

# Sharing the learning from whole family support work: Using insights from data and learning to respond to what matters for children, families and communities

Webinar recording

March 2026



## Sharing the learning from whole family support work Using insights from data and learning to respond to what matters for children, families and communities

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Transcript

### Chaired by:

**Heather Ottaway**, Head of Evidence and Innovation, CELCIS

### Speakers:

**Debbie Byrne**, Children's Services Implementation Consultant, CELCIS

**Magriet Cruywagen**, Lead for Research-Practice Collaboration, Glasgow Health Determinants Research Collaboration, University of Glasgow

**Stevie McGowan**, Design and Innovation Lead, Centre for Civic Innovation, Glasgow City Council

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### Heather Ottaway



Good afternoon, everyone. So, I'm Doctor Heather Ottaway, I'm Head of Evidence and Innovation here at CELCIS, and I'm chairing today's

session. And today, we're going to focus on using insights from data and learning to respond to what matters for children, families, and communities.

So this session is part of the whole family wellbeing funding programmes Learning into Action Network, which supports shared learning and practical action across Scotland. And as you've been made aware, the programme for the webinar has been updated and we'll now be hearing from Glasgow colleagues only today.

And just to note that we're really keen to share the learning from East Lothian too, around data and we'll update everyone as soon as possible about that.

So as you know, understanding the needs of children, their families and communities and what matters to them, as well as understanding how services and process are working, is central to achieving the improvements in whole family support. And the purpose of today's webinar is to look together at how data helps to create a learning system to support action and to reflect on learning from the improvement projects that have come together as a result of the renewed focus on data in Glasgow. And I'm delighted to be joined today by three colleagues. We have Debbie Byrne, who's our Children's Services Implementation Consultant here at CELCIS, and by two colleagues from Glasgow, Margriet Cruywagen, who's lead for practice for research practise collaboration at the Glasgow Health Determinants Research Collaboration, and also Steven McGowan, who's design and innovation lead at the Centre for Civic Innovation at Glasgow City Council. So, I'm now going to hand over to our first speaker, who is Debbie Byrne from CELCIS. Debbie, over to you.



**Sharing the learning from  
whole family support work:**

Using insights from data and learning to respond  
to what matters for children, families and  
communities in Glasgow

**Debbie Byrne: Children's Services Implementation Consultant  
CELCIS**



**Deborah Byrne**

Thank you, Heather. Good afternoon. So, I am going to be summarising

prior to Magriet and Stevie talking, I'm going to be just giving a little bit of a synopsis of CELCIS's role in supporting leaders from the Glasgow Child Poverty Programme in the past year. So, this work builds on earlier work, which I'm going to give a brief overview of. And then I'm going to go on to looking at the methodology that underpins our support and give an overview of our approach, finishing on some observations we made around progress. So just very briefly, I'll try and whiz through this. So our early support from about 2016 to 19, very much began with a focus to build change capacity within children's services, the aim being to shift from risk focused system to one of strength-based family centred practice. The work then evolved in 2020 to heads of service start to see a need to develop a vision for a shared approach to high quality practice, whilst also creating alignment to the Poverty Agenda, The Promise and the Prevention Agenda - no mean feat. So what began to emerge were opportunities through Scottish Government Whole Family Wellbeing Fund to local authorities, where there was a focus and an ask to build capacity for whole systems change with a clear focus on whole family strength-based support. So what we started to see was that the reach and scope of the work was starting to become wider and service to whole system change and Glasgow began to consider the role played by universal services and other services working alongside and support to families. So we then joined leaders from Health and Social Care Partnership in Glasgow and Glasgow City Council who came together and their focus really was to align the Child Poverty Pathfinder and the whole Family Wellbeing Fund to achieve full and effective implementation of GIRFEC. And the hypothesis behind this really was around that by refreshing the principles of GIRFEC and applying them to whole system change, this would lead to better outcomes for families whilst addressing poverty in a more systemic way. So, for example, speaking to the public service reform agenda, which was a strong driver. So this takes us up to January last year, where we began to step into supporting leaders from the Glasgow Child Poverty Programme. And as you'll hear, this is a multidisciplinary programme established as part of the council's efforts to reduce poverty in the city.

So, our role was primarily focused on support and leadership, where we brought expertise and working in complex change and using active implementation to support system change. So, I'm firstly going to speak to the ways of working required for system transformation and then just

talk a little bit about the functions required of leaders working in complex systems.

So we know that traditional public service systems are often characterised by methods of reporting and planning, which are better suited to predictive next steps for improvement. So, an example of that is reducing time delay, for example, in applications being processed. But for leaders from child poverty and strengthen and whole family support, we know that these traditional approaches don't serve them well, particularly in a system which is highly complex and where there's a number of interdependencies and change and uncertainty.

So in the Child Poverty Programme, for example, what we start to see was that tests of change carried out in booster wards, which are the wards that are identified as being having highest levels of poverty, highlighted that getting people back into work was dependent on a series of really complex issues faced by families, for example, caring responsibilities and families who have no access to childcare or families where English isn't their first language. So, at this stage in the programme, they were starting to acknowledge the limitations of that top-down reporting and information sharing. And what we saw is they were starting to explore spaces which felt more collaborative and provided opportunities for learning and innovation.



