



CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION

Improving life chances for children, young people and families

IMPOWER

Your Ambition. Delivered.

We support the public sector and systems to improve the life chances and futures of children, young people and families. By achieving the right outcomes, and ensuring care and support are aligned with needs, local areas can enhance financial sustainability and demonstrate better value for money.

IMPOWER
YOUR AMBITION. DELIVERED.

Through our partnerships with over 50 local authorities and our wider collaboration across the sector, we help identify and deliver outcomes-focused solutions to complex challenges.

Our unique EDGEWORK® approach and suite of digital tools enable us to better understand and respond to needs across systems. Our team brings together a rich mix of experience, including practitioners, commissioners, local government leaders, transformation experts and subject matter specialists.

We work with system leaders and frontline teams to deliver sustainable change across services supporting children, young people and families – from early intervention and prevention to statutory support and into adulthood.

Our work is guided by four core principles:



1

Adopting a systemic focus on the needs, strengths, aspirations and voices of children and young people.



2

Maximising impact through applied analytics and digital innovation.



3

Strengthening frontline practice across practitioners, commissioners and partners.



4

Taking a whole-system approach across service and organisational boundaries.



Children’s social care

IMPOWER works with local authorities, partners and people with lived experience to improve outcomes and life chances for children and improve the financial sustainability of services. This means working across all services and sectors supporting children and families and collaborating with a wide range of frontline teams. IMPOWER’s work is focused on three areas:

- 1 Keeping families together and preventing children from entering care
- 2 Providing children and families with the right care for their needs
- 3 Strengthening practice and quality across the system

Over **£20m**
in cost reduction within
children’s social care.

2,270
children and
young people’s needs
assessed and profiled
with Valuing Care.

Across FY2024-25

Case study: Cornwall Council

IMPOWER supported Cornwall Council to deliver their ‘Better Homes’ approach.’ The work focused on embedding new practice and commissioning approaches, increase the capacity, capability and confidence of the foster carer team, and deliver financial sustainability.



What we did

IMPOWER partnered with teams across Cornwall to embed needs and strengths-based approaches, including Valuing Care and family values. This included:

- Co-producing recruitment and retention initiatives with foster carers and social workers to build capacity, confidence and capability.
- Embedding Valuing Care’s Foster Carer Skills and Capacity Profile to inform matching, training and development.
- Profiling the needs and strengths of children and young people to identify opportunities for improved outcomes and more sustainable care.
- Establishing a multi-disciplinary panel to deliver opportunities and embed these new approaches across practice and commissioning.

Cornwall Council have now embedded the Valuing Care approach across all children and young people who are looked after and all foster carers.

Our impact:

28 children
supported to live
in better homes
for their needs

£10m+
achieved in
cost savings



The work with IMPOWER has been really impactful and has made a positive difference for many children and young people, while also delivering £10m in cost savings, showing that if you do the right things for children, you also save money.” Ben Davies, Service Director Children and Family Services, Cornwall Council

Education and inclusion

IMPOWER partners with local authorities and frontline professionals to understand what individual and group needs reveal about the support systems in place. We help map how prepared schools are to meet these needs and identify what is required to build their capacity. At the heart of our work is a commitment to ensuring every child is educated in an environment that suits their needs and supports the best possible future outcomes. Our work is focused in three areas:

- 1 Strengthening inclusion
- 2 Needs-led, strengths-based support for SEND
- 3 Travel to school

7,092 children and young people's Valuing SEND profiles completed.

Across FY2024-25

Case study: Dorset Council

Dorset Council faced a growing gap between the increasing complexity of children's SEND needs and the declining Setting Readiness of some primary schools. This led to delays in support, unnecessary statutory processes, and missed opportunities for early intervention – making school transitions harder for children, families and professionals. IMPOWER worked with Dorset Parent Carer Council and wider services to co-design an Early Years to Reception Next Steps Pathway, underpinned by the Valuing SEND (VSEND) approach.*

What we did

- 1 Practitioner workshops to define positive transitions and strengthen systemwide ambition for inclusion.

