GOLDEN KEY END OF PROGRAMME REPORT

JULY 2022

Golden Key End of Programme Report

Golden Key was a partnership between statutory services, commissioners, the voluntary sector and people with lived experience across Bristol, working to improve services for Bristol citizens facing multiple disadvantage.

Funded from 2014 – 2022 by the National Lottery Community Fund as part of its Fulfilling Lives Programme, Golden Key helped to bring about change at every level of the system.

This Report brings together the learning from the programme, as part of its legacy, and to inspire further change.

> *"Golden Key has been a force for good in Bristol. It has put the needs of residents with multiple and complex needs in the spotlight and improved the lives of many. It has provoked system change and made a significant contribution to partnership working capability and competence in our city. It has done this by working across organisational boundaries, by involving people with lived experience, by developing new ways of working and through putting equality diversity and inclusion at the heart of service design and delivery. It exemplifies the One City approach and is an initiative which all involved can feel pride in."*
>
> Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor of Bristol

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Foreword from Golden Key Independent Chair and Lead Agency

Golden Key focused on people with multiple and complex needs. Our clients experienced a challenging mix of homelessness, long term mental health problems, dependency on drugs and/or alcohol and offending behaviour. Golden Key's aim was to create new, positive, futures for those with the most complex needs by transforming the services they receive.

Golden Key was a partnership made up of service commissioners, service providers and people with lived experience. Throughout our work we placed a strong emphasis on continual learning. We benefitted enormously from having the University of the West of England (UWE) as our independent evaluator and committed partner. This report draws on UWE's findings.

We are particularly proud of the finding that most clients – especially those whose need was greatest - experienced positive life changes which they felt Golden Key had substantially contributed to. We are pleased that UWE found that the voice of lived experience consistently shaped the design and delivery of Golden Key and that the range and depth of our system change work, including our focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, was influential. Golden Key's legacy has been secured, not least by the creation and existence of a substantial, diverse, influential and committed community of practice.

This is long term work, for long term change.

Our vision is that Bristol Changing Futures, and other partnership work across the city, will build on our legacy, and continue our collective efforts to transform the system for people facing multiple disadvantage.

We invite all those reading this Report to step up to this challenge.

John Simpson
Golden Key Independent Chair

Aileen Edwards
CEO, Second Step
Golden Key Lead Agency

Acknowledgements

We want to acknowledge the significant and diverse range of partners and individuals who have contributed to Golden Key's learning and impact, which includes:

The National Lottery Community Fund

Past and present members of the Golden Key Partnership

Staff from the wide range of organisations which engaged with Golden Key

Independent Futures – our lived experience advisory group

Peer mentors and clients

All Golden Key staff past and present

The University of the West of England – independent local evaluators

A range of individuals that have championed the programme and actively supported us

Second Step as the lead organisation.

Executive Summary

Golden Key was an 8-year partnership between statutory services, commissioners, the voluntary sector and people with lived experience across Bristol.

Golden Key aimed to learn from the experiences of people who are farthest from services, by piloting, developing and delivering new approaches, and to utilise the learning and evaluation findings to improve the way the system works for people facing multiple disadvantage.

The longevity of the programme was a significant factor in what was achieved. This enabled staff, partners and people with lived experience to evolve their thinking and practice through an iterative process, and to innovate and pilot new approaches.

At the start we were on a steep learning curve, for although we generally knew about client need, we had little collective experience of what behaviours, ways of working and organisational requirements were required by all partners to really achieve system change. Along the journey there have been significant insights, positive changes achieved, and lessons for future work. We have valued learning about what worked well, and what did not. We have increased our understanding of how to work with the complexity, challenges and opportunities of the system; and the vital role the numerous and diverse individuals, agencies, people with lived experience, community groups and organisations play in having an impact.

Recommendations from UWE, the Golden Key local evaluation partner

In their final Report, UWE identified a number of recommendations and conclusions, including the following:

- Share Golden Key's learning on the person-centred and trauma-informed approach with other services, along with an understanding of the organisational and individual level enablers which GK have found are critical to support working with multiple complex needs service users. There are important implications for organisational support structures, commissioning, staff support and recruitment.

- Future support for service provision for people with severe and multiple disadvantage in Bristol must plan for some clients who have long-term support requirements, to avoid operational issues with provision which can only support a small group of fixed long-term clients.

- Implications about who has benefitted most from GK's support should be considered by future initiatives when making targeted recruitment choices about who can benefit from limited resources. Our findings suggest clients with certain characteristics have been more likely to benefit from GK's support (particularly those with high needs overall and those with high needs dual diagnosis).

- Further consideration needs to be given to proactively managing tricky but somewhat predictable circumstances around transitions and endings. For

example, planning to deal with temporary or permanent unanticipated staff departures, new pandemic restrictions, service endings in a way which carefully protects clients.

- Future initiatives should consider how services can be supported to identify and respond rapidly to clients' 'windows of opportunity'. The evaluation found that Service Coordinators spotting and responding to 'windows of opportunity' was a key mechanism through which they were able to engage and support clients to improve their lives.

- Future evaluation of similar initiatives should seek to produce or access a joined-up service use dataset ideally including counterfactual comparison data.

Reflections and feedback on what worked well and what could be improved

Reflections and feedback were collated from the Golden Key independent chairs group; UWE, the Golden Key evaluators; the National Lottery; Second Step CEO and Golden Key Programme Manager; and the Programme Director of Change for Good, on what worked well in Golden Key and what could be improved. This was presented to and discussed at the Partnership Board in 2021, and informed Bristol's successful bid for Changing Futures funding. These reflections are provided here:

What Worked Well

Golden Key

- The service coordinator model is widely respected, with commitment to learning and innovation, and good external evidence of positive impact on a significant number of clients.
- Significant new delivery projects developed: Housing First, the Call In, Safe and Inclusive Spaces training, Emergency Accommodation and Support delivered under Everyone In – all with good evidence of positive impact on clients.
- Promoting psychologically informed practice, with evidence of positive impact on the staff and services' response to challenging behaviours by clients.
- Independent Futures lived experience group - active across the partnership, at all levels, as equal partners.
- Embracing client voice through stories of lived experience to humanise clients and engage partners.
- Developing EDI commitment, understanding and focus.
- Creating and developing a wide and inclusive multi-agency partnership, with external evidence of impact on service provision.

- Golden Key is a strong and trusted independent brand.
- Creation of Creative Solutions Board (with BCC) with independent chair and system facilitation, with external evidence of positive impact on ways of working,relationships and shared understanding of client and system change
- Concept of independent, well networked, chair.
- Strong, enabling, relationships built with most senior leaders across Bristol.
- Putting improved services for people with complex needs firmly on the local agenda.
- System learning specifically around partnership development (Approach to Change), individual and service capacity and skills. Good external evidence of positive impact of system change principles on practice.
- Following the energy and adapting to changing contexts.
- Public celebration of organisations contribution to system change and new approaches to addressing multiple disadvantage.
- Consistent and strong relationship developed with UWE has shaped evolving practice.
- Legacy and learning products promoted on website, with positive feedback and considerable potential for influence.

Change for Good

- Strong co-ownership across Bristol City Council, the CCG, Golden Key, the VCSE and IF.
- Developing a system change approach for multiple disadvantage, starting with homelessness as first priority cohort.
- Nine co-owned work streams set up – co-ownership really helps
- My Team Around Me provides system model for any person facing multiple disadvantage.
  Peer and lived experience are strongly embedded.
- Delivery principles match Changing Futures – this strengthened Bristol's position and readiness to meet the challenge and opportunity presented by Changing Futures.

Creative Solutions Board (CSB)

- Clear methodology and paperwork to bring the right clients to the CSB.
- Referral process was of itself an important part of improved multiagency working.
- Developed consistent CSB membership across agencies.
- Trusted safe space for honest discussions.
- Good balance between discussion of individuals and applying learning to look at whole system.
- Catalyst for developments e.g. Associate Professional role, which was subsequently incorporated into My Team Around Me model
- External evidence (from UWE evaluation) shows CSB 'improved outcomes for referred cases'; 'direct impact on ways of working';

understanding of system change'; 'improved relationships' and 'all GK principles were strongly embedded'.
- The enabling culture and process of the CSB encouraged service co-ordinators, other client facing staff and the psychologist to initiate new solutions, modelling experiential learning.
- Focus on learning about system change with support of System Change facilitator and Independent Chair - space to influence and inform senior leaders about system change.

What could be improved – reflections and recommendations for future partnership working on system change

Golden Key

- Partnership Board size (we had around 25 members) enables inclusivity but hinders effectiveness. High turnover partner representation in statutory sector has hindered consolidation of GK understanding in larger partner organisations.
- Need to strengthen the link between governance and partnership to drive change.
- We didn't start off with a theory of change, which has made evaluation and assessment of success harder.
- Need to agree delivery plan and objectives which are implemented through strong, focused and accountable leadership and management arrangements, which doesn't create unnecessary bureaucracy.
- Better access to sources of particular expertise to inform and improve internal and external commissioning.
- Need to develop two-way approaches to more deeply embed Golden Key concepts within organisations, learning from each other.
- We haven't invested enough on system thinking at strategic level (we focused more on manager/ frontline level).
- We didn't have enough programme resource at the start – need to build in review points and adapt to emerging requirements and opportunities.
- There wasn't enough deep ownership by agencies of systems change projects or shared purpose from the start e.g. the
Trusted Assessment project, to fully embed the full change we
wanted. Commitment to drive through.
system change hasn't matched the ambition.
- We tried to do too much at times and the degree of focus on system change was sometimes insufficient, or too abstract.
- Leadership and management requirements develop through this type of programme – leaders/managers need to develop too, through learning and coaching.
- Don't push things where there is little momentum.
- Data collection and evidence is essential, but hard to obtain.

- Getting the balance of autonomy and accountability right is challenging – what is the right message about freedom and autonomy, to enable change?

Change for Good

- VCS less visible and engaged.
- Not enough resources – operating on good will and volunteers, therefore hard for some key people to engage.
- Some agencies less visible/ not consistently engaging.

Creative Solutions Board

- CSB has only considered a small number of individuals but now identifying a number of themes. No formal way to feed these into the wider system thinking.
- No formal relationship with Golden Key Partnership Board or Change For Good Steering group, other than as a work stream lead. In that sense, CSB had no formal authority, so system change has been small scale and dependent on individual board members' tenacity. Needs the clout and authority of the Board / Steering Group and a formal relationship within the governance structure to support the drive for change.
- How do we prevent duplicate conversations across the system and asking things of the same people?

Questions for further discussion

Following the summaries above, a series of questions have been identified which it is hoped will provoke further discussion, learning and continuing commitments to transform services for clients facing multiple disadvantage.

- How do we maximise learning to influence local and national policy?
- How well do we really understand the role and impact of EDI on this client group, our work and the systems?
- How well do we really understand the role and impact of trauma on this client group, our work and the systems?
- What have we learnt about client and staff selection and retention and ways of working that maximises positive impact?
- What are the opportunities for earlier interventions?
- How do we replicate the positive impact of long-term, sustained funding? Who funds this?

There is a strong commitment to build on the legacy of Golden Key's learning and evaluation findings through the Bristol Changing Futures programme – see [website].

1. How we have structured this report

In the following sections, the main learning themes and achievements of Golden Key are summarised and illustrated with examples from the range of work undertaken across the eight-year programme.

This is grouped under the following headings:

- Co-production
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Delivery of a complex, partnership-based, system change programme
- How we engage with and apply learning
- System Change
- Working with clients facing multiple disadvantage
- Working in partnership
- Innovation

We have included links to the Golden Key website, where all the Golden Key products can be found, and to a number of other resources.

