Reflect & Connect Pack

The things you didn't know you didn't know – what people really want you to know about social work and social care

Leadership Theme - Collaborating & Influencing

Digital Community Event

22nd August 2023

Leading to Change

Helping you to make a difference

How to use this pack

If you attended this event…

- **Use this pack as 'reflective practice'** to ask yourself some questions to build on your learning from the event:
  - Revisit the **Our Focus** page to:
    - Ask yourself the **questions offered for consideration**
    - Choose one or more **resources offered for consideration** to help you reflect on the questions
  - Revisit the real stories by watching a video on the **Our Contributors** page
  - Read the **Our Contributors' Learning**, **Our Collective Learning** and **Personal Reflections** pages to explore the themes, ideas, comments and take away points from the participants who attended the live event
- **Finally ask yourself:**
  - What have I learned from this event, in the moment and now?
  - What one thing will I do differently going forward?

If you are using this for connection…

- **Use this as a resource pack** to use in a team meeting, in person or online event.
  - **Review** the pack in order to understand:
    - The why and how on the **Our Focus** page
    - Who was involved in the collective learning from the **Our Community** page – this offers insight to where our participants came from
    - Watch the real stories from **Our Contributors** page
    - Read the **Our Contributors' Learning, Our Collective Learning** and **Personal Reflections** pages to explore the themes, ideas, comments and take away points from the participants who attended the live event
    - **Revisit** the **Our Focus** page to find resources and provocations
  - **Decide** what kind of event or session you want to run and with whom
  - **Check out** our DIY Guide to hosting a 1 hour conversation and our community resource Creating safe spaces online : 6 practises to build psychological safety
- **Contact us** if you have any questions or would like some support to set up or run a session using this pack. We are very happy to help! Email the team

Our focus
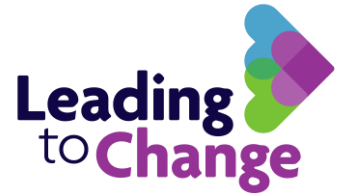
The things you didn't know you didn't know – what people really want you to know about social work and social care as part of our leadership capability theme of Collaborating and Influencing.

We explored what true collaboration means in practice and the impact that has across the system when done well and not so well.

We were joined by real leaders who shared their experiences and provided insight into their worlds of social care. They spoke about the challenges and successes of meaningful collaboration and the importance of professional respect in collaborative relationships.

Questions offered for consideration

- How well do you understand social care and social work?

- How has this helped your approach to collaboration?

- How have preconceived ideas possibly limited previous opportunities to collaborate?

- What opportunities for collaboration or positive influence have been open to you across different parts of our care system?

- How can staying curious about the work of others help us provide better care?

Resources offered for consideration

Longer read – [Feeley Report on Adult Social Care: Independent Review | The Scottish Government](#)

7 mins read - [Building a better understanding of adult social care | The BMJ](#)

18 mins watch - [How to fall in love with collaboration: Investing in our relationships | TEDx Talk](#)

11 mins listen - [Collaboration | The National Life-Skills Academy](#)

Curious to understand more about careers in social care and social work? Find out more about [careers in social services](#) and [read stories from those already working in social care](#)

Our contributors

With a focus on storytelling and reflections, our contributors shared their experience and insight.

Watch Jenny's video

Watch Cara's video

Watch Susan's Video

Jenny Thain
Director
Acre Care Homes

Cara Gillespie
Independent Sector Lead – Dumfries & Galloway
Scottish Care
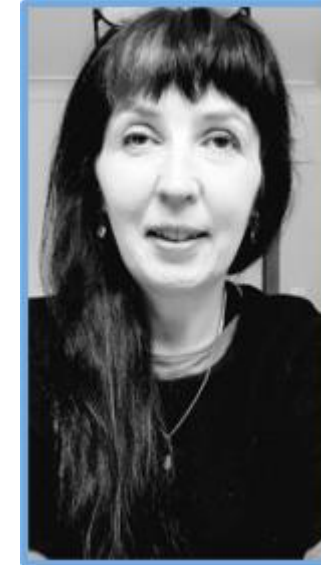
Susan Nevill
Principal Lead
Leading to Change

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Our contributors' learning

▶ We aim to build on all of the previous work we have undertaken as a community and collectively explore what good leadership looks like in practice.

