

SLFx LUNCHTIME LEARNING WEBINAR

**What next? How learning from Covid-19 can
support Scottish leaders to create a better
future**

28 May 2024

STRUCTURE OF THE WEBINAR

- Background - Covid-19 Learning and Evaluation Oversight Group
- Key learning from evaluation evidence - trust, risk & accountability and equality & inclusion
- Case study 1 – The Corra Foundation - “Increased Equity and Accessibility in Grant Making (20 minutes with questions)
- Key learning from evaluation evidence - collaboration & partnership working, geography, person-centred approaches
- Case study 2 – The Improvement Service - “Public Service Reform: Partnership Locality Working in Highland Perthshire” (20 mins with questions)
- Facilitated discussion - ‘what next?’ (20 minutes)

BACKGROUND - COVID-19 LEARNING AND EVALUATION OVERSIGHT GROUP

- Covid-19 created the conditions that led to an unusual or even unprecedented period of experimentation in the design and delivery of public services
- November 2021 - Deputy First Minister agreed to convene a COVID-19 learning & evaluation oversight group which ran for two years (concluded February 2024)
- Purpose of the group: **To bring together evidence to inform Scotland's recovery from COVID-19 and to learn from Scotland's response to COVID-19**
- The group included a mix of SG Directors and senior external stakeholders from the public and third sector, research organisations and Scottish Universities
- The group has had a particular focus on evidence and in particular, synthesising learning from evaluations of COVID-19 interventions

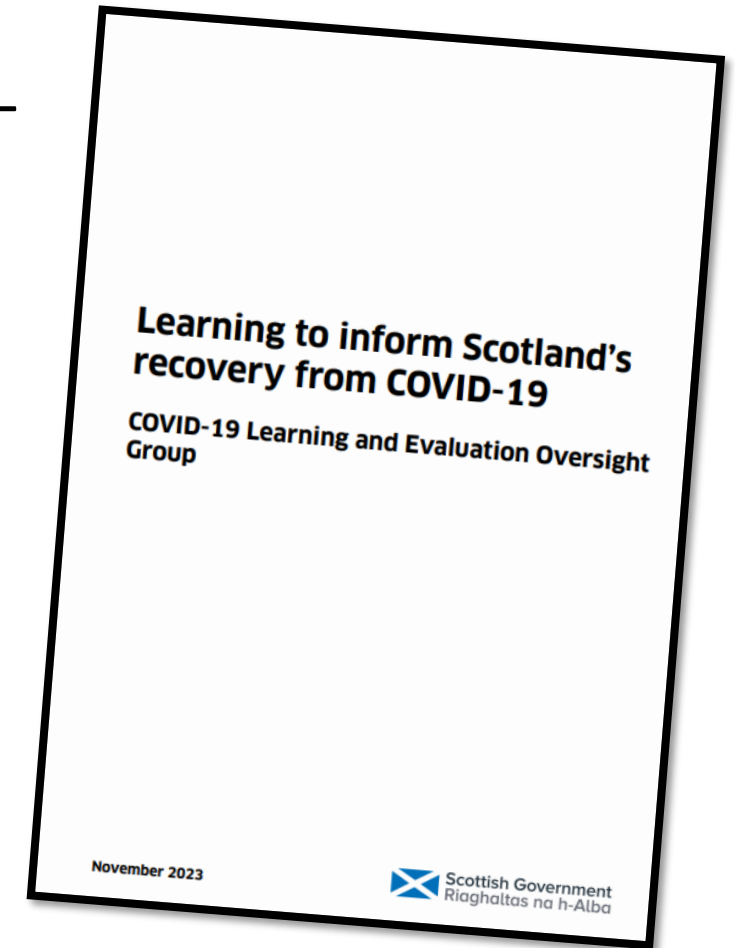
BACKGROUND - COVID-19 LEARNING & EVALUATION OVERSIGHT GROUP

Substantial programme of work over the lifetime of the group:

- Programme of grant funded expert reviews
- 'Learning from the pandemic' evidence papers
- **Synthesis of SG & Public Health Scotland evaluations of Covid-19 Interventions**
- **Four Covid Recovery workshops, with around 50 senior participants**
- **Learning from Person-Centred Approaches**
- Report on 'Evaluation during times of change'

BACKGROUND - LEARNING TO INFORM SCOTLAND'S RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

- Synthesises evidence from SG evaluations of Covid-19 interventions and other evidence sources
- Incorporates key points from four workshops held with senior leaders in late summer 2023
- The findings align with, and support, work that is being progressed as part of wider public service reform activity taking place across the public sector.