2. Summary of Learning Themes

2.1 Co-production

2.1.1 Independent Futures (IF) is a group of people with personal lived experience of multiple disadvantage. IF members aim to empower clients and professionals in Bristol to make long term positive changes by sharing the learning from their own lived experiences. IF acted as Golden Key's lived experience advisors, and were involved from the outset and throughout the programme, as equal partners.

2.1.2 As defined by Independent Futures, co-production is an intentional way of working when organisations want to create, review or deliver something with service users or people with lived experience of using services. Genuine co-production requires everyone to see others' perspectives and to work collaboratively. This results in outcomes which have been created equally by all parties.

2.1.3 Genuine, effective co-production brings a range of unexpected and impactful benefits. Putting the voices of people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage at the heart of the programme brought in diverse and unique insights and assets, buy-in from partner agencies, innovation, and helped to drive system change. It also humanises the work through personal stories and reminds everyone that clients are the most important beneficiaries.

2.1.4 Effective co-production happens when everyone involved takes time to increase awareness of their own power, bias and difference. It is important to

recognise that those with lived experience each have their own individual ways of thinking and working, in order to enable full involvement of all.

2.1.5 Creating favourable conditions for co-production includes taking time to build relationships, understand the work involved, develop shared goals, ensure diversity of experience and creating an accessible and inclusive environment.

2.1.6 It is essential to properly resource co-production groups ensuring they have access to a strong infrastructure as well as consistent and good quality support.

2.2   Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

2.2.1 Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) starts with an acceptance that discrimination is powerful and complex, operating at a system level and in terms of the experience of individuals. It follows that it is important that all involved engage in a process of critical and continual reflection firmly rooted in a commitment to understanding and tackling the trauma caused by all forms of discrimination.

2.2.2 Reflecting on our learning journeys, instigating conversations on complex EDI issues, and bringing together diverse perspectives, enables us to build our individual and collective capacity, confidence and competence for promoting EDI.

2.2.3 Learning about and acting on EDI issues is fundamental to system change work and achieving a more equitable system. It is important not to overlook long standing equalities challenges. Challenges must be addressed in order to have a significant positive and lasting impact on outcomes.

2.2.4 Everyone has a role to play. It requires sustained, visible, and accountable leadership.

2.2.5 Equality, diversity and inclusion need to be embedded and meaningful in all the work we do.

2.3   Delivery of a complex, partnership-based system change programme

2.3.1 Partnership-based system change programmes with ambitions to do things differently require additional resource and time for planning, learning, testing and partnership engagement. It is essential to adequately resource functions such as recruitment, administration, communication, data collection and analysis to coordinate and align different partner processes and policies effectively.

2.3.2 Programmes designed to increase knowledge equity across the partnership and system need to adapt approaches and products as this equity

builds, allowing evolution and transformation. This includes how we report and what we report on, our approach to governance, and our approach to delivery.

2.3.3   Procurement regulations can mitigate against partnership working where delivery agencies are excluded from and unable to inform commissioning decisions. This is a challenge to be addressed and resolved upfront, when forming an inclusive partnership.

2.3.4   Reflection at all levels of the hierarchy is essential, as is development of systems thinking and behaviours.

2.4   How we engage with and apply learning

2.4.1   Learning, reflecting and iterating is essential. We need to be better at building this into our governance structures, our practices and our ways of working including building capacity for stakeholders at all levels to participate. A commitment to learning is essential if a Partnership Board is to push forward system change work and embed change effectively.

2.4.2   Developing learning products that meet the requirements of the system and which are used in practice, needs to be seen as an on-going and iterative process. This requires continuing investment.

2.4.3   Evaluating new opportunities requires a lead-in phase in the project plan to establish a sound evaluation framework.

2.4.4   Evaluating complex programmes is challenging for both the evaluators and the providers. Building a strong, trusting relationship and shared narrative is essential to support strong delivery.

2.4.5   The strategy for communication is key to ensuring sharing and dissemination of learning. Targeting dissemination at key events can lead to greater impact and generate real change.

2.5.   System Change

2.5.1   System change requires having the competence and capacity for change. This includes a willingness to change. Energy needs to be put into exploring the capacity for change in partner organisations and agencies as well as any barriers to change, at all levels, to develop the environment and culture for change.

2.5.2   Use of practical guides, toolkits and training in systems thinking can help develop a shared understanding of what is meant by system change and how to make it happen.

2.5.3   Change can happen at all levels and can be big or small. Empowering and encouraging individuals and teams within organisations and agencies to be change agents can lead to improved outcomes and have impact.

2.5.4 Developing ways of sharing learning through system change can have a ripple effect and lead to a small change having a much greater impact than first realised.

2.6. Working with clients facing multiple disadvantage

2.6.1 The majority of people facing severe and multiple disadvantage need a bespoke, person-centred and holistic approach. The system should not drive how services are delivered, yet this is routinely how services operate. The client should drive this. Working in this way in Golden Key has enabled some of Bristol's most disadvantaged people, who were farthest from services, to achieve positive outcomes.

How have clients' lives changed through the support of Golden Key?

Around two thirds of Golden Key's clients' lives have improved since working with Golden Key. Looking at clients' onward destinations when Golden Key support had ended (excluding clients still supported in March 2020), 59% of closed client cases were recorded as having moved on to positive destinations which is higher than the overall Fulfilling Lives programme proportions. The average length of engagement was 3 years, 1 month, though over half of GK's clients engaged for 3 ½ - 5 years. 3. Most Golden Key clients we interviewed had experienced positive life changes which they felt GK had substantially contributed towards. Conversely, clients with the lowest level of need at the start saw very little change in their overall average outcomes.

How has Golden key's approach supported change?

Overall, the experience of clients reflected the highly person-centred approach (prioritised client relationship, flexible and responsive support, client led) which Service Coordinators described in terms of both principles and practice. Clients nearly all felt Golden Key's support was positively different to other services in how their Service Coordinator cared about them and their progress. Clients emphasised the importance of their relationships with their Service Coordinator and there were some indications of therapeutic value in client's lives. Relationship endings during the points of transition between workers and ending support have caused some challenges, which is concerning given the client population's vulnerability.

Clients particularly valued Golden Key's holistic approach with emotional and practical support, along with support to access and engage with services. There was considerable learning within the Service Coordinator Team in developing the Golden Key approach to supporting clients in person-centred and trauma informed ways.

From UWE Phase 5 Evaluation Report, Executive Summary

2.6.2 Planned, appropriate and timely move on is key. People with a trauma history who have developed positive and healthy relationships, perhaps for the first time, face a challenge to move on from that relationship. Understanding what was needed to enable clients to move on to mainstream services in a healthy and safe manner, was central to the approach.

2.6.3 The system can sometimes be a cause of client failure. Changes of approach, language, reflection, review and adaptation can lead to improved outcomes for the client.

2.6.4 Finding ways to share risk across organisations involved in supporting a client, rather than the risk sitting with one organisation, creates a culture of collaboration and accountability. This in turn promotes effective working and improves client outcomes.

2.6.5 Ensuring client-facing staff have the capacity and authority to innovate, build relationships and trust with partners and agencies, supports the environment for positive client outcomes.

2.6.6 Working within a psychologically informed framework has enabled person-centred and strengths-based innovative practices to flourish, and to achieve positive outcomes.

2.6.7 A culture of learning and reflection for staff with resource invested in staff support, training and supervision, including access to a clinical psychologist, enables client-facing staff to feel supported and empowered to deliver improved outcomes for clients.

2.6.8 For those facing multiple disadvantage with a need to access a range of services, the importance of a single lead case worker to coordinate the services the client needs, and support them to access those services, has proved invaluable.

2.7   Working in partnership

2.7.1 Building new networks is as essential as building trust. Communities and grass-roots stakeholders are as important as higher profile organisations. Goals will not be achieved without including community-based organisations.

2.7.2 Sharing learning, good communication and demonstrating the benefits of partnership working, such as by attracting additional resources, supports the development of strong partnerships.

2.7.3 Procurement legislation and guidance make it difficult for system change partnerships to develop and act differently. Significant thought needs to be given to how to build flexibility into procurement arrangements to allow all agencies to get involved with delivery and maximise collective impact. Relationship building with key commissioning staff is critical.

2.7.4 Partnership management requires significant time, effort and resource to be effective. This includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the Board and its subgroups, and clear escalation processes. This is important to ensure that issues are dealt with at the appropriate level, and to prevent the Board for example from getting involved in issues that can be resolved elsewhere.

2.7.5 Developing shared approaches to practices such as risk management can be challenging and requires investment of time and resource, as well as some flexibility.

2.7.6 Opportunities to share data and information should be explored and agreed at an early stage, as it can take time within each organisation to agree joint protocols.

2.7.7 Partnerships can be invaluable in addressing siloed thinking through bringing issues to the table and resolving together.

2.7.8 A shared learning model for a partnership is essential to enable understanding of system change and its impact. As is the understanding of partners as to how to work as part of the system.

2.8   Innovation

2.8.1 A system change and a partnership-based approach to delivery encourages innovation.

2.8.2 Developing innovation requires involvement of key stakeholders at an early stage. Presentation of a developed idea to agencies involved does not work. Developing and working on an idea together has a much greater chance of success.

2.8.3 Introduction of innovation pilots alongside existing workstreams can erode the resilience of an established team over time. Pilots also need to take into account the stage and maturity of the partnership, for example whether this is already established, or will need lead-in time

2.8.4 A culture of embracing and encouraging change, working in partnership and encouraging flexibility can make quite complex innovation possible and achievable. Strong relationships with statutory agencies (such as local authorities and health) and VCSE agencies, to foster more collaboration at strategic level, is very important to enable more impact.

2.9   Reflections on being a lead agency

Through workshops delivered by Golden Key partner Making Every Adult Matter ([MEAM](link)), ten 'criteria for success' were identified, which participants felt were important not just for the success of Golden Key, but which also had impact, relevance and transferability for future partnership programmes. These ten criteria are summarised here, and examples are included in this report.

The importance of the right approach for selecting a lead partner

- Ensure independent facilitation of the selection process by an organisation that does not want to be lead partner, with the lead agency selected by peers to build trust and confidence from the start. In Bristol the process was led by Voscur.
- Select an agency that has a strong track record of local partnership working, firm understanding of the local context, capacity/resource to lead, is representative of the local community and understands the ways that individuals experience the problem the programme is trying to address
- Keep in mind the different roles that statutory and voluntary agencies can play as lead partners and the incentives and disincentives for partnership that come with each choice. Recognise how this choice will impact the formation of partnerships and put in place plans to mitigate risks from the beginning.

Having a strong independent chair

- The role of programme governance is equally important to the selection of lead agency
- Includes ensuring that the work is not regarded as a "project" or "service" of partners' own, and partners instead engaging with it as a jointly owned systems change programme.
- There was significant value in having an independent chair as this prevents the programme from being too closely associated with the lead partner or being seen as a project or service. Second Step recognised the need for an independent chair early and had been key to getting this in place.
- Autonomy and independence of the chair was seen as very important – the Golden Key chair had not known anyone in the system when he started the role, this was beneficial for the positioning of the work and not being seen by any partner to have an agenda.
- Lead agency plays a vital role in ensuring these governance structures are in place. This requires a leader from the lead agency with good relationships and positioning to get the structures in place, before then stepping back for the independent chair.