*From August 2024 to April 2025

- 2 Development of a shared narrative for each child (e.g. a child-centred journey) to focus planning on lived experience.
- 3 Analysis of VSEND profiles and setting readiness data helps create an evidence based view of needs and school capacity.
- 4 We have developed a visual tool know as a 'radar chart' which distils complex insights into a clear, impactful approach enabling rollout of an inclusive pathway focused on early identification, collaboration and needs-led planning.

The pathway has laid the foundation for a locality-based SEND model, focused on early identification, data-informed planning and sustainable support. Practitioners report **greater confidence, stronger collaboration** and **improved family engagement**.

Our impact: 192 VSEND profiles have been completed, identifying 76 school risers in September 2025 who potentially could avoid needing an EHCP if they are supported effectively in mainstream settings. If scaled across the cohort, this approach could deliver **£2.4m** cumulative cost avoidance.

“Our partnership with IMPOWER has been instrumental in helping us work towards the ambition we've set ourselves: to best support children with SEND across Dorset through more inclusive education. In particular, the meaningful impact of their work with us across the High Needs system, supported by the VSEND approach, has been central in building the confidence of parents and carers, along with nurseries, schools and other partners. We've been able to identify needs earlier, target locality-based support, and make more informed, inclusive and needs-led decisions.”
Paul Dempsey, Executive Director of People – Children, Dorset Council.

Preparing for adulthood

At IMPOWER, we bring local systems together to build a shared vision to better prepare young people for adulthood. Through evidence-based design and a ‘test and learn’ approach, we help systems understand where they currently are, set achievable ambitions aligned with local aspiration, and co-design practical, person-centred interventions that make an immediate difference. Our work is focused in three areas:

- 1 Supporting children living in care to plan for the future
- 2 Strengthening transition to adult social care
- 3 Embed strengths-based practice



INCLUSIVE AMBITION

A diagnostic review of Preparing for Adulthood in a borough council found that developing a joint ambition between children’s and adult social care, and moving towards a model that focuses on progression and encouraging independence, would result in a **£7m saving**.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Working with a large county council, utilising our Valuing Good Lives approach, reviews were completed on 45 young people aged 18-25. Opportunities to increase independence were identified in **45% of cases**.

Financial modelling suggested that if actioned and applied to all young people in the age group, this could result in a **£2.6m saving**.

DELIVERING CHANGE

Working with a unitary council, utilising our Valuing Care approach, 33 young people aged 16+ were identified and supported to increase independence and move towards support models that encourage progression. This has delivered a **£3m saving**.



Too often, we’re delivering poor outcomes for our older children and young adults as they move through our services. Even when there’s a straight transition from social care to social care, we struggle to get it right.” *Melanie Williams, Past President of ADASS*

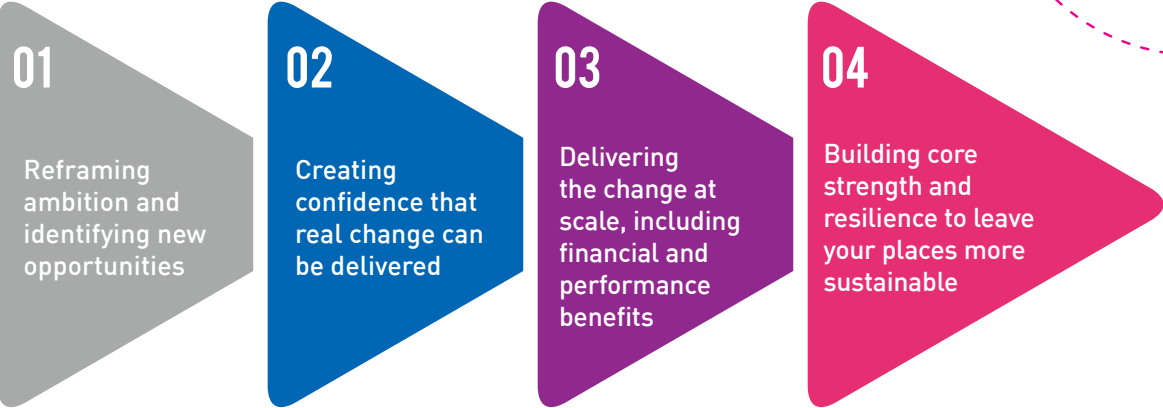
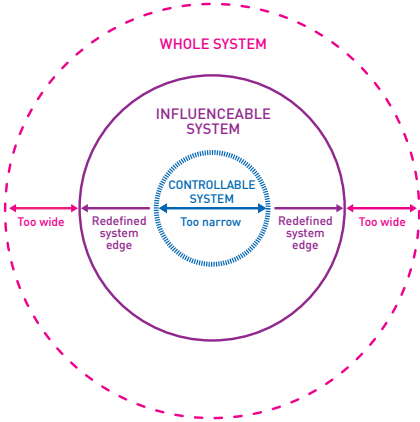
The IMPOWER difference



