



NATIONAL
LOTTERY FUNDED

CHANGING SYSTEMS FOR PEOPLE WITH MULTIPLE AND COMPLEX NEEDS

EVALUATION OF FULFILLING LIVES NEWCASTLE AND GATESHEAD 2017

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tyneside women's health



**CHANGING
LIVES**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Fulfilling Lives¹ is an eight-year programme funded by the Big Lottery aimed at people with multiple and complex needs - individuals who are likely to experience at least three of the following: homelessness, reoffending, problematic substance misuse and mental health problems. One of the intentions of the programme is to change systems for people with multiple and complex needs.

Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead is delivered by a Core Partnership led by Changing Lives in partnership with Mental Health Concern and Oasis Aquila Housing. Employing organisations Advocacy Centre North, Age UK, Mental Health Concern, Oasis Aquila Housing, Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company, Tyneside & Northumberland Mind, and Tyneside Women's Health are supported by Blue Stone Consortium. They employ Service Navigators who support individual clients to navigate systems. Three System Brokers lead on priority areas of systems change: workforce development, transitions and access to mental health services. The programme is supported by Experts by Experience, Operational and Strategic Reference Groups, and by a Research and Evaluation team. The programme commenced in 2014, and will end in 2022.

Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead ('the programme') asked the New Economics Foundation to conduct research into the effectiveness of the programme's overall approach to systems change. Group discussions and interviews were conducted with 48 people involved in the programme, including staff, core partners, Strategic and Operational Group members and employing organisations. This research will help to inform the future direction of the programme as it moves into its fourth year.

KEY FINDINGS

Changes have been successfully made in several parts of the system, including in identified priority areas. Key changes include:

- The implementation of Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) and multiple and complex needs training in key services working with people with multiple and complex needs is beginning to change working cultures and benefit clients.

- Peer research conducted by the programme was embedded in the recommendations of the Gateshead Homelessness and Multiple and Complex Needs: Health Needs Assessment.
- Fulfilling Lives' Experts by Experience Network has been part of co-producing films and scenarios and delivering RESPOND Training, a multi-agency simulation training package for mental health crisis care professionals. 18 initial pilot training sessions for "Blue Light" responders have been completed and the package has since been approved for roll out to Cumbria and North Yorkshire.
- A Dual Needs Strategy for Gateshead has been developed with Public Health Gateshead, with the intention of overcoming a long-term system barrier of access to mental health services for those with a dual diagnosis.
- The Department for Work and Pensions has made a single point of contact available for people with multiple and complex needs who are claiming Universal Credit, on a trial basis, and the programme is researching the impact of Universal Credit on this group of people.
- Core partner Oasis Aquila has changed its criteria for dispersed supported housing, with 16 units now available for people with multiple and complex needs.
- Employing organisations are reported to be working more flexibly and collaboratively.

The programme is successfully creating some of the pre-conditions of systems change (as identified in research by Collaborate). For example, it has developed trusted partnerships with many throughout the system; is practicing distributed leadership; and is creating an environment in which it is 'safe to fail'. Issues are increasingly acknowledged as systemic and requiring collaboration by partners involved in the programme.

The programme has developed a research and evaluation strategy that has enabled it to identify four key areas of focus for its systems change work: Access to mental health services, gender specific services, transitional periods (e.g. institutional discharge), and workforce development.

Several research participants felt that the programme has successfully 'diagnosed the system', although others felt there was more work to do around this. Most participants believed the programme now needs to focus on moving towards action for change. Ideas for taking this forward included: establishing task and finish groups; adopting solutions focused practice that enables individuals to identify where

they have the power to influence the system, including changing their own practice; and refocusing the Service Navigator role so that it includes an element of system brokerage.

Research participants believed that the programme now needs to establish itself more fully as a systems change (rather than service delivery) programme, and to communicate to both project partners and broader external stakeholders what systems change means, and how the programme hopes to achieve this.

There are a number of actual and potential routes to change through the programme. Key routes include:

- Work led by the System Brokers.
- Work led or influenced by the Service Navigators.
- Working groups/task and finish groups.
- Individuals initiating change in their own organisation's practice (for example supported by peer research or influenced by other types of involvement).
- The Experts by Experience Network.

The dedicated System Broker role is vital in driving change. They can work on priority areas of change, with partners who might not otherwise come into close contact with the programme, but have a willingness/openness to change and are motivated in part by the resource and support the System Brokers bring.

The programme has developed and benefits from strong partnerships and collaborative working, including supportive Strategic and Operational Groups, employing organisations and core partners, as well as other partners working on specific areas of systems change.

There are several examples of individuals being influenced by their involvement in the programme to change their own organisation's practice. This is most commonly reported by members of the Strategic Group and Employing Organisations. Not all of those involved in the programme have considered how they might change their own practice.

The Experts by Experience Network has undertaken a number of successful systems change activities, for example through its involvement in Respond training, the Gateshead Health Needs Assessment, and involvement in a group looking at Human Resources practice around recruiting, employing and providing a sufficient support to retain people with lived experience in employment.

However, the voices of those with lived experience could be more strongly represented in the programme. The Experts by Experience Network is currently being reviewed by the programme in recognition of this. Beneficiary impact over

systems change programmes/organisations has been identified by Collaborate as a pre-condition of system change, and there is scope for the network to play a more central role in the systems change process.

Evidence is seen to be a strength of the programme, and a key route to demonstrating the need for change as well as evidencing the effectiveness of new practice.

The programme is beginning to achieve change at scale through workforce development training in several parts of the system; seeing PIE pilots being adopted into practice by partner services; and by influencing changes in language, attitudes and working culture in parts of the system.

Sustained systems change is likely to be achieved primarily by:

- 1. Creating structures and process that embed the changes made to system components as a result of the programme.** This might include ensuring that pilots are adopted into practice, new ways of doing things are formalised in policy and service specifications, and new services/successful approaches are commissioned/funded.
- 2. Creating the conditions within a system that mean it can continue to change in response to emerging systemic issues**, even after the programme is no longer in place to lead change. This might include embedding reflective practice and co-production across the system; creating lasting connections between parts of the system; and influencing an understanding of the systems change approach within the system.

CONCLUSIONS

Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead is utilising an effective range of approaches to achieving systems change: each of the four main routes to change identified is an important element of its approach. The programme and its partners have achieved some significant early systems changes. It is successfully cultivating many of the pre-conditions of systems change, putting it in a strong position to influence further changes over time.

Now the programme should turn its attention to establishing itself more fully as a systems change (rather than service delivery) programme and communicating what this means; strengthening the expert by experience voice in its work; and moving from the identification of systemic issues towards action and the development of new ways of doing things.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

The following recommendations are based on the views presented by those interviewed, and on an analysis of the research evidence collected in the light of selected existing systems change literature. It is recommended that these are used as a starting point for discussion among programme stakeholders, for gaining deeper understanding of the issues, and for establishing agreed action.

A strong, clear, systems change focus

More strongly establish the programme as a systems change programme and spread understanding of what systems change is. This includes communicating about what systems change is, the different levels of the system, and how systems change can be achieved. This means moving away from understandings of the programme as a service delivery organisation; and ensuring that all those involved understand what systems change means.

Develop a coherent definition of systems change and the programme's role and aspirations in relation to this that can be used by all those involved in the programme to communicate to external stakeholders. This was requested by several different groups in the research.

Celebrate and communicate the systems changes made: Stakeholders were not always aware of the systems changes that the project had influenced. Celebrating the changes that have been made is likely to motivate and inspire further change, aid understanding of what 'systems change' means, and more strongly establish the programme as a systems change programme.

Clarify the different levels of the system at which systems change can take place, and use this as a tool to identify where change is needed. This has been done in some forums, but not yet been spread widely across the programme. The diagram on p.16 of this report (adapted from a model by Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM)) describes one way of understanding levels of change.

Review the extent to which the programme is influencing change at all levels from individual practice, to service delivery, to commissioning (as outlined in the above diagram). This includes clarifying with partners the extent to which the programme intends to influence the national system; partners were not all clear about this.

Move away from ‘diagnosing the system’ (with a focus on identifying system barriers and blockages) towards action for change. This could include existing partners (such as the Strategic and Operational Groups) considering how they could change their own practice and influence broader change, and taking more active ownership of/playing more active roles in strands of work. Ideas for this included establishing targeted working groups or task and finish groups, and introducing solutions focused practice.

Adopt a more asset-based approach that focuses on identifying and drawing on assets at all levels of the system. At present the programme primarily focuses on identifying systems barriers and blockages and solutions to these (or at least describes its work in these terms).



Roles and relationships

Ensure the Experts by Experience Network is more closely involved in the systems change process, building on successful systems change activities already undertaken by the group. A more central role could include a direct voice in discussions around understanding the problem, generating ideas for change, and designing new ways of working; and co-delivering work such as training or research.

Review the Service Navigator role: Several different groups of research participants suggested exploring possibilities for the Navigator role to become more systems-change focused, for example by including brokerage and support for services to change their own ways of doing things. This could perhaps focus on change at the individual service level, whilst System Brokers continued with a broader focus across the service delivery, commissioning and policy levels of systems change.

Retain the System Broker function: Initial programme plans saw the number of System Brokers being reduced from three to one in the fourth year of the programme. This research suggests that the dedicated System Broker role fulfils an important function of systems change leadership. The capacity of the Brokers to convene partnerships, and to support innovative practice, has motivated partners to become involved with the programme and been an important route to change. It is recommended that any changes to the model of systems change delivery ensures that these functions are retained.

