



Whole Family Support - Getting it right through collaborative leadership

Information and pre-reading for attendees

Venue: The Playfair Library
Old College campus ([get directions](#))
The University of Edinburgh

Date and time: Wednesday 25 June 2025

Refreshments: from 0900

Sessions start: 0945

Event closes: 1530



Pre-reading contents

- Agenda
- Whole Family Support: Key Features
- Interactive session 1: Whole Family Support tomorrow? The Case for Radical Place Leadership
 - Outline and suggested pre-reading
- Interactive session 2: What does it take? Practical enablers of systemic collaboration for Whole Family Support
 - Case Studies
 - Ten enablers of systemic collaboration for Whole Family Support
- Further reading and resources
- Practical information on attending the event

Agenda for the day

Note: Timings and content may be subject to change

Morning

Refreshments: from **09:00**

Welcome (start at 09:45)

- Professor John Holland McKendrick, Co-Director of Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU).
- Professor Sir Peter Mathieson, Principal, University of Edinburgh

First Minister – Speech and Q&A (09:55 to 10:40)

- John Swinney MSP, First Minister

Interval (10:40 to 11:00)

Setting the Scene (11:00 to 11:10)

- Professor John McKendrick

Interactive session 1 (11:10 to 12:10)

A Provocation: Whole Family Support tomorrow? The Case for Radical Place Leadership

- Kevin Anderson, Assistant Director, Corporate Policy, Strategy and Performance, South Ayrshire Council
- Martin Calder, Participation Assistant, South Ayrshire Champions Board
- Professor Donna Hall, Non-Executive Director, Mutual Ventures

Lunch (12:10 to 13:00)

Afternoon

Interactive session 2 (13:00 to 14:00)

What does it take? Practical enablers of systemic collaboration for Whole Family Support

- Assistant Chief Constable Catriona Paton, Police Scotland
- Clair Thomson, Collaboration Transformation Manager & Co-Director, Scottish Prevention Hub, Police Scotland
- Leah Black, Co-head of Regenerative Futures Fund, Foundation Scotland
- Paul Lawrence, Chief Executive, Edinburgh City Council
- Alison Gordon, Chief Officer, Education, Families, Justice and Integrated Practice and Chief Social Work Officer, North Lanarkshire Council
- Ross McGuffie, Chief Executive, NHS Forth Valley

Interval (14:00 to 14:20)

Plenary Session (14:20 to 15:25)

A panel Q&A reflecting on the discussions of the day.

- Councillor Maureen Chalmers, COSLA Community Wellbeing spokesperson
- Natalie Don-Innes MSP, Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise
- Paul Johnston, Chief Executive, Public Health Scotland
- Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, Cabinet Secretary Social Justice
- Prof. Carol Tannahill OBE (facilitating discussion)
- Dr Judith Turbyne, Chief Executive, Children in Scotland

Closing Remarks (15:25 to 15:30)

- Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP, Cabinet Secretary Social Justice

Event closes at 15:30

Whole Family Support – key features

Whole Family Support: What it should feel like for families

- **Accessible** – services in places where people go, embedded into community spaces, without barriers to entry (both practical barriers e.g. linguistic, timing, digital and barriers to service e.g. thresholds and assessments)
- **Relational** – starts and ends with the person/family, engaging with someone who takes time to understand them and their needs and pulls in relevant services based on need
- **Empowering** – embedding the voice, agency and aspirations of individuals and families into decisions around service provision
- **Strengths based** – focusing on existing resources, resilience and assets that individuals and families have, and building from that
- **Holistic** – considering the whole person and family, not just their immediate needs, conditions, or interaction with a single service





Whole Family Support: What it means for public services

- Build around community and place, embedding co-design into service design and delivery.
- Empower practitioners to innovate and make decisions with clear guidelines.
- Collaborative, working across and between organisations to build trusting relationships, develop a genuinely shared vision and plan focused on the needs of people not services
- Supported by aligned, cross-sector funding and delivery – including sustainable, pooled funding, with third sector as equal partners.
- Emphasis on prevention and early intervention.
- Make innovative use of data to target support towards those most in need, join up delivery and evaluate/ improve.
- Focus on outcomes and value for money enabling flexibility over input and activities.