We’re different because we take a whole-system approach to deliver the sustainable change our clients want and need. We deliver financial improvement with heart, supporting health and public services to better spend public funds. IMPOWER’s broader purpose can be captured in a single sentence: helping our clients to **Deliver on Their Ambition**.

How we do it is unique, and just as important as what we do. We help our clients to set ambitious goals. With a unique mix of EDGEWORK® and our theory of change, influence, applied behavioural science, and our technology toolkit, our experienced team help empower practitioners and leaders to transform organisations, systems and the bottom line.

Our EDGEWORK® methodology and theory of change is a proven and different way to co-produce organisational change and shift mindsets. Setting the right ambitions and finding new value is the first step of our four-step process and key to sustainable change.



Technology, analytics and innovation

IMPOWER's Applied Analytics Team

We have a highly-skilled, cross-functional team of analysts, with significant experience of working across the public sector, who are deployed alongside both our client's workforce and their IMPOWER colleagues to deliver actionable insights and boost the quality of our delivery.

IMPOWER INDEX

The INDEX is a benchmarking tool with a difference: it grades councils and Integrated Care Systems on productivity by calculating outcomes achieved per pound invested. The tool uses publicly available data to evaluate performance through eight different lenses, including Children's Social Care, High Needs and SEND, and working age adults, allowing insights to be gained from the whole child's journey. For each lens, an overall view of outcomes per pound is provided to give an understanding of what can be achieved when compared to a local authority's statistical neighbours.



IMPOWER's analytics tools

We have developed a suite of advanced tools that support and enhance our delivery. These include:

The Listening Tool

Uses text-based data (such as case notes) and Natural Language Processing to identify prevalent themes and trends, providing insight into how services are operating and producing compelling evidence to drive change.

For example, the analysis of case notes can help services to better understand children and families they are working with by asking questions and drawing out thematic insights.

Journey Mining

Provides holistic and individual views about how people move through a process. Using logic-based analysis and artificial intelligence to convert all pathways to an easy-to-interrogate dataset and process map, it helps to understand lived experiences, the impact of this on outcomes, and identify opportunities for improvements.