Strengthen links between different stakeholder groups: Several participant groups said that they did not fully understand the roles of other groups involved in the



programme, and how this fit with their own role. Ideas raised by participants included Strategic Group representation on the Operational Group, and vice versa.

Reflect on power dynamics in the programme and the system: Power dynamics were mentioned by very few research participants despite being central to systems change theory. Theoretical issues include the rebalancing of power between professionals and those with lived experience; the need to give up some degree of power in order to collaborate for systems change; and the use of power to set the boundaries or limit the scope of systems change activities. It could be helpful for programme staff and partners to have the opportunity to learn about and reflect on power dynamics in their work, for example through training.

Learning and evidence

Determine an approach to evaluating the systems changes influenced by the programme over its final five years, building on the current Research and Evaluation Strategy: The programme has conducted some useful and influential evaluations of some of its systems change activities (such as the pilot of PIE). This current research shows that the process of systems change is complex and unpredictable, and that, because systems change can only happen in partnership, attributing change to the programme is not straightforward. Capturing the changes influenced by the programme is important for the programme to learn, understand what works in systems change, and develop its approach. It is recommended that the programme develops a primarily qualitative approach to evaluating systems change over its final five years. This should include assessing the difference any systems changes have made for people currently experiencing multiple and complex needs.



INTRODUCTION

Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead ('the programme') asked the New Economics Foundation to conduct research into the effectiveness of the programme's overall approach to systems change. This research will help to inform the future direction of the programme as it moves into its fourth year.

This builds on previous research for the programme including:

- A literature review conducted in 2014 that summarised selected literature relating to systems change for people with multiple and complex needs.
- Research conducted in June 2016 exploring the systems changes being made by the programme in relation to local connection, access to benefits, and supporting people with no recourse to public funds.

ABOUT FULFILLING LIVES NEWCASTLE AND GATESHEAD

Background

Fulfilling Lives² is an eight-year programme funded by the Big Lottery aimed at people with multiple needs - individuals who are likely to experience at least three of the following: homelessness, reoffending, problematic substance misuse and mental ill health. The programme aims to bring different organisations and services together to offer people one co-ordinated support service that meets all their needs. One of the intentions of the programme is to change systems for people with multiple needs.

The programme commenced in 2014, and will end in 2022.

The Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling Lives programme (hereafter referred to as 'the programme') is being delivered by a **Core Partnership** led by Changing Lives in partnership with Mental Health Concern and Oasis Aquila Housing.

A wider partnership of organisations employ the programme's Service Navigators.

Employing Organisations are Advocacy Centre North, Age UK, Mental Health Concern, Oasis Aquila Housing Tyneside & Northumberland Mind, and Tyneside Women's Health.

A separate short-term pilot with Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) as an employing organisation is due to end on 31 August 2017, and an evaluation will assess the success of this. Blue Stone Consortium manages the delivery contract

Employing Organisations have with Fulfilling Lives.

The **Service Navigators** support individual clients to navigate systems. The programme's information system enables them to log system issues and barriers encountered by their clients, and link these to the programme's priority systems change areas (see below), providing a source of evidence that the System Brokers and others can compile to illustrate and examine system problems.

The **System Brokers** identify themes and priorities in system barriers based on evidence from both the Service Navigators and the wider policy picture, and lead on individual areas of systems change, collaborating, influencing and supporting innovative practice and change.

The programme has established **Experts by Experience, and Operational and Strategic Reference Groups**. The purpose of these groups is to understand and change the way services respond, are commissioned and are delivered, based on evidence of the issues encountered by people with multiple and complex needs.

The programme is managed by the **Programme Manager**, and supported by a **Research and Evaluation Team** that provides evidence and evaluations, and a **Communications Team** who support the creation and communication of key messages.

Systems change priority areas

At the end of its second year, the programme identified four areas on which to focus its system change efforts, through its Research and Evaluation Strategy:

- Workforce development, including psychologically informed environments (PIE), multiple and complex needs training, and reflective practice.
- Access to secondary mental health services for people with multiple and complex needs.
- Transitions, including prison release, hospital discharge, access to welfare benefits, and moving towards independent living.
- Gender specific services.

Each of the three System Brokers leads on one of the first three priority areas, whilst work around gender specific services is still in development supported predominantly by the Research and Evaluation team.

Context

Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead is taking place at a time of significant changes within the system. In particular, participants mentioned:



- Increased funding cuts to local and national services, both statutory and voluntary. Participants in this research believed that this brought both challenges to the programme, for example around stakeholders' capacity to engage, and opportunities in that stakeholders were looking for new ways to work more effectively within smaller budgets.
- Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead is one of several national programmes that foreground the importance of systems change. This includes work nationally by Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) and Lankelly Chase.

ABOUT THIS RESEARCH

Research questions

This research aimed to answer the following research questions.

1. How effective is the programme's approach to achieving systems change?

- What evidence is there about the extent of success of the programme in achieving systems change, and what does this show?
- Where changes to the system have occurred, how has this happened?
- What have those involved learned so far about what systems change means and entails, and what it might look like in practice?
- What are the views of those involved in delivering the programme about the effectiveness of the programme's approach to achieving systems change?
- To what extent has the programme influenced the practice of those involved (e.g. employing organisations, Strategic Group and Operational Group members), and the practice and policy of their organisations?
- How effectively is the programme utilising identified 'enablers' of systems change? (Issues to be explored include collaboration, modelling, and sharing learning and good practice).
- What barriers to systems change is the programme experiencing, and how can it overcome these? (Issues to be explored include power and vested interests).

2. How should the programme develop over its remaining years, in order to best achieve sustained systems change?

- What are the key actual and potential routes to systems change for the programme, and how do those involved in the programme think that these can best be utilised?

- What are the roles of those involved in the programme (e.g. Strategic Group, Operational Group, Experts by Experience, Core Partners, employing organisations, System Brokers, Service Navigators, Research and Evaluation and Communications team) in achieving systems change, and how could these be developed?
- What can be learnt from the literature review previously conducted and the views of those involved in delivering the programme about (i) how the programme can more effectively influence systems change; and (ii) how the programme can achieve a sustained impact after it comes to an end?
- How can the programme best ensure it is in a position to make recommendations for an effective system for people with multiple and complex needs when it comes to an end?

Methodology

A rapid appraisal approach was undertaken, gathering information from a range of people involved in the programme and reporting their views, in order to quickly provide information that can be used for decision-making about the future development of the programme.

The following methods were used:



1. A review of selected programme documents relating to systems change.
2. Group discussions and interviews were conducted with 48 people¹ involved in the programme.

Groups discussions were conducted with the:

- Service Navigators (8 people)
- System Brokers (3 people)
- Employing Organisations Forum (4 people)
- Operational Group (24 people)
- Strategic Group (12 people)
- Core Partnership (3 people)

One to one interviews were conducted with the Experts by Experience Co-ordinator, two System Brokers, the (now former) Research and Evaluation Lead and the Programme Manager.

¹ Some people attended more than one discussion.



SYSTEMS CHANGE THEORY

Systems thinking is a way of understanding problems and how they can be solved.

Systems thinking says that:

- The systems that people interact with can cause problems, even when they are designed to help people.
- We can solve problems by seeking to change these systems.

This research draws on several conceptual frameworks from the systems change literature in its analysis. These frameworks have been helpful in identifying the strengths of Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead, and identifying areas where there is potential for Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead to further develop. These are outlined in this section.

Components of the system

In *Thinking in Systems*, her classic work on systems change, Meadows identifies three system attributes: elements, interconnections, and purpose.³

- **Elements:** both tangible (people, physical resources, buildings etc.) and intangible (cultures, values etc.).
- **Interconnections:** the relationships that hold the elements together, such as acceptance criteria, referrals, budgets and money flows, knowledge and information etc.
- **Purpose:** the purpose of the system rather than the stated purpose of people within the system. This can be 'deduced from [system] behaviour, not from rhetoric or stated goals'. This almost always includes the purpose of perpetuating itself as a system, which can make change difficult.

Burns⁴ describes two subsequent waves of systems theory that place an additional emphasis on:

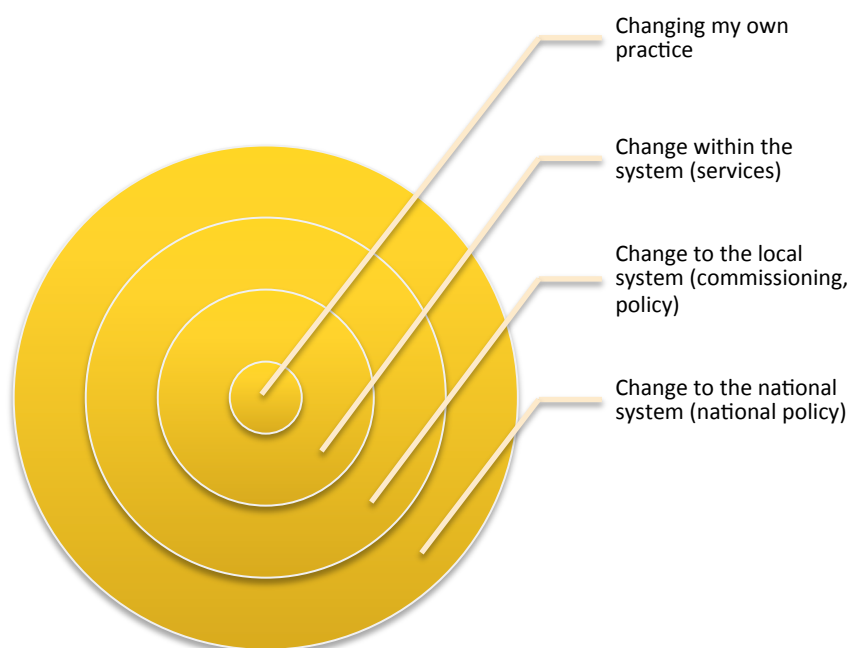
- **Meanings:** the ideas, concepts and values ascribed to the world by different actors in the system.
- **Power:** including the way in which we construct boundaries around issues.