▶ We invited the community to listen to our contributors, explore what this means for us, and what practical learning we can take away using breakout groups to enable real conversations and connections.

Jenny shared her experiences as a Care Home Manager and Owner

What you don't know is that the people who work in care homes are experts – I'll put this out there bravely as a truth but also as a message that myself and other provider colleagues are starting to get behind and challenge old ways of thinking.

I felt that care homes at this stage were not considered collaborators, instead we were guided or told what to do, everyone appeared to know better and our lived experience and our expertise, it didn't seem to be valued.

Managers are adept at managing multiple, competing tasks but they require outsiders to see this and accommodate it. We've taken it as our job to ensure that we are seen.

I believe collaboration starts with identifying what each party needs from the other and communicating it with professional respect and clarity.

Understanding people and what they bring to the table is where I believe the value is found and collaboration can start.

Cara shared her experience of a collaborative Test of Change to tackle delayed discharge

… one of the things people often don't know about social care, is time and task… it's fundamental to this project and some of the ways and reasons why it worked and is working

… the employer employing the care worker is only paid for that specified time that the social worker has said [e.g. 15 min visit for x, y, z task]… this was a huge challenge for care at home and was driving people away from the sector.

… by agreeing aligned goals, the provider partners and the statutory partners were able to recognise how they were able to meet each other's needs… I think we're on to a new type of conversation because going on that journey together has helped to highlight all the ways in which the processes can be improved.

… by listening to what the providers are saying… there's now a weekly forum where [issues] can be looked at together, so that constructive challenge coming in all directions about solving problems, about doing that collectively and not in professional silos in quite the same way.

Susan shared her reflections and invited further connection and conversation

I've been in social work for a long time so I know the system incredibly well, and my role in Leading to Change, I think the best thing about it is that it's a brand new role, that NES as an organisation has really stepped into a space where it wants to raise the profile of social work and social care knowing that it's not seen by others as a space that social work and social care would naturally occupy.

I suppose my thing about social work and social care is about really trying to help people to understand the complexity… it gets shortened down to 2 sets of 2 letters but the complexity that sits under there is mind blowing and my experience of helping other people get some insight into that is that a lot of the behaviour that people find challenging isn't coming from a bad place, isn't actually coming from a place of judgement or criticism, it's coming from a place of just not really understanding what the complexity means.

I think it is about saying we're all just human beings in the end… I'm interested in people and the grey areas and what we can do to make those grey areas something helpful.

Our collective learning

Importance of building trust and how to do this genuinely

At its core there is a need for professional respect and to see those that work in SC as the experts in what they do

Competing targets for each sector (and organisation commissions) drive the divide and incentivise the status quo

How do we not go over old ground? Draw a line and show up to conversations differently (collaboration)

If this was easy, then what would happen/what would it look like? – The National Care Bill would be a driver for parity if done right and should pay attention to what the individual service user needs

Issues with 'blending' and therefore confusing roles e.g. SW doing care at home packages instead of the higher tariff planning and risk management activity. Well-meaning but does this blurring of the lines create confusion?

Need focus on importance of care – if care system falls down has a massive impact on NHS / hospitals

How trust between sectors eroded during the pandemic and how to re-build relationships

Perceived difference in value of care sector vs NHS – there was money for junior Drs – leads to real feeling of unfairness and inequity

Can very much relate to what was being talked about by the presenters

Using inquiry and being curious

Learning best practice from others and building relationships

We are in the same storm, but not the same boat

Nobody sets out to do a bad job – it's the systems and processes that have caused the current difficulties

The funding resource is symbolic of the lack of parity – community funding is nowhere near acute NHS hospitals

Care workers often do nursing roles, would be paid more in Aldi – this needs to change – recognition (and funding) of role

Need to understand who you should be speaking to and invite them into spaces at earlier stages

What you pay attention to then develops into habit

Professional respect – more multi-cultural service users. What does it mean for local staff, other staff? The awareness raising and respect for those that are caring for service users?