Whole Family Support: Commitment from the Scottish Government

- Increasing flexibility over how funding is spent locally.
- Streamlining of reporting requirements.
- Simplifying our policy and Programme delivery landscape.
- Supporting collaborative, place-based leadership through Community Planning Partnerships.
- Trusting in and listening to partners' understanding of the priorities and concerns of people and communities they are closer to.
- Shifting accountability mechanisms to incentivise and require collaborative working.
- Enabling and facilitating improvements in data sharing.
- Facilitating learning about whole family support approaches.



Session 1: Whole Family Support tomorrow? The Case for Radical Place Leadership

Professor Donna Hall (Mutual Ventures), Kevin Anderson and Martin Calder (South Ayrshire Council) will lead us through a short presentation outlining how Radical Place Leadership, relational approaches and good collaborative leadership can enable Whole Family Support. The session will highlight some shared challenges and opportunities, and culminate in table discussions based on a “provocative question” to support an initial exchange of views on what more we can do collaboratively to enable person-centred, whole family support when and where it is needed most.

Some suggested pre-reading:

[Radical Place Leadership: The Public Money that Falls Between the Silos](#)

[The Liberated Method - Rethinking public service](#)



Session 2: What does it take? Practical enablers of systemic collaboration for Whole Family Support

The following 3 case studies are presented as examples of ongoing work intended to enable key aspects of Whole Family Support approaches. Contributors have collaborated to identify some of the initial practical leadership lessons that have come from these case studies – also summarised later in the pack. A panel and discussion session on the day will bring these to life.

Case Study 1: Scottish Prevention Hub

(An example of a national-level collaboration to enable a whole system approach to prevention.)

The Scottish Prevention Hub (SPH) is a co-located, co-directed, national collaboration between Edinburgh Futures Institute (University of Edinburgh), Police Scotland and Public Health Scotland. It is intended to bring policing, public health, academia and wider partners – including the third sector – closer together, and to embed a whole system approach to prevention.

We recognise that there is complexity around individual and community needs which extend beyond policing and health, and create demand across public services. The solutions lie in whole system responses aimed at improving outcomes from birth.

We know that achieving a healthy life expectancy remains out of reach for many people in Scotland and that factors such as where people are born, grow, live, work and age have a significant impact on health risks, access to care, and overall wellbeing.

We believe that collaboration is hard and that developing high-quality relationships is not an inevitable part of working with others. The SPH is paying attention to the challenges of collaboration both internally and with partners.

The SPH is catalysing an innovative ecosystem focused on primary prevention, data driven innovation, place-based working, challenge-led research and joining up services to support relational and person-centred system wide change efforts, in essence an incubator for public service reform.

We have agreed 6 key workstreams and have activities and projects that are linked to each – **Build a Data Collaboration, Research & Evidence, Place-based Insights, Collaborative Leadership, Learning & Evaluation** and **Sustainable Structures**.



The Scottish Prevention Hub - Why?