Levels of systems change for those who wish to change the system

The following diagram, adapted from a model by Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM), captures some of the different levels of systems change that were discussed by participants in this research.

Levels of systems change for those who wish to change the system



The process of achieving systems change: Six Steps to Significant Change

Forum for the Future's six steps model sets out a process for achieving significant change.

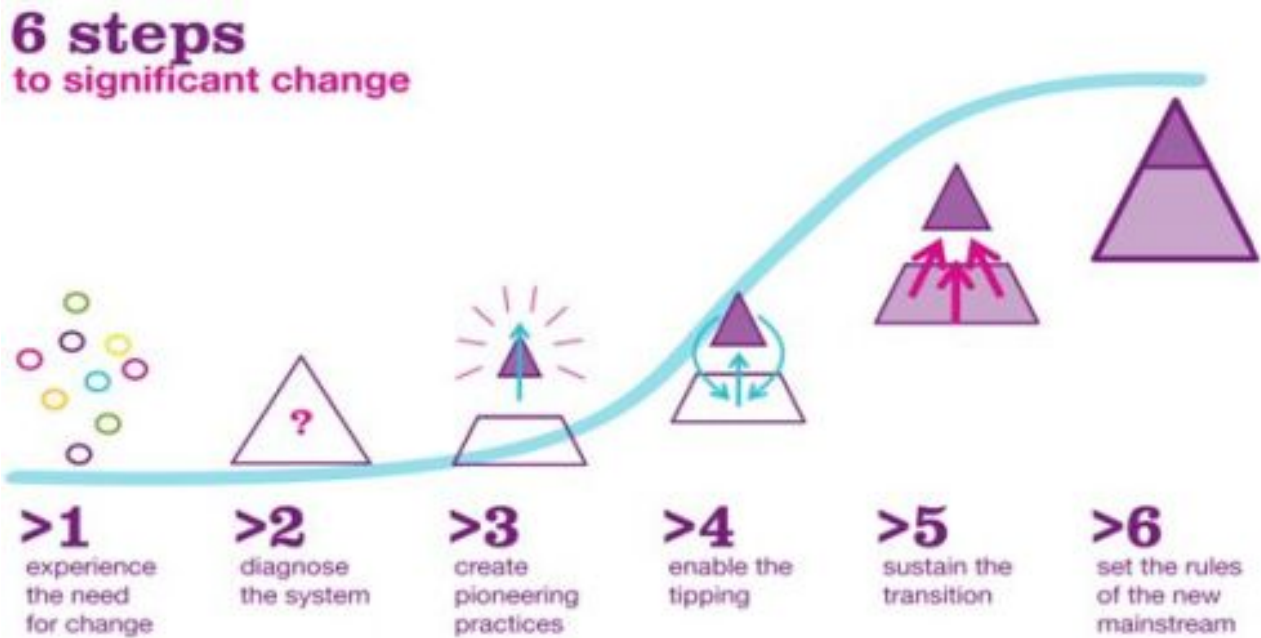


Image from Forum for the Future⁵



Nine preconditions for systems change

Collaborate's nine preconditions for systems change identify the necessary vision and behaviours to begin to achieve systems change.



Image from Collaborate⁶



SYSTEMS CHANGE OUTCOMES

This section outlines some of the systems change outcomes Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead has influenced. This is not an exhaustive record of systems change achieved by the programme, but gives examples that participants in the research described.

OUTCOMES OF THE SYSTEM BROKER-LED WORK

Workforce development and psychologically informed environments (PIE)

This area of work covers psychologically informed environments (PIE), reflective practice and complex needs training. Guidance explains that a psychologically informed environment ‘takes into account the psychological makeup – the thinking, emotions, personalities and past experience - of its participants in the way that it operates.’⁷ It can ‘help staff work more effectively with people who have complex and multiple needs.’⁸

Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead has:

- Piloted a PIE approach in three services run by core partner organisations, and conducted and published an evaluation evidencing its effectiveness.
- Delivered ‘train the trainer’ sessions on PIE for 10 frontline organisations which is due to be evaluated.
- Partnered with the core partner organisations to deliver complex needs training both internally and to external partners.
- Produced a series of films made with Experts by Experience Members using both 1-2-1 interviews and group discussions: all are freely available on youtube.

Systems change outcomes include:

- All core partner organisations said that they had begun to implement a psychologically informed approach in some or all of their services. They report that the PIE training has increased capacity and resilience in staff, and benefited clients as a result.
- The System Broker leading on Workforce Development and PIE has been seconded to Changing Lives (the lead Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead partner) part time to help it embed reflective practice in its services.

- A General Practice has agreed to train all surgery staff in PIE and understanding people with complex needs. Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead hopes that, if successful, this can be rolled out to GP surgeries across Newcastle and Gateshead.
- It is reported that Local Authority commissioners are considering making PIE a key requirement of services. For example, Sheffield set out a city wide tender for PIE delivery and Gateshead are considering its use within their soon to be re-commissioned supported housing contracts.



'We identified [through adopting a PIE approach] that we didn't have a calm quiet space to have conversations. We put a few walls up and now we have a room for these conversations.' – Core Partner

'[PIE] creates capacity and resilience in staff. It's helped to have reflective practice, they can offload [when they experience difficulties]. Staff reported feeling resilience – not reaching the end of the week at snapping point. This is benefiting clients because staff are looking forward to conversations [...] And this means having the capacity to hold clients a bit longer. You realise they often want someone to listen, and staff can do this.' – Core Partner

Access to secondary mental health services

People with multiple and complex needs often struggle to access support from secondary mental health services.

New National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines were published in autumn 2016 recommending that secondary mental health services should 'not exclude people with severe mental illness because of their substance misuse', and should 'ensure [a] care coordinator works with other services to address the person's social care, housing, physical and mental health needs, as well as their substance misuse problems, and provide any other support they may need.'⁹ Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead worked with MEAM to submit evidence to inform these guidelines. The programme is now focusing on ensuring these guidelines are implemented locally. Key systems change outcomes include:


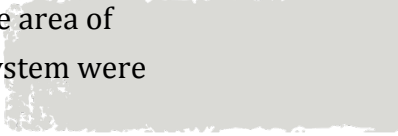
- The System Broker leading on this area of work worked with Public Health Gateshead to draft a Dual Needs Strategy for Gateshead reflecting the new NICE guidelines, which is currently being finalised.
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- The structure and format of Gateshead's Drug Related Deaths Panel has changed, to include an evidence-based exploration of systemic issues. Fulfilling Lives is supporting an appreciative enquiry into the deaths of Gateshead clients experienced at Fulfilling Lives and is working with the Local Authority to explore future preventative solutions.
- Gateshead's Dual Diagnosis team has started to hold monthly dual diagnosis forums, which provide a forum for frontline staff to talk about clients with dual diagnosis issues.
- Fulfilling Lives is working with Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, which operates across Newcastle and Gateshead, to explore a potential Pilot. Fulfilling Lives circulated a survey of professionals working across the Newcastle and Gateshead system, scoping their concerns and experiences in accessing secondary mental health services. 19 Surveys have been received at the time of writing this report, which include some robust suggestions and findings. Following discussion at the Fulfilling Lives Strategic Group, the Programme Manager's presentation to the Mental Health Programme Board, and subsequent meeting with the Chief Medical Officer for Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust the next Operational Group will focus on developing the scope of a pilot and share the expected re-structure of services at the beginning of October.
- Fulfilling Lives has been involved in the Together in a Crisis proof of concept project, which will inform the development of an urgent care model. The project is being led by lead agency Mental Health Concern and partner organisations Home Group, Citizens Advice Newcastle and Changing Lives. Fulfilling Lives provided £15k to ensure that peer evaluation was part of the overall evaluation for the project and are supporting the external evaluator by training Peer Researchers who will specifically ask recipients of the service about their experience of the new concept which will be included in the wider evaluation.

Universal Credit and other transitions

Newcastle is a Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) test and learn site for Universal Credit. Full service Universal Credit was introduced in Newcastle in May 2016.

The System Broker leading on the programme's priority systems change area of transitions identified Universal Credit as a priority issue. Many in the system were



concerned about how elements of Universal Credit delivery would affect people with multiple and complex needs.

The programme is working with the DWP locally to collect evidence of how well the introduction of Universal Credit is working for this client group. The System Broker found that a pre-existing trusted partnership (which existed as a result of previous work the programme had conducted with the DWP around access to benefits) helped facilitate this joint working, as did Newcastle's position as a test and learn site.