Politicians / policy makers don't want to engage/ listen

Fife collaborative demonstrates that things can be better, and when we have collective voice its louder

Work as imagined and prescribed is far from work as actually done/possible and there needs to be more done between different parts of the system to improve understanding so that collaboration can be improved

Explaining your intentions and doing things *with* people and not *to* people

Bringing all stakeholders in to the collaboration conversations including service users

When things go right, who takes credit for collaborative achievements?

Silos in integrated spaces and how can we work collectively to overcome these obstacles?

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Personal reflections

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What is your one key reflection from your discussions?

- Respect for each other's expertise is key to allow building of connection and collaboration.
- Allies may not be obvious- don't make assumptions about potential collaborators based on someone's role or employer.
- Key to me for collaboration (from a commissioner perspective), is to start from a position of trust. Our currently outdated approach - needs to be flipped for trust to be our starting point.
- Personal commitment is there. Systems and processes need to fit around that, not fit commitment into systems and processes.
- Stress in the system defaults people to looking inwards not outwards - another issue that needs to be flipped!

What is one practical step you will take to apply the learning from today?

- Acknowledge any power imbalances, tensions, openly to allow these to be addressed.
- Keeping chapping the doors across the sectors to open communications.
- The right thing to do needs to be the easiest thing to do.
- When communicating with other organisations or systems - never assume, find out what is going on for them, try and work in collaboration.
- Encourage more providers in my patch to access Leading to Change and contribute to the discussion on collaboration across sectors.
- Opening up discussion, maintaining an open mind and sharing experiences.
- Identifying what is core to my role- following a person-centred approach to supporting both managers and staffs for effective service delivery.

Your feedback

- Good open and safe discussions with protected time.
- Welcoming space with people from all backgrounds – lots to be learned.
- Great to have people from social care being given a voice to discuss things they wish other people could know.
- Because I work in health care it gave me more of an insight in the care system.
- Collaboration was noticed from the 1st speaker to the last. I could tell everyone wanted to work cohesively with the other to promote better standards and ways of working.
- I knew the health service was under immense pressure, but it made me more aware of the perhaps even more immense pressures the care service is under.

Final reflections

- We are all in the same sea in different boats.
- That social care is often ignored but has great potential to influence health within the community.
- 'How are you and what is important to you today' is a great way to start a collaborative conversation!
- Divisions can be through power and political dimensions which reinforce the status quo. To make it 'easy' we need to begin the conversation from the individual's perspective and build round them instead of trying to get a 'better' understanding of the system (an impossible task to get 'right')
- "In the beginner's mind there are many possibilities, but in the expert's there are few" - *Shunryu Suzuki*

Moving forward
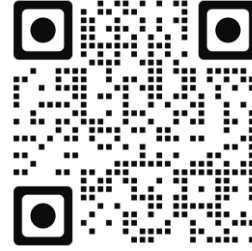
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▸ **Tell us more** hello@leadingtochange.scot

  ▸ We read and reflect on all feedback we receive which shapes our future events. Do you have anything you wish to share?
  ▸ How did you use this Reflect & Connect pack? What was useful or what would you like to see?
  ▸ We would love to hear your ideas for potential topics and contributors
  ▸ Do you have thoughts and learning to share? Would you like to write a blog or know someone who could? Our team can fully support you with this.

▸ **To find out more**, please explore

  ▸ Our community resources – read our latest report or watch a 3 minute key summary, consider our community created assets or watch our short animations
  ▸ Our many leadership, sector and programme resources available to read, watch and engage with from internal and external sources

▸ We hope to see you again soon at one of our next events – scan the QR code above to find out more

Thank You!