project lift

Project Lift
Community Engagement Events Series

Final Report - Executive Summary
September 2019 to March 2021

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The purpose of the community engagement programme

The community engagement programme was designed to support Project Lift's goal to establish a system-wide approach to identifying, supporting, enhancing and growing leadership at all levels across Scottish healthcare and social services. In doing so, Project Lift will help to support the transformation of health and social services in Scotland, and improve their culture and the experience and wellbeing of Scotland's people.

The community engagement activity of Project Lift underpins all of its other activities, supporting them by offering creative and liberating spaces for leaders at all levels to:

1) Connect with others to share perspectives and stories;

2) Express their experience and interest in leadership, work culture and wellbeing;

3) Build their individual agency;

4) Make a collective contribution to the leadership of healthcare and social services* across Scotland, regardless of grade, profession or geography.

It was therefore our mission for this programme of work to **create these spaces**. In addition, we aimed to **increase the reach** of the community and **enable collaboration** between disciplines, professions and sectors through the work of this programme.

At the kick-off workshop in September 2019, we established a set of key aims and metrics for the community engagement programme to help us monitor its impact. The aims came under the headings of:

1) **Contribute to a collective understanding of 'what good leadership looks like' in healthcare and social services across Scotland**

2) **Broaden the reach of Project Lift**

3) **Have a positive impact on community members**

*Please note, 'social services' refers to all social work, social care and early years services - which may be delivered by public, independent or voluntary organisations.

The community engagement activity

In Winter 2019/2020, we began a series of face-to-face Project Lift community events in different areas of Scotland. Each event would consider 'what good leadership looks like' through a different lens, for example 'leadership and wellbeing', 'leadership and relationships' and so on. As well as the face-to-face events, the programme would consist of two digital events, several

'leadership in practice' videos, a series of blogs, engagement with 'friends of Project Lift' and various analysis and reporting activities.

Having delivered several of the planned activities, we paused the programme in March 2020 due to Covid-19. We took a few months to allow the external context to settle and formulated a new set of activities which still achieved our original aims. After two digital 'discovery workshops' in June 2020 with the friends of Project Lift group, we developed a digital series of events, tailored to the needs highlighted by the community and still with a focus on exploring what good leadership looks like but now set within the context of the pandemic. Some of the events were topic-led - i.e. Project Lift set the topic in collaboration with a panel of speakers - while others were community-led ('hosted'). Hosted events were designed to 'pass the mic' to the community entirely, allowing them to set the topic for discussion and host the event with technical support from us. **Figure 1** below highlights the key activities, and **figure 2** shows each lens through which the events considered leadership. Click the link on each lens to see the insights pack for the event.

Figure 1: Community engagement programme activity

Events	
Face-to-face events	
Digital events - community-led ('hosted')	Digital events - topic-led

Communications and outreach	
Blogs on key leadership questions	Engagement with Friends of Project Lift
Leadership in practice videos	Twitter and email campaigns, e.g. 12 days of Christmas

Analysis and reporting	
Event feedback	Reflective interviews and evaluative event

Figure 2: Lenses through which events considered leadership

Each other's pressures	Leadership at all levels	Leading change	Power
Wellbeing & resilience	Relationships	Agency	Collaboration
Serve to Lead	Kindness	Positive transitions	Civility
	Compassion	Unconventional career paths	

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1) Contributing to a collective understanding of 'what good leadership looks like' in healthcare and social services across Scotland

The community events examined leadership through different lenses, for example 'leadership and wellbeing', 'leadership and agency', 'leadership at all levels', and so on. Some of the events were 'hosted' by community members themselves. In each event, attendees shared their own experiences and in doing so provided insight into what good and effective leadership means for them. The 12 common indicators of good leadership cited by the community are shown in figure 2 below. Interestingly, the key indicators all relate to skills in relationship building and management.

Figure 2: The 12 key indicators of good leadership

1. Trust. Trust underpins good working relationships, and leaders have a role to create cultures of trust

2. Small things matter. Saying "hello", remembering names and being visible in the office environment are small acts of leadership, but can have a powerful effect.

3. Purpose-driven. Having a shared purpose as a team can be foundational to success. Leadership is about asking why, creating shared purpose.

4. Values-driven. Understanding and staying true to your values as a leader.

5. Understanding your team. Seeking to understanding your team as people beyond their job role or pay band.

6. Role-modelling. Actively modelling the behaviours you want to see in others, like actively listening.

7. Authenticity. Being your whole self at work, showing moments of vulnerability and admitting when you don't have the answers.