Key systems change outcomes are:



- A single point of contact has been assigned temporarily in each of the three JobCentres in Newcastle (and soon to be in Gateshead) to support people with multiple and complex needs with Universal Credit. These provide support for Newcastle Welfare Rights Team clients as well as Fulfilling Lives clients.
- Research evidence is being collected by the programme in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions and Newcastle Welfare Rights Team on the effectiveness of this approach.
- Fulfilling Lives will be providing reflective practice sessions and multiple and complex needs training with 16 frontline DWP staff.

Work is also underway in relation to other points of transition. A report evidencing the experiences of people with multiple and complex needs on release from prison is soon to be published. The System Broker is also working with local partners to develop a tenancy sustainment programme tailored to people with multiple and complex needs.

CHANGES EXPERIENCED/IMPLEMENTED BY PARTNERS

This section considers the extent to which systems changes have been experienced or implemented by core partners, employing organisations, and Operational and Strategic Group members.

Core partner and employing organisations spoken to described:

- Piloting and subsequently more fully implementing a PIE approach in their services.
 - Delivering multiple and complex needs training both internally and within the external system as training partners to the programme.
 - Reflecting on and changing their own practice (see boxed example below).
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- Taking part in more multi-disciplinary meetings, which had been encouraged and convened by the Service Navigator.
- Improved information sharing.
- Increased service user involvement through the Experts by Experience Group.

Of the three employing organisations spoken to, two were members of core partner organisations, so might be expected to be more involved in change than non-partner organisations. However, their experiences suggest that employing Navigators within organisations has been an effective route to change, by influencing services' thinking and gently challenging their practice.

We delayed stepping back from people after we identified we weren't the best organisation to work with them and needed to refer them on. This came from realising those people didn't get there overnight; they had a history of being passed around organisations [and by referring them on we were doing the same thing]. We thought: 'is there something we can do to make sure these people don't think "what's the point of trying, they just palm you off elsewhere"?' – Employing Organisation



Oasis Aquila Housing: changing criteria for dispersed supported accommodation

One core partner and employing organisation, Oasis Aquila, described the changes it has made to its accommodation service as a result of Fulfilling Lives.

‘We radically adapted our accommodation service. Previously we rarely accommodated people with multiple and complex needs, but now they are our new target group. This came about during a discussion with our Service Navigator: I was encouraging her to be creative in sourcing an accommodation option for a client with multiple evictions and no apparent options, whilst we had an empty property. I felt a hypocrite not accepting the client. We housed the client and a year on he walked into our centre in a suit on his way back from a job interview.

My role was to challenge [the way we worked] – can we say as an organisation we’re housing the most vulnerable people?’

We had six dispersed housing properties. That’s extended to 16 now – we got additional properties from the housing company [that manages housing for the local authority]. It works because people aren’t living together – a lot had multiple evictions because of their behaviour with other people. It’s a Housing First style approach with intensive support.

We got involved as core partners because we saw the need for change. Fulfilling Lives has facilitated that, given us the opportunity to explore and test new ways of doing things.’

Operational Group members (who included some core partners) described:

- Stronger relationships with other group members.
- Increased opportunity for reflection, including the opportunity to take part in ‘excellent conversations’ and ‘reflect on systems’.
- Increased knowledge, for example about other parts of the system.
- Some people described collaboration and partnership work.
- Some people described some changes in their practice, for example practicing PIE, introducing multiple and complex needs training to their organisation, ‘looking at new ways of working’, and one person said their involvement in Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead had ‘influenced the direction of work to meeting the needs of [this] client group’ in relation to ‘strategy development’.

Strategic Group members described:

- The generation of a system-wide perspective in the group and the wider system, and a deeper understanding of complex needs and systemic issues.
- Implementing pilots (such as PIE) and staff training on multiple and complex needs in their organisations.
- Their commissioning practice being influenced by programme principles.
- Stronger collaboration including (i) experiencing closer working relationships with others in the system, and (ii) brokering relationships for the programme with others in the system.

They said that the programme had informed:

- Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Mental Health Concern's Together in a Crisis project (which aims to provide a supportive mental health recovery process for people with an urgent but non-clinical mental health need, incorporating Peer Research and Peer Evaluation).
- A Gateshead-wide homeless health needs assessment.
- A Gateshead housing report.
- A renewed focus on the value of lived experience, with the Experts by Experience Group working with Gateshead Council and forming a key part of Respond training.

INFLUENCING LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

A range of participants said that they had noticed the language being used by those in the system changing to reflect the language being used by the programme, and believed that Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead has played a significant part in this.² They gave examples of terms like 'PIE', 'systems change' and 'transitions':

'It's popping up, in a meeting with someone unrelated to Fulfilling Lives. And you think: that's our language, our influence. I suspect a lot of it is word of mouth and the dedicated work building links in key services, and people go out from those. And there has been some conscious effort to share the message.' – Fulfilling Lives staff member

'I can't emphasise enough how much the dialogue within the system has changed since Fulfilling Lives. [...] I don't know if it's just coincidence that things we've led

² Participants were aware that other national programmes, for example those led by MEAM and Lankelly Chase, were also using some of these terms.

on is starting to pop up in policy. It's hard to take credit for things when it's others who are changing, but it's certainly dialogue and thought processes I think we've influenced.' – System Broker

System Brokers also believed they had helped influence the culture within some organisations involved. This included having a more systemic perspective, and being more willing to discuss flaws in their own practice:

'I thought it was really healthy to hear people like [name] be so challenging about system change [in the Operational Group], and being so open and honest and saying, "I [conduct work] knowing that it's not going to work, because what else is there? The system needs to change." [...] We don't want to take ownership of that [...but] we've changed that culture.' – System Broker

INFLUENCING THE PRE-CONDITIONS OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

As well as identifying the more tangible outcomes of the programme, it is important to consider the extent to which the programme has cultivated the conditions that facilitate systems change, which can be expected to help lead to systems change over time. The model of pre-conditions to systems change developed by Collaborate provides a useful guide to these (see p.17). This section considers the extent to which the programme is demonstrating the behaviours and vision set out by this model, and touches on how some these conditions have been created and have helped to create systems change.


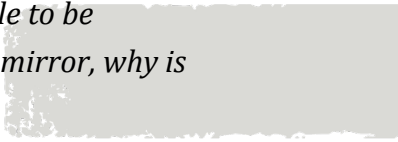
Behaviours

The first set of pre-conditions refers to the behaviours of actors in the system, or 'how you plan to do systems change'.

Trusted partners: understand and adapt to each other's values

Fulfilling Lives has had a high degree of success in creating trusted partnerships. It has well-attended Strategic and Operational Groups, and System Brokers have built strong partnerships with several system actors. The System Brokers believe that trusted partnerships are central to the systems change outcomes they have achieved.

'[The importance of] relationships has been massive. And being able to be independent, saying this not a personal thing, we're just holding a mirror, why is



the data showing this and that? There is a lot of trust there, the [partner organisation] trust us as a programme.’ – System Broker

The Programme Manager has found that a deep degree of trust is required in order for partners to openly reflect on flaws in their own way of working. She has found that being open about the programme’s own failings has helped others in the system to feel less exposed:

‘In these times which are difficult and austere, how can people have the freedom to be upfront and open about their failings in front of competitors? [...] The way we’re as a programme being more open about our learning and failing, I think that’s really important’ – Programme Manager

The System Brokers report that people are more likely to talk openly about elements of their practice that are not working well in one to one discussions rather than in public meetings. They have found that a supportive rather than critical approach is essential:



I went in with a collaborative head on, thinking this not about bashing [this system problem] and saying what is really bad about it, it’s about learning and understanding what our clients’ journey is and understanding, where things don’t work so well, what can be done. This approach worked well and kept them engaged. They feel we’re an ally.’ – System Broker

Distributed leadership: enabling, no egos, fluid, convening

The programme has found that practicing distributed leadership has helped to build trusted partnerships. Several stakeholders described the importance of the project ‘working alongside’ organisations rather than seeking to be experts solving systems problems for the organisations. Employing Organisations cited the model of employing Service Navigators within services as an important example of this; the Navigators were seen as an extra resource and support by frontline staff. Likewise System Brokers described themselves as supporting and convening conversations with stakeholders.

The Programme Manager described learning by the programme around how to perform the role of systems change leadership, giving the example of how the programme relates to the Strategic Group:

‘We’ve historically had [the Strategic Group] as receiver of all our wonderful stuff, another report, more information, ‘clever us’, instead of: let’s take something a bit unfinished, and use all the brains around the table to help us. It’s much healthier now.’ – Programme Manager



The Research and Evaluation Lead described this as stopping ‘trying to problem solve ourselves.’ This new approach has reportedly led to more of a sense of ownership over the programme by the Strategic Group, and helped them to understand how they could usefully influence the system.

‘You’ve got to sometimes stop and think what do you [as stakeholders] think we should be looking at? Are these right things? Asking not telling, approaching what is important to them.’ – Programme Manager

Resilient and risk embracing: safe to fail, able to quickly bounce back

Stakeholders described the risk embracing approach of the programme:



‘Fulfilling Lives gives the opportunity to try and learn, this is really positive. It’s not a failure that [one programme activity] didn’t work.’ – Core partner

Being safe to fail and able to quickly bounce back is important to the System Broker work. Some elements of their work have been more successful than others, for example when stakeholders have not wished to pursue an area of systems change, or when external policy changes affect the system on which systems change work is focusing.³ System Brokers described the importance of being able to recognise and move on from unsuccessful areas of work. The Research and Evaluation Lead described this, in particular in relation how the programme prioritises where to focus staff’s limited capacity:

‘There’s something around being incredibly flexible. Everyone in the programme has to have the same focus but has to have a willingness to drop something if it’s not working because you could waste huge amounts of time and energy and not get anywhere [...] Our work around people with no recourse to public funds was a good example of this – we were trying to do something where we didn’t ever have the power to change it because it’s so national policy based.’ – Research and Evaluation Lead

This decision relates to personalisation and an ongoing use of funds. The workstream has continued with more impact by identifying the key strategic leads to take this work forward and contribute to their work rather than lead it.