BACKGROUND - CROSS CUTTING THEMES

GEOGRAPHY

**ORGANISATIONAL
TRUST**

**ACTING WITH
URGENCY**

USE OF DATA

**REAPPRAISING
SECTORAL
CONTRIBUTIONS**

**EQUALITY AND
INCLUSION**

**RISK &
ACCOUNTABILITY**

**COLLABORATION
& PARTNERSHIP
WORKING**

**DIGITAL
TECHNOLOGY**

ORGANISATIONAL TRUST - Evidence from numerous studies illustrates the importance of public trust in effective policy delivery

- Public trust takes time to build but can be quickly diminished.
- The level of the public trust in organisations has a direct bearing on the effectiveness of policies. A lack of trust amongst disadvantaged groups can widen pre-existing inequalities.
- Trust between organisations is critical in supporting effective policy delivery. Where there were high levels of pre-existing trust between organisations, policy responses were able to be developed and delivered at pace.
- Public trust should be seen as central to Scotland's national resilience and future pandemic preparedness.

Insights from workshop participants:

- maintaining / reverting back to co-production with local partners and communities during the pandemic
- valuing and trusting local knowledge in national forums
- giving autonomy to local partners without unnecessary reporting requirements
- increased openness and transparency between cross sector partners

‘Maintain recognition of importance of place in building trust. Local partners have trust in the bank. Continue to build on that trust’

RISK & ACCOUNTABILITY - We need to learn from the ways in which organisations were given greater autonomy to take risks during the pandemic and ask whether we have got the balance right between risk and reward.

- During the pandemic, Local Authorities, community partnerships and voluntary organisations were given greater autonomy to take risks to implement solutions to support individuals and communities.
- The higher risk tolerance that existed during the pandemic is being replaced by a return to risk aversion and concern about lines of accountability.
- It is important to consider the risks of inaction (alongside the risks of action), especially for the most disadvantaged groups.

Insights from workshop participants:

- Desire to keep a more measured approach to risk taking
- New ways of delivering funding should be prioritised

'Recognition that taking risk doesn't automatically mean risk is not being managed'

“Greater awareness and analysis of risk/opportunity in advice and decision-making”

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION – There is a lack of evaluation evidence in Scotland on how and why Covid-19 interventions affected disadvantaged and equality groups

- There is a need to systematically collect better evidence on how policies are experienced by disadvantaged and marginalised groups.
- There is evidence to suggest that some COVID-19 interventions may have widened pre-existing inequalities.

Insights from workshop participants:

- We need visible leadership and a sustained focus on reducing inequalities
- This should 'set higher standards and expectations' and avoid equality and inclusion being 'an afterthought

[we need to]... 'develop mechanisms through which community engagement, and engagement with those suffering most from inequalities, can actively inform service design and policy'.

CASE STUDY 1 – THE CORRA FOUNDATION

**Increased Equity and Accessibility in Grant
Making**

Scottish Leaders Forum

Increased equity and accessibility in
grant-making



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FOUNDATION
voice • power • change

www.corra.scot

Ten-year strategy (2020-30)



Voice



Power



Change



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What we do



Grant making



Place-based work



Influencing change



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Our focus during COVID

Flexibility, Responsive, Adaptive, Collaborative.

- Co-design of funds with other funders, Scottish Government, intermediaries.
- Funds that aimed to support different needs (including Third Sector Resilience Fund, Wellbeing Fund, Supporting Communities).
- Application process that were easy and quick (often decisions within 10 working days).
- We went from a funder averaging 200 applications per annum to nearly 5,000.
- Innovations included pooling staff capacity across grant-makers, pro-active grants, payments to 'buddy' organisations / individuals.

What we learned

- Being 'open to all' isn't enough to make funding accessible and equitable
 - Access to good information about available funding is vital.
 - Criteria written for people who understood a 'funding landscape'.
 - Forms and questions often have emphasis on accountancy tests.
- Listening to new groups and communities we were reaching
 - Small grassroots organisations at the heart of their communities.
 - Connections with groups who had never engaged with funders.
 - Groups we were trying to reach still experienced barriers to funders.
- Improving processes and practices
 - Increased commitment to listening and co-design.
 - Trust = emphasis on why fund *as opposed to why not*.
 - Valuing small grants.