8. Kindness. Mainstreaming cultures of kindness within workplaces, through language, actions and strategic thinking.

9. Flexibility and adaptability. Adapting your leadership style to suit the needs of the situation or people you're working with, while still staying true to your values.

10. Humour. Creating a space for humour and laughter.

11. Challenging negative behaviours. Actively challenging behaviours that do not fit with your team's values.

12. Creating space for reflection. Having active, reflective conversations with your team encourages others to develop.

2) Broadening the reach of Project Lift

We aimed to increase the overall reach of the Project Lift community, as well as foster a diverse community in terms of sector, professional level and geography. To do this, we leveraged the Project Lift and Kaleidoscope networks, and the networks of our associates Heather Shearer, Meg Wright and the hosts/speakers we worked with. We also encouraged community members to 'bring a colleague', and provided multiple ways for people to engage with programme content - from social media, to blogs, to short films. **Figure 3** shows some of the statistics on reach and diversity of the community. **Figure 4** on the next page illustrates the geographical spread of engagement across Scotland - the numbers show number of people from each area who registered for an event.

Figure 3: Summary of statistics on reach and diversity

The average number of registrants per event was **86**

Average number of actual attendees per event being **44**

On average, **57%** of attendees at each event were joining for the first time

On average, of the people who registered for the events:

79% were from healthcare

10% were from social services

7% were from healthcare and social services

4% were from other (e.g. leadership development)

Across all of the events, the proportions of registrants at each 'level' were:

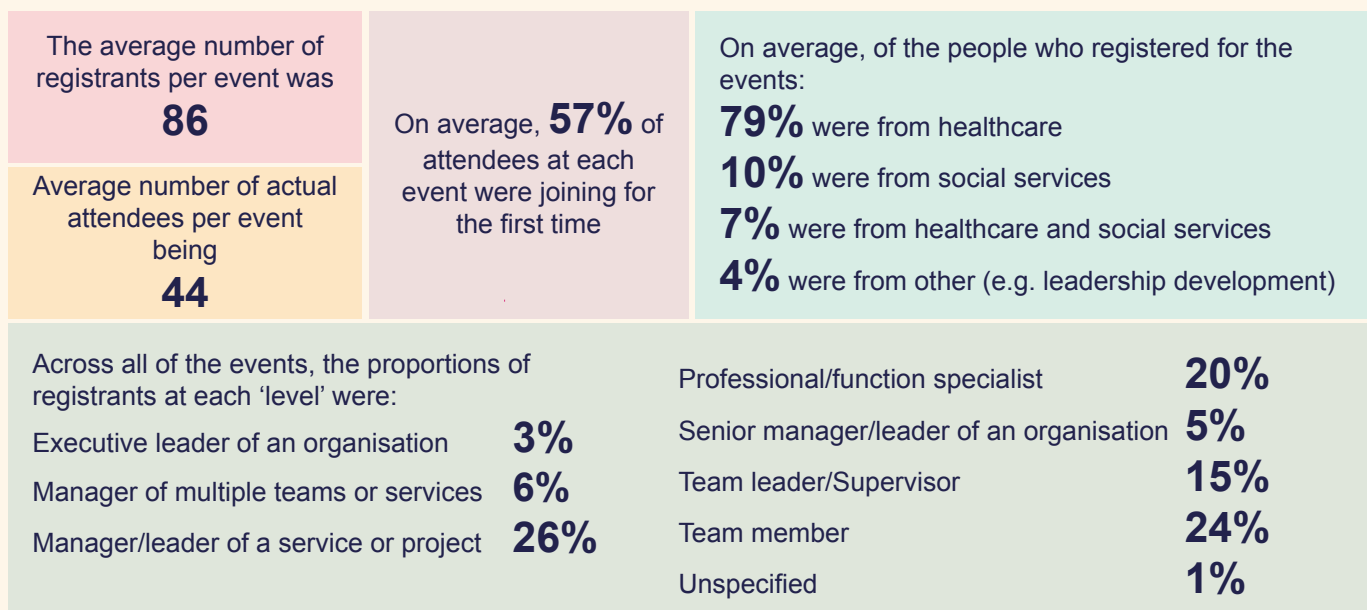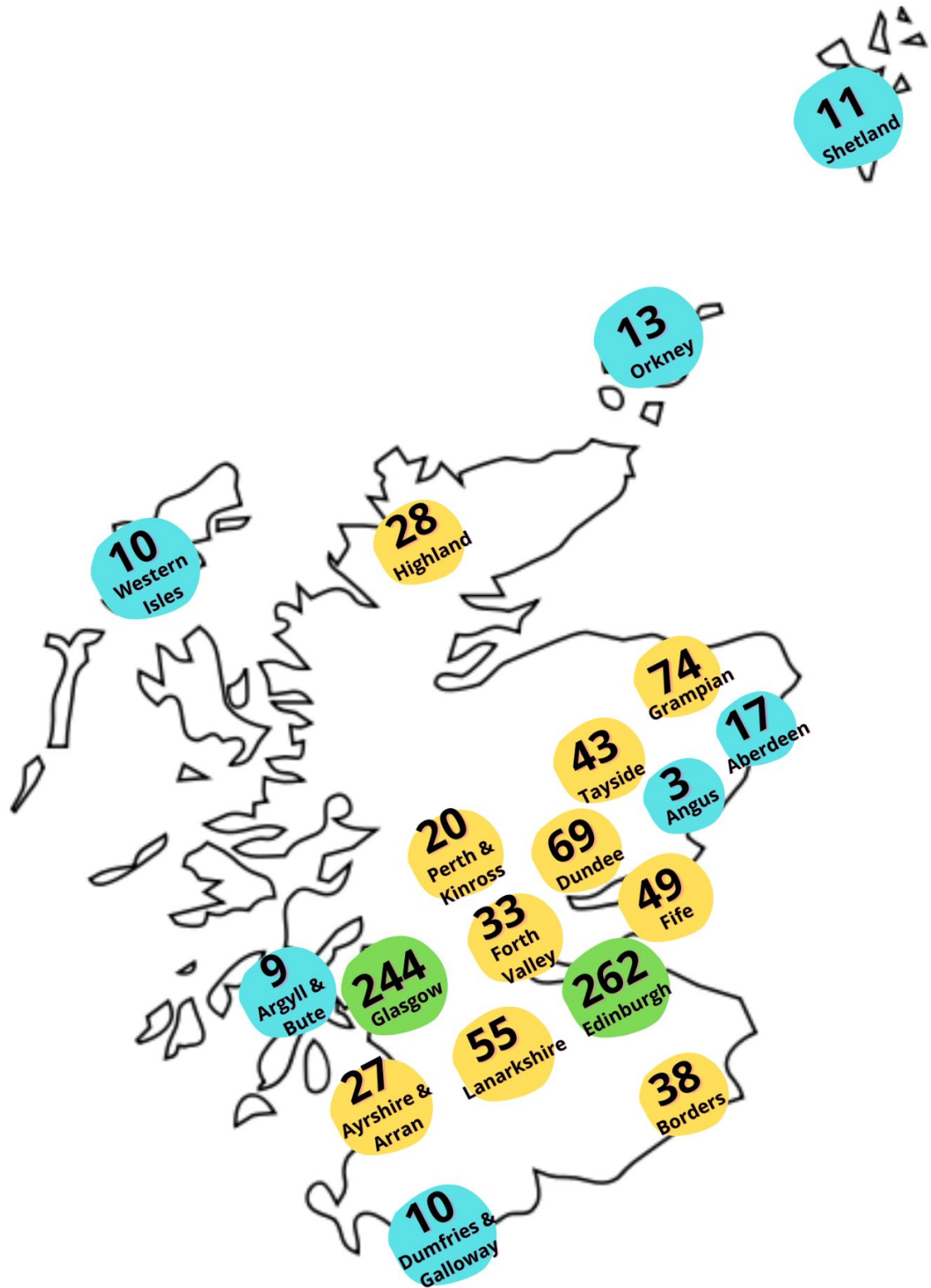|	
Executive leader of an organisation	**3%**
Manager of multiple teams or services	**6%**
Manager/leader of a service or project	**26%**
Professional/function specialist	**20%**
Senior manager/leader of an organisation	**5%**
Team leader/Supervisor	**15%**
Team member	**24%**
Unspecified	**1%**

Figure 4: An illustration of the geographical spread of engagement across Scotland - the numbers show number of people from each area who registered for an event.