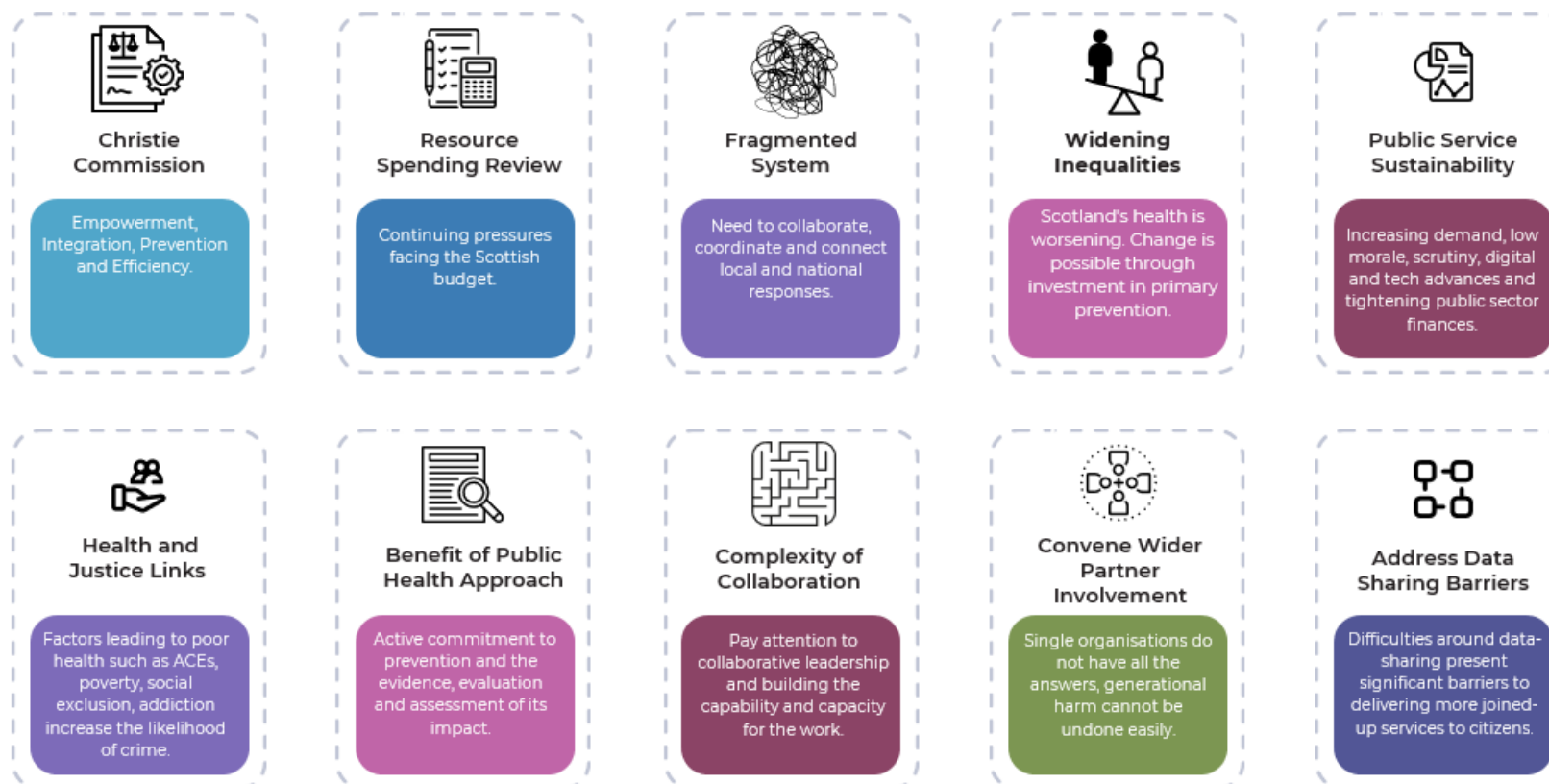


Image: Drivers for the Scottish Prevention Hub

We are using our learning to move into a new, next phase, which is to explore options to scale the Hub into a **Scottish Centre for Prevention**, and to lead on developing a business case for a **Common Data Platform for Scotland** – a near real-time linked data system – to inform proactive and preventative action, support a holistic understanding of families and communities, and to significantly improve the health, wellbeing, and life chances of people across Scotland.



The Collaboration Challenge

Building capacity and capability for effective collaboration is critical for better results and improved outcomes. Our underpinning methodology for enhancing collaboration essentially requires *paying attention to these challenges* and supporting *how to work differently*. We are advocating for, and designing **Collaborative Leadership programmes** to support this - but recognise the need for much wider system involvement, investment and integration to make the scale of changes needed.



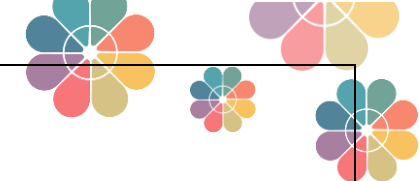
Source: Docherty K (2025) Working Together: A Framework for Collaborating in Complexity

To help us navigate these challenges we are applying a framework based on a **four-principle approach** – ***being systems focused, working emergently, being relational, and having an inquiry mindset***. We believe that the sum of the parts will offer us an alternative and more effective way of working together. While our work is focused on ‘upstream prevention’ and reducing health and wellbeing inequalities in Scotland, this approach can be applied within different contexts.