Learning in practice

Micro Grants – BOOST

- Collaborative fund; maximising skills, wider reach, shared risk and reduce bureaucracy for applicants.
- Rolling programme; grants up to £3k, grassroots community-led, streamlined and light touch processes.
- Impact for communities; sustaining and developing new activities, social connections, confidence in applying to other funding sources.
- Underpins the principles of Christie Commission.

Embedding our learning

- Leadership

- Organisational culture delivered through how Corra works.
- Encouraging staff to design new process (alternative payment options).
- Acknowledge the journey - we all tendency to focus on what is comfortable.

- Equity

- Increased involvement of people with lived expertise.
- Improved our capturing of applicant data around diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Anti-racism Action Plan.

- Risk

- Grants to support cash first anti-poverty measures; reaching un-constituted and un-banked groups.
- Acceptance you won't mitigate all risks, set clear risk appetite.
- Published fraud policies and practices.

How we work



**Listening and
responding**



**Building
relationships**



**Pursuing diversity,
equity and inclusion
(DEI)**



**Open, trusting,
flexible grant
maker**



**Contributing to
tackling climate
change**



**Willing
to be bold**



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CROSS CUTTING THEMES

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COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP WORKING - The Covid-19 pandemic necessitated and facilitated collaborative partnership working, between and within sectors, enabling an effective crisis response.

- The emergence of COVID-19 resulted in a clarity of purpose on a small shared set of outcomes across sectors and improved collaborations between organisations.
- Local government and third sector organisations were given greater autonomy to act and in many instances this resulted in improved outcomes.
- In some cases, collaborative partnerships forged during the pandemic have led to lasting changes in attitudes and relationships.

Insights from workshop participants:

- Keen to 'keep and build on the excellent cross-sector relationships that were established due to the pandemic'.
- A greater 'willingness to cut through siloes and organisational boundaries' and 'noticeably more willingness on all sides to 'step up' and take responsibility'
- Greater value placed on collaboration – *'Relationships and networks are "the work"'*

'Spinning up "hurricanes" of multi-disciplinary teams to tackle specific challenges that cross traditional boundaries'

GEOGRAPHY- Evaluations of COVID-19 interventions suggest that the effects and legacy of COVID-19 is likely to vary for rural and urban areas

- COVID-19 led to stronger recognition and appreciation of the value of local knowledge and understanding, and the importance of this in directing resources to those most in need.
- The greater autonomy provided to local and third sector organisations to flexibility use funding enabled 'local leaders to utilise the resources as required to meet outcomes that mattered'.
- The diversity of Scotland's rural and island communities should be taken into account when developing place-based solutions for recovery.

Insights from workshop participants

- Importance of local knowledge
- Valuing and trusting local knowledge in national forums
- Empowered, flexible and local services

[flexible funding allowed]... "local leaders to utilise the resources as required to meet outcomes that mattered".

LEARNING FROM PERSON-CENTRED APPROACHES

The report helps to define what constitutes a 'person-centred' approach, unpicks what this is in practice, what enables and supports such an approach, and what the benefits (and costs) might be of adopting a person-centred approach.

Focusses on 4 case studies of person-centred approaches to public service delivery during and immediately after the Covid-19 pandemic.

- **The Promise**
- **The Dundee Child Poverty Pathfinder**
- **The Scottish Drug Deaths Taskforce**
- **The Expert Review of Mental Health Services at HMYOI Polmont**

Attributes of a 'person-centred approaches'	Frequency	
	Always	Often
Holistic	X	
Ethical	X	
Relational	X	
Strengths/ assets based	X	
Intensive		X
On-going		X
Preventative		X
Bespoke		X
Local		X
Provides choice		X
Addresses power imbalances		X
Takes risks		X