The importance of the role of the board

- Lead partners need to ensure:

- There is clear understanding from all involved of the difference between "partnership governance" and "organisational governance". In organisational governance, board members are responsible for running of an organisation or charity. In partnership governance, members have a twin responsibility – responsibility for the programme (to some agreed extent) and a responsibility to create change within the organisation they represent and the wider system (a systems responsibility). Clear terms of reference are needed to create this twin responsibility, as well as accountability structures at the board and within members' organisations (see below).
- There is clarity on the division of responsibility between the partnership board and the board of the lead agency.
- Board of the lead agency has put in place clear processes for managing risk associated with delegation of any functions to a partnership board.
- Structures are in place around the 'systems responsibility' role of partnership board members, both within the board itself and in board members' employing organisations.
- Board members understand their role in helping to drive systems leadership and system-wide change and are held accountable for this at the board and within own organisations.

The importance of lived experience

- The lead agency has an important role in promoting the involvement of people with lived experience in all aspects of the programme's governance, delivery and evaluation.
- Creating the right structures to enable the involvement of people with lived experience is vital, and the success of Independent Futures (IF) in Bristol was noted as a particular success of the programme.
- Promoting good practice around co-production across the system is an important part of any programme, as is challenging bad practice.

Shaping narrative and purpose: Delivery versus system change

- There is constant tension between running a delivery programme and a systems change programme. Delivering frontline work (such as navigators) can show the system how to be different and create helpful evidence and data, but can also risk programme being seen as "a service" and remove incentives for systemic change from other partners. Conversely, trying to lead systems change without practical examples of how things could be different can be challenging.
- Lead agency has key role in getting this balance right for the programme and encouraging others to engage in discussion that can build consensus. The frontline work led by Golden Key was necessary pre-requisite for the systems change work; the process of finding the balance on this was a learning process.
- Developing a clear narrative for the approach the programme plans to take between delivery and systems change is vital. In Golden Key there wasn't always a clear narrative expressed, this could have been communicated

from beginning of programme (while also recognizing the work is by nature iterative).
- Lead agency needs to ensure their staffing and resourcing matches the balance chosen between delivery and systems change. Bristol team recognised they needed to adapt staffing structure to create more resource for systems change work.
- Lead agencies need to give themselves regular time for reflection and iteration to support programme development. External support may be a useful way of achieving this.

Supporting the process of system change

- Lead agency has important role in helping operationalise the concept of systems change, upskilling partners, providing the expertise and trusted spaces for this to take place.
- Bristol lead agency recognised early that significant investment was needed in support for systems change; external resource was brought in to support learning, development, action and reflection.
- Process of systems change will evolve over life of programme and lead partner must be ready to lead the place to the next stage of systems change journey. In Bristol this included iterating the approach to systems change over the years, from blocks and barriers work, to Creative Solutions Board and other initiatives.
- Achieving systems change will require focus and prioritisation on a set of key issues, as the system is too big to change wholesale. Lead Agency has important role in helping the place to make these choices and to keep them focused on these.

Evaluating impact

- Measuring and evaluating impact is an important part of role of lead agency, including shaping evaluation of the programme. Significant work was needed in Bristol to scope and agree an approach to defining, measuring and evaluating systems change and this work was prioritised at the beginning of the programme. The relationship with UWE was highlighted as particularly important in this respect.
- Lead agency also has role in ensuring that learning from the evaluation helps to shape the programme throughout its implementation, not just at the end.

Building and maintaining relationships

- Lead agency has key role in building and maintaining the relationships needed across the place to deliver successful systems change programme
- There had been continuity in many key roles in Bristol and this was important for the programme. There was more turnover in statutory sector, and relationships with statutory partners therefore sometimes struggled as a result.

- If organisations have 'skin in the game' and it is clear how they are accountable for the change the programme is trying to make, then they are more likely to be properly and sustainably involved
- Lead agency needs to create challenge but avoid confrontation with partners across the system, tempering their own ambition to bring others on the systems change journey. Lead agencies can't be seen to be 'throwing out the old' but do need to be ambitious.

The importance of equity, diversity and inclusion

- Systems change is not possible without a clear focus on equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Lead agency has vital in leadership role around equity, diversity and inclusion. This needs to be at the heart of system change ambitions and activity.
- The representativeness of the people and organisations involved is highly relevant – it will not be possible to identify blocks and barriers for some groups if their experience of the issue the programme is tackling is not well understood. The experience of minoritised communities, young people and those involved in criminal justice were highlighted as important within the future Bristol work.

The role of funding

- Money from external sources (to statutory or voluntary agencies) can cause disincentives for systems change across the local system. This needs to be recognised from the beginning and actions put in place to mitigate risk. Failing to consider impact of this early can have negative effects on the programme (this links to point above about choice of statutory/voluntary lead partner and impact on partnership formation).
- Ability of National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) to fund a system change programme rather than a delivery programme has been vital to success. Flexibility of NLCF and their focus on learning and iteration had been key components of success, as had relationship between funding managers and lead agencies.
- Particularly at beginning of the programme, there is a need for funders and lead agencies to avoid a focus on numbers, throughput and output, and instead to focus on development and measurement of systemic change.
- Lead agencies need to feed back to the funder about any funding/assessment barriers that are preventing a systems change focus and being flexible themselves in how programme is developed and reported. It took some time at beginning of the programme for these relationships between the NLCF and lead partners to form and become effective.

The full MEAM report is submitted with this Report.

3. Full Report

In this section of the report, the learning themes set out in section 2 above are illustrated with examples from across the programme.

These are drawn from a range of sources including the Golden Key staff team's internal logs and learning reports, UWE's independent evaluation reports, Golden Key Impact Reports and products, and a report by Make Every Adult Matter (MEAM).

3.1   Co-production

3.1.1   Learning theme: genuine, effective co-production brings a range of unexpected and impactful benefits. Putting the voices of people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage at the heart of the programme brought in diverse and unique insights and assets, buy-in from partner agencies, innovation, and helped to drive system change. It also humanises the work through personal stories and reminds everyone that clients are the most important beneficiaries.

Example 1: Telling Your Story Once: The Telling Your Story Once project aimed to avoid the need for clients to repeat their stories and personal information. From the outset of Golden Key, Independent Futures were passionate about the need for this, and acted as powerful advocates for change.

The vision for the project stalled due to data sharing restrictions, and the ability to find a secure and effective digital solution. As a result, and with the perseverance of IF and the Partnership Board, the project took another direction. The changed approach to the recommissioning of Bristol's Homelessness Pathways services included a stipulation that service providers commit to using Trusted Assessments. Bristol City Council worked with the Bristol Homelessness Pathways providers to achieve this. This led to an important development, with 16 agencies delivering a range of accommodation-based and resettlement support services adjusting their assessment process to improve the client journey experience. This gave clients more involvement and control in the way assessments were carried out.

This challenging project presented many barriers to achieving progress. Independent Futures were involved throughout - in developing and delivering the project, training, and engaging with partners. They kept the voice and needs of the client at the heart of the work and maintained momentum across all partners to overcome these challenges and achieve the change clients needed.

Example 2: Involvement from the start, and at strategic level: The IF Group were fully involved at the start of Golden Key, from the visioning stage, through the business planning and initial implementation. This laid strong foundations for the co-production approach in Golden Key, and IF's central, ongoing role, as equal partners.

The Group were involved with a range of workstreams and sub-groups, and attendance at a range of associated meetings, including:

- Golden Key (GK) Partnership Board

- GK Creative Solutions Board
- GK Audit, Legacy and Sustainability Committee
- GK Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee and workstream
- Housing First Board
- GK System Change Group
- GK Evaluation Advisory Group
- Change for Good Steering Group
- Livelihood Programme Group
- Homelessness Prevention Board

"…we are getting our voices out there and they are listening and it is working"

"I cannot say that I ever really felt like a token gesture 'service user group'… Independent Futures (IF) has always felt like an equal partner in this Golden Key project"

Quotes from Independent Futures members (from [UWE Phase 5 report](#))

Example 3: Involvement in commissioning: In 2017, two IF members were involved with evaluating tenders submitted to Bristol City Council by organisations wanting to provide residential rehabilitation services. IF members evaluated the bids, looking specifically at how the bidders proposed to involve and engage those with lived experience in the services they wanted to run. As a result, IF members were able to play an important part in ensuring that those commissioned to provide rehabilitation services in Bristol were organisations who understood the importance of listening to people with lived experience.

IF's involvement in another tendering process generated the following positive feedback:

"Just wanted to write and say thank you again for help with evaluating this tender. It is quite a skilled piece of work and you have been fantastic and really committed to getting the best provider for the service. This has been a big help for us and getting the tender evaluated will mean securing the best services for rough sleepers in the city, which means helping a lot of vulnerable people off the streets."

Quote from Bristol City Council.

Example 4: Police Consultation: IF fed into two consultations with Avon and Somerset Police, providing advice on the issue of failures to turn up to court. Their feedback is helping to bring about a change in the way court summons letters are worded and designed.

3.1.2 Learning Theme: Effective co-production happens when everyone involved takes time to increase awareness of their own power, bias, and difference. It is important to recognise that those with lived experience each have their own individual ways of thinking and working, in order to enable full involvement of all.

Example 1: The Starter Guide to Co-production: Independent Futures members worked in collaboration with the Golden Key Learning Team to bring together their learning from 8 years of being involved in co-produced work.

Six facilitated workshops mapped IF reflections and experiences and the **'starter guide to co-production'** is the culmination of this work.

This learning theme is central to IF learning, and highlights that effective co-production begins with those involved taking steps to raising awareness of their own power, bias and difference:

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On power: 'It is important for everybody to reflect on power in their own context. Being aware of how power may influence the co-produced work can help to create conditions for good co-production'.

On bias: 'For better co-production, safe spaces are needed to help us reflect on our biases honestly, both individually and together. This can feel uncomfortable but can be very constructive. An increased awareness of biases will enable everyone to make more informed and balanced decisions.' As one IF member put it, we need to 'make the unconscious conscious.'

On difference: 'We have learned it can be helpful to increase your awareness of different cultures, experiences, and beliefs to expand your understanding of other perspectives'. As one IF member commented: "Everyone is responsible for everyone else's feelings."

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The full version of the Guide can be found here:

3.1.3 Learning theme: Creating favourable conditions for co-production includes taking time to build relationships, develop shared goals, ensure diversity of experience and creating an accessible and inclusive environment.

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"Relationships are the foundation of co-production."

"If system change is the goal, then one perspective is not enough".

Quotes from IF members

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Example: from the Starter Guide to Co-production:

'We were asked to co-produce a slot in a webinar by a senior academic. Time was dedicated upfront to get to know each other and build an initial trusting relationship with the professor where everyone felt like equals. This provided a foundation for the rest of the work as IF members felt able to voice any anxieties or blocks they came across.' (IF members)

3.1.4 Learning theme: It is essential to properly resource co-production groups, ensuring they have access to a strong infrastructure as well as consistent and good quality support.

Example 1: Attention was paid to induction and ongoing support of members, including weekly check-ins and group reflective practice.

Two of IF's new members gave feedback on how they have found joining the group. One said "IF is more serious than I expected. The work is more meaningful and important", while another who joined during the pandemic said, "I joined IF separated by a screen. The screen is still there but the separation is not; replaced by IF's strength of diversity".

Example 2: Make Every Adult Matter (MEAM) chose to work with IF on a national project which was speaking directly to commissioners and key stakeholders in the criminal justice system. MEAM approached IF because they knew how well supported IF members were, and recognised the high quality of co-production and lived experience representation the group brings.