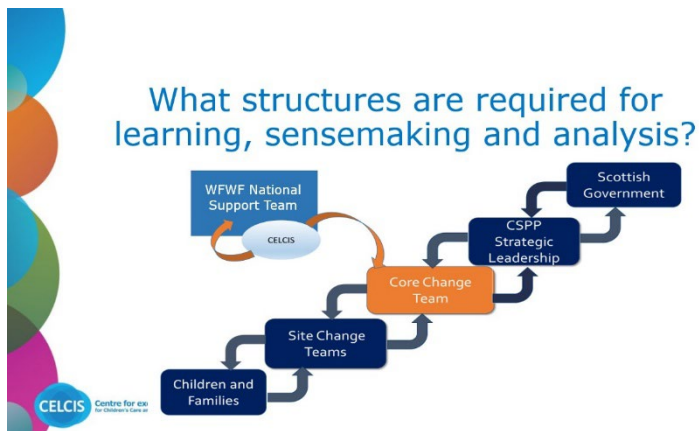
What do we want these new ways of working to look like?

- Valuing lived experience
- Being flexible and adaptive
- Non judgemental & empathic
- Building trusting relationships
- Providing truly co-ordinated support

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So as highlighted, as we can see in the CELCIS Children's Services reform research, we heard that barriers to multi-agency working include siloed working, professional power imbalances and professional hierarchies. So, our focus in Glasgow was to lean in and to support leaders to consider new ways of working which cut across these organisational boundaries and establish service models and brought together the multi-agency team in a different way. So, paying attention to, as we can see, valuing lived experience, being flexible and adaptive, non-judgmental and empathic,

building trust in relationships and providing a truly coordinated support, which speaks to modelling the ways in which we are aiming to work with families.



So you can see from this slide here, it's quite self-explanatory, but in this model you'll see how some of the core multi-agency practises I've just spoken to in the previous slide can best be supported through a cascading learning system or structure. And this is where all levels of the system are interdependent on one another.

So in order, for example, to enable these desired system behaviours and practices to thrive and be sustainable over time, what we need is an enabling structure which aligns with the shift in culture. So, we know that sense making and analysis is key to a learning system and we know that connexions and feedback loops or circular ways of communicating information between each level of the system are key from children and families to Scottish Government. So, you'll see in the middle there we've got the core change team – and for the purposes of today, we will equate that to the multidisciplinary team and the core coordination spaces. So, this is centrally located in the model to reflect the level of collaboration needed by them with all levels in the system. So, this core change team, for example, are part of a cascading system of support where efforts can't be sustained in isolation and they need organisational support and must have upward accountability to leaders who can provide that support. You'll also see that our external support is situated outside of, but feeding into the system. So, our role was to support leaders to create a culture and structure which would support and strengthen socially significant outcomes for children and families.

So how did we do this? One of the ways we supported leaders was to focus on the following core functions and that was creating stability, paying attention to relationships, capturing learning systemically and

closing the feedback loops. So some examples of that were with creating stability, really encouraging leaders to develop shared values and strategic intent and provide clear guiding principles for the work, including being clear about scope, being very clear about rationales for decision making at a strategic level, supporting the behaviours and the multidisciplinary programme to collaborate well by valuing diverse perspectives and knowledge and bringing all of this together into shared spaces. Just like we saw in that cascade model previously, really intentionally bringing the tests of change from the programme in to inform iterative next steps and encourage experimentation and encouraging cultural learning from failure and success. And really as part of the work, we also supported leaders to create opportunities for delivering key messages that invited contributions from the multidisciplinary team, not just reported down, and help them to make sense of them and to contribute to some of the rationales. So, we start to see some developments in the next few weeks, and we saw the multidisciplinary team coming together in different ways.



## Progress

*Leaders made 5 commitments:*

1. Leadership Development
2. Guiding Principles
3. Reflection & Direction
4. Innovation & Development
5. Learning

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So, what evolved from this work was a culmination of what I have just described. Some weeks later we were invited to a team day development event run by the Child Poverty Programme. And there we supported leaders to make 5 commitments to the multidisciplinary programme going forward. And like I said, this was a culmination of the core functions that I've just spoken to in the previous slide.



## Progress:

- Increased use of systems-thinking language and tools in leadership discussions and documents.
- There are now spaces created for integration and learning
- Evidence of reflective practice influencing decision-making (e.g. strategic shifts, adaptations).
- Changes to the way in which multi disciplinary fortnightly sessions are led and facilitated
- Shared learning sessions from workstream leads and opportunities for discussion, reflection, making connections across the programme and thinking through next steps about how best to make links with other parts of the system that support local communities (including third sector supports)
- Recognizing that voice and participation needs to be strengthened to inform the work



So what we began to notice, as you'll see from the slide, is we really saw a shift towards a more open and collaborative culture. So, leaders really moving away from providing answers to facilitating dialogue and sense making. Leaders starting to create safe spaces that encourage questioning and constructive challenge. And we saw meetings shift from top down to becoming a bit more reflective with people engaging in collective problem solving and systems focused discussion. And most crucially, there was this continuing increase in recognition of the need to further strengthen voice and participation to inform the work.

So, a really important part of this work has been the Centre for Civic Innovation, who bring a certain methodology with them in supporting data and learning. And this really strengthens the programme in terms of their specialist skill set. So, I'm going to pass you over now to Stevie and Magriet who are going to go on to speak about what this work looks like in practice.