CASE STUDY 2 – THE IMPROVEMENT SERVICE AND PERTH AND KINROSS - HIGHLAND PERTHSHIRE CASE STUDY

**Public Service Reform: Partnership Locality
Working in Highland Perthshire**



*The 'go to' organisation for
Local Government
improvement in Scotland*

Covid Recovery



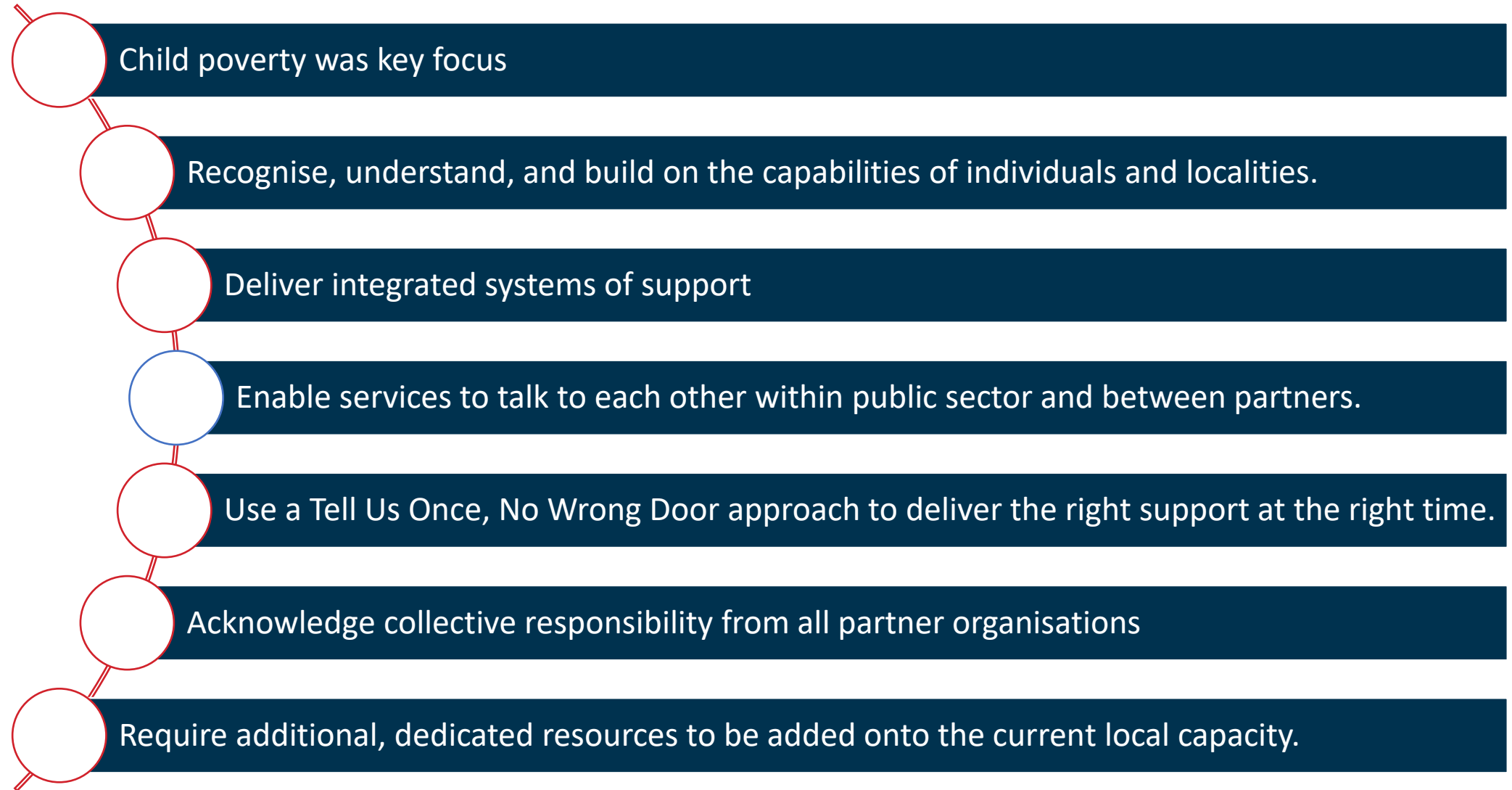
Public Service Reform

How it Began: The Covid Recovery Strategy

- Published in October 2021 the Strategy set out Scottish Government's vision for recovery.
- The Strategy provided the overall principles that should guide recovery plans.
- Strong focus on **partnership working** between Scottish Government, Local Government and the Private and Third Sector.