Example 3: IF received a lot of positive feedback during its work with a range of different agencies and groups, reflecting the fact that the group was well supported to play a meaningful role:

> *"Helpful...Thoughtful... Eloquent... Brilliant...Insightful...Absolutely fantastic..."*
>
> Quotes from the range of partners IF worked with, which included Bristol City Council, Bristol Independent Mental Health Network (BIMHN) and the Golden Key partnership.

3.2 Equality, diversity, and Inclusion

3.2.1 Learning theme: Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) starts with an acceptance that discrimination is powerful and complex, operating at a system level and in terms of the experience of individuals. It follows that it is important that all involved engage in a process of critical and continual reflection firmly rooted in a commitment to understanding and tackling the trauma caused by all forms of discrimination.

Example 1: **EDI activities:** In March 2020 the Golden Key Partnership Board agreed funding to support a range of EDI focused work activities. This was to support the development and impact of historic and existing EDI work activities;

explore how hearing and acting on different voices within the city could influence what is valued; and co-create a more inclusive narrative which could support people to think and act differently in relation to EDI.

The people involved in leading the work chose to take an emergent approach that was grounded in trauma-informed practice, co-production and iterative action learning.

The activities undertaken included:

- The setup of an **EDI Partnership Board Steering Group** and an **EDI Project team.**
- **Addressing the 'elephant in the room' - a conversation series** focussed on supporting system leaders to learn together and take responsibility for collectively tackling systemic inequalities and injustices.
- **Exploring equalities impact assessments (EIAs) –** a 'test and learn' activity to understand the effectiveness and impact of EIAs.
- **Working with The Equalities Trust** – actions taken to raise the profile of people facing multiple disadvantage as an unrecognised protected characteristic.
- **A learning webinar on EDI** where panellists looked at the three main themes that emerged when addressing the complexities of EDI, and shared the success factors they identified for positive EDI outcomes, based on their journeys. This can be found [here](#).
- **The EDI Approach to Change –** a tool designed to help people conceptualize, hold and engage with the complexities of equality, diversity, and inclusion challenge

Example 2: The importance of forums for discussion on EDI issues: Golden Key initiated a range of fora designed to enable a more deep and confident discussion of EDI issues. A large group of managers from across the partnership met regularly to better understand the concept of intersectionality and its implications for service design and delivery. A second group of white voluntary sector chief executives working on Changing Futures, meet regularly to better understand how white privilege can compound discrimination.

> *"There is no end point to EDI work, rather each of us must always keep working on ourselves"*
>
> From EDI: a Learning Journey (2022)[1]

3.2.2 Learning theme: Reflecting on our learning journeys, instigating conversations on complex EDI issues, and bringing together diverse

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[1] EDI: A Learning Journey – a forthcoming Golden Key paper

perspectives, enables us to build our individual and collective capacity, confidence and competence for promoting EDI.

Example 1: The shift to learning: The EDI Project Team made the decision to transition to an EDI Learning Group. This decision was led by a need for challenging and supportive spaces to discuss equalities activity and facilitate the learning journey. This shift enabled the Group to focus on reflective practice, the sharing of learning and tools, and development of EDI case studies, and was key in enabling the Group's EDI learning and legacy ambitions.

3.2.3   Learning theme: Learning about and acting on EDI issues is fundamental to system change work and achieving a more equitable system. It is important not to overlook long standing equalities challenges. Challenges must be addressed in order to have a significant positive and lasting impact on outcomes.

Example 1: **EDI as integral:** EDI focussed work activities were integral to Golden Key strategic and operational activity during the entire funding period. Notable successes included diverse representation of local organisations on the partnership board, innovative approaches to building the client caseload to ensure balanced representation across protected characteristics, and targeted work with specialist organisations and local communities to reach and support people that are furthest from services[2].

Example 2: The importance of EDI data and an enquiring approach: Data analysis by Golden Key identified a significant difference in the outcomes of female and male clients being supported by the Service Coordinator Team, with women experiencing poorer outcomes after working with the team for the same length of time as men.

The Golden Key Partnership Board commissioned a piece of work to understand what may be lying behind this and how the partnership could respond. This led to launching of a report focused on the experience of women facing multiple disadvantage, and the impact that gender can have on clients' experience of services. The Report can be found here. This was presented as part of the System Leadership webinar series hosted by Golden Key and was the second webinar focused on equalities issues. Held on International Women's Day 2021, it was attended by a range of stakeholders and involved a panel of the CEO of One25, a regional Probation representative, and Golden Key service coordinator team member. A strong and positive discussion underlined the commitment to taking the agenda and work forward.

The Report will be hosted on the Changing Futures Learning Hub as a resource for other organisations and services to utilise, and to ensure the learning and call for change on this issue maintains momentum.

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[2] ibid

This experience also highlights the importance of integrating an equalities analysis into the design of evaluation and data collection, at the start, and of exploring this in terms of service access, client experience of the service, and outcomes. A focus on learning and bringing diverse stakeholders together to review both quantitative and qualitative data can provide valuable insights, and an evidence base, as part of the system change journey.

3.2.4 Learning theme: Everyone has a role to play. It requires sustained, visible, and accountable leadership.

Example 1: EDI is everyone's business: An overarching theme within Golden Key learning and wider related literature has been that emergent system change often starts with the actions of passionate individuals bringing energy and taking simple actions to address an issue they feel personally connected to.

Participants involved in Golden Key's EDI activities spoke about the importance of acknowledging that at different times everyone has a role to play. Anyone could be discriminated against because of a protected characteristic and can therefore increase their awareness of what power they hold. Anyone who brings passion, understanding and energy to EDI issues has the capacity to lead from their position through modelling behaviours and being involved in conversations. Emphasis was placed on EDI leaders being comfortable with not 'being expert' all the time and being open to listening and learning from others.

This included fostering the principle that EDI is 'everyone's business'. This was reflected for example in the Golden Key Learning Conference, and EDI webinar where participants reflected on what they could do personally on EDI.

Example 2: Golden Key strived to model and build capacity for sustained, visible and accountable leadership on EDI. This is illustrated in Golden Key initiatives, such as the Bristol Leadership Challenge, a system leadership course piloted in 2019, in partnership with UWE and the Leadership Centre, and with strong links to Bristol's Stepping Up programme; the Leadership series of webinars which had a strong EDI focus; and the Golden Key Chair ensuring that EDI was present and visible in the membership and activities of the Partnership Board.

Example 3: Golden Key learning on EDI includes the importance of creating the conditions of possibility: Organisational leaders can:

- Offer strategic sponsorship to EDI work activities
- Ensure investment through provision of funding and/or other resources
- Work with an acceptance that this kind of work takes time
- Develop the willpower and resilience for doing things differently
- Recognise the importance of collectively agreeing what language people are using
- Prioritise and integrate EDI into organisational purpose statements, processes, values etc
- Protect spaces for EDI focussed discussion
- Ensure that people have safe spaces and support

> *"…this is a systemic and structural problem – it's not one organisation that can resolve this. If we start looking at things as a community then we find different ways of working."*
>
> From: EDI: A Learning Journey[3]

3.2.5 Learning theme: Equality, diversity and inclusion need to be embedded and meaningful in all the work we do.

Example: Use of Equality Impact Assessments: Golden Key practice informed Second Step's development of an improved Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Tool, which places more emphasis on co-production with stakeholders including people with lived experience from the start of the EIA process. Through a focus on EDI, one of Golden Key's partners developed a personalised EIA tool for use with clients, with positive feedback. Roll out is planned in a wider range of services.

3.3   Delivery of a complex, partnership-based system change programme

3.3.1: Learning theme: Partnership-based system change programmes with ambitions to 'do things differently' require additional resource and time for planning, learning, testing and partnership engagement. It is essential to adequately resource functions such as recruitment, administration, communication, data collection and analysis to coordinate and align different partner processes and policies effectively.

Example 1: Use of secondments: Golden Key aimed to test the impact of secondments and co-located staff as a model for increasing inter-agency working, shared learning and positive client management. Recruitment for all staff roles into the Golden Key programme took nine months from inception. This included establishing partnership protocols with six partners, adjusting processes to accommodate staff on different pay scales, building matrix management relationships with six partners and adapting recruitment processes to accommodate each organisation. These arrangements can take longer with statutory organisations where there may be less flexibility to quickly adapt and sign off existing policies, processes and approaches. This is helpful learning for any multi-partner programme, and the importance of discussing partnership expectations and timescales from the start.

Example 2: Understanding the resource requirements: To be effective, system change programmes require resources for back office and central support service functions, such as Project Support and Communications staff. To meet these needs in Golden Key required finding flexibility in the £10million budget, and reallocating

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[3] ibid

£1million over the 8-year life of the programme. NLCF's support and flexibility in reallocating funds made this possible. In a system which has faced significant cuts for over a decade, there is a real risk that we habitually under-resource back-office or support functions. Additionally, at the outset, we were unaware exactly what resources would be required for a new kind of programme focused on system change. This is valuable learning for future programmes of this kind, and for example, has informed the resource planning for Changing Futures. The following example illustrates the importance of this back-office support for multi-partner programmes.

In 2015, Golden Key had six board sub-groups running with very little back-office support to manage papers, minutes, coordination, developing Terms of Reference and reporting. This led to some poorly managed meetings and slipping timelines. The initial posts recruited for this work supported a wide range of administrative functions and were the only resource for the programme. As a result of re-allocating resources, new project management and project support posts were created, and played a vital role in the partnership's functioning and effectiveness.

3.3.2   Learning theme: Programmes designed to increase knowledge equity across the partnership and system need to adapt approaches and products as this equity builds, allowing evolution and transformation. This includes how we report and what we report on, our approach to governance, and our approach to delivery.

Example 1: Shifting to transformational activity: The function of the Golden Key partnership board evolved during the course of the programme. In earlier years, it undertook a traditional board role of supporting implementation and overseeing operational delivery. In January 2017, the focus of the board evolved to focus primarily on driving transformational system change activity. This important shift led, for example, to the creation of a Golden Key Approach to Change, the more robust integration of work around EDI, discussions around UWE's findings relating to Golden Key's system change work, the formation of the Creative Solutions Board, and the commissioning of system change expertise.

Example 2: Partnership as a catalyst for change: In summer 2020, Bristol City Council approached Golden Key as the local system change partnership, to focus on the Everyone In initiative[4]. Everyone In, and making the most of this opportunity to do things differently for homeless people facing multiple disadvantage and achieve sustainable change. By the City approaching GK in this way changed the way the Golden Key Partnership Board viewed its role and the approach it could take to

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[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-continues-drive-to-end-rough-sleeping-building-on-success-of-everyone-in

working in partnership. It led to the launch of the Change for Good Project in summer 2020, which is described in more detail below, in section 3.7.2.

Example 3: Reporting arrangements: We found that our reporting arrangements for Golden Key were not right at the start, as no one knew exactly what was needed for a system change programme. We all needed to change and evolve our expectations. We shared these insights with the NLCF.

3.3.3   Learning theme: Procurement regulations can mitigate against partnership working where delivery agencies are excluded from and unable to inform commissioning decisions. This is a challenge to be addressed and resolved upfront, when forming an inclusive partnership.

Example: **Doing commissioning differently**: A number of grass-roots agencies reported feeling excluded from the programme as they did not have capacity to attend meetings without financial compensation. Competitive tendering processes also often exclude smaller organisations and community groups from accessing funds, which can limit the funding they have. This in turn impacts their capacity for engaging in a system expectation, or opportunity, where this requires them to represent their clients' interests. These smaller agencies include those with an equalities focus, which bring reach into, trust and expertise with communities and populations who face multiple disadvantage and additional barriers, for example relating to race, gender, age or other factors.