³ An example is when the earlier than expected introduction of Universal Credit locally rendered work around access to the existing benefits system less important.



Strengths based: utilising the assets of people and place

The programme's approach to working with partners is a strengths based approach; the distributed leadership described above requires this. The programme recognises and draws on the strengths of partners in its collaborative work.

There are some examples of where the programme could make more use of the assets available to it:

- The Experts by Experience Network does not have a strongly embedded role in the systems change process, so the assets of people with lived experience of multiple and complex needs are not being made full use of.
- The model of focusing on system barriers experienced by case studies in the Operational Group usefully highlights systemic issues, but focuses on system deficits rather than assets. The assets of group members, and the areas in which they could influence systems change, could be usefully explored further.
- The roles in the system change process (see p.34) focus strongly on the identification of system barriers and blockages, and on identifying solutions to these. A more asset-based approach would also identify the assets available at each stage of the process.

Able to let go and act as a platform for innovation

The System Brokers have described 'letting go' of a number of areas of work. An example is the work on Local Connection⁴ that is now being led by Homeless Link. They report that it can sometimes be difficult to judge when to let go and when to continue to support areas of work, and this would be a useful area for the System Brokers to reflect on as the programme progresses.

Vision

The second set of pre-conditions refers to the ambition of the system.

Issues are acknowledged as systemic and requiring collaboration

Project partners describe an increasing understanding of the systemic nature of many issues encountered by people with multiple and complex needs, and the need for a systemic response to these. This is demonstrated by examples in the above sections

⁴ This work explores the possibility of agreements between local authorities to house people in areas with which they have no 'local connection' (for example, having lived there for six months out of the last 12, or having close family who have lived in the area for at least five years), which is usually a stipulation for help with housing.

'Changes experienced/implemented by partners' (p.21) and 'Influencing language and culture' (p.24). Programme staff and partners said that this was not yet fully the case across the system:

'There was a strong response from [specific] services about [one systemic barrier identified] – they didn't agree this was an issue.' – core partner

However, they said that partners increasingly acknowledged issues as systemic, and described building positive relationships with new partners as the programme progressed.

Citizen centred: from concept to delivery, and beneficiary impact over organisation focus

The programme is centred on the needs and experiences of people with multiple and complex needs, with its systems change work based on evidence of the experiences of clients being supported by the Service Navigators. There is scope for the programme to ensure more direct influence of beneficiaries over its work, for example by strengthening the role of the Experts by Experience Network in the systems change process.

Grounded in the place but open to new approaches

The programme is strongly grounded in the local context, responding to local issues and opportunities (such its establishment as a test and learn site for Universal Credit). It has also drawn on new approaches from other areas, for example drawing on national learning about PIE, and learning from other localities about different Local Connection practices.

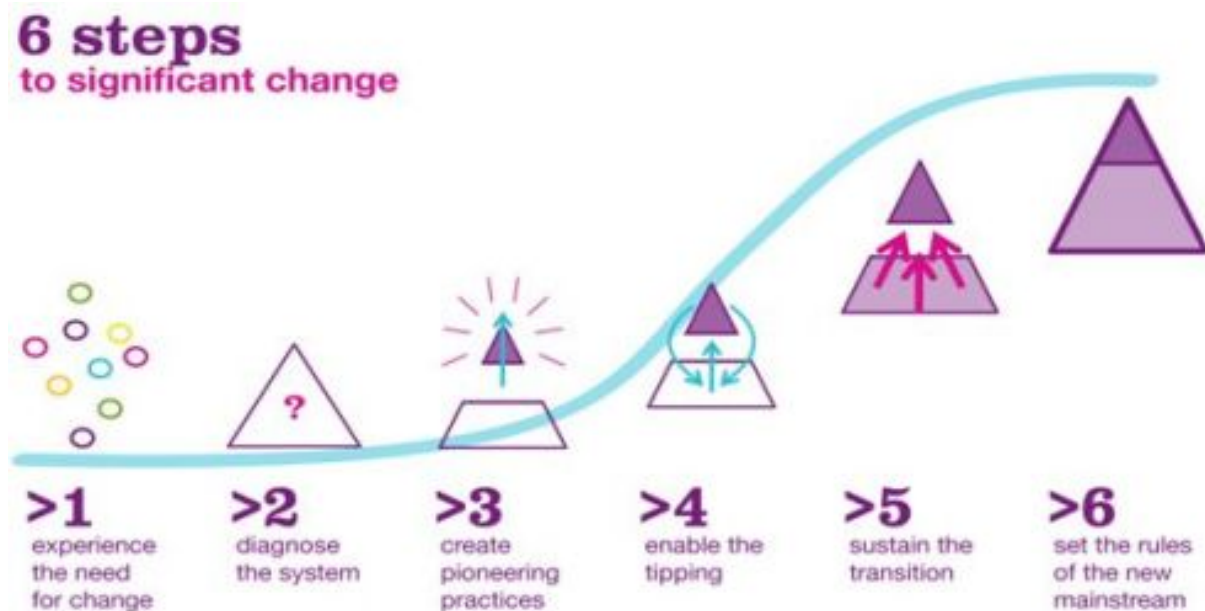


ACHIEVING SYSTEMS CHANGE: THE PROCESS

This section explores the system change process, including: stages in the process; routes to systems change; roles in changing systems; and the programme’s learning about the process.

STAGES IN THE SYSTEMS CHANGE PROCESS

Forum for the Future’s Six Steps Model outlines the steps in a process to achieving systems change. This is a valuable tool for understanding where Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead is in the process; each step is considered below.



Step 1: Experiencing the need for change

Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead places a strong emphasis on providing case studies and other evidence of the need for change, based on the direct experiences of the Service Navigators’ clients, and this has played an important part in convincing stakeholders of the need for change. The word ‘experience’ highlights the importance of going beyond the provision of/passive receipt of evidence. The systems change literature¹⁰ suggests that to experience the need for change, people need to go beyond being presented with evidence and participate in discussions and reflection; hearing the testimonies and experiences of people with multiple and complex needs can play a useful part in this. The programme provides many opportunities for such discussions,

for example via the Operational and Strategic Groups, working groups, and discussions convened by the System Brokers. However, opportunities to hear the voices of those with lived experience first hand are limited.

As described in previous sections, this research shows that many stakeholders know there needs to be change, although not all key stakeholders are yet fully involved with the programme:

'It's created an appetite and platform for people to change [...] for people to listen and work together' – Fulfilling Lives staff member

However, not all stakeholders involved with the programme recognise the need for change in their own practice. This may in part stem from a lack of full understanding of the nature of the systems change approach, which involves examining how one's own practice forms part of the system and could helpfully change, as this quotation from the systems change literature describes:

*'I have to start by reflecting on and changing myself. I have to understand myself, because the person who will be the hardest for me to lead through change is me.'*¹¹
– Helen Bevan (systems change practitioner and theorist)

Step 2: Diagnosing the system

There was general agreement by the research participants that the stage of 'diagnosing the system' has been completed, or nearly completed. The systemic problems that people with multiple and complex needs encounter are felt to be well-known and understood, and it is generally felt that the programme has collected (if not yet fully analysed) sufficient evidence about these.

'We've mapped the system – we've not yet gone to the next level.' – Core Partner

Some programme activities still focus on diagnosing system problems. Examples include discussions of systemic barriers revealed by case studies, and elements of the Service Navigator role. There may still be a valuable role for these activities: for example, they can be a useful starting point for generating ideas for more effective practice, and can create more engagement and ownership over making changes. They also enable the programme to continuously diagnose changing issues in a changing system. However, it is recommended that any such activities should have a clear purpose which enables moving beyond diagnosis towards action for systems change.

What has not yet been fully diagnosed is whereabouts in the system the problems, and potential solutions, sit. The programme has begun to distinguish between strategic and

operational level systemic barriers, and this is valued by the Strategic Group, enabling them to seek solutions to strategic level barriers. It would be helpful for the Operational Group to explore more fully where changes might usefully be made at an operational level.

Step 3: Creating pioneering practices

As outlined in previous sections, a number of innovative practices have been implemented as a result of the programme. Examples include: embedding PIE approaches in core partner services; trialling a single point of contact model for Universal Credit for people with multiple and complex needs; and the Housing First-style model of dispersed supported housing adopted by Oasis Aquila.

Steps 4 to 6: Enable the tipping, and beyond

These steps relate to scale and sustainability. Some areas of the programme's work may be moving towards a 'tipping point' to scale. Workforce development training (including PIE, complex needs and reflective practice) is taking place on a growing scale, including train the trainer courses. PIE is being implemented in core partner services, and multiple and complex needs training is taking place in several parts of the system (for example with DWP and GP staff).

Stakeholders also report some changes in language and culture that may indicate a tipping point in understanding of issues as systemic.