### Fostering a learning culture The Innovation and Learning Framework

**Magriet Cruywagen**  
Research-Practice Collaboration Lead  
Glasgow Health Determinants Research Collaboration

**Stevie McGowan**  
Design & Innovation Lead,  
Centre for Civic Innovation | Glasgow City Council

**NIHR** Health Determinants  
Research Collaboration  
Glasgow

**CENTRE  
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CIVIC  
INNOVATION**



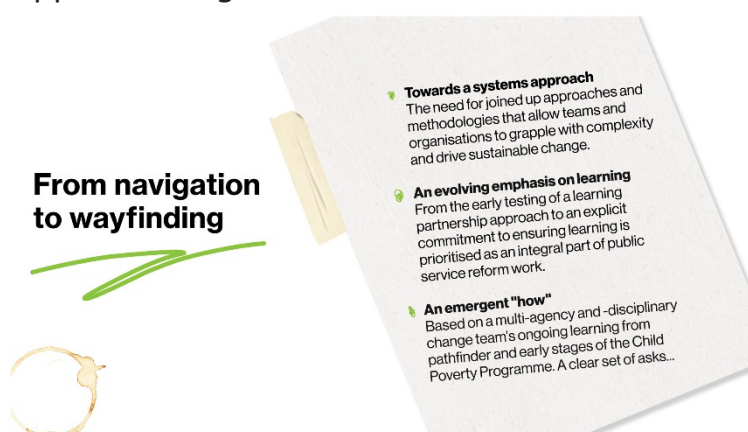
## Magriet Cruywagen

Great, thank you so much, Debbie. Just a brief note of introduction, thank you to Heather for the kind introduction at the beginning. As she mentioned, I am currently working with the Glasgow Health Determinants

Research Collaboration as their lead for research practise collaboration. And alongside that, I also work at the University of Glasgow in their School of Education as a research associate.

Over the past five years, give or take, I've been working with the City of Glasgow on a range of projects related to child and family poverty, with a central focus on how we might foster and strengthen a culture of learning, as well as reflective practice. And a lot of this work has been in the context of multi-agency teams, who are grappling with complex wicked problems. But as we begin this afternoon, I'll find a few key aspects of the Glasgow context. And my colleague Stevie will expand on a few of these in a moment.

So the first thing that is well worth highlighting is that Glasgow has articulated a shared city-wide vision, which is to reduce family poverty and inequalities in Glasgow's communities through public service reform that prioritises person-centred and place-based approaches. And this shared vision, which was captured in the city's 2024 local outcome improvement plan, is in many ways the culmination of early exploration and learning that happened between 2022 and 2024 through the city's multi-agency Child Poverty Pathfinder. And through the Child Poverty Programme, which has emerged from that initial Pathfinder, Glasgow continues to build on early investments in systemic change, as well as more effective ways of working across organisations and sectors. And all of this is with the objective of creating a public service landscape that supports Glasgow's families and communities to flourish.



And as Glasgow continues on this journey, there's an awareness that multi-agency and disciplinary change teams, and Debbie referred to this a moment ago, this is really integral to how the Child Poverty Programme operates. There's an acknowledgement that these teams need to be supported to transition their practise as well as their orientation from one

of navigating to one of wayfinding, particularly as they wrestle with some very complex social challenges - and child and family poverty is a really core focus there as I've highlighted. And a key discipline as well as lens in this undertaking centres on systems thinking and approaches that reflect the need for more joined up ways of working and methodologies that allow teams and organisations to proactively engage with complexity, while also driving sustainable change in how public services are developed, as well as how they're delivered and continually improved. And as Glasgow's work through the Child Poverty Programme has developed, one thing that we've observed is an evolving emphasis on learning. In the context of its precursor, which was the Pathfinder, we had an opportunity to engage in the early prototyping and testing of a learning partnership approach. And this has since developed into an even stronger and more explicit commitment to ensuring that learning is prioritised as an integral part of the public service reform work that continues to happen through that program. And something that we observed in the last year - so that was in 2025 - as we worked with the Child Poverty Programme's multi-agency team, was an emergent, an ask that came from the team around a clearer how. So really being able to articulate a clear process for how they work together and how they navigate or how they find their way through complexity. And in response to these asks that emerged during development days, as well as a range of other learning and capacity building sessions, the team worked with the team at the Centre for Civic Innovation, as well as the HDRC on the development of the Innovation and Learning framework. And what I'll do now is I'll hand over to Stevie, who's going to tell you a bit more about the framework that we've developed and how that scaffolds the multidisciplinary collaboration that's happening through the Child Poverty Programme.

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### **Stevie McGowan**

Thanks, Magriet. Hi, everyone. I'm Stevie McGowan. I'm the Design and Innovation Lead at the Centre for Civic Innovation here at Glasgow City Council. I'm also a design expert with the Design Council and an associate designer with the V&A Dundee, where I get to feed into design policy nationally. Today, I'd like to take you on a short journey through how we design for good in Glasgow, specifically how we combine design, data and collaboration to address real challenges faced by communities and how

that work is shaping public service reform and policy development in the city.

