project lift

Project Lift
Community Digital Events Series
May 2021 to March 2022
Final report: Executive summary of impact

KALEIDOSCOPE
Health and Care

Executive summary

Between May 2021 and March 2022, **Project Lift**, **Kaleidoscope Health and Care** and its partners delivered a digital event series for, and in close collaboration with, a community of leaders at all levels across social work, social care and health in Scotland.

What did we do and why?

This digital event series was part of Project Lift's community engagement work - supporting the ultimate goal of establishing a system-wide approach to identifying, supporting, enhancing and growing leadership at all levels across Scottish social work, social care and health sectors, supporting the transformation of services in Scotland.

The aim of the events was to bring the Project Lift community members together to discuss their challenges and experiences, connect with each other, build individual agency and contribute to a collective conversation around how to embed good leadership practices into their work.

At the heart of this digital event series were the community members. This series was co-designed with community members through a 'discovery phase' at the start of the process and built on the evaluation process from the **2019-2021 event series**.

In the previous series of community digital events, the Project Lift community identified **12 key indicators of good leadership**. This year, we turned our focus to exploring with the community how these indicators could be embedded into daily practice. Across **9 events**, we explored leadership through various lenses, and with each one we considered how to implement some of key indicators of good leadership.

What did we find?

Evidence we collected suggests that the community event series was successful in meeting its aims and contributing to Project Lift's overarching goals, and there is a positive story to tell about its impact on community members. A number of findings and themes stand out:

- **The 'small things matter'**: While we know how influential system- or culture-level factors are to our working and leadership practices, the community members underlined how the 'art' of leadership is in how we respond to these contextual levers. It is the small, daily actions that truly make good leadership, and the Project Lift community are full of learning, advice and enthusiasm for practical ways to implement good leadership, as captured in the table below **'Small things matter: 10 practices that help embed good leadership'** below.
- **We saw an increase in overall reach of this event series compared to the previous one:** On average, each event attracted 62 attendees, which is an increase of 41% on the previous series. Many of the events were sold out (with over 140 registrants), and we consistently reached new attendees with each event.
- **We saw greater diversity of sectors represented:** We made significant headway in closing the gap between social work, social care and health representation, which was weighted heavily towards health in the previous series. This series there were 57% (n=661) of total registrants working in healthcare; 19% (n=220) in social work or social care and 18% (n=209) working across the social work, social care and health sectors.
- **There was strong evidence that the series had a positive impact on the community members:** Community members spoke highly of their experiences of the events, particularly in terms of helping them to enhance their leadership skills, offering protected time for reflection, and facilitating connection and discussion in a safe space.
- **Community members want more facilitated opportunities to connect with others:** There is opportunity to deepen the connection between event participants, and to take the Project Lift community a step further. The community has suggested many innovative and practical ways of cultivating this - such as hosting different types of events, sharing tips for reaching out to people and signposting to other activities across the sector.

Where do we go from here?

It's clear from our evaluation that there is an opportunity to build on the success and momentum of this series, and further broaden the reach and impact of Project Lift. We suggest **hosting another community event series** exploring the topics highlighted by participants and bringing in voices of leaders from a wide range of sectors and levels. There is also appetite to learn more about when leadership doesn't go to plan and learning from mistakes. Project Lift is also in a good position to more directly facilitate connections between community members, such as by hosting events with a specific focus on peer connection.

This report was published in April 2022
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What did we do and why?
Purpose and background

What was the purpose of the Project Lift community digital event series?

Project Lift's goal is to establish a system-wide approach to identifying, supporting, enhancing and growing leadership at all levels across Scottish social work, social care and health. In doing so, Project Lift will help to support the transformation of health and social services in Scotland, and improve the cultures, the experience and wellbeing of Scotland's people. **Find out more about Project Lift and its wider activity.**

From May 2021 to March 2022 Project Lift worked with **Kaleidoscope Health and Care** to host a community event series to support this goal, and to create welcoming spaces for a community of leaders at all levels in health and social care in Scotland to connect, learn and grow together.