Our approach is based on a 4-Principle Approach for collaboration.



Source: Docherty K (2025) Working Together



Practical lessons and learning from Scottish Prevention Hub work

- **Role model collaborative leadership**, invite in different insights, strengths and experiences.
- **Upfront and continued senior leadership support matters for complex work**, legitimising and encouraging wider buy in.
- Explore **co-directed and co-located opportunities**.
- **Mobilise existing resources** in non-traditional ways (people and money).
- **Engage and connect at systemic, community and individual levels** to address issues holistically – from the broadest systems to grassroots and individual actions.
- **Pay attention to the challenges of collaboration**; building trusted relationships is not an inevitable part of working with others.
- Take time to create a sense of **shared purpose and ambition**.
- Understand **partner and colleague motivations, challenges and values**.
- **Work in the gaps**, this is often where innovation happens.
- **Build your own collaborative culture** where being able to comfortably challenge each other and ways of working becomes normalised.



Case Study 2: Edinburgh Regenerative Futures Fund and Edinburgh Council

(An example of collaboration to enable sustainable, pooled funding, including for the 3rd sector, with community voice at its heart)

The City of Edinburgh Council has committed to ending relative poverty by 2030 and reaching net-zero emissions by the same year. However, without significant, systemic, long-term investment these goals will not be met. Existing funding models are short-term and restrictive, failing to address the root causes of these systemic issues. As a result, grassroots movements and organisations - those best placed to create lasting change - struggle to secure sustainable support, leaving transformative solutions underfunded and underdeveloped. Funders often expect communities to solve problems alone and as a result we rarely work across systems and sectors to resolve issues.

The **Regenerative Futures Fund** is a **groundbreaking £15 million, ten-year spend-down pooled fund** designed to put decision-making power into the hands of those most affected by poverty and inequality. This responds to the Edinburgh Poverty Commission and the Edinburgh Climate Ready Strategy. This innovative model of long-term funding is a first for Scotland - moving away from the status-quo of 3-years as long-term.

Co-designed by activists, grassroots organisations, funders, and local and national government representatives, the Regenerative Futures Fund supports groups working together to tackle poverty, racism and unfair environmental impacts on communities. By offering long-term, unrestricted funding, the Regenerative Futures Fund enables community-led change that is sustainable, innovative, and impactful. Our innovative 'governance ecosystem' creates possibilities for working together across sectors and systems to create solutions that will last. The fund will:

- Provide ten years of unrestricted funding to a cohort of grassroots organisations and collectives, allowing them to plan for long-term impact.
- Foster collaboration and shared learning among funded organisations, creating a network of support and solidarity.
- Empower people experiencing poverty and inequality to take leadership roles in decision-making processes.
- Support organisations addressing the root causes of poverty and racism while working towards environmental restoration.
- Challenge traditional funding models by removing barriers that exclude smaller, diverse-led organisations.
- Create the conditions through our governance ecosystem for resource, influence and power holders to enable long-term systemic change by collaborating across sectors and boundaries.
- Create a blueprint of place-based systems change that can inspire and share learning with other places and regions.

We are currently operating in 'Year 0' - this is what we call the year prior to the 10-year programme – here is a flavour of success and progress during this year:



- Developing The Pooled Fund: £5.75 million has been committed to the pooled fund to date from The Robertson Trust (£1m), Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (£0.5m), The National Lottery Community Fund (£2m), Turn2us Edinburgh Trust (£1m), City of Edinburgh Council (£1m) and Foundation Scotland (£250k).
- Residents Panel: following a careful and considered recruitment process we have a group of 16 Edinburgh residents who between them have professional expertise across a range of areas and personal experience of poverty and racism. This group are being trained to make decisions on which organisations will be funded and over time will be part of the accountability structure.
- Community Organisations: after receiving 280 responses to an eligibility checker, organisations were invited to submit an expression of interest. We anticipate receiving around 90 expressions of interest from which the Residents Panel will select 40 to receive capacity building funding between August – November 2025. The themes and approaches that are emerging from the community organisations so far are – racial justice, housing, homelessness, food systems, community-led climate action, whole family support, disability justice, legal advice, youth work. The funded cohort of 10-15 organisations will be selected during winter 2025.
- Oversight & Enabling Board: this board meets quarterly and has met twice during Year 0. The group is made up of senior staff from each funding organisation. The role of the group is to oversee the project and enable change.

