

## Appendix A

## Isos Partnership Report: Seven universal enablers of improvement in children's services

	Strategic approach	<ul> <li>Rigorous and forensic self-assessment of the organisation's strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>Honest and open response to any external feedback or inspections – focus on improvement, avoid denial</li> <li>Develop a vision &amp; strategic plan that is right for the organisation – not to "tick a box" or be seen to be acting</li> </ul>
2	Leadership & governance	<ul> <li>Maintain the right, stable, focused leadership at all levels – political, senior leaders &amp; middle managers</li> <li>Don't rush into a restructure – engage staff and develop structures that will best support improving practice</li> <li>Effective, professional governance – with key decision-makers from partner agencies to enable swift action</li> </ul>
3	Engaging & supporting the workforce	<ul> <li>Change the rhetoric – avoid the "blame game" and ensuing turbulence in staffing</li> <li>Articulate high expectations &amp; ambitious goals – provide a clear description of what good practice looks like</li> <li>Stabilise the workforce – and support frontline professionals through manageable caseloads and supervision</li> <li>Develop staff from within – through a pro-active recruitment and a robust staff development strategy</li> </ul>
4	Engaging partners	<ul> <li>Engage senior partners – for example, through well-run, effective LSCBs, to create a mandate to collaborate</li> <li>Align thresholds – to ensure consistent decision-making about referrals to the service</li> <li>Review practices through multi-agency audits – to drive improvements across all services and agencies</li> <li>Remain outward-facing – to avoid the risk of "group-think" or slipping into denial about performance</li> </ul>
5	Building the supporting apparatus	<ul> <li>Maintain a secure front door – to ensure the right cases are dealt with in the right way, at the right time</li> <li>Ensure the flow of cases reflects a child's journey – to ensure decisions are taken in the child's best interests</li> <li>Know the business – ensure regular flows of robust evidence that can be used by members, leaders &amp; staff</li> <li>Develop routines to track progress, audit quality, monitor improvements and hear from children themselves</li> </ul>
6	Fostering innovation	<ul> <li>Create a learning culture – one in which new ideas and initiatives to improve practice are openly encouraged</li> <li>Test and pilot new ideas carefully – adopt a measured approach to find out what works in the local context</li> <li>Evaluate rigorously – to learn from and respond to innovative practice – and know when to "hold your nerve"</li> </ul>
2	Judicious use of resources	<ul> <li>Ensure strategic &amp; financial planning are aligned – to enable and sustain short- and long-term improvements</li> <li>Invest where it is needed – deploy additional resources to unblock back-logs or develop critical new processes</li> <li>Sustain investment – avoid the risk of diverting resources elsewhere before improvement is embedded</li> <li>Focus on long-term priorities – investing in prevention services to reduce demand on other services</li> </ul>