In partnership, we established a set of four key outcomes and associated aims for the community digital event series to help us to understand its impact. The four intended outcomes were that the event series:

1. Supported collective understanding of how to implement the 12 key indicators of good leadership
2. Broadened the reach of Project Lift
3. Had a positive impact on community members
4. Created events which run smoothly

See the outcomes and associated aims in more detail

About the community digital event series

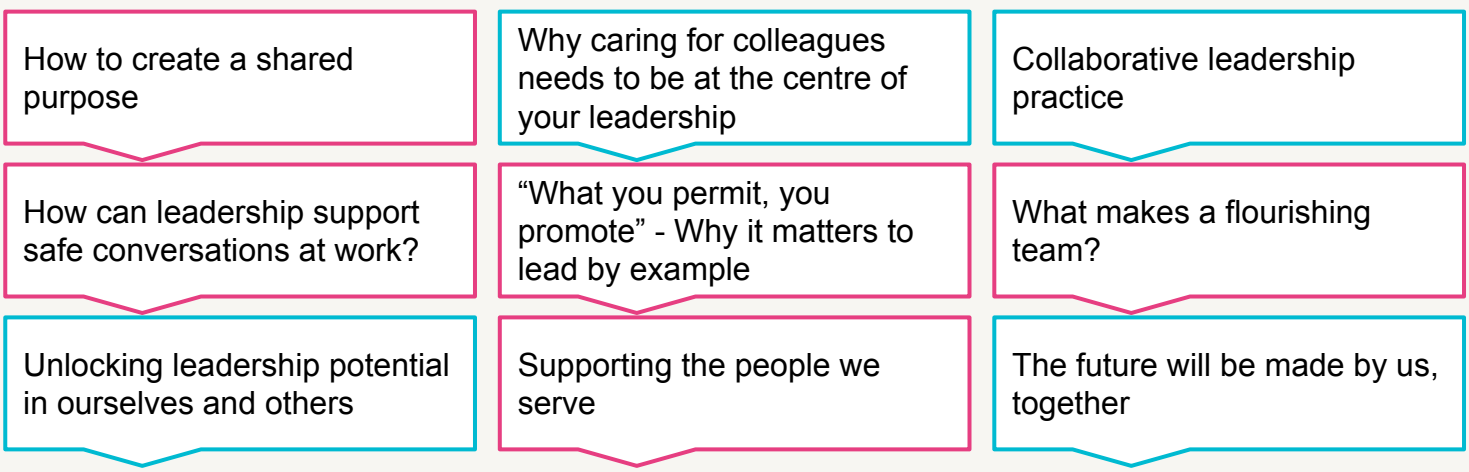
The community digital event series was delivered with community members at its heart; what they said, we did. Drawing on a co-design process with community members and partners, **we hosted 9 open, free, digital events.**

In this series, we built on the 'the 12 key indicators of good leadership', which were co-developed in the **2019-2021 event series**. We took these indicators a step further - moving from '*what* good leadership looks like' to '*how* to implement the key indicators of good leadership'. Each event topic (see Figure 1) acted as a 'lens' through which to consider how to implement the key indicators of good leadership, and included a mix of speakers, open discussion, chat questions and facilitated breakout discussions. We held two broad categories of event:

- **'Courageous conversations of the moment'**: These events explored the 'big questions' relating to what it's like to be a leader right now and what leaders need to be attending to. These discussions aimed to offer fresh perspectives on ongoing issues in leadership, or open up new issues.
- **'Getting practical'**: These events honed in on the practical details of day-to-day working in social work, social care and health sectors. They focused on sharing learning, practical tips and advice among community members to take back to their day jobs as leaders, regardless of level, role or organisation.

Summaries of all of the events can be found on the **Project Lift past event page**.

Figure 1: Lenses through which events considered how to apply the key indicators of good leadership
(blue outline = 'courageous conversation of the moment'; pink outline = 'getting practical')



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What did we find?

1. Implementing the key indicators of good leadership

Our evaluation demonstrated that **there was an increased understanding among the community of 'how' to implement the key indicators of good leadership.** There was also evidence that this increased understanding was converted into action, with 88% (61) of the 69 respondents to our final evaluation survey reporting that they had implemented at least one of the key indicators since having attended a Project Lift event.