A number of pilots of innovative practice have taken place, and a key challenge for the programme now will be to find a way to embed the successful practices from the pilots in practice and policy.

Steps 4 to 6 are considered further in the section 'Scale and Sustainability'.



ROUTES TO SYSTEMS CHANGE

The programme makes use of several main routes to systems change. Each operates across both the service level and the local policy/commissioning level of the system. The Research and Evaluation team supports many of these routes, for example by conducting Action Learning Sets and co-ordinating the evidence in order to identify barriers and blockages requiring change.

Route 1: Work led by the System Brokers


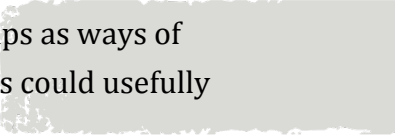
The System Brokers have the capacity to proactively work with partners to support, influence and encourage change in the programme's priority areas. Examples of System Broker activity include supporting pilots, conducting training and research, and drafting strategy. They can work with stakeholders who might not otherwise come into close contact with the programme, but have a willingness/openness to change and are motivated in part by the resource and support the System Brokers bring. The System Brokers work at different levels of the system depending on the level and type of the systems barrier (e.g. with services or commissioners, and with the statutory or voluntary sectors). These dedicated roles are crucial in driving change in these areas.

Route 2: Work conducted by the Service Navigators

The Service Navigators provide a direct link to the current experiences of people with multiple and complex needs and problems they encounter in the system, ensuring the programme is grounded in these. The role provides evidence of systems issues faced, a potential path for people into the Experts by Experience Network, builds relationships with organisations within the system, and can influence small systems flexes. The role has also successfully encouraged employing organisations to reflect on and change (to different degrees) their practice.

Route 3: Working groups/task and finish groups

The programme has previously established some working groups; little evidence about the extent of these groups' effectiveness emerged in this evaluation. However, research participants wanted to see more working groups or task and finish groups as ways of moving towards action for systems change. They suggested these groups could usefully



spin off from the Strategic or Operational Groups, and include people with particular interests in the given area of the system.

Route 4: Individuals initiating change in their own organisation's practice

This area of change is led by individuals who are part of the programme, who implement change within their own organisations. They are open to making change, and the programme provides the challenge, opportunity, knowledge and ideas to help them do so. These individuals may include Core Partners, Employing Organisations, services coming into contact with the Service Navigators, and members of the Strategic or Operational Groups. They also include other stakeholders who come into contact with the programme by other means. This type of change emerges from individuals' contact with the programme. It can be encouraged (for example by cultivating the pre-conditions of systems change or establishing working groups), but it is less structured and cannot be planned for in any detail.

Sometimes you don't know you're doing it [systems change], and that's probably the best thing, when others have taken a lead on things, and you don't know what you're directly impacting.' – System Broker

Route 5: The Experts by Experience Network

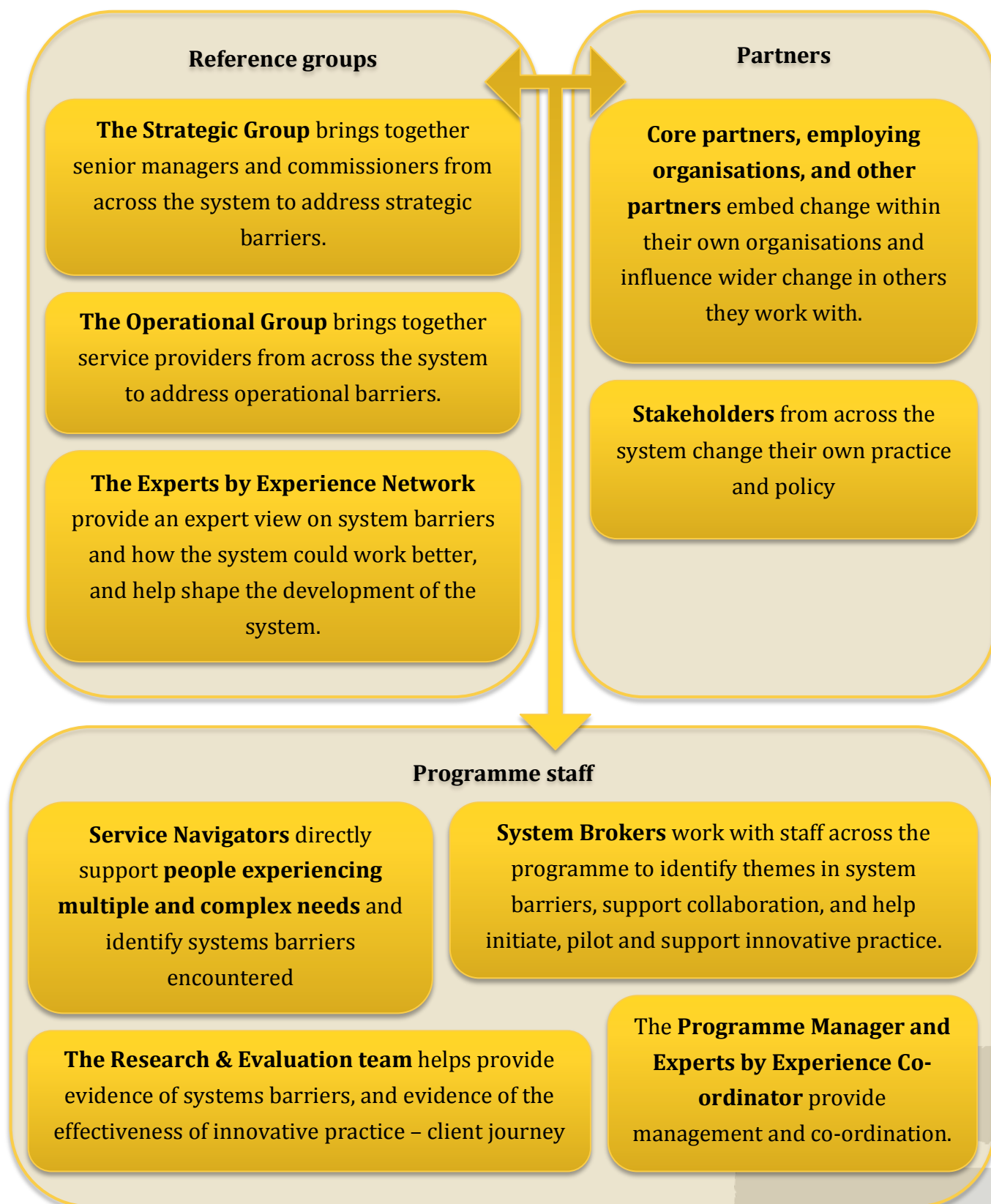
The Experts by Experience network has provided expertise to system actors such as commissioners and the police. There is scope for the network to establish itself as a source of expert advice in service design and commissioning decisions. As such, the network is a valuable potential route to embedded systems change in policy and commissioning as well as at service level.



ROLES IN THE SYSTEMS CHANGE PROCESS

The diagram below shows the roles that it is intended that key staff members, partners and stakeholders play in achieving systems change. This is an evolving model, and participants said that some parts of the process worked more effectively than others.

Roles in the systems change process



The effectiveness of this model, and opportunities for developing these roles, are considered below.

The Service Navigator role

The Navigator role is important for a number of reasons. First, it provides a direct link to the current experiences of people with multiple and complex needs and problems they encounter in the system, ensuring the programme is grounded in these. Through this, the role enhances the programme's credibility (according to partner organisations), and is a valuable source of up to date evidence in a constantly changing system. And second, it has successfully encouraged employing organisations to reflect on and change (to different degrees) their practice.

As the programme moves away from direct service provision to a stronger focus on systems change, people from across different parts of the programme suggested that the Navigator role could usefully become more systems-change focused. Members of the Strategic Group and the Employing Organisations group suggested there was scope for a role that spent more time brokering systems change, supporting services to change their practice (in response to blockages experienced) rather than supporting individuals to navigate services on a more ad hoc basis. It was felt to be important that people in this role 'worked alongside' services rather than being seen to be brought in to sort out problems in the service. The feeling that Service Navigators are 'working alongside' services is seen to be one of the advantages of the current model of employment within services.

The Service Navigators themselves said they would like to be more involved in changing systems through their role. They gave the example of a Navigator who had been closely involved in the pilot with DWP around access to benefits as an example of this.

Expanding the Navigator role would enable the project to broaden its systems change reach; the System Brokers reported large workloads and said that their limited capacity limits the programme's reach in terms of systems change; they said they have usefully drawn on some Navigators to help with some areas of work.

The System Broker role

The experiences of the programme so far suggests that this dedicated role focusing on systems change is vital in driving change forward. The role provides the link between the Navigators' role of collecting on-the-ground evidence and undertaking system influencing and flex, and other parts of the system. The Brokers have a great deal of

experience and demonstrate a sophisticated, evolving understanding of how to create systems change. The expert resource that the Brokers can provide has been important in building trusted partnerships and motivating stakeholders to work with the programme. The Brokers have had the capacity, for example, to deliver training on PIE to services, to support the development of a draft Dual Needs Strategy for Public Health Gateshead, and to convene partnership meetings. The importance of the role may reduce over time, as those within the system take on a more leading role in making systems change, but at present the role is central to achieving systems change.