Change in this area requires investment by all stakeholders. Programme budgets need to include provision and flexibility to pay these smaller agencies for their time. Their involvement and input into service specifications, at an early stage of any commissioning process, promotes a more inclusive approach, and supports better commissioning outcomes. Critically, this process also builds relationships and trust between delivery agencies, commissioners, people with lived experience and communities – both fundamental to the system change process.

Under Changing Futures, there is a commitment to development of a Multiple Disadvantage Strategy for Bristol, and a different approach to commissioning for people who face multiple disadvantage.

This draws on the Commissioning for Complexity research and developments across a number of cities and areas in the UK.[5]

3.3.4   Learning theme: Reflection at all levels of the hierarchy is essential as is development of systems thinking and behaviours.

Example 1: System Change Group: The Golden Key Spark team supported the development of a system change group chaired by the CEO of one of the Golden Key partner organisations, 1625IP. With the support of a system facilitator, this

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[5] https://collaboratecic.com/a-whole-new-world-funding-and-commissioning-in-complexity-12b6bdc2abd8
https://collaboratecic.com/a-whole-new-world-funding-and-commissioning-in-complexity-12b6bdc2abd8

Group undertook action experiments and system projects, and reported on these to the Partnership Board and Creative Solutions Board.

Example 2: Reflective Practice: Golden Key encouraged reflective practice at all levels. This was integrated into the support structures and practice of the Golden Key delivery team and IF. One member of the partnership initiated this throughout their own agency and presented on this at the Golden Key PIE day. Learning has been shared and is now developing across other agencies.

3.4 How we engage with and apply learning

3.4.1 Learning theme: Learning, reflecting and iterating is essential. We need to be better at building this into our governance structures, our practices and our ways of working including building capacity for stakeholders at all levels to participate. A commitment to learning is essential if a Partnership Board is to push forward system change work and embed change effectively.

Example: learning about formative evaluation: As part of its governance arrangements, Golden Key created an evaluation advisory group (EAG) to work with UWE on the design and reporting arrangements for their work. This was an important group which helped steer the evaluation process. UWE's findings were regular, detailed and constructive but struggled to get the in-depth discussion they deserved. Occasionally the EAG held reflective learning sessions with UWE and staff and IF to look in-depth at their findings and draw out learning. This was extremely helpful in taking learning forward, but we did not do this consistently. Further thought is needed on how formative evaluative findings can more strongly influence emerging practice across the system.

3.4.2 Learning theme: Developing learning products that meet the requirements of the system and which are used in practice, needs to be seen as an on-going and iterative process. This requires continuing investment.

Example: Strengths based Meeting Toolkit: At Golden Key, we learnt, from our own experience and through feedback from our partners, that services have a tendency to focus on managing problem client behaviours rather than thinking about what is going well. This tendency doesn't always lead to the most positive outcomes for our clients.

In contrast, strengths-based approaches focus on an individual's resources, skills, qualities, achievements and successes rather than on deficits, problems or negative behaviours.

> A strengths-based approach to working with people who experience multiple disadvantage can provide opportunities for both professionals and clients to see themselves and specific situations in a new light.

Multi-agency meetings are often organised in response to (perceived) negative behaviours, incidents or escalating risks, and as such are key leverage points for positive change. They are spaces where multiple stakeholders come together and are therefore opportunities to introduce a different approach in a coordinated and planned way. A strengths-based approach maximises the potential for positive outcomes and, as part of a whole system approach, helps to expand and develop individual mindsets and organisational and systemic culture.

The toolkit outlines the application of this approach to multi-agency meetings, exploring the motivations and benefits for doing this and providing guidance, tips, and tools to support the process.

The toolkit can be found here.

3.4.3 Learning theme: Evaluating new arenas requires a lead-in phase in the project plan to establish a sound evaluation framework.

Example: The importance of evaluation frameworks and data sharing agreements: Evaluations require a framework on which to build a dataset. If there isn't established precedent for this which fits the approach being used, this will need to be developed. UWE undertook this activity for Golden Key and established a strong framework which similar programmes could use to evaluate system change activity and behaviours. It took three years to develop a usable framework.

Partnership evaluations require a data-sharing agreement across key partners and the evaluation plan was dependent on data-sharing agreements. This proved very challenging, and we were unable to effectively address this, particularly with statutory organisations. If data-sharing agreements aren't in place, it is worth considering alternative approaches to gathering required data.

3.4.4 Learning theme: Evaluating complex programmes is challenging for both the evaluators and the providers. Building a strong, trusting relationship and shared narrative is essential to support strong delivery.

Example 1: Working together on reports: At the start, communications between evaluators and the programme team were 'clunky' and sometimes polarised, with evaluators not understanding some aspects of delivery, and the programme team at times feeling defensive. We learnt that having a joint reflective session with evaluators, people with lived experience and staff really helped pull out key learning and improved the reports.

Example 2: Ensuring evaluation findings have influence: The detailed local evaluation findings, which were potentially very helpful, struggled to gain sufficient attention and response from the partnership. Commonly, evaluation findings are presented to a single organisation who have themselves commissioned the work, or to the Partnership Board as part of a full agenda. Thought needs to be given to how findings can influence a partnership where responsibility for initiation, reflection and response is more diffuse. This compounds the inherent challenges of evaluating impact in such a multi-faceted project as Golden Key.

3.4.5 Learning theme: The strategy for communication is key to ensuring sharing and dissemination of learning. Targeting dissemination at key events can lead to greater impact and generate real change.

Example 1: Homelessness Call to Action: Golden Key worked closely with the Mayor's City Office on a Homelessness priority. A Golden Key Homelessness Call to Action Partnership Event helped to build momentum and raise awareness. This led to the City Office, with Golden Key and different members of the City coming together (business community; VCSE partners; housing providers; Bristol City Council and people with lived experience) as a Task and Finish Group to tackle the ever-worsening issue of homelessness. Following this, an additional 34 flats for rough sleepers were secured.

Example 2: Launching Golden Key's Gender and Severe and Multiple Disadvantage Report on International Women's Day created local and national impact, and contributed to the important national discussions that were happening around this issue. The report, and the webinar used to promote it, generated positive feedback from a range of sources, with requests from NLCF to present this work in other forums.

3.5   System Change

3.5.1   Learning theme: System change requires having the competence and capacity for change. This includes a willingness to change. Energy needs to be put into exploring the capacity for change in partner organisations and agencies as well as any barriers to change, at all levels, to develop the environment and culture for change.

Example: Knowing when to bring in additional expertise: Acknowledging what we don't know and where we need additional support and specific expertise, is essential. Golden Key sought support from MEAM and others, including UWE; Martin Sandbrook at Schumacher Institute, who delivered system change training; and our approach to change consultant; to develop the System Change Strategy. We found it challenging to commission expertise in this area.

8.5.2 Learning theme: Use of practical guides, toolkits and training in systems thinking can help a shared understanding of what is meant by system change and how to make it happen.

Example 1: Action Experiments: Golden Key delivered systems thinking training to over 100 staff across the system, ran surgeries and provided one-one coaching for staff across the system who were developing their action experiment cycles. This action experiment approach was key in inspiring and enabling staff and managers across the partnership to build confidence and incorporate a systems approach into their everyday practice.

> *"Systems thinking has given me the permission to gently challenge any blocks I come across both personally and professionally. To ask 'why does it have to be that way? Why can't we try another way?' It's definitely given me so much*

> *confidence in my thinking and approach to any challenges or uncomfortable situations."*
>
> System Change Champion

Example 2: Building capacity for systems change: The Golden Key Spark Team, which focused on building capacity for systems change activity, delivered an organisational system change project which supported a Golden Key partner, Talking Money, with their internal development. This project delivered eight group sessions for Talking Money staff at all levels of the organisational hierarchy, four coaching one-one sessions, three sessions with the management team, and a workshop for operational staff focussed on building system change processes into client-facing teams. Feedback was positive:

> *"The process has been enormously helpful – I found it quite bewildering to begin with, but now I am able to recognize complexity and chaos – where I used to find [some client's situations] really overwhelming now I can understand what's happening and think about my relationship to it."*
>
> *"Being part of (this project) has been empowering, there's been a sense of safety, it brings me joy, purpose… [the project has been] impactful, always new, always learning, not stagnant. I've really recognized the impact of personal growth."*
>
> Quotes from Talking Money staff.

Example 3: **The Golden Key Practical Guide to System Change** explores learning from across Golden Key's community of individuals, teams, groups and organisations who have taken action on system change, offers practical guidance, and outlines some of the common themes and approaches within this work. It reflects the belief that everyone can make change happen, and anyone who is motivated to create change, can. The guide can be found here.

3.5.3   Learning theme: Change can happen at all levels and can be big or small. Empowering and encouraging individuals and teams within organisations and agencies to be change agents can lead to improved outcomes and have impact.

Example 1: Working with Bristol Refugee Rights: Through working in partnership with Bristol Refugee Rights (BRR), a client-facing member of Golden Key staff with expertise and knowledge of Bristol's asylum seekers and refugees identified a gap in services for people from these groups and communities who have experienced severe multiple disadvantage. In response, he piloted providing consultancy support to BRR caseworkers and case-managed the more complex cases. This led to BRR applying for and gaining a grant fund for a specialist caseworker based at BRR. The

bid was successful as a result of the evidence base of positive outcomes achieved through the Golden Key work.

Example 2: Logging evidence to achieve impact: an operational housing manager attended the Golden Key-run system change training. Following this, she attended a Fuel Poverty conference held by Bristol Energy, and then utilised the Golden Key Action Experiment Cycle to explore the impact of fuel poverty on the tenants she was overseeing. She discovered that while some clients could qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme, others could not, due to nuances in their license agreements. This led her to approach the Warm Home Discount Scheme to ask why these restrictions were in place. Those overseeing the grant weren't aware of the negative impact of the restrictions and advised that they could amend them if she was able to provide evidence. Due to her careful logging of evidence over previous years, she was able to provide this, and the scheme changed the restrictions. This change to the system meant all clients in unstable accommodation were then able to access the Warm Home Discount Scheme – bringing significant benefits to individuals, at national level.

3.5.4 Learning Theme: Developing ways of sharing learning through system change can have a ripple effect and lead to a small change having a much greater impact than first realised.

Example 1: The Golden Key Great Practice Awards – energising and celebratory, these brought together diverse stakeholders from across Bristol including people with lived experience, agencies, City leaders, commissioners and funders, to celebrate the individuals, organisations and networks that were creating systemic change to improve outcomes for people with multiple disadvantage. Awards were given across a range of categories including Inspiring Learning, Developing Trust, Cultivating Change, Equality Diversity and Inclusion Champion, Independent Futures, and System Change Hero. Taking place over a number of years, these events received positive feedback, sparked wide interest and helped generate a sense of being part of a movement for change.

Example 2: The beginnings of My Team Around Me: In 2019 Golden Key carried out a piece of work with IF and the CCG focused on understanding better the experiences of clients with complex needs. This led the CCG to include a chapter on mental health complex needs in their Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and conceived the concept of My Team Around Me based on the feedback from people with lived experience. This laid the foundations for the jointly sponsored Change for Good partnership initiative, which undertook early groundwork and piloting of the My Team Around Me concept in 2021 with Bristol City Council's social care homelessness team and also the Link service. This has generated valuable learning and partnership commitments. Bristol Changing Futures is now integrating this and taking this work forward.