Across all of the events, one message was clear: **'the small things matter'**. Through speakers' stories and community member discussion, a number of practical tips were shared on how to implement the key indicators of good leadership in our everyday life. We've brought this together in '**Small things matter: 10 practices that help embed good leadership**', a resource co-developed with the Project Lift community. Also available in visual format.

Small things matter: 10 practices that help embed good leadership
1. **Reconnect to your 'why':** Create a 'why board' - taking the time to set out and visualise the **why** behind what you do - the principles and goals that drive you.
2. **The art of listening:** So often we listen to respond, rather than listen to really understand. In your next conversation, try listening to someone for a few moments longer than you usually would, uninterrupted, and see how this transforms your conversation.
3. **Check-in and out:** Take the time to check how your team are, before and after meetings - this gives people a chance to focus, get everyone's voice into the conversation and sets the tone of the time together. Try one of these prompts: a. How are you today? b. What has your attention today? c. What would you like to get out of this meeting? d. What are your closing reflections on the meeting? e. What stood out to you in this meeting?
4. **Actively reach out to people:** We know how important those informal chats are, for inspiration, solving problems, and feeling connected, but sometimes it can be hard to reach out to people, especially at big events. Did you know you can private message people on MS Teams meetings? Just double click their name to message them directly.
5. **Give praise:** Recognising others' achievements is an important part of being a leader and supporting a team, but we don't always remember to do it day-to-day. If you use MS Teams, did you know you can 'send praise' to members of your team to recognise their good work? Find out more
6. **Bring your team values to life:** Take the time to really understand your team values and consider how they can be used to connect people to your purpose. Set up 'values in practice' (VIP) awards for your team - recognising and celebrating when team members have embodied the team values.
7. **Protect and plan time together to reflect:** Create time together to actively reflect on things that are important to the team - whether that's about work, achievements, working together, common challenges, or the future. See what works for your team - try setting up regular short reflection sessions, or make reflection part of ongoing agendas.
8. **"Hello, how are you?"** Challenge yourself to make this phrase part of your everyday - in your emails, in the corridors. Actively make the time for connection with others within your day.
9. **Gather feedback purposefully:** When you ask for feedback, first ask yourself, "Why am I asking this? What will I do with this feedback?" This can help to focus the feedback into something constructive that can help you improve.
10. **Make wellbeing part of a structured conversation:** Wellbeing isn't a 'nice-to-have', it's an essential part of being able to do our job well and care for others. How can wellbeing become more part of the structure of your organisation? Think about where wellbeing can fit into your meeting agendas or your development or performance conversations.

What did we find?

2. Reach and impact on the community

We made significant progress on the goal of broadening reach of the digital event series in comparison to the previous series. The reach of the series in terms of **number of attendees was 41% higher** per event compared to the previous series (an average of 62 people per event this series compared to 44 in the previous series). We have also made significant headway in **closing the gap between social work, social care and health representation**, which was weighted more heavily towards health in the previous series. See Figure 2 for more detail.

Figure 2: Summary of statistics on reach and diversity across the series

We saw an increase in overall reach

The average number of attendees per event was **62**, a 41% increase from the last series. Many of the events were sold out (with over 140 registrants)

We consistently reached new attendees

On average, **55%** of registrants at each event were registering for the first time, demonstrating that the community was continually expanding

We saw greater diversity of sectors represented

- **57%** (n=661) of total registrants identified as working in healthcare
- **19%** (n=220) solely in social work or social care
- **18%** (n=209) across the social work, social care and health sectors
- **7%** (n=81) other

These data show a more even spread across social work, social care and health compared to the previous event series.

We maintained diversity of professional level

This year, we wanted to maintain a good spread of professional level, and we achieved this with:

- **51%** (n=592) of total registrants were at management level or above
- **45%** (n=522) were at professional / functional or team member levels
- **4%** (n=46) identified as 'other' or did not specify.