So at the Centre for Civic Innovation, our work is grounded in helping the city better understand people's lived experiences and translating those insights into meaningful change. We focus on five core activities:

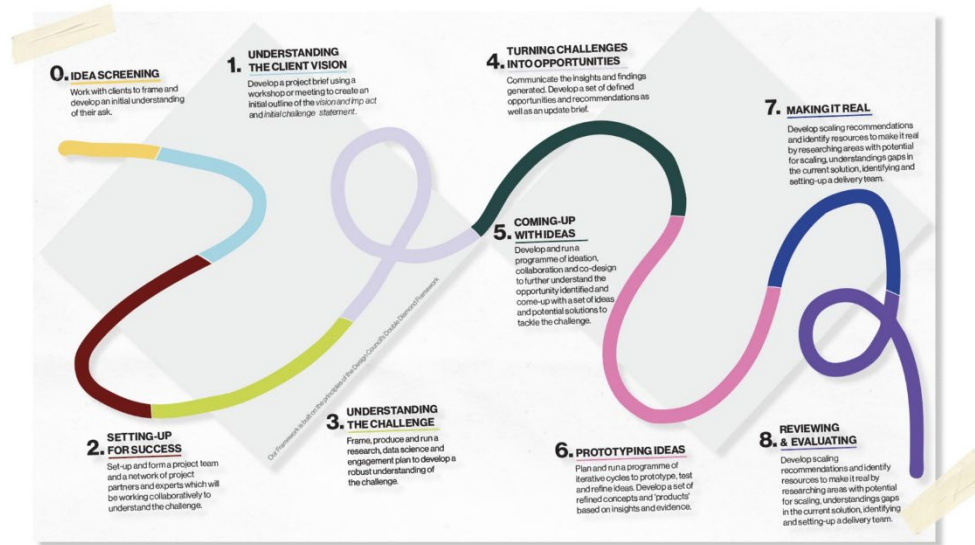
- solving complex problems with people,
- developing new ways of working,
- understanding what people want and need,
- creating knowledge building capacity,
- ultimately understanding and addressing poverty.

These pillars help ensure we are working on the right problems, not just repeating the same approaches.

In Glasgow, our Child Poverty Programme has undertaken significant and thoughtful exploratory work to reimagine our current approach to tackling child poverty. Focusing on people, place and data, we've established the conditions necessary to secure whole system change to address inequality and disadvantage. To redesign services that allow communities to flourish, we must foster trust, build stronger community connections, and empower individuals to be part of decision-making processes within their communities. Developing a stronger system where we work more collaboratively, share resources, and have a collective vision with our third sector, will empower the council to develop asset-based systems and infrastructure that creates a citizen-centred culture where we listen to our people and empower them to participate.

The fight against child poverty in Glasgow is real. 26% of our children live in poverty, which is 25,690 children. Each year we produce the Child Poverty Report in Glasgow. Its purpose is to support those working to alleviate child poverty. It informs decisions and shapes resource allocation and provides a shared evidence base for the city.

# Our eight phases of innovation and learning...



Promoting a design-led, citizen-centred approach requires sustained effort and culture change. We've developed a model based on the Design Council's Double Diamond, a framework for innovation and learning focused on people and planet. This was designed and tested across a range of policy areas, including tackling poverty, redesigning the city's employability system, and tackling climate change. Using design, data and collaboration, the CCI is exploring innovative ways to solve societal challenges that lift families out of poverty.

Our framework for innovation and learning has eight key stages. The initial stage we call idea screening, where we work with project sponsors or initiators to frame and develop an initial understanding of a potential idea, a systemic question or challenge and/or a service or policy priority. We do this to ensure ideas, places or areas of investigation align with strategic priorities and aims of the Child Poverty Programme before resources are committed. This is where the framework really starts with the team as we look at understanding the vision and stage two. Here we develop a project brief to create an initial outline of the vision and anticipated impact, as well as an initial challenge statement. This allows us to build a shared understanding of a request, its origin and what it's trying to achieve by working closely with project sponsors and strategic stakeholders to contextualise the objectives and fill the gaps in the picture. The next stage is setting up for success where we convene a project team and a supporting network of project partners and experts that work together to understand the challenge. This lets us bring the

right people together by assembling the correct mix of expertise, skills and roles and establishing how the project team will work together. This includes governance, shared values, approaches, and practices.

Understanding the challenge follows. This is where we frame, design and implement a research and engagement plan to develop a robust understanding of the challenge. This ensures we clearly define and frame the actual problem carefully, using a design-led approach to test assumptions, engage with a wide range of stakeholders and weave together different types of data to build a robust evidence-based and shared understanding of the challenge ahead.

The next stage is turning challenges into opportunities. This is where we communicate the insights and findings generated, develop a set of defined opportunities and recommendations, as well as an updated brief. We do this to synthesise insights and to clear opportunities for change. Focusing effort where design adds the more strategic value and where project sponsors can proceed with confidence and get approval for the next phase. Our next stage is then where we start generating ideas. We develop our run of programme of ideation and collaboration and co-design to further understand the identified challenge or opportunity and come up with a set of ideas and potential solutions to tackle it. This allows the team to explore and co-design potential solutions grounded in a varied evidence base, while encouraging creativity. Developing ideas with those who are closely affected by a challenge ensures moving beyond assumptions towards solutions that are more likely to meet real needs. Stage 6 is where we start prototyping ideas. We plan and run a programme of iterative cycles to prototype, test and refine ideas, develop a set of refined concepts and products based on emergent insights and established evidence. This lets us bring ideas to life by turning them into tangible prototypes and test them rapidly in a range of different scenarios with end users and delivery partners, ensuring refinement before significant investment is made.

Stage 7 is making it real. We develop scaling recommendations and scope the resources required to make it real by researching areas with potential for scaling, understanding gaps in the current service or policy landscape, as well as identifying and setting up a delivery team. We do this to support the transition from tested prototype to sustainable service, process, policy or system that can be scaled and adapted for use across

the areas of the city. This includes commissioning, investment decisions and adaptation for different contexts.