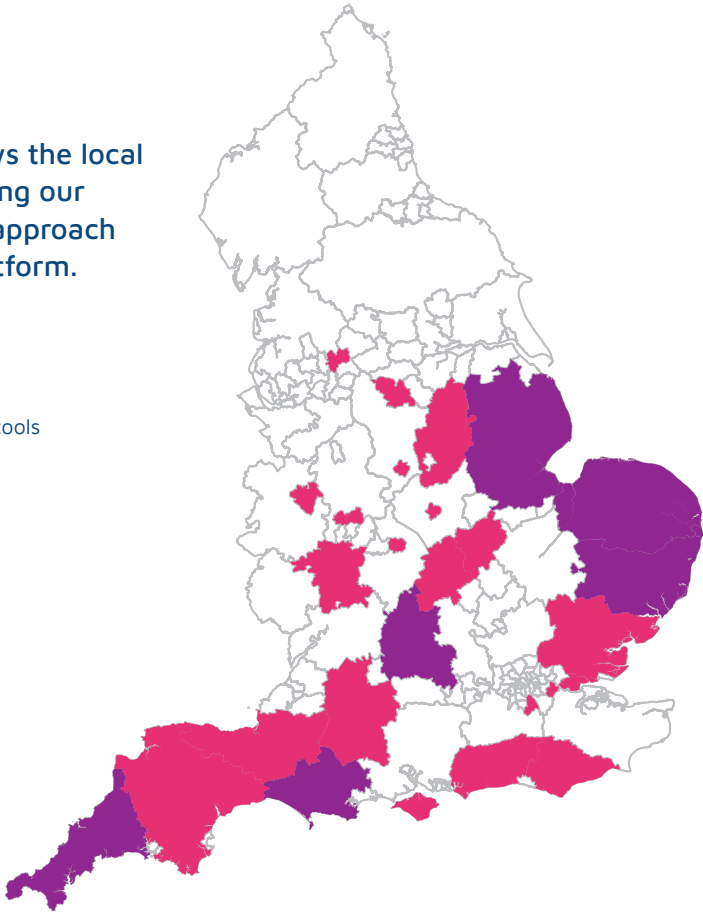
For example, Journey Mining can help understand the flow of cases moving between early help and statutory services to better understand why some families might 'bounce' between services.

Valuing Lives

Using data and technology is key to unlocking opportunities to improve outcomes and deliver value for money. Our suite of approaches and tools has been co-produced with young people, practitioners, parents and carers, and professionals and offers a methodology to better understand and respond to needs. We have developed a number of sector specific approaches that local areas can use to map need, plan appropriate support, and wrap around children, young people and families at an individual, cohort and population level.

This map shows the local authorities using our Valuing Lives approach and online platform.

- KEY
- Using 1 tool
 - Using 2 or more tools



Valuing Care

Valuing Care is an approach to practice and commissioning which gives focus to children’s needs, strengths and aspirations to improve their life chances. By better matching care to needs we’re able to significantly reduce the cost of care.

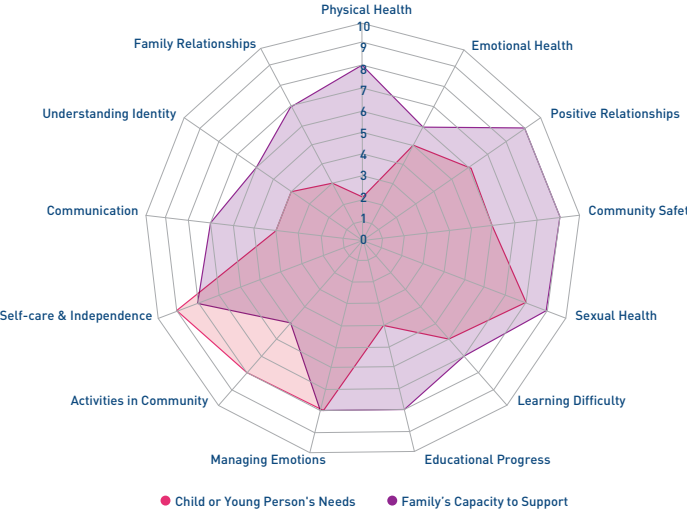
Valuing SEND

Valuing SEND takes the individual needs of a child or young person and maps it against their parent/carer’s confidence and the readiness of their setting to meet need. The data can also be aggregated to look at communities, counties and the national picture of need and readiness to meet need.

Valuing Good Lives

Valuing Good Lives helps bring greater clarity on the needs, strengths and goals for people accessing care and support and turn this into clear, actionable and strengths-based plans, including those entering adulthood and accessing care and support for the first time.

An example Valuing Care radar chart





To find out more about the impact we
could achieve together, please get in touch.

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