We maintained diversity of geographical location

There was representation from all corners of Scotland at the event in this series - we extended our reach across island communities, as well as remote, rural and urban areas across Scotland. The highest representation in absolute numbers was from the west regions, yet overall we saw a spread across the country which is reflective of the access that a digital delivery format provides.

This series also saw a more innovative use of the events by some teams, whereby an event was attended by the full team and then followed up by a team session on the topic. This combined the digital delivery with a more local connection.

"The event was brilliant. [It] was lovely to attend with so many fellow NHS Forth Valley colleagues and then come together afterwards to discuss the event in relation to our own board." **Event participant**

There was strong evidence that the series had a **positive impact on the community members** in relation to helping them **enhance their leadership skills, offering protected time for reflection, and facilitating connection, including across sectors.** For example, out of the respondents to event feedback forms across the series (n=163), **87%** (n=141) agreed or strongly agreed that the event had enhanced their leadership skills, and **90%** (n=147) said they will use what they learnt in future.

We suggest the impact of attendees is cultivated even further in future event series by offering more support and opportunities for the community to nurture connections and conversations beyond the events themselves.

> Project Lift has enabled me to grow as a leader and has given me a self awareness that I did not have before. It has also made me look at my moral compass in more detail. I question myself… in a style that asks if this is the correct approach to achieve the best results
> **Final evaluation survey respondent**

> The sessions and self assessment have helped me tremendously. Time out to reflect, listen and share with others has been invaluable, especially over the last two years. It has helped me set a direction for the type of leader I want to be.
> **Final evaluation survey respondent**

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Where do we go from here?

Recommendations for future community engagement activity:

Based on what we have learnt from this community events series, we outline below some recommendations for any future community engagement activity, to continue to broaden reach and maximise impact. **See a suggested plan for a future event series**.

- **Develop another event series building on the topics suggested by community members** - We recommend building on the impact of this year, to develop a further community events series, drawing on the **range of topics** that have been highlighted by community members.
- **Collaborate with other events or festivals, to help diversify and broaden reach -** This series' collaboration with **Illuminating Leadership Festival** positively impacted the size and sector diversity of the registrants - there is opportunity to further broaden the reach of Project Lift by working with other organisations and events.
- **Practically enable more opportunities for networking -** Many of the community members expressed a desire for more opportunities to network with others, however some people said they didn't know how to or didn't feel confident in reaching out to people. Project Lift could share tips or resources on connecting with others to help people make the first move (e.g. how to send a direct message on MS Teams or tips on following up via email), and host spaces to enable this networking and connection, such as running informal 'coffee meet-ups'.
- **Amplify outside opportunities to connect with people -** Project Lift is in a great position to connect up parts of the system and signpost to opportunities across the sector, and could scope and promote activities and events going on in the sector which community members might be interested in, such as networking walks, book clubs, and other events.
- **Share videos of speakers on the Project Lift website and on social media** - While we currently record the speakers for each event, and embedded the videos into the 'insights packs', there is opportunity to further the reach and impact of the speakers' stories far beyond the live event, by sharing these videos as a standalone resource on Project Lift's social media or website.
- **Bring in a wider range of speakers -** The community spoke highly of the event speakers, but there was also appetite to hear from a greater range of speakers to further cross-sector collaboration and learning, such as service users, and those from other sectors like police, fire services and education.
- **Run sessions on learning from 'when things go wrong' -** There was a sense that the community is keen to learn from where things have gone wrong or where situations are challenging, and that community members value the sense of vulnerability shared by speakers, and the psychologically safe space created. Learning from 'when things go wrong' could be a focus for a future Project Lift event series.
- **Continue running events which are 90 minutes, mid-week and bi-monthly -** We saw an increase in the number of attendees at the events, and received good feedback on the format and style, as well as how the sessions fit into participants' working days, and would suggest taking this format forward in future event series.
- **Keep using a large team of breakout facilitators** - Community members valued the psychological safety that was fostered in the breakout discussions, and having a large set of skilled breakout facilitators supported this - meaning that the discussions could be small, well structured, and key themes well captured.
- **Promote who the events are for and the value of them** - Some people who did not attend the Project Lift events would value knowing the impact the events would have on their work and/or on the patient/service user care and experience. Some sadly also felt they didn't 'qualify' to attend as they do not hold an official 'leadership' role.

