

## Using Systems Thinking in Public Policy: The experience of the Munro Review of child protection

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This paper gives an account of how systems thinking was used in 'the Munro Review', a high-profile examination of child protection activities in England, conducted for the Department for Education. The activities constituting 'child protection' and the circumstances that led to the Munro Review are outlined. Two examples of the use of CLDs are then considered: the visualisation of how a 'compliance culture' had grown up and, via group model building, the creation of a large, complex CLD of current operations. The paper continues by describing how this work was then used to give structure to the range of issues the Review had to address, and used as an organising framework for the final recommendations. The paper closes with an account of some significant steps that have been taken so far to create a child protection system with the critically reflective properties of a learning organisation, and a reflection on how the use of systems thinking helped bring this about.

**David C Lane** is Professor of Business Informatics at Henley Business School. He specialises in strategic analysis using system dynamics and systems thinking. He works interactively with groups of senior managers to help them express their ideas in the form of a system dynamics-based simulation model. The model and the facilitated process help managers to think through the long-term policies of their organisation.

His theoretical work concerns the contribution that system dynamics can make to the formalisation of certain concepts arising in social theory. His practical interests include: healthcare management; the creation of marketing strategies for cinema films, child protection and the dynamics of project management.

David Lane has mathematics degrees from Bristol and Oxford Universities and a Doctorate in mathematical modelling also from Oxford. He was a consultant in Shell International and a marketing manager in Shell UK. Before joining Henley he was a faculty member at City University Business School and then London School of Economics and Political Science. He has consulting and executive education experience in a wide range of commercial and public sector/government organisations.

In 2005 David Lane received an LSE award for outstanding performance and innovation in teaching and in 2008 he received a student-nominated LSE Students' Union Teaching Excellence Award.

In 2004 he was elected Fellow of the Operational Research Society for "outstanding contributions to the theory and practice of OR", and in 2007 was awarded the System Dynamics Society's Jay Wright Forrester Award "for the best contribution to the field of system dynamics in the preceding five years". In 2010 he was appointed as an Advisor to the Munro Review of Child Protection for the Department for Education. In 2011 David Lane served as President of the System Dynamics Society. In 2014 he received the Operational Research Society's President's Medal for the application of systems modelling approaches in the child protection sector.