Practical lessons and learning from Edinburgh Regenerative Futures Fund work

- Encourage and support bold and visionary collaborative leadership within and outwith the public sector: key in securing a commitment from City of Edinburgh Council.
- Enabling environments for systems change are created through senior leadership modelling and empowering collaboration and bravery.
- Shifting and sharing power and loss of control is less scary when you build oversight and accountability into an ecosystem.
- Work in the open, sharing progress and challenges to build networks and share learning.
- Pooling resources as a way of de-risking by funding collaboratively and learning. Money is one part of this but if we are serious about systemic change we need more than money and a commitment to enabling change.
- Work with both urgency and patience; taking time to build relationships whilst maintaining pace matched with urgency.
- Field-build, share learning and build expertise.
- Model collaborative leadership in our teams: through co-leadership in our staff team.
- Share and shift decision-making power with people with lived experience: we make sure our residents' decision-making panel are remunerated, onboarded and supported to think and act beyond themselves.
- Flexibly and open-mindedly fund development phases that allow for emergence and building of trust: it took 4 years to get the Regenerative Futures Fund from initial idea through to launch.
- Consider the impact of how long decisions take to make and how easily carefully designed ideas can be derailed by politics and risk appetite.
- Consider the importance of space and co-location to aid cross-sectoral and complex collaboration: the Regenerative Futures Fund team benefit from being based at EFI.

Case Study 3: North Lanarkshire

(An example of local-level collaboration, including between local authority and health partners, to enable a systemic shift to whole family support approaches)

North Lanarkshire benefits from a **single integrated plan** supported by a focused and crosscutting programme of work which embeds transformation at the heart of how we deliver for our communities rather than as an add-on, breaking down the artificial divide with business as usual. The seven constituent programmes are supported by 28 **high level health check indicators reflecting the interdependency of place and people focussed activities**.



Whole Family Support is central to our *Resilient People* programme, integrated with other key strands including *Tackling Poverty*, *Preventing Homelessness*, *Community Capacity Building* and critically *Investing in Prevention*. This approach is delivering positive change including:



- A 26% reduction in use of foodbanks supported by our *Cash First* approach, innovative food referral pathway and commitment to income maximisation enhanced by additional temporary HSCP funding to extend council financial inclusion services, in turn contributing to a 41% rise in benefit checks undertaken and more than 47m of income generated for families.
- A 93% reduction in exclusions for those with care experience, supported by strong joint working across education, social work and virtual school.
- A 31.6% increase in breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks, with the highest increase in SIMD 1, delivered through a joined-up approach across community learning and development, early years, education, health and facility services.