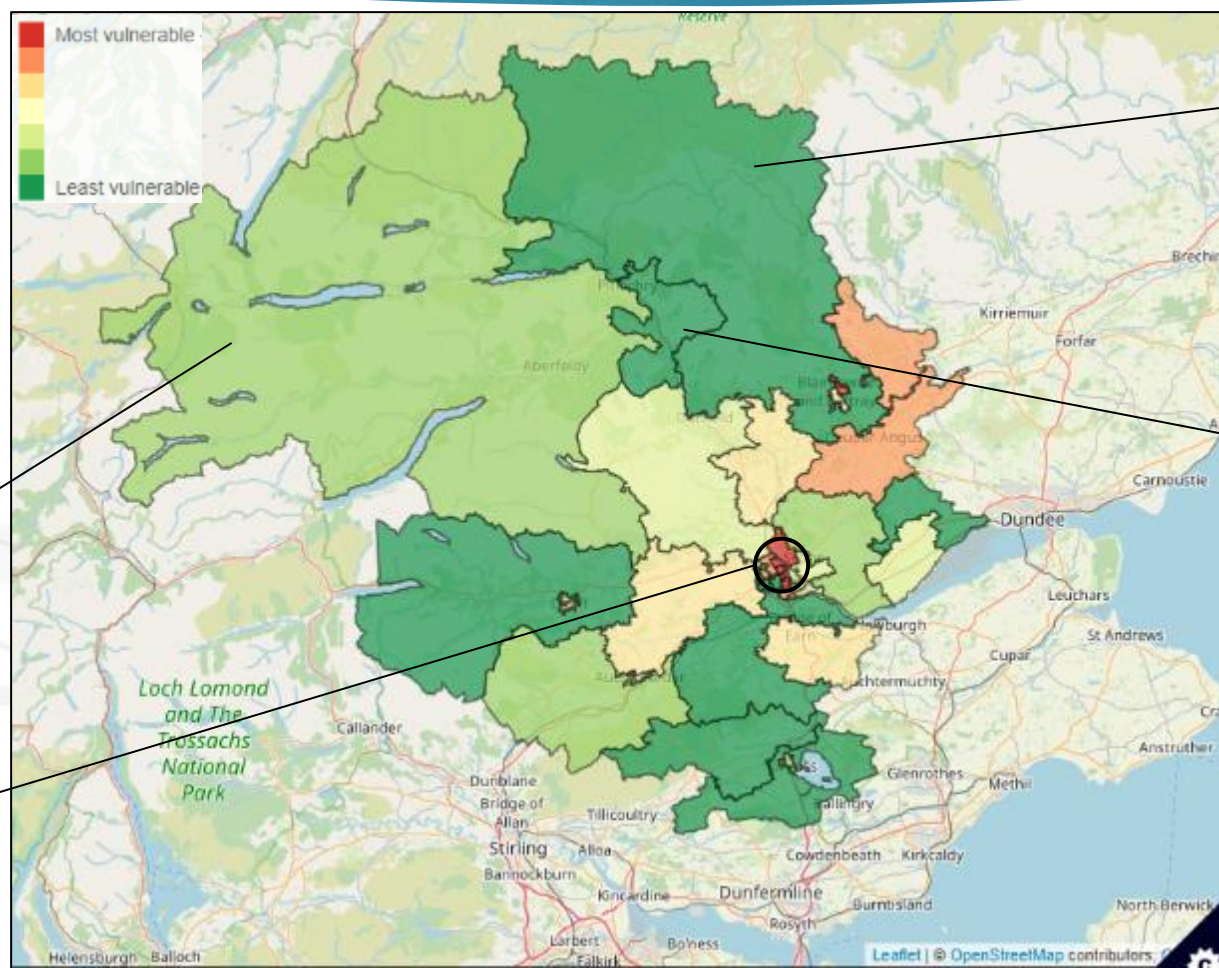
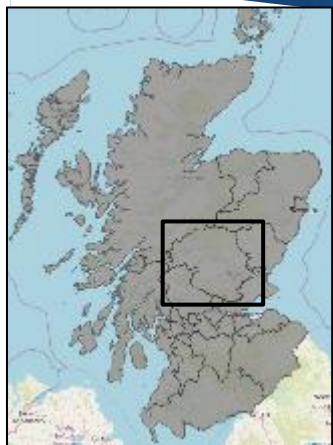
The Projects