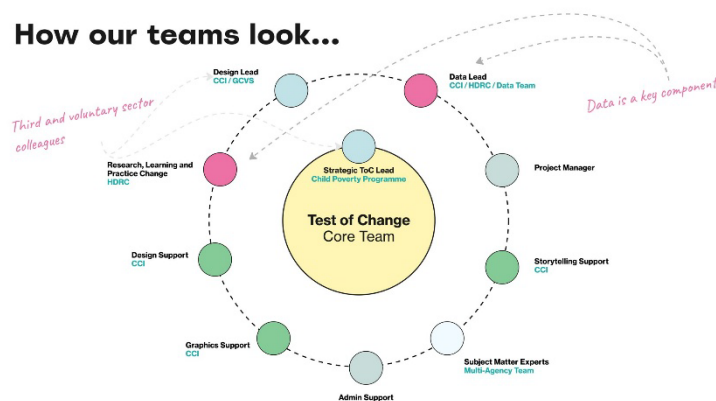
And that brings us to reviewing and evaluating. For ease of explaining the system, we call this stage 8, but actually evaluation and learning is prioritised throughout the framework. However, at this stage, a summative evaluation and review process is set up to ensure the entire process, including ongoing iteration and adaptation, is assessed systematically and transparently. We do this to capture learning about the process and outcomes, ensuring delivery aligns with the programme's vision, as well as a test of change prioritised outcomes. Key indicators are co-developed, monitored and analysed to better understand impact, as well as social return on investment. While many challenges and risks are mitigated before making it real, adjustments are often needed and careful review of projects in action allows test of change teams as well as the Child Poverty Programme leadership to clarify or reframe the original intentions.

Working directly with more than 10,000 colleagues, citizens and community organisations in the last three years, this approach is inspiring a network of city change makers with an ecosystem of trust, strong community connexions and empowered citizens. We've also established a working partnership with Glasgow's Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC), a joint initiative of the council, a number of universities in the city and the Health and Social Care Partnership to embed research, learning and data even further in the innovation and learning framework, changing culture and practise across the city. Researchers and practitioners from the HDRC are embedded in our multidisciplinary teams and leading on the expansion of the framework as a key vehicle for fostering a learning culture.

The Child Poverty Programme in Glasgow has implemented this innovation and learning framework to support this public service reform agenda. The framework provides a strategic and structured approach to delivering public service reform in Glasgow. It enables partners across the system to work in a consistent and coordinated way, supporting collective learning, shared understanding and evidence driven decision making. It is our rapid learning system for systemic change and capacity building. It provides a clear pathway from ideas to impact, ensuring innovation is aligned, tested and ready to scale. The framework helps teams to build shared understanding of families' experiences, prioritise and test ideas,

systems and services, strengthen decision making and keep citizens at the centre of everything we design.

### How our teams look...



We bring together multidisciplinary teams that include designers, data specialists, researchers, storytellers, project managers, economic development specialists, third sector colleagues, academics, graphic support, subject matter experts, and more. The game changer for us, though, has not only been working in multidisciplinary teams, but rather multi-agency teams, working together on the same projects in the same rooms with a structured and facilitated methodology to support real and impactful innovation. Colleagues from across council teams, from finance and economic development to communities and financial inclusion, are working in collaboration with third sector colleagues, city partners in health and social care, housing providers and more, embedded in the project teams together with a shared vision. Ending family poverty is not on the agenda. It is the agenda. This mix allows evidence, experience, technical skill and creativity to work together deliberately and effectively. Throughout our process, data is a key component. It helps us understand challenges across the city, but no single data set ever gives us the full picture. We draw on multiple sources and methods, combine quantitative and qualitative insights, and build a deeper understanding of lived experiences. By weaving insights together, we create a more holistic human view of each challenge.

The data, and more importantly, the insight we develop, is used in many ways in the city. As mentioned, it contributes to the annual Child Poverty Report. The report combines both qualitative and quantitative data. Storytelling is a really strong element of the report, and we strive to elevate the voices and experiences of both those living in poverty as well as those working hard across the city to alleviate the challenges. The Child Poverty Dashboard is a tool we've developed to allow colleagues

throughout the city to understand the landscape and support decision making, helping them prioritise resources and focus budgets. We also use data to strengthen our approach around engagement and research planning, resource prioritisation and strengthening data sharing partnerships.

Our combined design and data approach has influenced major developments. The Child Poverty Programme itself was a development of the initial Child Poverty Report. The Scottish Government set up a Child Poverty Pathfinder based on the early data work and that then developed into a 10-year child poverty programme. The city has been able to identify and target efforts in 10 booster areas within the city. Initially, these allowed us to focus the Child Poverty Programme in those areas, but policy and strategy across the council family has now shifted to be targeting those booster boards across all services. We've developed a number of data sharing partnerships, including an exciting partnership with the government's Department of Work and Pensions, who have recently allowed us special permission to actively target citizens who we know are living in poverty, using their data sets and combining them with ours. This could be a real game changer in this space and we're being seen as a national trial. Our ongoing collaboration with the HDRC has also allowed us to augment the data expertise and experience in the CCI team, while exploring ways to further strengthen the council family's capacity to critically engage with, and use data evidence and research in the development and the improvement of services, policies and processes.

