation. Significant delay due to local authority staff will incur extra costs.



Legal Deep Dive

Case review of care proceedings for young children



Contact details

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

Coram-i

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About the Legal Deep Dive

This document sets out the details of potential partnership work between your local authority (LA) and Coram-i in relation to a 'Legal Deep Dive' of selected cases. Based on an in-depth analysis and review of the processes and practices associated with a small sample of young children who have recently completed care proceedings in your local authority, the project aims to:

- Provide a quantitative analysis of features of care planning and court processes for young children.
- Develop hypotheses about reasons for blockages and delays.
- Highlight good practice and suggest areas of improvement.

The Legal Deep Dive will focus on issues relating to:

- Children's family background
- Pre-proceedings work (e.g. children's services involvement prior to Formal Action)
- Taking Formal Action (e.g. Legal planning/ Gateway meeting)
- Care proceedings (e.g. length, contested matters, transfer and Final Hearing)
- Parenting and expert assessments (e.g. quality of evidence, when commissioned)
- Assessments of relatives (e.g. concurrent assessment)
- Tracking of cases (e.g. unexplained delays, proactive action)

Where possible the review will compare council performance against relevant benchmarks.

Data gathering

The data gathering process requires the legal department within children's services to select ten cases of 'index children' according to certain criteria as specified by Coram-i's methodology (e.g. children must be under two years at the start of care proceedings and recently been granted Final Orders). The cases must also include contested and non-contested cases, and index children with older siblings.

Researchers from Coram-i will undertake separate interviews with the index child's local authority social worker (accompanied by their team manager), and with the LA solicitor who had the most involvement in the case.

The interview questions are detailed and include the collection of both quantitative data (tick-boxes) and narrative information about each case. Interviews take approximately 1½ - 2 hours each and we estimate that it will take four full days to conduct the interviews in both the legal department and within the social work team. We anticipate that the allocated social worker and lawyer will spend some time familiarising themselves with the interview questions prior to the interview to ensure everything can be covered within the tight timescale.

Timescales

The timescale will vary, but below is a general indication of the amount of time that will be taken to complete the Legal Deep Dive:

Task	Who is responsible	Time taken
Identification of cases and scheduling of interviews	Local authority	3 weeks
Interviewing	Coram-i / Local authority	3 weeks
Data inputting, analysis and report writing	Coram-i	4 weeks
Draft report to stakeholders	Coram-i	1 week
Meeting to discuss report and action plan	Local authority / Coram-i	