The evaluation team

External partners and stakeholders said that strong evidence was one of the strengths of the Fulfilling Lives programme. A dedicated internal evaluation role (alongside good information systems and data collection by the Service Navigators) is central to this. The programme has collected a great deal of evidence, firstly about the characteristics and experiences of people with multiple and complex needs, and secondly about the effectiveness of innovative practice being tested in pilots. This has been vital in convincing some stakeholders of the need for change; some stakeholders were not willing to work closely with the programme without this evidence. Evaluations evidencing effectiveness have enhanced the credibility of the programme's pilots, as well as usefully indicating areas for improvement in these. The internal evaluation team has proved a useful resource for external partners in pilots (such as the DWP) that has motivated partnership working. The team also developed a cost calculator, which programme staff reported to be positive.

The Experts by Experience Network

The role of the Experts by Experience Network is currently being reviewed. The Network has conducted valuable work within the system (for example bringing the expert voice to Respond training). There is significant scope for the Network to be more closely involved in the systems change process, and the Experts by Experience Co-ordinator is intending to work with the Network to identify how this could best work, in discussion with programme staff. The systems change work is grounded in the Navigators' clients' experiences (who are not currently members of the Network), but there is currently less opportunity for the voices of experts by experience to directly inform the systems change work beyond this. A more central role could include a direct voice in discussions around understanding the problem, generating ideas for change,

and designing new ways of working; and co-delivering work such as training or research.

The Operational Group



The Operational Group has a good attendance of engaged stakeholders from across the system. It is working well as a forum for discussion, forming new relationships, increasing knowledge and awareness, and generating new ideas. For example, at least two people approached the System Brokers at the end of the most recent Operational Group meeting with ideas of system changes they wanted to help implement.

A meeting format that enables the Group to move beyond discussion towards action would help to build on the strengths of the Group and maintain motivation. One System Broker said they would like to adopt a solutions-focused practice approach to the Group that encouraged people to identify what they were able to control and change. Another staff member suggested that action learning sets or communities of practice could be usefully established.

The discussions of case studies of Service Navigators' clients experiences during Operational Group meetings are helpful in grounding discussions in lived experience, evidencing systemic problems and the need for change, and generating discussions and ideas. However, these potentially leave people exposed to defending their own processes and practice in a public meeting, and other approaches may be more helpful in encouraging people to take ownership of making change. One of the nine 'pre-conditions for systems change' identified by Collaborate is an approach that is 'strengths based: utilising the assets of people and place'. It could be useful to consider adopting more strengths-based approaches to meetings, such as appreciative enquiry.

The Strategic Group

The programme reports recent learning around the role of the Strategic Group. This includes moving away from the model of the Group as oversight to the project, and towards the Group as active participants in systems change. Group members requested that programme staff clearly distinguish between strategic and operational systems barriers so that they could explore how they could help resolve the strategic barriers. Strategic Group members report brokering connections for the programme, and implementing some change within their own organisations.



Partner organisations and employing organisations

Having organisations involved as partners to the programme and/or employers of the Service Navigators has been an important route to systems change. The partner and employing organisations spoken to for this evaluation are clear that a key role of theirs is to implement change within their own organisation (it should be noted that only one employing organisation that was not a Core Partner took part in the evaluation).

Some systems changes that partner/employing organisations reported implementing included: implementing PIE in services; opening access to dispersed housing to people with multiple and complex needs; and working more flexibly and collaboratively. Organisations credited their employment of Navigators (as well as, for partners, their strategic-level involvement in the programme) with these changes, saying that this encouraged them to challenge and change their own way of working. Navigators reported their employing organisations being more willing to work with people with multiple and complex needs, working more flexibly, and expanding their roles to include support they would not normally have provided. One example given was of Age UK supporting people with benefits and helping with family reconnection.

The model of employing navigators in services as a route to systems change has not proved effective in every case however. It was felt that the model provided an opportunity for organisations wishing to make change to do so, but that where there was less motivation for (or other barriers to) change, the model might not be as effective.

Strengthening links between different Groups

The Experts by Experience Network, Operational Group and Strategic Group currently work quite separately. Operational Group members said they would value a stronger link with the Strategic Group, including more feedback about what has happened to strategic issues they have raised that have been taken to the Strategic Group. They said it would be valuable for a Strategic Group member to attend Operational Group meetings, perhaps on rotation, and potentially for an Operational Group member to attend the Strategic Group meetings. Likewise, representation across meetings could be considered for the Experts by Experience Network. Staff members also said they would like stronger links with the Reference Groups.

Not everyone had a clear understanding of their own role in the systems change process and how this could fit in with other roles in the wider programme; it would be helpful to clarify this for all Groups.

LEARNING ABOUT THE PROCESS

Research participants described the following learning about the process of systems change.

Using evidence effectively

Evidence was seen by stakeholders to be one of the strengths of the programme, which collects a wealth of evidence about clients' experiences. Programme staff described learning about how to use evidence effectively:

'[We've been] thinking more about intention, targeting, who is it for, what is its purpose.' – Research and Evaluation Lead

Evidence has helped to convince stakeholders that a systemic issue exists, to demonstrate the scale of the issue, and to provide 'direct learning from our clients' stories [which can be] categorised and analysed'.

Piloting

The System Brokers have found that pilots are a means of testing innovative practice and initiating systems change that 'the system can tolerate'.

'Working alongside' partners, as a resource to be drawn on

The capacity of the programme to support organisations has been helpful in encouraging partnerships. For example, the System Broker working with the DWP around Universal Credit was able to offer support with researching clients' experiences:

'There's a key motivation in Newcastle, because we're classed as a test and learn site, to work with a research programme [Fulfilling Lives] that has got the infrastructure and the focus to really approach it from a collaborative research perspective.' – System Broker

Likewise, the Service Navigators were seen as additional resources by those on the ground:

'I think [the fact we employ Navigators] helped staff to accept them, so they're an extra resource.' – Employing Organisation



Finding the right level at which to influence

A key learning point for the programme has been about the value of identifying the right level at which to influence:

'I first thought it was a service issue, then I found out staff were only doing what managers were telling them, managers were doing what commissioners told them, and commissioners were doing what policy told them.' – System Broker

This includes identifying 'how I can change my own practice'.

Behaving differently from the existing system

Being both relatively independent from the current system, and able to behave differently from the system, was seen to be important:

'We have the luxury of being able to be different, so we can go in and talk to an agency separately rather than being another part of the system. It's all about modelling [a different behaviour].' – Programme Manager

Overcoming barriers to change

Each of the routes to system change described in the section 'Routes to systems change' (p.32) works with those with some willingness to work with the programme and consider making changes to their own practice. The programme has encountered the following barriers to change among some system actors:

- Fear of exposing flaws in my practice and admitting vulnerability
- A belief that my own practice does not need to change
- Anxiety about a new approach and being out of my comfort zone
- Lack of time/capacity/resources
- Policy does not support a new kind of practice

Those involved have found that the following have worked well in convincing less willing partners to take part in the programme's systems change activity:

- Listening to less willing partners, understanding their values and priorities, and attempting to meet their needs.
- Providing robust quantitative and qualitative evidence of the need for change.
- 'Working alongside' partners rather than being seen as coming in to sort out problems.

- A willingness to drop issues when the discussion gets stuck, and move towards building a constructive partnership around other issues where change is more possible.



SCALE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead is due to end in 2022. This section considers ways in which the programme might ensure systems change takes place at scale and is sustained after the programme ends.

STEPS TO SCALE AND SUSTAINABILITY: THE SIX STEP MODEL

The final three steps of Forum for the Future's Six Steps to Significant Change model focus on scale and sustainability. These are:

- **Step 4: Enable the tipping point.** This involves achieving scale through three routes - growing, replicating, and diffusing and influencing.
- **Step 5: Sustain the transition.** This includes addressing resistance that can arise at this stage.
- **Step 6: Set new rules of the mainstream.** This entails cementing change, for example through policy change, which is often preceded by shifts in attitudes and evidence that they will work.


ROUTES TO SCALE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Scaling change

As discussed in the section 'Stages in the systems change process' (p.29), the programme has begun to reach scale through:

- Workforce development and PIE training in several parts of the system. This has resulted in the implementation of PIE and reflective practice in some services, and is intended to result in a greater understanding of the multiple and complex needs among system actors.
- Influencing changes in language, attitudes and working culture, for example an understanding of systems change and recognition that issues are systemic, among actors in several parts of the system.

Pathways to scale identified by Forum for the Future are:

- Inspire and enable influencers.
 - Networks and collaboration.
 - Barrier removal and lock-in, including policy and advocacy.
- 

- Communication and behaviour change.
- New financial models, measures and standards.
- Incubate and accelerate entrepreneurs and technologies.

Sustaining systems change

This section presents an analysis by the New Economics Foundation based on learning from the literature and the ideas of participants in this research.

There are two (inter-related) issues in relation to sustainability of systems change, which are considered below.

1. **Creating structures and process that embed the changes made to system components as a result of the programme** – so that, for example, pilots are adopted into practice, different approaches are integrated into commissioning, and strategies are adhered to. This may include:
 - Ensuring that successful programme pilots are adopted into practice (with separate sources of funding secured if necessary).
 - Ensuring that successful elements of the programme (examples given by participants include the function of navigation for people with multiple and complex needs, and the Experts by Experience Network) secure their own sources of funding and/or are adopted into other organisations' delivery models, so can continue after the programme ends.
 - Ensuring that new ways of doing things are formalised in policy and service specifications.
 - Achieving changes in the components of the system: for example, the commissioning of new services or development of new pathways.
 - Influencing changes in attitude and understanding of people across the system, for example a deeper understanding of the needs, experiences, and assets of people with multiple and complex needs, how they can best be supported, and individual system actors' own roles in this.
 - Ensuring that sustained change is not dependent on one individual in an organisation, but is embedded in processes, policies, and attitudes across a wider team.

