Children's Information

# *Ethical and Effective Information Use Practice Framework:*

# *Learning from the Children's Information Project*

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**CSCDUG webinar:** Children's Social Care - Policy Reforms and Uses of Data

# How the Framework Came About

- It started from two core principles: information use must be effective, in meeting needs and achieving outcomes, and ethical, in being proportionate, transparent and respectful of rights.
- The team began with five founding practices: voice, data, ethics, use and learning.
- These evolved through hands-on, co-productive work with four sites (local authorities) and consultation with a wider Learning Network of 20 local authorities.

**An iterative process**

*The Framework was not fixed in advance. It was refined through repeated cycles of:*



# Emerging Learning

**Narrow strategic view.** Statutory categories, thresholds, process measures and performance reporting can dominate.

**Rich insight is fragmented.** Context held in conversations, case records and professional judgement is difficult to combine and use.

**Purpose can be unclear.** Collection alone does not show whether information improves decisions, services or outcomes.

**The opportunity.** Treat information use as a defined field of practice, not only a technical or data-management task.

*The information-use problem is not a shortage of data.*

# Four approaches put purpose at the centre




**BEST USE OF INFORMATION**

Existing operational, local and national evidence is connected and used well.

**INTEGRATING VOICE**

Children, young people and families influence what is collected, how it is understood and what follows.

**UNDERSTANDING NEEDS**

Information reveals the nature, distribution and changing context of need.

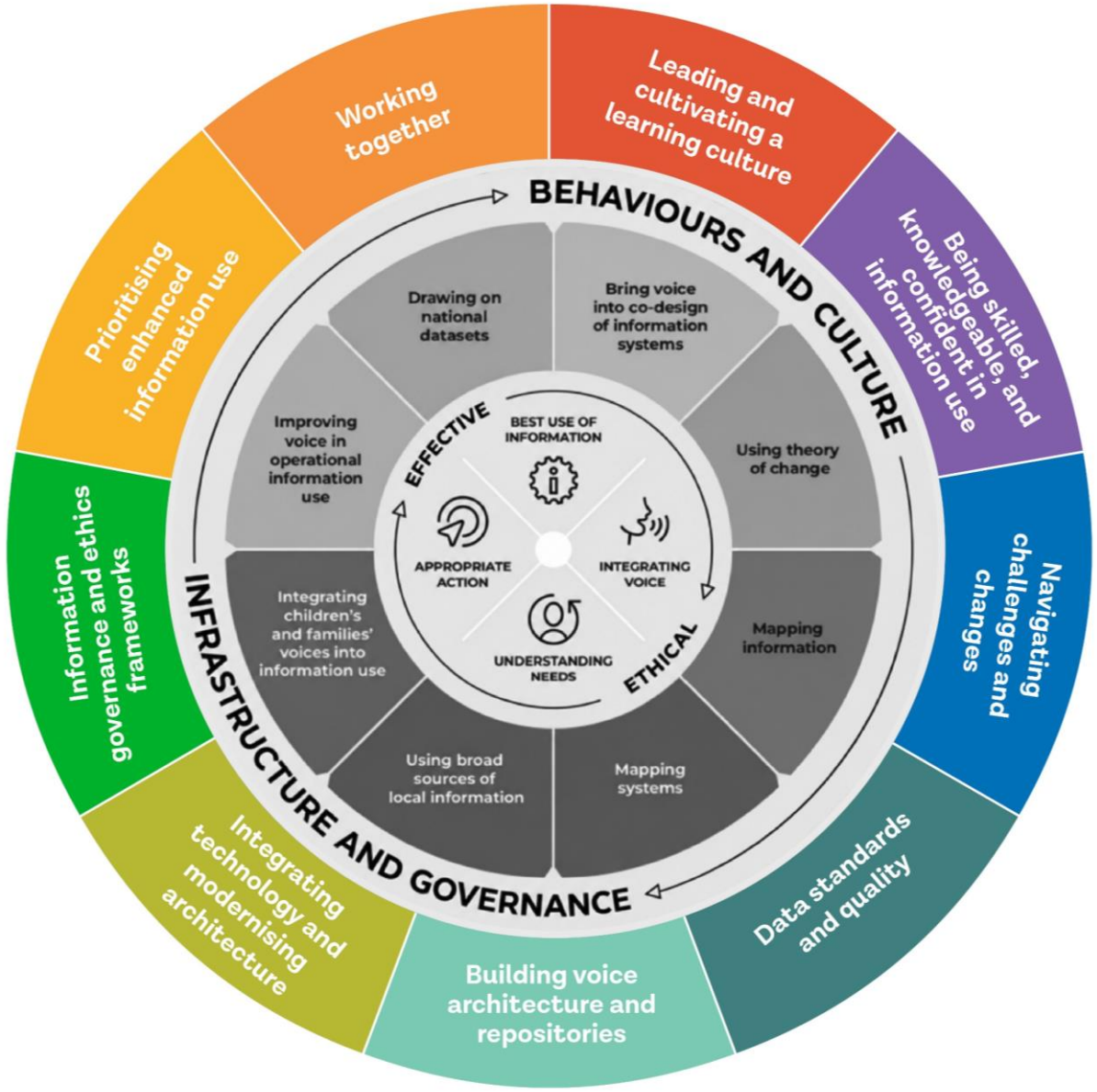
**APPROPRIATE ACTION**

Information leads to decisions, reflection, adaptation and improved outcomes.

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# Why the Conditions for Change Matter

## Leadership without commitment

Without active leadership support, information use is treated as a minor technical task and sidelined under pressure. Without a shared vision, different parts of the system chase their own idea of success, and without protected resources, good intentions stay vulnerable to everyday demands.

## Culture without trust or safety

When leaders respond to data errors with blame, practitioners hide mistakes or turn to unofficial workarounds instead of the formal system. Data becomes a compliance stick rather than a tool for reflection, and quieter voices struggle to be heard.

## Systems that do not fit practice

When formal systems don't adapt, workarounds and shadow systems emerge, informal spreadsheets and parallel records that fragment the picture. Poor interoperability and mismatched data mean vital safety information can be missed altogether.

## Confidence and skills left unsupported

Even when sharing information is vital to a child's safety, a lack of confidence can stand in the way; serious case reviews repeatedly find that information goes unshared. Rich family stories get lost when practitioners lack the skills to use data well.

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## *A Toolkit for Ethical and Effective Use of Children's Information*

***Digital toolkit that brings together guidance and tools:***

*Definitions*

*Practical tools*

*Examples*