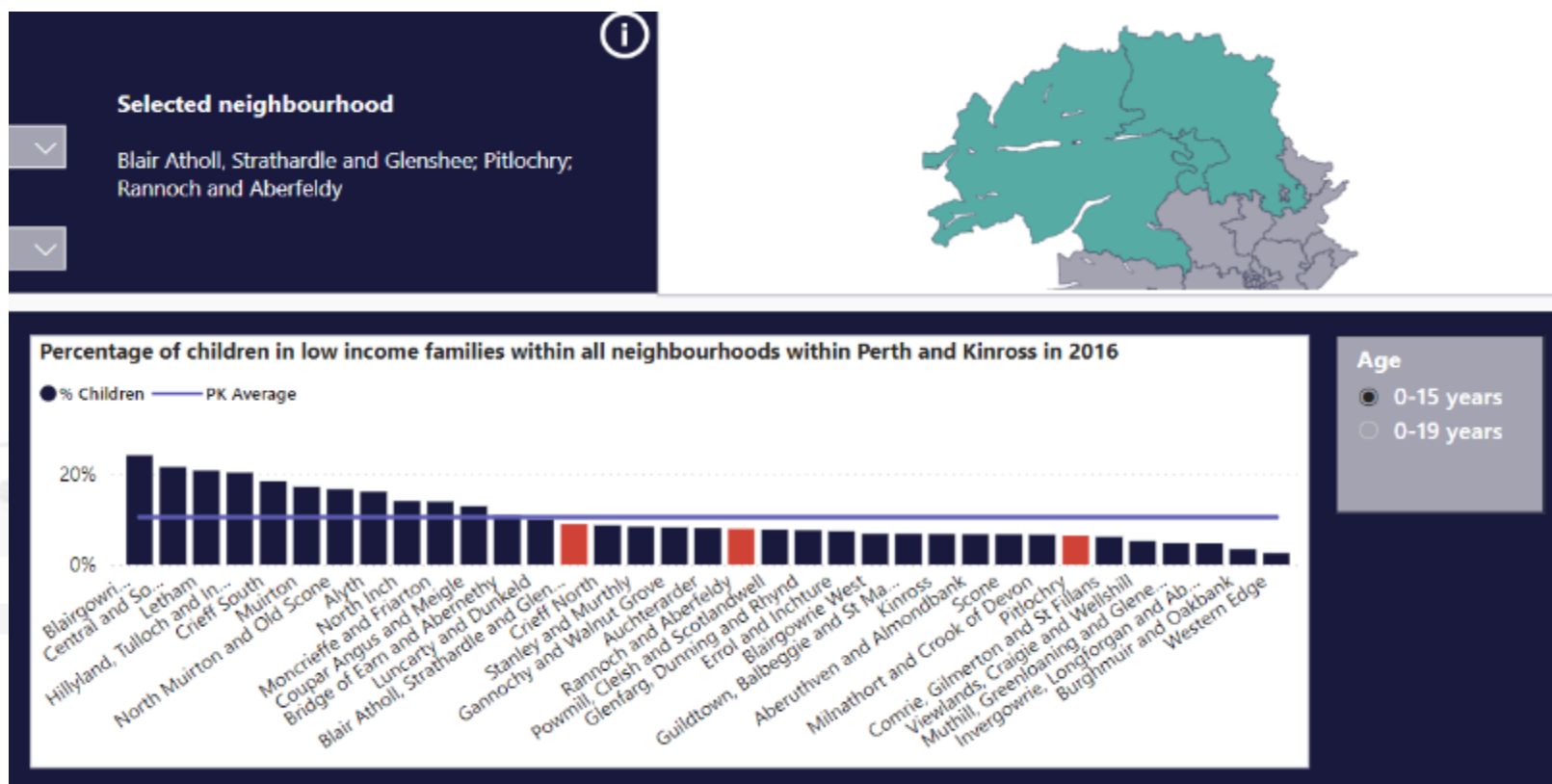
Locality Working

ESTABLISHING LOCALITY MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS

Highland Perthshire – Geographic Context



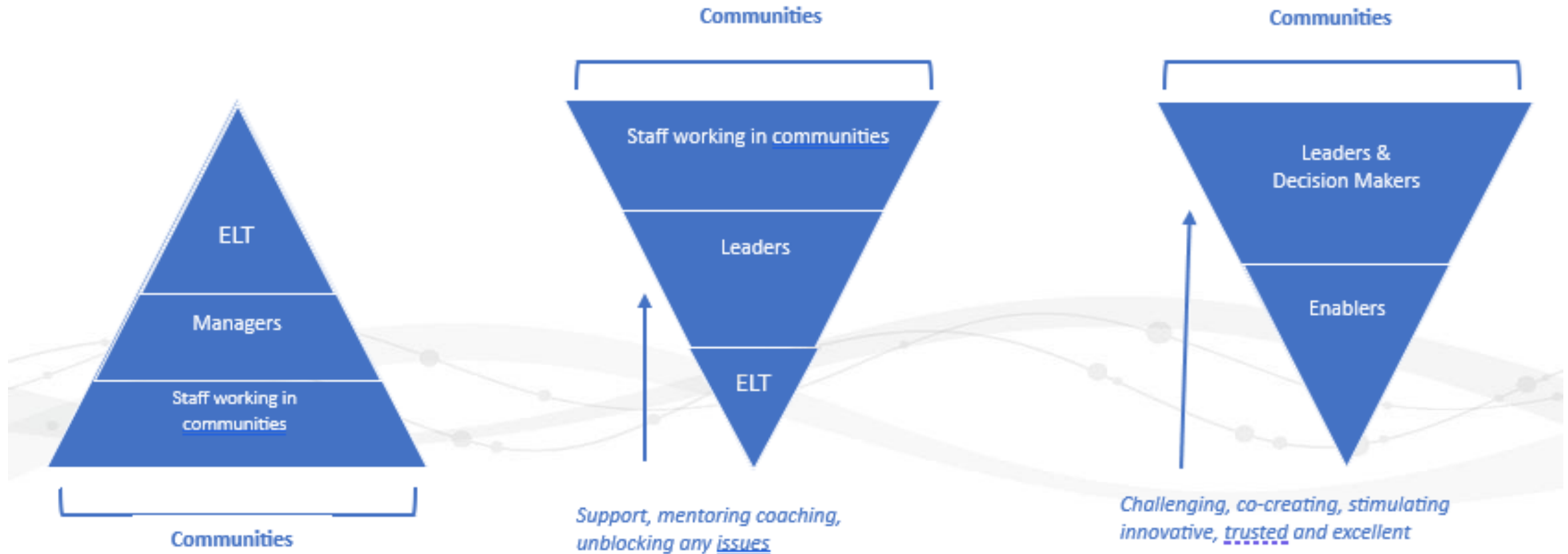
Highland Perthshire – Demographic Context



Inclusive Communities – Why?

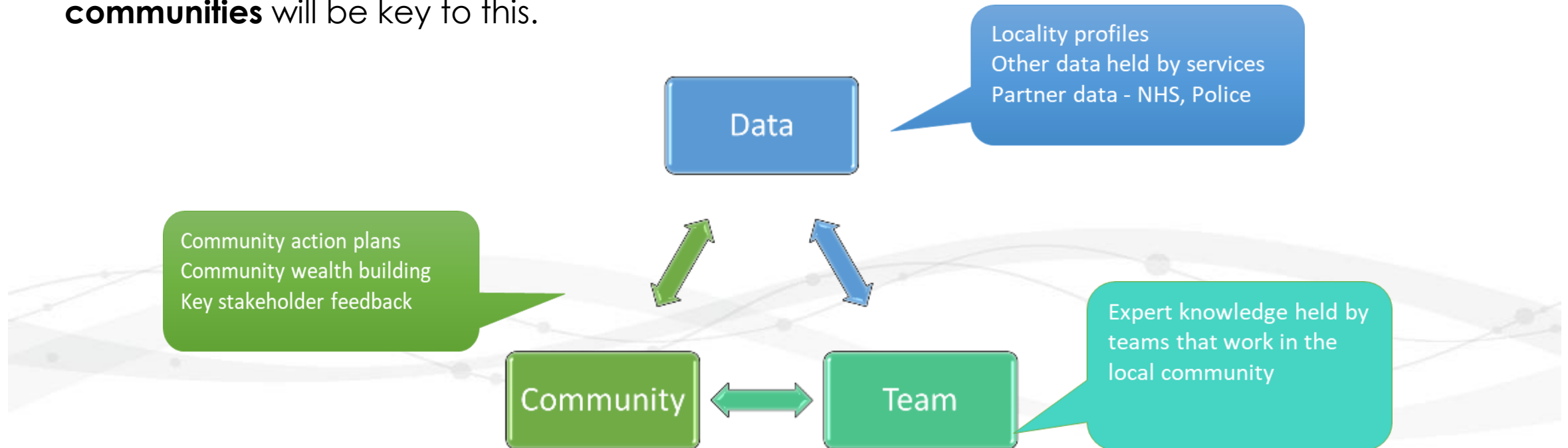
- ❑ Hard Edges Scotland makes a renewed case for “*taking a whole system approach to severe and multiple disadvantage, with sustained and deep collaboration and coordination required at all levels.*”
- ❑ At the moment services are separately held responsible for their own outcomes whether this be educational outcomes, alcohol reduction, employment, poverty or rent arrears targets.
- ❑ In real life problems are not experienced in isolation and each are interrelated and impact on each other. In many instances services respond when a problem arises rather than intervening early to prevent it happening.
- ❑ We have an opportunity to begin to re-design our services with our communities and develop and deliver locality-based networks of organisations, agencies, services and community members that work together effectively to prevent, intervene, support and respond to the needs of residents and communities.
- ❑ Communities are often much better at identifying their needs and designing solutions. Any solutions therefore must start with people and be designed around people and communities.