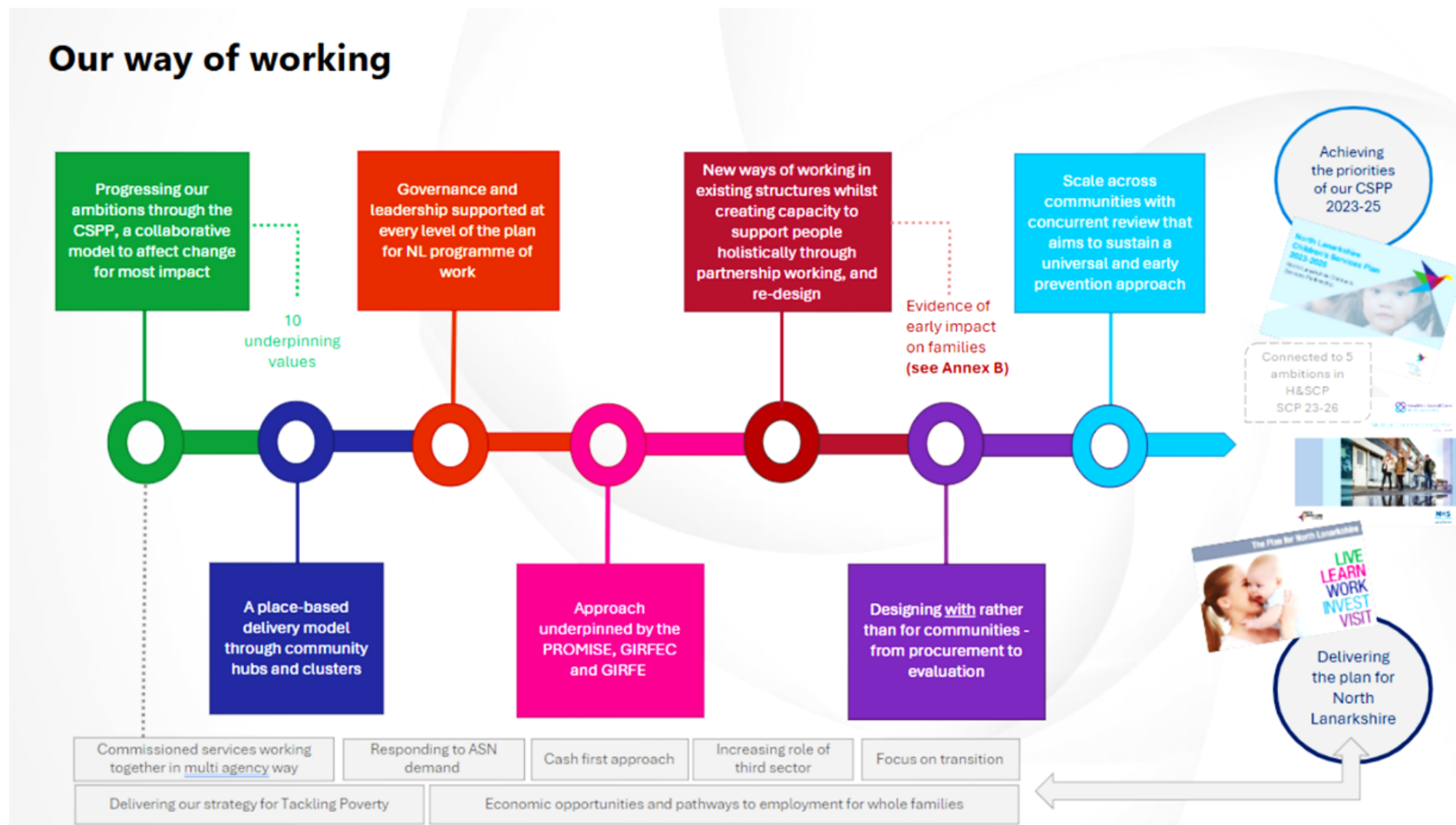
Alongside this our work with Promise Scotland (Human and Economic Cost Modelling) is supporting our ambition to **increase the percentage of core spend focused on prevention** whilst 90% of whole family wellbeing funding and 82% of community mental health and wellbeing funding has been invested in prevention, with our families benefiting from our co-produced early support services delivered by Community and Voluntary Sector partners including our *Families Here and Now* Service and *Neurodevelopmental Family Support Service*. Both services are improving local accessibility through their footprint in our growing network of community hubs, with both also diverting demand from statutory services. The latter is addressing, at a much earlier stage, the support needs of families whose children may be awaiting specialist assessment. Additional innovations and shared ownership in this space have also seen the HSCP commit monies to supplement school counselling and wellbeing support and the trialling of a whole school approach to lengthy neurodevelopmental waiting lists, with in-school assessment providing capacity gains alongside a more child-centred response.

The cross-cutting nature of the programme of work and the introduction of the overarching health check indicators have promoted ownership and coherence at local level. A **single programme support role provides coherence and connection** across the programmes as has the involvement of third tier managers from across services in both the development and the delivery of the programme – embedding cross-service working and relationships and building both ownership and delivery capacity.