3.6   Working with Clients Facing Multiple Disadvantage

3.6.1 Learning theme: The majority of people facing severe and multiple disadvantage need a bespoke, person-centred and holistic approach. The system should not drive how services are delivered, yet this is routinely how

services operate. The client should drive this. Working in this way in Golden Key has enabled some of Bristol's most disadvantaged people, who were farthest from services, to achieve positive outcomes.

Over the life of Golden Key, the Service Coordinator team engaged and supported 250 clients facing severe and multiple disadvantage.

Informed by the nationally recognised [Make Every Adult Matter (MEAM) approach](#), the Service Coordinator model has been developed and refined through 8 years of Golden Key practice, internal and independent evaluation, and learning. It was designed to bring a radical shift in the way services work for this cohort.

Evidence shows that the Service Coordinator team has developed expertise and achieved impact in working with Bristol citizens with the highest, most complex needs, who experience persistent, severe multiple disadvantage.

Team members worked flexibly and were led by the client - responding to changing need, adjusting priorities, offering flexible support at the client's pace, and prioritising the client, rather than prioritising a service/assessment's requirements.

3.6.2 Learning theme: Planned, appropriate and timely move on is key. People with a trauma history who have developed positive and healthy relationships, perhaps for the first time, face a challenge to move on from that relationship. Understanding what was needed to enable clients to move on to mainstream services in a healthy and safe manner, was central to the approach.

Example 1: The role of trust: Building longer term relationships were a foundation of the approach, ensuring consistency, predictability and trust with clients. We learnt that for the client, a secondary impact of building trusting relationships was more willingness to engage with other services because the client believed their trusted worker was genuinely representing and acting on their behalf, and not trying to pass them on. This links to the concept of '[epistemic trust](#)' that is used in mentalisation – a psychological approach adopted by the Service Coordinator Team in the final 3 years of the programme.

Example 2: Client endings: These were a complex area of learning throughout the programme. Initially, there was a lack of realism about how clients' lives might change and how relationships between clients and workers might evolve over time.

Enabling trust to be established between our worker and other professionals was a key focus of our ending process. For the majority of clients who had a service co-ordinator and other identified service professionals, endings were planned and trauma-informed. A number of clients were stable enough in their recovery so that endings became an enabler to living more independently. With some clients, where trust had not been established with other professionals and services, endings became more challenging. Interestingly, the 'over-dependency' came not only from client to worker. Workers found it hard to 'let go', holding an anxiety about failing the

client. Line management supervision, clinical supervision and reflective practice played an important part in ensuring endings were trauma-informed and structured, and reflections around collaboration and collusion and the importance of positive endings were explored. Using the reflections, team members were able to ensure each client had an appropriate amount of time to co-create their ending with their worker. Clients and professionals were fully aware of handover processes, to help to manage transitions well.

During the latter stages of Golden Key a reflective tool was developed with client involvement, which helps to look at endings as a next step, as opposed to something coming to an end. The tool looks at strengths and achievements, focuses on the here and now, and transitions. This is being incorporated into a partner's staff training, has generated interest amongst other providers, and has potential for use in Changing Futures.

3.6.3 Learning Theme: The system can sometimes be a cause of client failure. Changes of approach, reflection, review and adaptation can lead to improved outcomes for the client.

Example 1: Five system challenges: Practitioners who supported Golden Key clients documented some 600+ 'blocks and barriers' that they perceived to be preventing people from making changes in their lives. The Golden Key staff team worked to make sense of all this information and produced a list of fifty recurring issues. Further discussion between practitioners and Golden Key's Partnership Board identified five overarching challenges. These five system challenges represent the most prevalent issues which have been observed across multiple parts of the system.

Our learning has highlighted that these five system issues are complex challenges that need to be worked with rather than treated as 'problems to be solved'.

The five challenges are*:
- Lack of appropriate options
- Assessment and referral processes
- Transitions
- Shared accountability
- Culture and mindset

Example 2: A lack of options: the lack of options available for people facing multiple disadvantage has been observed across all parts of the system and partly

derives from the siloed nature of the system. Clients are often seen as 'too complex' because they have high levels of need across several areas.

In response to a lack of housing options, in Spring 2018, Golden Key initiated Bristol's first Housing First pilot. This was delivered in partnership with Bristol City Council and the city's registered housing providers.

An extract from the UWE evaluation findings describes the positive impact and learning gained:

Overall, there is clear evidence of Housing First in Bristol having impact and establishing a good case that the approach is feasible in Bristol.

Once clients are housed by Housing First in Bristol, they are highly likely to sustain tenancies, but challenges related to availability of suitable housing mean there is a long delay to house many clients.

Housing outcomes: Up to December 2020, Housing First has housed 28 clients and impressively, supported 92% (26) of those to sustain tenancies.

Client profile: Up to December 2020, 90% of all recruited Housing First clients had three or four needs across homelessness, offending, drug/alcohol misuse and mental health. The average age of Bristol's housing first clients was 45 and the majority (80%) of clients were white.

Housing providers are strongly committed to the Housing First model, which is important as Housing First tenants can often be more time consuming and costly. Enablers for this commitment include their own senior leadership commitment and staff's confidence in the Housing First support provision. In turn, the Housing First support provision helps housing providers to offer clients more flexibility and take risks outside normal practices.

Client outcomes: The primary goal of Housing First is housing stability, but there is some evidence here that Housing First has supported improved outcomes in multiple other need areas over their first 12 months. Outcome Star Areas where change is particularly strong included: 'Offending', 'Drug and alcohol misuse', 'Self-care and living skills', 'Meaningful use of time', 'Social networks and relationships', 'Physical health' and 'Managing tenancy and Accommodation'.

UWE's Report Recommendations include:
- A Bristol Housing First service should be funded long term at an appropriate level to meet the needs of people with multiple complex needs who experience entrenched homelessness and have no suitable options for housing.
- Review processes and communications approaches with housing providers to ensure they are fit for purpose during tenancies and maximise suitable housing opportunities pre-tenancy.
- Ensure funding and caseload planning take a realistic account of resources necessary for pre-tenancy engagement periods and for flexible support during the tenancy for as long as the client needs.

- Better understand those individuals who were declined and/or accepted but disengaged and develop proposals for future potential options to support these individuals.
- Establish the collaborative approaches to handling risk that have been developed by the service as consistent practice within Housing First and share learning in this area with others.

From UWE Housing First Evaluation Report 2021

The following case study demonstrates the benefits of the collaborative approach developed by the Housing First Team and its housing provider partners.

Following neighbour complaints, Katie was threatened with eviction. The Housing First support worker acted quickly to contact the housing provider and attempt to delay or defer the eviction process. The support worker advocated for Katie and highlighted the importance of maintaining consistency in Katie's housing to avoid temporary homelessness between tenancies. Katie was evicted but the housing provider pre-emptively offered her a more suitable home and there was no break in secure housing.

From UWE Housing First Evaluation Report 2021

The concept of My Team Around Me (MTAM) meets many of the concerns of individual agencies working with complexity. This is being piloted in Changing Futures, where there is potential to explore how MTAM could benefit Housing First clients, to enable improved access to services and sustained outcomes for homeless clients who have the highest, most complex levels of support need.

Example 3: Alternative Response Checklist: The implementation of the 'Alternative Response Checklist' (ARC) has been pivotal in a wider reframing of how we view and respond to more challenging behaviour and serious incidents within a hostel setting, during the 'Everyone In' service run by Golden Key at Arnos Manor hotel. It supported both our aspiration to reduce evictions and also to test innovative practice. The ARC was adapted by Golden Key from a tool originally devised by Homeless Link who introduced this to the team and encouraged and oversaw its ongoing use.

The previous practice was to issue warning letters and whilst we looked to use these in a thoughtful manner, they tended to have little effect with clients who were often used to either ignoring or responding negatively to this more directive approach. This previously led to evictions for a small number of clients through sideways moves to other accommodation settings when we felt that we had run out of other options via the standard warning letter approach.

The tool encouraged a less reactive, more reflective approach. As a result, most incidents were viewed instead as a trigger for an immediate strengths-based review of the client's support carried out collaboratively with the client themselves.

Where needed, this support review also involved hotel management and security, both reducing the risk of them wanting to take immediate punitive measures (generally a request for immediate move on) and also fostering a closer understanding of the more psychological and trauma informed approach we looked to take.

In a number of cases, the ARC tool helped to avoid evictions and enable more positive client outcomes.

For example, one client was issued with a limited warning instead, the opportunity for the client to re-engage in support, and led to them staying.

In another case, it led to the client taking the positive step to engage with other services.

Opportunities to share this tool more widely with other accommodation providers are being explored.

3.6.4 Learning theme: Finding ways to share risk across organisations involved in supporting a client, rather than the risk sitting with one organisation, creates a culture of collaboration and accountability. This in turn promotes effective working and improves client outcomes.

Example: Creative Solutions Board: We observed that collaborative work is most effective when there is a culture of shared accountability and trust between organisations. Where everyone holds some of the responsibility it enables us all to engage in changing things for the better. It is useful to have a shared approach to risk, a clear understanding of which statutory body is holding overall accountability, and clarity over who is leading any coordination process.

This was a key reason for creating the Creative Solutions Board, (CSB) established in 2019. This brought together senior leaders, with budget and/or service responsibilities, from across Bristol's service provision, from statutory bodies such as Bristol City Council and probation services, to local VCSE organisations.

The Board was a space for creative thinking outside of our usual 'boxes', to meet the complex needs of people with experience of homelessness, offending behaviours, mental and physical health issues, and substance misuse. The CSB encouraged innovative new approaches through shared accountability, which allowed members to reconsider how issues become 'stuck' in the system for clients. Building on the experience and learning gained, the work of the CSB is continuing under Changing Futures.

3.6.5 Learning theme: Ensuring client facing staff have the capacity and authority to innovate, build relationships and trust with partners and agencies, supports the environment for positive client outcomes.

Example: Case Study from the Service Coordinator Team:

A client of the Service Coordinator Team was sleeping rough, had severe mental health issues and chronic drug and alcohol problems. She was pregnant and Social Services were involved due to concerns relating to her substance misuse and that she had had previous children removed. Whilst engaging with Golden Key, her child was born prematurely and was in intensive care for 6 months. The stress of the situation deteriorated her mental health. Child Protection Procedures were escalated.

The Service Coordinator's role was to coordinate services to meet her needs, these included Adult Social Care, Primary Care, the local Children's Centre, drug and alcohol services and counselling agencies. This involved using a multitude of skills and approaches to help the client engage with these services.

With this wraparound and coordinated support, her mental health improved; she stopped drinking alcohol and engaged well with a relapse prevention programme. She completed parenting courses and undertook some counselling.

Due to the improvements in her wellbeing, her Child Protection plan was downgraded to Child in Need, in recognition of the progress she had made, and she won back the custody of her children.

The Service Coordinator worked with the client and agencies involved on a planned closure of this long-term case.

"Without your help I would never have been able to work with the services that have helped me over the past few years." (The client)

"It is without a doubt that your support and work with the client allowed her to be the person she is today and that she was able to have her children in her care. I know the client is the one who had to have the motivation to change but without your ongoing support, she may not have been able to achieve this, it has been a pleasure working with you." (Social Worker)

3.6.6 Learning theme: Working within a psychologically informed framework has enabled person-centred and strengths-based innovative practices to flourish, and to achieve positive outcomes.

Example 1: Building good practice in PIE: Golden Key employed a PIE lead for part of its programme. It also initiated a local PIE network and convened a PIE day, attended by practitioners, commissioners, people with lived experience, with positive feedback and momentum. Speakers included Robin Johnson, a national PIE expert.