Thank you

We would like to extend our thanks to all those who have collaborated and contributed to the community digital events series. To the leaders at all levels across our system who have attended, contributed to, spoken at and inspired our community events, thank you.

This report summarises the key findings of the series. Read the full evidence review.

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

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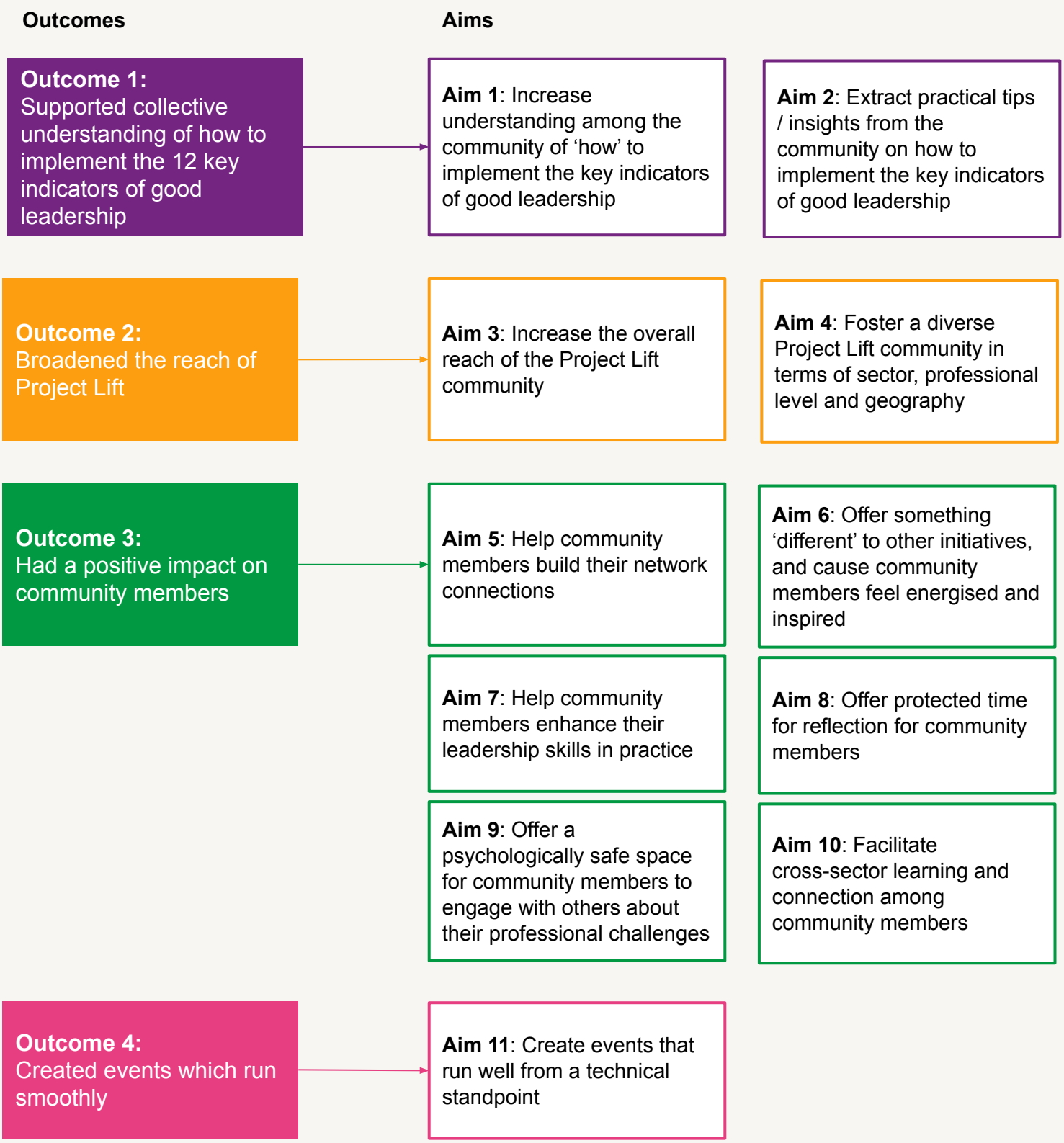
Appendix A: Key outcomes and aims of the programme

Figure 3: Evaluation framework: Key outcomes and aims of the programme



There were a series of metrics we used to measure progress against these aims, which can be reviewed in the full evidence review.