By working in place-based, multi-agency and person-centred ways, we are creating a significant culture shift. We design and test viable policy and service prototypes, foster a learning culture, build leadership capability and capacity for change, strengthen multi-agency capacity, and identify both successful practice and areas needing improvement. Ultimately, this work is about readying leadership for change at all levels of the city; while building and empowering multi-agency change capacity for true public service reform. We believe our innovation and learning framework gives us a structured, transparent approach to preparing and supporting decision making to support public service reform. It aligns with and constructively reinforces the Scottish Government's route map and

national principles of holistic whole family supports' 4 key drivers for change:

- children and families at the centre,
- availability and access,
- whole system approach
- joined up support, and workforce and culture.

Skills such as analytical thinking, criticality, resilience, flexibility, leadership, and social influence are becoming increasingly essential. This reinforces the importance of design systems thinking and evidence-led decision making and future-proofing the work across the city. There's plenty for us to do and many challenges ahead, but in our city, our slogan is people make Glasgow and innovation is in our DNA. I'll hand you back to Magriet on that.

### **MC** Magriet Cruywagen

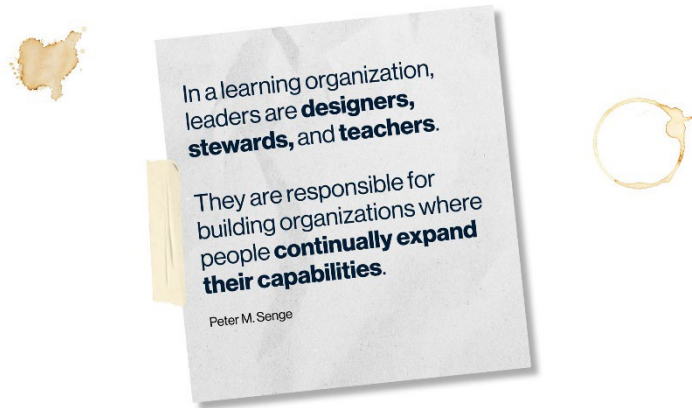
Great, thanks, Stevie. So just as we begin to conclude, we wanted to leave you with a few reflections on the type of leadership that we need for to foster a learning culture, as well as the systems that support that. And really at its core, this is about leadership that actively stewards that shared vision that Glasgow has articulated around the reduction of family poverty and inequalities.

So, I referred to leadership for learning, but as we were preparing this presentation, I realised that the heading could be leadership of, leadership for, but also leadership as learning, the importance of acknowledging learning as a core competence for any leader, regardless of what their particular role is within an organization. And Peter Senge refers to leaders as designers, stewards, teachers, but also builders, the builders of organisations that create this type of enabling context for staff at all different levels to be engaging in learning. And this certainly has a cultural dimension, but it's also about putting the types of systems, workflows, and incentives in place and ensuring that these are continually developed but also governed well to afford team members both the time and the space to learn. So, it's about leaders who have that clarity and that commitment, but also an openness to continually learning themselves. And we refer here to learning by example. So rather than, particularly strategic, leaders seeing themselves as apart from learning processes, acknowledging that they need to be actively involved in cross-

organizational and sectoral learning and modelling what a learning culture might look like. And part of this is the ongoing development of learning disciplines in their own practice so that others within their organisations and teams can see this modelled on an ongoing basis.

And for us, a core emphasis with the work as we move into the next phase and continue to consolidate what we've developed is around the importance of multi-generational capacity building, where learning disciplines are inculcated in organisational cultures and that value for learning as an integral part of the work rather than something that happens after the fact or on top is embedded within, particularly the multi-agency and multidisciplinary, teams who are working with the innovation and learning framework. But the acknowledgement of the potential for this to be scaled out across the Glasgow City Council, as well as its network of partners, in the city who are delivering public services. And through the innovation and learning framework, we have the opportunity to prototype tools and workflows that scaffold this type of learning. In the first instance, our focus is on working closely with the Child Poverty Programmes leadership team to look at how we can actively involve them in the learning that's happening through the development of specific tests of change through the framework. But we also interface with other key structures in the city, such as the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership, and endeavour to work closely with other regional and national partners as well. And really what this comes down to is thinking through how we can be stewarding knowledge more effectively within and across organisations to ensure that there is a long-term institutional memory that drives new defaults in practice and process.

One example of how we do this, and I won't go into too much detail, is through a series of stage gates. So really creating a structured process for accountability, dialogue and knowledge mobilisation that also actively involves strategic leaders in the process and projects that we develop through the framework.



In a learning organization,  
leaders are **designers,**  
**stewards,** and **teachers.**

They are responsible for  
building organizations where  
people **continually expand**  
**their capabilities.**

Peter M. Senge

I'll just leave you with this quote from Peter Senge around learning organisations and the importance of leaders as designers, stewards and teachers who are also building the types of organisations where the people who work within them can continually expand their capabilities. And this is a key reference point for us as we continue to develop and refine the innovation and learning framework. I'll conclude there and hand back to you, Heather. Thank you all so much for coming along today.

### **HO** Heather Ottaway

Thank you so much, Stevie, Magriet and Debbie. So fascinating and such a lot to think about. We're going to have, as I said at the top of the session, we're going to have probably 3 minutes now, just, which I know is not a huge amount of time, but just for you to have a bit of time to pause and reflect and please do put some reflections in the chat and also either on the questions that are in there already for you to think about or anything else that's sprung to mind during the presentations. But also do use that time to put any questions or curiosities that you have for our speakers today. And we'll pick those up in discussion in 3 minutes time. So we'll come back together for the discussion at 1.44.