Bottom up, not top down

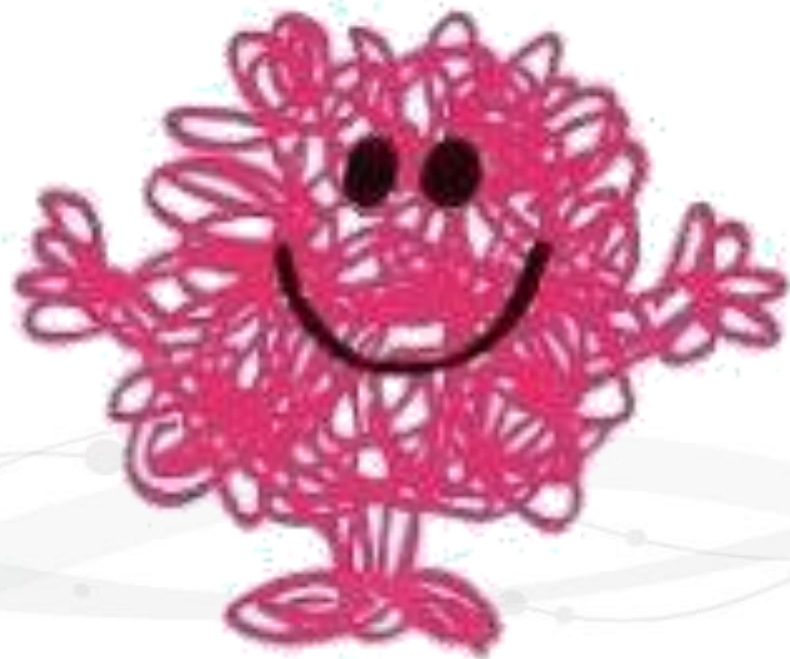


Connected Resources –Multi-Disciplinary Locality Teams

- ❑ Outcomes will be determined by evidence-based locality evaluations. Development of **Locality profiles, mapping of community assets and resources** and **ongoing dialogue with communities** will be key to this.



The challenge in a picture!



Untangling.....

- ▶ Intelligence, myths, hearsay
- ▶ Community engagement and development
- ▶ Role of elected members – representative democracy
- ▶ Differing plan, strategies, priorities and expectations
- ▶ Structures – locality / themed
- ▶ Budgets and resources
- ▶ Accountability, monitoring and review
- ▶ Relationships and cultures

▶ **NOT EASY!**

Benefits Realised so far in Highland

- ▶ Better Links between services operating in the locality, networking opportunities after COVID
- ▶ Joining up of resources between public transport unit and schools for school trips
- ▶ Better links to community and thirds sector groups e.g. Christians against Poverty
- ▶ Allows social prescribers to access better links to services
- ▶ Started work on more joined up funding applications e.g. Basil Death Trust to fund school trips
- ▶ Highland selected as pilot area for a cash first partnership with CAB because of locality team approach
- ▶ Locality group able to feed into and refine the TSI mapping of services for Highland Perthshire
- ▶ Advice hubs set up in rural locations to extend reach into communities (monthly)

These are just a few examples. A full list is being compiled following the recent locality workshop and will be shared once complete

Delivering Public Service Reform: Christie in Action

“If we are to have effective and sustainable public services capable of meeting the challenges ahead, the reform process must begin now. The principles informing this process are clear:

- Reforms must aim to **empower individuals and communities** receiving public services by involving them in the design and delivery of the services they use.
- Public service providers must be required to work much more closely in partnership, to **integrate service provision** and thus improve the outcomes they achieve.
- We must prioritise expenditure on public services which **prevent negative outcomes** from arising.
- And our whole system of public services - public, third and private sectors - **must become more efficient** by reducing duplication and sharing services wherever possible.”



Thank You
Any Questions?

DISCUSSION

What next?