Example 2: The person-centred approach: The Service Coordinator Team worked collaboratively to develop a bespoke psychological framework. This involved taking a person-centred approach: regarding clients with empathy, in a non-judgemental manner, and being creative about ways to meet and engage with individuals. Team members were supported to understand clients from a trauma-informed perspective and understand how to use different reflective and supportive opportunities effectively. As part of the approach, service coordinators found it useful to share principles and implement learning about mentalisation (Rayns G, 2016 V[6]) as part of their practice, supporting individuals to consider what goes on in their own minds and in the minds of others.

The team's psychologist described the team as holding an awareness of the importance of thinking about themselves and the assumptions they hold. Service coordinators aimed to start discussions with clients from a point of cultural humility and they are involved in a continuous process of reflection around how culture, equality and equity are defined.

3.6.7 Learning theme: A culture of learning and reflection for staff, with resource invested in staff support, training and supervision including access to a clinical psychologist, enables client-facing staff to feel supported and empowered to actively deliver improved outcomes for clients.

Example: The importance of reflection: The Service Coordinator Team learning environment is effective and sustained because learning is integrated culturally at every level: from facilitated reflective practice groups consisting of cross-sections of people from different roles and backgrounds through to the importance of a shared, open office space and an enthusiasm by individual team members to engage informally with reflective processes - staff reported that informal reflection happens constantly. The Psychologist also lead and supported a formulation approach to enable staff to better understand how clients were presenting and some of the root causes for their needs, thus improving the interventions of staff.

3.6.8 Learning theme: For those facing multiple disadvantage with a need to access a range of services, the importance of a single lead case worker to coordinate the services the client needs, and support them to access those services, has proved invaluable.

Example: Case Study from Service Coordinator Team: the following case study illustrates the importance of this coordinating role. The learning from this informed the development of My Team Around Me, and the 'Lead Professional' role.

Jaden had experienced long-term street homelessness and drug dependency, resulting in ongoing physical health issues requiring regular hospital admissions. Unable to maintain accommodation for longer than a couple of months, he struggled to sustain engagement with drug services or Probation for more than a few weeks.

Working consistently with Jaden, and 'seeing the system through his eyes', revealed a pattern of street homelessness, emergency hospital admission, being

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[6] https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/children/news-views/2016/october/building-reflective-practice-how-can-we-use-mentalisation-theory-in-effective-direct-work/

linked in with services and then returning to street homelessness due to a breakdown of support, because of his non-engagement with those services. As Jaden's trust in his Service Coordinator grew, it became clear that he didn't engage with services due to his belief that he would always fail, and then be punished.

The Service Coordinator took his case to the Golden Key Creative Solutions Board (CSB). Through the CSB, Bristol City Council's Case Review Group, a high support accommodation service, DWP and Bristol Drugs Project (BDP) Shared Care worked together to create a more flexible response, and to counteract Jaden's cycle: BDP and DWP both offered drop-in style appointments, instead of a fixed slot, with no negative consequences should he not attend, offering another appointment instead.

Jaden utilised a Golden Key Personal Budget to clear his service charge arrears, and to buy food until his Universal Credit claim had been set up.

The Service Coordinator took the lead in coordinating collaborative working with all the agencies involved, having reflective 1-1 conversations, and sharing information through weekly emails. This meant everyone was on the same page, up to speed, and knew what still needed to be done. Agencies developed more of a shared sense of responsibility, thinking more systemically and how they could work differently together. For Jaden, this meant he received shared, consistent messages, and a more holistic response.

Through the CSB, a Senior City Council Housing Manager agreed to hold open a housing placement in a high support setting, outside the normal rules. By flexing the system in this way, Jaden was able to settle into accommodation for the first time in 10 years and he engaged with DWP.

3.7   Working in partnership

3.7.1 Learning theme: Building new networks is as essential as building trust. Communities and grass-roots players are as important as higher profile organisations. Goals will not be achieved without including community-based organisations.

Example: The Call In: Initiated by Golden Key in 2018, the Call In is a partnership project between Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Bristol City Council, and Golden Key who deliver the programme. The project seeks to divert young people involved in drug-related offending away from the cycle of criminality by giving them the opportunity to take part in an intense six-month programme of mentoring, learning and activities. The mentors bring an understanding of the type of issues the young people have faced, and some have their own lived experience.

An independent evaluation in 2021 found:

- The Call In had assisted over 30 young people, predominantly from Black, Asian and minoritised backgrounds, to work towards their aspirations.
- It had won the support of a range of stakeholders who are firmly supportive of the principles behind the approach – a second chance and an investment in young people to gain future benefits for themselves and for society while also addressing the over-representation of Black, Asian and minoritised young people in the criminal justice system.
- Its USP is described as having the staff and mentor group with their roots in the local community. Diverse community initiatives play a vital role in ensuring a broad range of stimulating experiences for The Call In participants. In its turn, The Call In supports and engages with local initiatives underlining that what is good for the participants can also contribute to local enterprise.
- Avon and Somerset Police have benefitted from The Call In. In setting the project up they found new ways to work with the local community and specifically Black and minoritised communities.
- The Panels are an example of how stakeholders comprising The Call In partnership, including staff, mentors, community representatives and the police, own the benefits of the programme. They work to reinforce and build on the impacts of all aspects, including leisure activities, personal development workshops, interactions with staff and mentors, and Employment, Education and Training support.
- An updated cost analysis of The Call In demonstrates that the programme is a much more cost-effective response to offending by young people than prosecution and imprisonment, and with a much better chance of lasting reductions in re-offending.

> "If you're looking for a way out to escape sentencing, then you may as well do your sentence, if you're looking to change your life then that's The Call In…"
>
> Quote from young person on the Call In (from Call In Evaluation)

3.7.2 Learning theme: Sharing learning, good communication and demonstrating the benefits of partnership working, such as attracting additional resources, supports the development of strong partnerships.

Example 1: Change For Good: In Autumn 2020, Golden Key partnered with Bristol City Council and the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to launch Change for Good.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, rough sleepers were moved off the streets and into temporary hotel accommodation under 'Everyone In'. All the agencies and charities involved in homelessness were keen to ensure things did not return to the way they were before, and Bristol City Council pledged to do all it could to make sure no-one had to return to the streets.

Partner agencies all recognised that this was an opportunity to develop an innovative plan that worked. This meant providing the right accommodation in the right place and the many types of support people need to turn their lives around.

Change for Good, as a sister project, put into practice what Golden Key had learned about successful and sustainable system change and partnership working, with co-production with people with lived experience, and equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of the process.

The project ran alongside the work the council is doing to secure more move on accommodation in the city, supporting people on the next stage of their housing journey (see next example).

"This pandemic has given us a once in a lifetime opportunity to re-think the way we tackle homelessness in our city. We are committed to changing things for the better and recognise that solving homelessness goes beyond housing. If we don't address people's health and social care needs at the same time as providing them with accommodation, we are setting them up to fail.

The Change for Good project will redefine our approach to homelessness by working together with our partners and providing people with the right support and the right housing at the right time. We have worked closely with the Golden Key since its inception and the strength of this partnership made them the obvious choice to lead on this project."

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol

Example 2: The Emergency Accommodation Team: As part of Everyone In, Golden Key ran a service in a local Hotel – one of a number of local emergency accommodation schemes, which created new opportunities to work with some of Bristol's most excluded rough sleepers.

Accommodation and support were provided to 32 people at the Hotel, and commissioners then increased the funding to enable the team to provide this to up to 60 individuals living in a range of other temporary accommodation settings.

The UWE Evaluation underlined the range of valuable learning from this initiative.

The following comments from the Golden Key Emergency Accommodation Team staff highlight some of the different ways of working brought about by this initiative:

"There was a 'can-do' attitude, not just in the team but also externally. I'd sit in meetings with managers and commissioners and people would go 'we can do this'…I'd say 'is this about resources, is this going to cost you money?' and

> *sometimes people would say 'no, it's nothing to do with the extra money, we just normally wouldn't have done it."* Golden Key Senior support team member
>
> *"If you cut us through like a stick of rock it says 'it's all about the relationships' but it has confirmed that … I'm excited because I think when we get through this…I think the relationships we've built here… where people have got to know each other, I think this will make a difference. I think bizarrely we might have made more connections across the city than we would have in the past...between managers and different sectors. I think if we can take that forward, I think that's really positive."* Golden Key support team member
>
> *"It shows you can do amazing things quickly. there'd be commissioners, senior manager, people from different sectors, and people would decide things within a meeting, within in an hour and a half. And I think 'we take years to do this'… so I think we need to remind people of that, of where their heads were in this space."* Golden Key support team member.
>
> From UWE Case Study 2021

Example 3: Working in partnership in the criminal justice system: The Golden Key programme team provided the Reducing Reoffending Board with advice on system change and governance.

> "*It was the Golden Key team amongst others who identified the need for the Board to reform."*
>
> John Smith, (the then) CEO of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Example 4: The Recall Group: Legislative changes to the criminal justice system over the last decade increased the number of people recalled to prison repeatedly for breaking their probation rules.

These recalls had been identified as perpetuating a vicious cycle of further recalls to prison and re-offending, particularly for people with multiple complex needs. A multi-agency group of senior leaders in the 'Avon and Somerset Reducing Re-offending Board' supported Golden Key to establish a separate multi-agency group of operational professionals, the 'Recall Group'. This new group started in January 2018, and was facilitated by Golden Key, with 15 monthly workshops held.

Members were committed to the overall purpose of the group; to take a 'joined up' multi-agency approach to understand the causes for repeat recalls and find practical and/or innovative solutions to reduce recalls.

A 'practitioner led' approach mirrored that taken by the Golden Key Systems Change Group, with time split between tracking activity progress; discussion of problems and

potential solutions, shared knowledge, agency updates, and shared lived experience; reflection and planning. People with lived experience were engaged in 4 workshops which many members of the group found valuable, though some felt they would like the involvement to be more focused and purposeful.

UWE's evaluation identified four areas of change within and between services that were successfully facilitated through the Recall Group which are likely to have affected people being recalled:

- Improved communication from the National Probation Service (NPS) to prisoners, using the 'Email a prisoner' service.
- Improved communication between prison staff and the CRC probation resettlement hub when recalled prisoners arrive in custody.
- Improved knowledge of local support services and other new local/national initiatives.
- Improved understanding of other parts of the criminal justice system involved in recalls and developed relationships.

During a meeting of the Reducing Reoffending Board, the Governor of HMP Bristol said that the work of the Recall Group, which Golden Key joined and contributed to, had improved processes and experiences not just for recalled offenders, but for all people in the prison. More detail can be found in the 2018 Golden Key Impact Report here.

3.7.3 Learning theme: Procurement legislation and guidance make it difficult for system change partnerships to develop and act differently. Significant thought needs to be given to how to build flexibility into procurement arrangements to allow all agencies to get involved with delivery and maximise collective impact. Relationship building with key commissioning staff is critical.

Example: Bristol Homelessness Pathways commissioning: To stabilise services and systems in order to focus on improvement and development the Golden Key partnership allowed opportunities for commissioners and housing providers to discuss commissioning processes in a new way. Previously, commissioning processes severely hindered the ability of services to focus on improving the client experience and collaboration with other agencies, as their resources were drawn into rounds of competitive recommissioning. This process inhibited our partners' ability to engage in system change activity, as many were involved in recommissioning processes.