2. **Creating the conditions within a system that mean it can continue to change in response to emerging systemic issues**, even after the programme is no longer in place to lead change. The literature review conducted by the New Economics Foundation for Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead in 2014 found that: ‘Systems change is never finished; instead, a process that enables systemic problems to be identified and responded to is in place.’¹² This may include:

- Creating strong connections between different parts of the system that continue after the programme ends, including forums for discussion and action.
- Building an understanding across the system of systems change, the systemic nature of many difficulties encountered by people with multiple and complex needs, and the role of reflective practice, collaboration, learning and openness to change in response to this.
- Creating lasting processes, forums and others means which facilitate a reflective, open, flexible and collaborative approach within organisations across the system.
- Ensuring that reflective practice is embedded across the system (for example, in services, through the implementation of PIE).
- Ensuring that co-production, meaningful service user involvement, and the expert by experience voice is strongly embedded within the system (for example in service design, commissioning decisions, and service delivery).
- Supporting systems leadership by individuals outside the programme, so that they can continue to take on systems leadership roles within different parts of the system after the programme ends.

‘If you can have more genuine co-production and service user involvement, that would help the system to change without us being involved. That’s the way to influence the system when we’re not around.’ – System Broker

‘I’d like to see that services are in reflective mode, are open. It’s about reaching an end where more services are able to collaboratively look and keep changing – so it’s workforce development.’ – Programme Manager



Developing evidence and recommendations for the system

One of the questions this research set out to answer was: How can the programme best ensure it is in a position to make recommendations for an effective system for people with multiple and complex needs when it comes to an end?

The systems change literature suggests that sustained systems change is likely to be achieved primarily as a result of having influenced collaborative change in the areas outlined above (for example in policy/commissioning and in attitudes/working cultures), rather than through leaving recommendations for an effective system.

However, it will be of value for the programme to capture and share its learning around the process of systems change, and the outcomes of its systems change approach (including effective elements of the system and remaining system barriers and blockages). To this end, it would be of benefit for the programme to conduct an evaluation of the systems change element of the programme over its remaining years.

The programme is also building a body of evidence of effectiveness of innovative approaches, in particular through its evaluations of pilots, which will form a valuable part of its legacy.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead is utilising an effective range of approaches to achieving systems change: each of the four main routes to change identified is an important element of its approach. The programme and its partners have achieved some significant early systems changes. It is successfully cultivating many of the pre-conditions of systems change, putting it in a strong position to influence further changes over time.



Now the programme should turn its attention to establishing itself more fully as a systems change (rather than service delivery) programme and communicating what this means; strengthening the expert by experience voice in its work; and moving from the identification of systemic issues towards action and the development of new ways of doing things.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

The following recommendations are based on the views presented by those interviewed, and on an analysis of the research evidence collected in the light of selected existing systems change literature. It is recommended that these are used as a starting point for discussion among programme stakeholders, for gaining deeper understanding of the issues, and for establishing agreed action.

A strong, clear, systems change focus

More strongly establish the programme as a systems change programme and spread understanding of what systems change is. This includes communicating about what systems change is, the different levels of the system, and how systems change can be achieved. This means moving away from understandings of the programme as a service delivery organisation; and ensuring that all those involved understand what systems change means.



Develop a coherent definition of systems change and the programme's role and aspirations in relation to this that can be used by all those involved in the programme to communicate to external stakeholders. This was requested by several different groups in the research.

Celebrate and communicate the systems changes made: Stakeholders were not always aware of the systems changes that the project had influenced. Celebrating the changes that have been made is likely to motivate and inspire further change, aid understanding of what 'systems change' means, and more strongly establish the programme as a systems change programme.

Clarify the different levels of the system at which systems change can take place, and use this as a tool to identify where change is needed. This has been done in some forums, but not yet been spread widely across the programme. The diagram on p.16 of this report (adapted from a model by Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM)) describes one way of understanding levels of change.

Review the extent to which the programme is influencing change at all levels from individual practice, to service delivery, to commissioning (as outlined in the above diagram). This includes clarifying with partners the extent to which the programme intends to influence the national system; partners were not all clear about this.

Move away from 'diagnosing the system' (with a focus on identifying system barriers and blockages) towards action for change. This could include existing partners (such as the Strategic and Operational Groups) considering how they could change their own practice and influence broader change, and taking more active ownership of/playing more active roles in strands of work. Ideas for this included establishing targeted working groups or task and finish groups, and introducing solutions focused practice.

Adopt a more asset-based approach that focuses on identifying and drawing on assets at all levels of the system. At present the programme primarily focuses on identifying systems barriers and blockages and solutions to these (or at least describes its work in these terms).

Roles and relationships

Ensure the Experts by Experience Network is more closely involved in the systems change process, building on successful systems change activities already undertaken by the group. A more central role could include a direct voice in discussions

around understanding the problem, generating ideas for change, and designing new ways of working; and co-delivering work such as training or research.

Review the Service Navigator role: Several different groups of research participants suggested exploring possibilities for the Navigator role to become more systems-change focused, for example by including brokerage and support for services to change their own ways of doing things. This could perhaps focus on change at the individual service level, whilst System Brokers continued with a broader focus across the service delivery, commissioning and policy levels of systems change.

Retain the System Broker function: Initial programme plans saw the number of System Brokers being reduced from three to one in the fourth year of the programme. This research suggests that the dedicated System Broker role fulfils an important function of systems change leadership. The capacity of the Brokers to convene partnerships, and to support innovative practice, has motivated partners to become involved with the programme and been an important route to change. It is recommended that any changes to the model of systems change delivery ensures that these functions are retained.

Strengthen links between different stakeholder groups: Several participant groups said that they did not fully understand the roles of other groups involved in the programme, and how this fit with their own role. Ideas raised by participants included Strategic Group representation on the Operational Group, and vice versa.

Reflect on power dynamics in the programme and the system: Power dynamics were mentioned by very few research participants despite being central to systems change theory. Theoretical issues include the rebalancing of power between professionals and those with lived experience; the need to give up some degree of power in order to collaborate for systems change; and the use of power to set the boundaries or limit the scope of systems change activities. It could be helpful for programme staff and partners to have the opportunity to learn about and reflect on power dynamics in their work, for example through training.

Learning and evidence

Determine an approach to evaluating the systems changes influenced by the programme over its final five years, building on the current Research and Evaluation Strategy: The programme has conducted some useful and influential evaluations of some of its systems change activities (such as the pilot of PIE). This current research shows that the process of systems change is complex and

unpredictable, and that, because systems change can only happen in partnership, attributing change to the programme is not straightforward. Capturing the changes influenced by the programme is important for the programme to learn, understand what works in systems change, and develop its approach. It is recommended that the programme develops a primarily qualitative approach to evaluating systems change over its final five years. This should include assessing the difference any systems changes have made for people currently experiencing multiple and complex needs.



ENDNOTES

- ¹ Big Lottery Fund (n.d.) *Fulfilling Lives: Supporting people with multiple needs*. http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_complex_needs Accessed on 01.09.2014
- ² Big Lottery Fund (n.d.) *Fulfilling Lives: Supporting people with multiple needs*. http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_complex_needs Accessed on 01.09.2014
- ³ Meadows, D. (2008) *Thinking in systems: a primer*. (ed by Wright, D.). Sustainability Institute.
- ⁴ Burns, D. (2007) *Systemic action research: a strategy for whole system change*. Policy Press.
- ⁵ Draper, S. (n.d) *Creating the big shift: System innovation for sustainability*. Forum for the Future. Image from: <https://www.forumforthefuture.org/blog/introducing-forum's-six-steps-significant-change>
- ⁶ Billiald, S and McAllister Jones, L. (2015) *Behaving like a system?* Collaborate and Lankelly Chase. <https://collaboratecic.com/behaving-like-a-system-184e70563822>
- ⁷ Robin Johnson, co-author of "Psychologically Informed Services for Homeless People – Good practice guide" 2012 Department of Communities and Local Government, and developer of <http://pielink.net/>, cited in Richie, C. (2015) *Creating a Psychologically Informed Environment: Implementation and Assessment*. No One Left Out: Solutions Ltd for Westminster City Council.
- ⁸ Richie, C. (2015) *Creating a Psychologically Informed Environment Implementation and Assessment*. No One Left Out: Solutions Ltd for Westminster City Council.
- ⁹ National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, *Coexisting severe mental illness and substance misuse: community health and social care services*. NICE guideline [NG58] Published date: November 2016 <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng58/chapter/Recommendations#first-contact-with-services>
- ¹⁰ See for example Chapman, J. (2004) *System failure: why governments must learn to think differently* (2nd ed.).
- ¹¹ Bevan, H. (n.d.) *Helen Bevan on the Challenge of System Reform*. NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement. http://www.institute.nhs.uk/quality_and_value/introduction/article_13.html. Accessed on 01.09.2014.
- ¹² Hough, J. (2014), *Changing systems for people with multiple needs: Learning from the literature*. New Economics Foundation.