11 Shetland

13 Orkney

10 Western Isles

28 Highland

74 Grampian

43 Tayside

17 Aberdeen

3 Angus

20 Perth & Kinross

69 Dundee

49 Fife

33 Forth Valley

9 Argyll & Bute

244 Glasgow

262 Edinburgh

55 Lanarkshire

27 Ayrshire & Arran

38 Borders

10 Dumfries & Galloway

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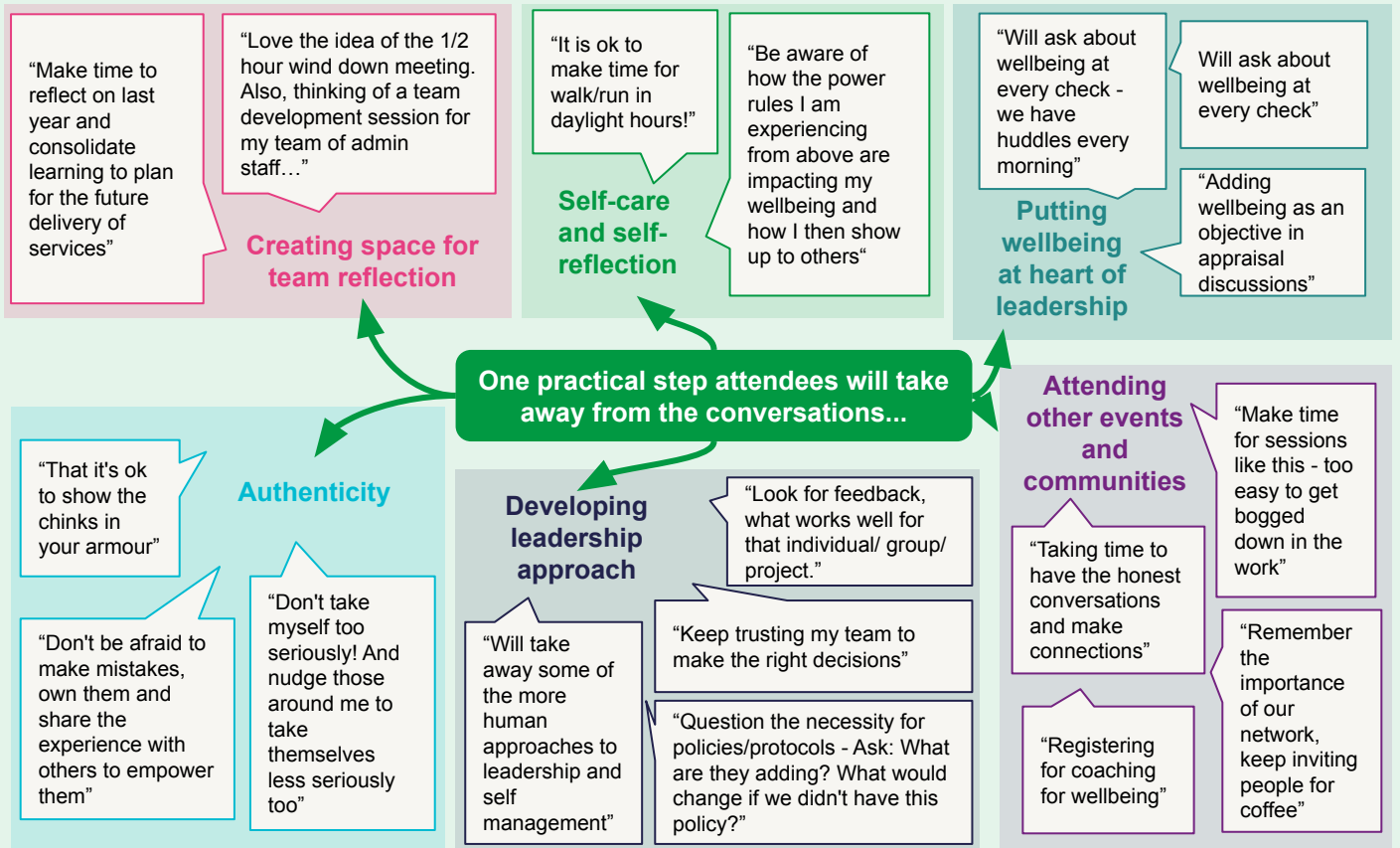## 3) Having a positive impact on community members

We aimed for the events to have a positive impact on the community members in several ways: By helping them to build network connections, offering them something 'different' to other initiatives, helping them enhance their leadership skills and providing protected time for reflection. **Figure 4** below outlines the themes of what community members said in relation to each of these impact areas. **Figure 5** shows more detail on some of the practical ways community members felt their leadership skills would be enhanced as a result of attending the events.

There were additional positive impacts noted by community members, including creating a sense of belonging for some workers, helping community members to feel more comfortable expressing themselves at work, offering peer support through Covid-19 and a feeling that learning about others' experiences could help them in the future.