Okay, so thank you so much to those of you that have put some questions in the chat. Really, really helpful questions. I'm going to start with ones directed towards Magriet and Stevie, which is: were there any big challenges with implementing this approach and how did you manage that?

### **MC** Magriet Cruywagen

Well, I'll start off, Stevie and then you can jump in as well. I think it's important to acknowledge that in many ways the framework itself

emerged from a number of challenges that the multi-agency and disciplinary team were navigating in trying to come together and to work together effectively, whether that is through collaboration or other ways of approaching partnership working. And so, we see it as an ongoing process of refining that framework. So even within the process of an individual test of change that's taken through the framework, there are ongoing feedback loops and opportunities to sense check the extent to which the framework and the toolkit that underpins it is as useful as possible to those teams. So, I think from our perspective, it's always really important to say that while this provides a really clearly structured process for teams to work together and also to interface more effectively with a range of different leadership structures, it's scaffolding rather than a fully finished building. And so, we are needing to optimise it as we go along. And one of the advantages has been the opportunity to have even the colleagues who are working on the development of the framework, as Stevie mentioned, it's the health determinants research collaboration alongside the Centre for Civic Innovation but also drawing in expertise and perspectives from other partners wherever we can. We've worked closely with CELCIS to be able to learn with and from them as well, just acknowledging that these are both the way of working as well as the subject matter and some of the policy areas that colleagues are grappling with are very complex. And so, it needs to be a team effort, and we need to also be agile and willing to adapt as we go along. It's easy for me to sit here and say that, but that does take a lot of energy and a lot of collaborative stamina.

MS

### **Stevie McGowan**

Yeah, to pick up on that as well. We've not just developed this in the last wee while, we've been working in this way for probably 9 or 10 years and working across a whole range of different areas to really try and embed this way of working. There was the council set up a centre of excellence for data, I think maybe 10 years ago, and we kind of came out of that team. We used design to try and solve problems for different projects to try and build a bit of momentum. We brought staff with us really and I think even if we look at the Child Poverty Programme itself, the leadership there, that was the real big one for us as a team. When the government put in the objectives for all the councils to reduce child poverty. They came to us to say we actually don't really know the picture

on poverty because nobody does. Even the government's figures are just extrapolated data. So, they came to us to see if there was anything we could do. And really that was based on relationships, the people who were leading that team at the time had worked with me and some of my colleagues previously. We did a lot of work to try and understand what they were looking to find out and basically the Child Poverty Report came out of that. We did a lot of workshopping and stuff and they were very, very anti the touchy-feely storytelling side of things. And at one point, we ran a session where they actually come up and gave us a hug because of what had come out of that session, which neither of us really wanted to do, if I'm being honest. But it did really bring a breakthrough there. And it started to really build political momentum, I think, with that one, which was really helpful. We worked on a whole range of things, small or big, to try and embed it in the FOI process in the city. There was a team looking at that and they did one session with us, and they went from having one thing that they could do to have 29 things that they could do and implement right away. So again, there was lots and lots of things. And then we've worked with the employability team for almost two years, which has really reset the agenda for what they're looking to do around employability and started to really develop new services and programmes there. So, it's a whole range of things. I think, yes, it is difficult, it remains difficult, it will always be difficult because we're working on things that no one really knows how to solve. But what the frameworks allowed us to do through the programme is to have something that people can kind of hold on to and know that they've got experts that can take them through each step.

**HO Heather Ottaway**

Thank you. And I'm really hearing what you're saying about relationships in that and how crucial relationship building is in this context. There's been a couple of other questions that have come up, which is also around challenges. And I think it would be for the three of you to answer. And it's about: how do you ensure time was made available for this work and obviously was OK'ed for this work and ensuring it was prioritised at different levels of the system as well as time and day-to-day practice? I don't know which of the three of you would like to answer that?

**MS Stevie McGowan**

Happy to go, you're probably sick of my voice, but I'm happy jump in. So, I suppose we're lucky in Glasgow that they've invested in a dedicated team, so my team has grown over the years from a few people to, there's now I think 12 in my actual team, but there's about 26, 27 who are part of a collaborative working team and then we have a wider programmes and there's probably about 40 or 50 in it. So, in terms of making time available, there's at least 15, 20 of us that is our actual job to do this. What we've been able to do over time is create ways of working that means we can bring people out of their day job just for an hour or two and maximise what we get from them. And we do a lot of work in the background. I think there's lots of stuff around, for example, Scottish approach to service design training. A number of our colleagues have gone on that training, but they're then kind of left to their own devices and they were struggling a wee bit. So, the employability programme would be one opportunity where we were able to come in and help them. They were kind of a wee bit lost with the tools and being able to help them in kind of an hour or two a week and we do the work in the background. I think that's one of the things I would absolutely say about this way of working. You can build capacity and skills and everybody to work this way, but you do need some specific professional skill sets like anything else. So, I think what we've been able to do is test the balance of that over the last 10 years. And we seem to have quite a good mix just now and then again, it's like, as Magriet says, it's bringing in other colleagues. So, we absolutely don't own this. It's Glasgow's framework and CELCIS and HDRC and all the other people that we work with that absolutely are adding to that mix. So, it's just a continuous thing. I think the big shift has been politically and at senior level, they understand the level of change that's required in the city and in the country, that we have to do things differently. So, it's, again, over time we've been able to evidence that we are working has an impact. And then they're trying to kind of buying into that now on a grander scale. So, it's become easier to get time, I would say. It's still a work in progress like anything, but it's showing the worth and then people buy into it.