Cohesive planning across services and the partnership is tackling funding silos and has supported **joint funding of priority areas of service delivery** alongside **combining funds to support key transformation activity and tests of change** – for example, our Neurodevelopmental Family Support Service is now supported by three different change funds, as we have sought to expand and evolve the service to support what matters to families, most recently to enhance focus on financial wellbeing. The use of a 'Community Solutions' model first developed through the HSCP has also supported community capacity building in distribution of funds and the involvement of the local Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS), facilitated by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire our local TSI. In the context of challenges associated with demand and budget pressures and temporary funding models, a whole system approach to our planned review of family support across all LA services (CLD, Education, Housing, Social Work) and commissioned services is intended to maximise sustainability without a shift away from family support principles.

Collective leadership underpinned by the unity of purpose provided by the Plan and **trust both across services and between partners** built over years has clearly been influential in our progress to date, though not without tensions and challenges, at times linked to external pressures and targets. Creating and modelling **a culture which embeds lived experience and an expectation of co-production with families**, including

within commissioning with a focus on outcomes within service design, and which **centres people in place-based developments**, has been critical. For example, embedding trauma-informed design within our community hub roll out and ensuring **digital, built environment and economic developments** are also levers to address inequalities.





Other critical factors have included:

- Willingness to **share risk**.
- **Commitment** to a 'one service' 'no wrong door' operating model.
- **Consistency of message** – for example, investment in staff roadshows delivered jointly by chief officers and the third tier officers involved in our programme of work (POW) development.
- Modelling and embedding **joint ownership of issues** – for example our council chief executive leading on breast feeding and our local police commander chairing our Promise Conference. Cross service leads for our programmes and projects.
- **Constructive challenge** both internally and in attempts to influence the external environment including government.
- Consideration within our **budget process** not solely of statutory requirements but the contribution of activities to prevention/ cost avoidance and the ambitions of our POW.
- Understanding and continuing to work with **the contextual challenges** such as:
 - Moving front line staff to principle-based rather than rule-based practice - though the right thing to do, this brings with it governance challenges;
 - Effective use of data sharing, both internally and with partners, to support planning, and effective impact measurement;
 - Working with national partners to reduce the challenges presented by national commissioning for local delivery and current siloed reporting requirements towards improved policy and funding integration; and
 - Managing multiple short-term funding streams which continue to create challenges for planning, delivery and skills retention for both statutory and CVS partners and in ethical commissioning and development of supports with families.

Practical Lessons and Learning from North Lanarkshire work

Building a supportive context, including trust and focus to support transformation, clearly takes time including investment in building local political support for a different way of doing things.

- The firm foundation provided by the integrated plan and health check indicators is key, as is decluttering – focusing on activities which have the potential to make the most difference.
- Scalability and sustainability remain challenges but are partly addressed through an approach that embeds transformation in what we do rather than as separate activity.
- Recognition that empowering families and communities means also empowering front line staff.
- Leading by example - sometimes there is a need to go ahead and do something and then show/convince others including government it can work.
- To escalate progress the need remains for more flexible funding models both locally and nationally including for health and education.



Ten enablers of systemic collaboration for Whole Family Support

Collaborators for the second interactive session have drawn out some initial thinking about ten key enablers from the three case studies above, which are common across their work. The discussion will allow attendees to consider how these apply in their own contexts.

1. Model Bold Collaborative Leadership

Encourage and support leadership that is willing to take risks, share power, and work across traditional boundaries. Formal Leaders must enable environments where systemic change is possible. Invest in building collaborative cultures and mindsets. Act despite uncertainty or imperfect conditions.

2. Align Around Shared Purpose

The importance of a shared vision. In practice, this means embedding goals into integrated plans, using these shared purposes to break down silos and align efforts across organisations and services.

3. Shift Power to Communities and Front-Line Staff

Effective collaboration often involves a redistribution of power. E.g. Regenerative Futures Fund makes funding decisions with lived experience at the centre. North Lanarkshire co-produces services with families and includes lived experience in commissioning. The Scottish Prevention Hub is supporting projects that have 'local voices' at the heart.