In 2016, following discussions across the Partnership at board and system change group level, Bristol City Council announced their intention to change their approach to commissioning in this round. Instead of a 'recommissioning' process which requires all providers to bid for work, they were able to undertake a 're-contracting' approach. The current housing providers worked together to create a more cohesive

and sustainable system for the long-term benefit of the clients. Contracts would also be for 5 years, with an extension of an additional 5, compared to a previous arrangement of 3 with an additional 2 years.

Feedback from commissioners and partners was that this change increased their capacity to engage in system change activity and improved partnership relationships across the homelessness sector. Many partners re-engaged in Golden Key system change activity once this change happened.

3.7.4 Learning theme: Partnership management requires significant time, effort and resource to be effective. This includes clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the Board and its subgroups, and clear escalation processes. This is important to ensure that issues are dealt with at the appropriate level, and to prevent the Board for example from getting involved in issues that can be resolved elsewhere.

Example: the challenge of moving from 'system flex' to system change: The role of the Partnership Board shifted from overseeing implementation and supporting innovation, to Board members playing a role in opening doors and unlocking potential focussed around five priority areas including: criminal justice system, homelessness, mental health, PIE and the client voice.

Emerging evidence indicated that with the right conditions, operational staff could resolve a significant amount of the logged blocks and barriers facing clients. This was a key piece of learning that could have been used as a reflection point for the board to consider how 'creating the right conditions' could allow other organisations to adopt similar approaches, leading to less blocks and barriers in the system.[i]

However, we also learnt that we did not have a strong enough or clear enough process to move from system flex, to pushing for system change. Processes did not align, requests for system flex were too vague or broad, the Partnership Board could not work out what to do, or how to do it. The Board was not trained enough to do system change.

This made us realise that having some active facilitation alongside the Chair was going to be useful.

We started by trialling a System Facilitator to work alongside the CSB Chair and with the CSB. We experienced how successful this approach is to help embed system thinking into actual 'live' activity: learning by doing.

Based on this learning, Changing Futures includes a commitment to deliver system leadership training at an early stage in the programme, for their Programme Board, key system roles and people with lived experience, alongside ongoing coaching and action learning. Changing Futures also will be ensuring system change facilitation and learning is an integral part of the programme's governance structures.

3.7.5 Learning Theme: Developing shared approaches to practices such as risk management can be challenging and requires investment of time and resource as well as some flexibility.

Example: a shared approach to risk at programme level: Establishing a partnership-based risk management approach required time investment to support the board in risk assessing as a team. At Golden Key, this required a CIPFA delivered workshop to establish the programme risk register, and a shared approach to managing it.

3.7.6 Learning theme: Opportunities to share data and information should be explored and agreed at an early stage, as it can take time within each organisation to agree joint protocols.

Example: challenges with data: Golden Key was unable to access data from all sources regarding clients' engagement with services. This meant that this information was required to be gathered from clients and was limited. For example, the team could only report on 17 clients having had contact with drug or alcohol services, which did not reflect the reality of clients' experiences.

Lack of data and information sharing also meant that the service was unable to understand Criminal Justice engagement.

Changing Futures places a bigger focus on the importance of improving use of Data at system level, and the resources to meet the challenges involved.

3.7.7 Learning theme: Partnerships can be invaluable in addressing siloed thinking through bringing issues to the table and resolving together.

Example: Housing First: Through our relationship with Housing First providers we worked closely with one housing provider, Live West, which was one of the first to come on board, to enable a mindset change in the work of their allocations team – moving to more of a strengths-based and trauma-based way of working, and in partnership with our team, to be able to house and sustain people's tenancies.

As the Bristol Housing First pilot developed, alongside Bristol City Council and Live West, more Housing Providers came on board including Sovereign, Curo and Solon.

To support the pilot, Golden Key established the Housing First Board, bringing together representatives from Bristol City Council, Live West, the Golden Key team and IF, as well as an operational group. This was very important to be able to share with Bristol City Council and all partners the benefits of the Housing First model, and how all providers were working differently with the clients. The Board monitored progress and shared learning, e.g. a Housing First Round Table event (autumn 2021) for senior partners to share learning.

3.7.8 Learning theme: A shared learning model for a partnership is essential to enable understanding of system change and its impact.

Example: Bristol Leadership Challenge: Golden Key developed a range of initiatives to support this, including the Bristol Leadership Challenge. This initiative was sponsored and driven forward by the Chair of Golden Key.

The notion of the Bristol Leadership Challenge (BLC) emerged from the experience of clients involved in Golden Key. Conversations between Golden Key

partners indicated there was much interest in exploring the system leadership implications of providing services to this group.

To facilitate this work, Golden Key led the creation of the BLC Commissioning Group which commissioned UWE to design and deliver the BLC programme. UWE worked in partnership with the Leadership Centre.

BLC aimed to build and strengthen the collective leadership capacity of Bristol so the city can better address the complex issues it faces. The Commissioning Group was sponsored by Bristol's elected mayor and involved a wide range of stakeholders across all sectors who contributed time, invested resources and shared expertise to enable BLC to be established. A key tenet of the programme was that the organisations which sponsor individual participants pledge to develop system leadership more widely.

The BLC design and commissioning process, in itself, made a significant contribution to strengthening our partnership working.

BLC also recognised that Bristol's leadership cohort does not reflect the make-up of the local population and that this needs to change. The first BLC cohort of 20 plus participants was a diverse group in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, role and sector.

The pilot programme included a focus on mental health with participants being expected to explore how related services could be improved.

Learning from the BLC will inform the design of the system leadership training and skills development under Changing Futures.

3.8 Innovation

3.8.1 Learning theme: A system change and a partnership-based approach to delivery invites innovation.

Example: Innovation in commissioning: How funding is managed, and the reporting requirements, have a huge impact on system cultures.

As described in 3.7.3. above, the Golden Key partnership successfully influenced the way homelessness services are commissioned; after over a decade of re-contracting services on tight timeline cycles, services and commissioners have spear-headed a new, partnership-based approach based on re-contracting and longer-term cycles.

Bristol Changing Futures has identified 'commissioning for complexity' as one of its top system change priorities and is establishing a' multiple disadvantage commissioning group'. This strategic work will draw on a range of research,

developments and learning from the work of Toby Lowe[7] and others, and approaches being taken in other cities across Changing Futures areas.

3.8.2 Learning theme: Developing innovation requires involvement of key players at an early stage. Presentation of a developed idea to agencies involved does not work. Developing an idea together has a much greater chance of success.

Example 1: Housing First: Bristol's Housing First initiative required engagement of housing providers at the beginning of the innovation discussions. The model had to be able to work with registered social housing providers, as alongside Bristol Council's own stock, this was one of the few housing supply sources available. Lead-in time for Housing First took almost a year because the housing provider relationships and model development needed this time to succeed. This lead-in time has paid dividends.

Golden Key were careful to manage allocations, have a range of housing providers and distribute clients across vacancies in a manner that was manageable and sustainable for the housing provider.

Example 2: Winter Pressures pilot: In December 2017, Golden Key was commissioned and funded by the BNSSG CCG to provide support to people who are 'high impact' users of A&E services ('high impact' users include people who are both frequent users of A&E, as well as those who require the support of a number of clinical teams). Golden Key set up the new service in six weeks, working in partnership with all those involved, from the start. Service coordinators were seconded to the pilot from Second Step, BDP, Missing Link and 1625 Independent People, and two brief intervention workers were recruited on six-month contracts.

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44 referrals were accepted into the service and more than 70% remained engaged with the service for the entire period of support – a significant achievement.

The project evaluation showed that the pilot had made a positive difference to clients, when comparing individuals before and after the team's support.

Set up to help reduce pressures within A&E services, the pilot highlighted how pressures in the wider system can provide an opportunity for innovation and partnership. The CCG took an unusual step at that time to look outside the NHS to the VCSE sector to deliver the pilot. The commissioner had developed key relationships already and was able to use these relationships to develop a viable project.

We also know that with short term projects they may not maximise impact because they are working with systems that are under huge pressure, and which are therefore unable to realise the potential. You only get part of the benefits. When opportunities

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[7] https://collaboratecic.com/a-whole-new-world-funding-and-commissioning-in-complexity-12b6bdc2abd8
https://collaboratecic.com/a-whole-new-world-funding-and-commissioning-in-complexity-12b6bdc2abd8

like this arise, we should all look to having the longest possible period of time for the pilot, build on existing strong relationships, and also where there has been momentum in the system.

More information on the Winter Pressures Pilot can be found in the 2018 Golden Key Impact Report here.

Example 3: Universal Credit Implementation: During the roll-out of Universal Credit, DWP were making great efforts at partnership engagement but weren't achieving the connections they needed to understand how to implement well. Golden Key supported the partnership engagement based on learning from the programme, and focussed on DWP's imperative, rather than bringing their own. This resulted in a positive, system-wide intervention which included a range of stakeholders from across the system.

DWP were delivering training to support the implementation of Universal Credit. By working with Golden Key, DWP adjusted their approach to delivering 'train the trainer' training across organisations working within support sectors. This resulted in 95% of Golden Key agencies having an in-house Universal Credit trainer, allowing organisations to then disseminate the learning throughout their organisations. Golden Key was pivotal in this initiative, in engaging agencies in developing this approach, and in achieving the numbers of engagement.

3.8.3 Learning theme: Introducing innovation pilots alongside existing workstreams can erode the resilience of an established team over time. Pilots also need to take into account the stage and maturity of the partnership, for example whether this is already established, or will need lead-in time.

Example: The Service Coordinator Team (SCT) - a reflection from the SCT Manager and learning lead: By year 3 the SCT had established a clear sense of identity and purpose through self-organisation, and cycles of reflection and learning. The quality of the work and improved outcomes for clients was evident and the team was gaining respect from practitioners in other organisations.

The team had demonstrated a high tolerance for managing uncertainty and change during the initial phase. A series of innovation pilots (Housing First, Winter Pressures, The Call In) began being introduced within the SCT and alongside the core delivery of Golden Key client work. Some of these set challenging expectations around timeframes and delivery.

All of these pilots have led to successes for the programme, positive progressions for individuals, significant system change and new learning. The unintended consequences were that they drew some of the strongest members of the SCT into the new work. This diluted the core resources; skills set and focus of the team.

This is important learning for the design of future system change programmes.

3.8.4 Learning theme: A culture of embracing and encouraging change, working in partnership and encouraging flexibility, can make quite complex innovation possible and achievable. Strong relationships with statutory

agencies (such as local authorities and health) and VCSE agencies, to foster more collaboration at strategic level, is very important to enable more impact.

Example: Our learning about what made Change for Good (described above in 3.7.2.) successful:

- Impetus from Covid 19 and building on Bristol's contribution to Everyone In – demonstrating what's possible, creating energy and momentum for further change.
- Ownership and buy-in by statutory agencies from the start, with joint sponsorship by the CCG, Bristol City Council and Golden Key; an Independent Chair with a local government background, and a Programme Director with a Health background - all which really helped the profile, level of commitment and impetus for change.
- The programme built on learning from the work of Golden Key and IF with the CCG, with the emergence of the concept of My Team Around Me.
- Strong involvement by lived experience from the outset, and a peer worker, and positive contributions from a range of statutory and voluntary sector staff, with 9 work-streams initiated.
- Dedicated staff resources from the City Council and CGG to undertake an early pilot of the My Team Around Me approach with people who were homeless, including those in hospital.
- This early piloting and learning provided a platform for Changing Futures to take forward development of the My Team Around Me model.

Thank you for reading this report. We hope you find learning and reflection here that you can take away with you!

Please look at our Golden Key and Changing Futures websites to see Golden Key Learning products and also new learning.