Kidscape’s experience highlights the range of challenges that using external delivery partners can pose to organisations replicating with this model.

PACS has shown that using external delivery partners enables scale to be achieved, but this requires significant management if the intervention is to be delivered with a high level of fidelity whilst achieving ambitious delivery targets. Kidscape worked hard to adapt, refine and manualise the intervention, whilst supporting its delivery partners to develop the resources needed to manage, monitor and quality assure the delivery.

Another challenge came mid-point in the delivery schedule. A delivery partner in a replication area revealed it was no longer able to sustain delivery so an alternative replication site had to be identified and delivered in. This illustrates that despite due diligence and well developed relationships between partners, delivery through third parties always constitutes a business risk. Additionally, outcome monitoring proved difficult. Delivery partners only distributed questionnaires at the end of service provision to 29% of the 20% subsample of beneficiaries, 317 in total. (See ‘Outcomes achieved’.) This illustrates the risk that monitoring subsamples can pose, particularly in interventions delivered by third parties. Time must be invested in ensuring that there is common understanding of roles and expectations from the outset, and where possible, in ensuring that support is provided to partners in establishing a culture that recognises the value of regularly collecting and using outcomes data.

This range of issues reminds intervention owners that significant preparation pre-training and pre-delivery is vital, including contingency planning. Potential risks should be identified and addressed before delivery, as should ways of supporting and speeding-up implementation. Significant time must also be available to train delivery partners and to support them to provide a quality service to well targeted beneficiaries.

Five key ingredients of successful replication

The Realising Ambition consortium has mapped each project’s journey against our five key ingredients of successful replication. The key points from this follow below. Find out more about these ingredients.

A tightly defined and replicable service: Kidscape has worked hard to develop the infrastructure required for future replications of the intervention to be delivered with fidelity.

Kidscape has been delivering high quality training programmes and interventions for young people for over 32 years to safeguard children from exploitation, harming and bullying. Positive Assertive Confidence Skills (PACS) is a school-based, preventative intervention, identifying and targeting young people who exhibit aggressive or challenging behaviour with the potential to become perpetrators of bullying or criminal behaviour. In Realising Ambition, Kidscape developed a sub-contracting model to replicate and scale PACS. It supported three local authorities to establish delivery teams, providing training, resources and ongoing assistance for them to deliver the programme in schools.

Lessons learnt

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Funding awarded: £728,171
Duration of funding: 3 years
Number of beneficiaries: 5,540
Areas of delivery: Oxfordshire, Essex and Wolverhampton

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A tightly defined and replicable service: Kidscape has worked hard to develop the infrastructure required for future replications of the intervention to be delivered with fidelity.
A service that is effectively and faithfully delivered to those that need it: The organisation understands the mechanisms and processes that help schools to identify which young people are suited to the intervention. It also has a realistic understanding of the scale of outcomes that can be achieved with PACS. Evidence is used to learn and adapt, as required: Kidscape has frequently used learning from this replication to adapt its processes and infrastructure that support delivery in schools, including developing its training programme and the focus of its quality assurance visits. There is confidence that outcomes have improved: Whilst overall only 5% of beneficiaries (262) completed both a pre and post-intervention questionnaire, the limited data they did collect does indicate that PACS has had a positive impact on young people’s emotional well-being and coping skills, generally keeping them stable. The service is cost-beneficial and sustainable: It has come to be a core part of Kidscape’s offer and has become a licence-based delivery model in order to reduce costs.

Outcomes for beneficiaries

Each organisation has sought to monitor the outcomes of children and young people prior to and after service delivery. Find out more about outcome measurement in Realising Ambition.

Kidscape and its partners delivered PACS to 5,540 young people across Oxfordshire, Essex and Wolverhampton. Due to the high number of intervention recipients, it was decided that only a 20% subsample (1,108 young people) could be randomly selected to complete questionnaires from the Realising Ambition Outcomes Framework. Questionnaires were administered to 64% of this subsample of young people at the outset of service provision, and to just 29% at the end of service provision. These proportions were larger for Kidscape’s own in-house questionnaires, which were 41% and 36% of all intervention recipients respectively.

Analysis of these outcomes indicate a statistically significant reduction in emotional difficulties scores, with 71% of young people’s emotional well-being remaining stable or having improved over the course of the intervention. These improvements did not translate into threshold (risk category) changes, however, which remained stable.

Improvements in recipients’ coping skills were also identified in the analysis, with 43% of young people indicating they would use positive coping strategies such as walking away or counting to 10 by the end of the intervention, compared to just 9% who indicated they would use negative coping strategies such as hitting.

Although the changes in outcomes are relatively slight and overall generally stable, such stability in emotional well-being and behaviour is both desirable and realistic for less intensive prevention interventions such as PACS.

What next

The Kidscape team specifically responsible for the replication of the intervention has been dissolved, as have the teams that delivered the intervention in the local authority areas. However, Kidscape has developed a licence-based delivery model for PACS that can be purchased by schools, and the programme remains in Kidscape’s core offer post-Realising Ambition.