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Appendix B: A suggested plan for a future event series

Based on the reflections and recommendations outlined in the final report, we suggest that Project Lift runs another series of digital community events, drawing on the learning from the evaluation of this series.

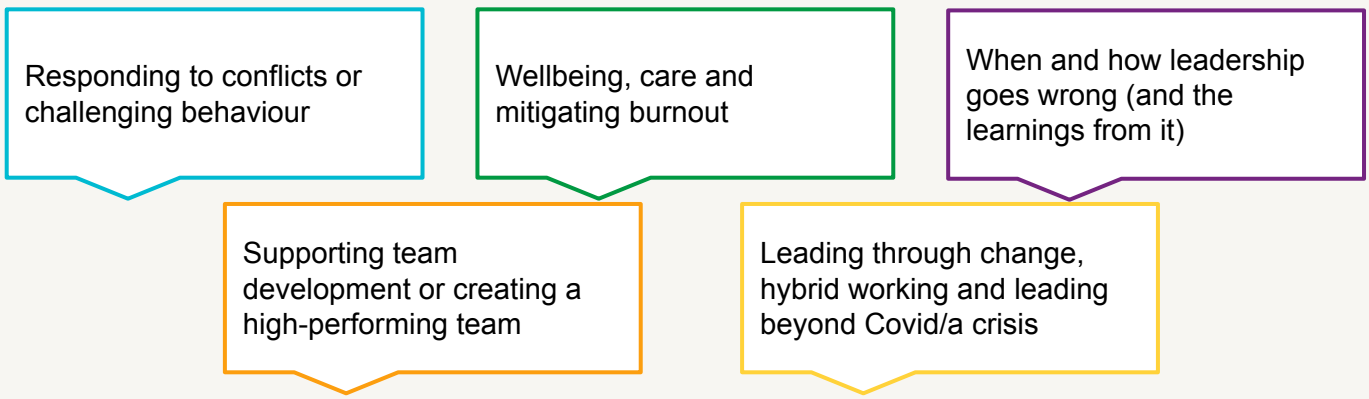
We suggest prefixing a new event series with a short 'discovery phase', working closely with a group from the Project Lift community, and the Project Lift team and its partners, to refresh the success measures, source inspiring speakers, and confirm a plan of activity.

Complemented by the discovery phase, communication activities and a continued focus on evaluation, our proposal is to run three different types of event across the series:

1. Spotlight conversations

It is clear from this series that the structure we have used for the community events thus far has worked well. We therefore suggest running another series where we dive into some of the big conversations around leadership, drawing on the topics identified by community members, shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Topics for a future event series, identified by community members



2. Learning from failure series

Alongside the larger community events, we suggest leaning into the appetite from community members to learn more about when things don't go well and how to respond: a 'learning from failure' series. This will be about having psychologically safe conversations about when things don't go right in leadership - and how we can learn from it.

These 30-60 minute 'mini-events' would be short, fast-paced and energising, aiming to show a different angle to leadership. For each session, we would invite an interesting and inspiring speaker to share their story with us to stimulate conversation.

3. Community connections: Random coffee meet-ups

There is an opportunity to really build on the community aspect of Project Lift and support community members to make connections across health and social care and build relationships with new people, helping them feel part of a community. We propose running monthly 'random coffee meet-ups' - an opportunity for community members to sign up to be randomly paired with another community member. We would facilitate the connection - randomly assigning pairs and making the introduction via email - providing them with the tools to build their personal networks.

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