Figure 4: Different ways the programme made an impact on community members

Building network connections

60%

of attendees reported making new, or rekindling existing, connections at the events which they wouldn't have otherwise

Offering something 'different'

What community members told us:

1. Project Lift events are less didactic and formal

2. Project Lift events provide a safe space to have open conversations

3. Project Lift events provide more opportunity for learning

Helping enhance leadership skills

What community members told us:

1. Project Lift events give people the chance to reflect on their skills

2. Project Lift events drew attention to the behaviours behind good leadership

3. Project Lift events helped us understand 'leadership' more

Providing protected time for reflection

What community members told us:

1. Time together "helped me feel part of something"

2. Allowed more time for reflection on challenges

3. It's time efficient

4. Being guided to reflect is helpful

Figure 5: More detail on practical ways community members enhanced leadership skills as a result of the events

"Make time to reflect on last year and consolidate learning to plan for the future delivery of services"

"Love the idea of the 1/2 hour wind down meeting. Also, thinking of a team development session for my team of admin staff…"

Creating space for team reflection

"It is ok to make time for walk/run in daylight hours!"

"Be aware of how the power rules I am experiencing from above are impacting my wellbeing and how I then show up to others"

Self-care and self-reflection

"Will ask about wellbeing at every check - we have huddles every morning"

"Will ask about wellbeing at every check"

"Adding wellbeing as an objective in appraisal discussions"

Putting wellbeing at heart of leadership

One practical step attendees will take away from the conversations...

"That it's ok to show the chinks in your armour"

Authenticity

"Don't take myself too seriously! And nudge those around me to take themselves less seriously too"

"Don't be afraid to make mistakes, own them and share the experience with others to empower them"

Developing leadership approach

"Look for feedback, what works well for that individual/ group/ project."

"Keep trusting my team to make the right decisions"

"Will take away some of the more human approaches to leadership and self management"

"Question the necessity for policies/protocols - Ask: What are they adding? What would change if we didn't have this policy?"

Attending other events and communities

"Make time for sessions like this - too easy to get bogged down in the work"

"Taking time to have the honest conversations and make connections"

"Remember the importance of our network, keep inviting people for coffee"

"Registering for coaching for wellbeing"

Based on what we have learnt from Project Lift's community engagement so far, we outline below some recommendations for any future activity:

- **Project Lift's events and other engagement activity are valued by community members**, demonstrated by positive performance against the metrics we set and additional insights gathered across the duration of the programme. We suggest there is a period in any further engagement of 'playing back' to the community what they said, since this may drive more engagement. We suggest highlighting the key ways in which Project Lift adds value to community members:
  - Helping to build network connections
  - Offering something 'different' to other initiatives
  - Helping enhance leadership skills in practice
  - Offering protected time for reflection
  - Sharing learning from others' experiences
  - Peer support through Covid-19 and beyond
  - Creating a sense of belonging
  - Supporting self-expression at work and with peers

- Now with a good understanding of what the Project Lift community thinks are the indicators of good leadership, we suggest further community engagement activity turns its focus to the ways in which we make these qualities more visible and commonplace across healthcare and social services in Scotland. **Perhaps turn from 'understanding' to 'enabling', asking the question of how to create positive workspaces and cultures** which encourage these qualities more among leaders and team members.

- **There is an appetite for more support beyond the events themselves**, helping community members to build peer networks for continuous learning and review of their progress - whether that is place- or interest-based, etc. We suggest looking into resources and infrastructure which would support this, helping community members to make the most from what they learn at the events. More time at the events themselves could also be allocated to connection-building.

- **To diversify the community further, we suggest a stronger focus on engaging social services** to increase representation from this sector. This could involve working closely with partner organisations and influential individuals in the system to understand what the barriers are and engage them in finding the solutions.

- **We also suggest a continued focus on what leadership is and why it matters for people at all professional levels**. Using advocates and different marketing campaigns could support this, helping to diversify the community further.

- **We suggest continuing with a digital model,** given the extra accessibility it offers and the more efficient use of resources.

- There is value in the emotional support which these events offer. They clearly provide a space for people to look to themselves and their peers to understand what they are experiencing and for support. **We didn't anticipate the emotional impact the events would have and this is something we would encourage Project Lift to nurture even more in future.**

- **Another role which Project Lift might want to step into more is becoming more influential around the processes and structures which support leadership development** in the workplace, for example, objectives-setting, personal development planning, etc. Perhaps there is a route for more advocacy and policy-change by Project Lift.

To read the full report, please click here.

If you have any questions or feedback about this programme or report, please contact lydia@kscopehealth.org.uk

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