**MC Magriet Cruywagen**

And just to add to that, I think absolutely something that we observe as well is there can be a rhetorical commitment to learning and to a learning culture, but it's about making the implicit explicit. And that has been one

of the opportunities that we continue to harness through the innovation and learning framework, that it creates that clear structure. And it also puts us in a position to make a clearer ask. For example, if we are asking subject matter experts to contribute to a process, what might that entail? Are they involved in the entire process or are we asking them to come in at particular phases and contribute to the ongoing learning? And even practical things we spoke about: workflows, tools, processes, to what extent is this being reflected in a workload tracker at a team level? These are things that can seem quite boring and administrative at times, but they make a real difference in terms of enacting that commitment. If senior leadership are saying learning is part of the work, then it does need to be reflected in what days look like. And as Stevie said, the value of having a dedicated team who can come alongside other colleagues and create that space they can come into where there's a structured process for them to share some of their insights, but also to go away perhaps with a set of questions and prompts that they can feed into their work as well. But it definitely is something that does bear and needs to be reinforced and it needs to be structured as well.

HO

**Heather Ottaway**

Thanks, that's really helpful. Debbie, is there anything you want to add to that?



**Deborah Byrne**

I think I would just echo everything that Magriet and Stevie have said. I suppose from our point of view, we were really fortunate to already have long standing relationships with the leaders of the Child Poverty Programme at the time of stepping in, as I talked about in the presentation. So, we were really fortunate in that way. I think it always boils down to relationships. We know that working with leadership, it's encouraging leaders to think about those really core functions of building trust, trust and relationships in a multi-agency team, making sure that there's clear lines of autonomy and scope and decision making and that they've got the capacity to do the things that only they can do in the time that they have is something that's crucial in our work, I think.

HO

**Heather Ottaway**

Thank you. And we've got a few questions that are about how do you

track and monitor success, but I suppose I would also start with what does success look like in this frame for yourselves? And particularly, I suppose, for children and families.

**MC Magriet Cruywagen**

Once again, Stevie, please feel free to jump in, because I think it's important to highlight that that actually has a multi-dimensional answer. As Stevie highlighted, the framework which is currently being used by the Child Poverty Programme tries to hold in balance a focus on public service reform that leads to better outcomes for children and families. So there's always the risk of being so focused on how we work together but not being able to progress that meaningfully to impact in terms of families and communities. But one of the advantages with the framework is having a clear commitment to ongoing monitoring and evaluation throughout that takes that dual lens. So, there's a process focus, but there's also an impact focus. And it might be in certain instances that success looks like identifying at the earliest phases that actually the challenge that we thought we needed to address is already being addressed. So, what can we do to amplify existing successful practice? That is a bigger success than going away and insisting that we prototype something new just so we can point to something new and say, look what we did over here. Success is sometimes about amplifying the existing successful practice, but it's also about identifying areas where there's the opportunity to stop doing certain things. But in other instances, it will be about working through that process, taking a design-led way of working that allows us to swiftly prototype ideas for whether it's services or policies that can then be tested and scaled and ensuring that every part of the process is reviewed and evaluated so that that learning can inform future practice. But we can also see where we need to be optimising this way of working or how it might inform broader systemic optimization as well. But I'll hand over to you, Stevie, as well, if you want to come in and highlight any other aspects.

**MS Stevie McGowan**

No, I think ultimately success will look like reducing poverty in the city, I think ultimately, is obviously what we need to do. I think where we've got to at that stage in the programme is giving us a good base to then go and try and do that. I think realistically the scale of the problem; we have to

try and understand it better and that's where a lot of the time has been spent. I think also there's a lot of time being spent in setting up - I see there's a range of questions around the multi-agency side of things. Being able to set that up to actually work in that way has been a success, I would say, that it doesn't really exist in many places and we're kind of aligned in a way of working now. The city is in the process of working with the government to develop a new strategy around the next four years in terms of what the actual aims and objectives are over this piece within the 10-year programme, which should set out clear objectives of actual deliverables. But I think the ultimate deliverable is that we have to reduce the number of kids in poverty and we're targeting the people who are most at risk. And it's been good to be able to have the data to identify those, but actually there are lots of things stopping us moving forward and that's where a lot of the work's been. So most of the data that we've got we can only use for research. So again, it's like trying to lobby for policy change and lots of different data protocols to change. It's not easy, it takes time to do that, but we are in a good place now, I think, to really properly grow. But yeah, I would say most of the success from our side is about actually being ready to go now, I think, which has taken a long time and most of that is actually not down to us, it's there's so many moving parts that we just have to keep moving. So yeah.

HO

### **Heather Ottaway**

We are coming to the end of the webinar now. I think that was so helpful and so helpful I hope for people to begin to think about this in relation to the work that what they're doing in their own areas as well. Such a lot of useful and helpful things to think about. I'm going away, I'll be thinking about lots of different things around this this afternoon. So, it just really remains for me to say thank you so much to Stevie, to Magriet and Debbie and for everyone who's attending. And also, to say that the next webinar that we're hosting that is looking about sharing the learning from Whole Family Support is going to be happening on Thursday, the 28th of May. We'll share the link to register for this in the chat and in your post event e-mail and the session is going to focus on the role of collaboration in supporting change. We'll hear about collaborative planning, action, decision making processes and leadership experiences from colleagues, both in Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership and East Lothian Council. So, thanks very much again for coming along, everyone, and

have a good afternoon.  
Bye-bye.

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