4. Fund for the Long-Term with Flexibility

Rigid, short-term funding undermines systemic change. The case studies emphasise multi-year, unrestricted pooled funding and flexible use of change funds to test and evolve services.

5. Invest in a Collaborative Culture, Not Just Structures

Sustainable collaboration relies on trust, relationships, and mindset.

6. Create Governance Ecosystems, Not Hierarchies

Innovative governance frameworks facilitate collaboration, e.g. Regenerative Futures Fund oversight and accountability ecosystem balances shared power with transparency; North Lanarkshire uses joint leadership roles across services and tiers; Scottish Prevention Hub has a flat governance structure which encourages peer review and challenge, open dialogue, sharing insights.

7. Prioritise Emergence Over Planned Approaches

All examples show success through experimentation and iteration, embracing emergent approaches.

8. Work in the Open to Build Collective Learning and Momentum

Transparency strengthens alignment and learning. Includes sharing challenges, progress and approaches openly, using indicators and shared metrics to focus on collaboration and impact.

9. Align Resources Beyond Money

Collaboration involves mobilising time, people, space, and infrastructure. Can include co-location to enable non-monetary resource sharing, connecting people, infrastructure and knowledge.

10. Institutionalise Collaboration Through Roles and Practices

Dedicated roles and capabilities make collaboration part of "how things are done", e.g. roles like a "Collaborative Leadership Lead" to bridge boundaries and build capacity and capability.



Further reading and resources

[Programme for Government](#)

[Getting it Right for Everyone](#)

[Getting it Right for Every Child](#)

[National principles of holistic family support](#)

[The Place Principle](#)

[Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026](#)

[Early child development transformational change programme - gov.scot](#)

[National renewal and prevention: First Minister's speech - gov.scot](#)

We are very grateful to Dr Kristy Docherty, Director of Public Services at the Edinburgh Futures Institute, who has kindly agreed to make her book “**Working Together: A Framework for Collaborating in Complexity**” available to attendees of the event. Hard copies of the book will be available for attendees on the day.



Practical Information for attendees

Identification: Delegates are asked to bring photographic identification to the event. If you think this might pose any issue, please contact us in advance at: ScottishLeadersForum@gov.scot

Chatham House Rule: This is a private event, with key sessions observing the Chatham House Rule. You are asked not to attribute specific comments to attendees, nor post photos or videos of delegates that would disclose their contributions.

Privacy Notice: Outwith the sessions that are subject to the Chatham House rule, the Scottish Government may carry out photography and filming to record and document this event. Images and footage may be stored for future use in our social media, websites, and official publications. This content may also be shared with third parties e.g. social media outlets. Our use of this data is in strict accordance with data protection laws. If you do not wish to feature in such images, then please contact us in advance at: ScottishLeadersForum@gov.scot

Venue: More detail about the venue, including accessibility, and how to get there, can be found [here](#). Please note, there is no parking available.

Accessibility: Wheelchair access to the venue is via the South Bridge entrance, with event staff positioned there to assist. There is a hearing loop in the main plenary hall. If you have any issues or concerns, then please contact us in advance at: ScottishLeadersForum@gov.scot

Health: Respiratory infections including COVID-19 can spread more in indoor places. It is important that we keep doing the things that keep us all well. To protect yourself and keep others well:

- Attendees should feel free to wear a mask if they wish to do so and sanitiser will be available.
- If delegates are feeling unwell on the day, we kindly ask you to stay at home and avoid contact with others.
- Delegates are asked to inform us in advance if they have any allergies, by contacting the team at: ScottishLeadersForum@gov.scot

WIFI: WI-FI is accessed via 'VisitEd network' and there is no password.

Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016

The Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016 is in force and the Lobbying Register is operational. That Act requires any regulated lobbying of MSPs, Scottish Government Ministers, special advisers, and the Permanent Secretary to be registered on the Lobbying Register. You should note that it remains the responsibility of attendees to determine whether the nature of their participation triggers a requirement to register under the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. Scottish Parliament guidance, FAQs and common scenarios are available [here](#) including a helpful information leaflet.

This event is a forum of peers, operating under Chatham House rules, and the presumption is that delegates will not utilise the event as an opportunity for lobbying either national or local politicians.