

Fairer Futures Partnerships Spotlight Session: No Wrong Door Approaches

Learning Report:
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In partnership with the Scottish Government, the Improvement Service are supporting colleagues delivering Fairer Futures Partnerships (FFPs) with sharing learning, facilitating opportunities for peer support and collaboration around approaches, opportunities and challenges.

Part of this support includes a series of Spotlight Sessions, focused on bringing FFP colleagues together around specific themes identified as priorities by FFPs and partners, to share approaches and learning. The June 2026 session focused on FFPs' learning around No Wrong Door approaches, and we heard from FFPs directly about how they are embedding a No Wrong Door approach within their FFP work.

You can watch the presentations and access [North Ayrshire's](#) and [West Dunbartonshire's](#) slides.

About the Improvement Service

The Improvement Service (IS) is the go-to organisation for local government improvement in Scotland. Established in 2005, the IS supports councils and their partners to deliver better outcomes for communities, reduce inequalities, and achieve efficiencies.

We do this through leading transformation, building capacity and capability for improvement across the sector, supporting collaboration to tackle shared challenges, providing data and intelligence to inform policy and decision-making, and delivering national shared service applications and technology platforms.

Our expertise covers a wide range of areas including digital public services, performance measurement and benchmarking, transformation and change management, workforce and skills development, planning and place-based approaches, economy and employability, poverty and inequalities, and climate change.

For more information, visit our website: www.improvementservice.org.uk

Key messages

A number of key themes around No Wrong Door were identified during the session:

- **No Wrong Door** is most effective when it moves beyond signposting to coordinated, person-centred support, often through a trusted single point of contact.
- **Strong partnership** working across the public and third sectors is critical to delivering joined-up support, which in turn, is vital to effective No Wrong Door delivery.
- **Data sharing and access to systems are key enablers**, supporting better risk awareness, reducing the need for people to repeat their stories, supporting people to access the right support at the right time, and ultimately improving people's outcomes.
- **A clearer, shared understanding** of what No Wrong Door means in practice is needed to ensure a consistent, whole-system approach.

Opening reflections

Attendees were asked to use Menti to respond to some initial questions around the development of a No Wrong Door approach in their local areas.

What does No Wrong Door mean or look like in your local area/FFP?

Respondents' comments have been grouped thematically below:

Open access

- No barriers to services, everyone is welcome
- Anyone presenting for support is supported, no matter where they live or what the presenting issues are
- You can go to any agency for support, not always happening though
- Every service being able to support anyone, or at least connect them with support
- Any family who comes in gets support, even if it is not exactly what we offer
- Won't be turned away
- The multi-agency drop-in is open to everyone
- Working with anyone who attends, even from beyond the area
- People can access the support they need from any service
- Can access help required from multiple avenues

Person-centred support

- Right support at the right time
- Having conversations and being supported no matter what service it is
- Build relationships first and understand wider needs, not just the initial issue
- Stigma free
- Responding to people when and where they need it
- Help is there when you need it, not just when services are open

Joined-up, multi-agency working

- Partnership working to ensure a person's needs are met, coordinated approach
- Multi-agency working to connect people to services
- More joined-up services
- Services working more collaboratively
- Coordinated approach and efforts of services to benefit individuals and communities
- Professionals have better knowledge of what each other are doing
- Better relationships with colleagues and peers across organisations, shared responsibility
- Working together across council services and third sector

'Tell Us Once'

- Only needing to tell your story once to open up all the help you need
- One entry point to support for families
- Soft handovers between services
- Clear access channels
- Collaboration to simplify access to services
- One-stop shop and information hub approach
- Staff are equipped with information and resources

Effective referrals

- Finding the right support
- Coordinating delivery to ensure people access the right support at the right time
- People signposted to appropriate partners and services
- All staff knowing who can help
- Accessible access to advice and support

Early intervention

- People in need of help get it first time
- Hidden needs are identified quickly

Community focus

- Focussing on identifying underserved communities
- Bringing services to the people who want them
- Community led
- Recognising need for better alignment across communities

What is working well for you locally in terms of embedding a No Wrong Door approach?

Respondents' comments have been grouped thematically below:

Partnership working

- Better cooperation between agencies
- Increased partnership working, improved data sharing, longer-term engagements with vulnerable people
- Multi-agency drop-ins across the area
- Collaboration and staff member in place to deliver awareness/training for staff
- Community planning partners supporting
- Shared locality and delivery of programmes between services
- Strengthening relationships across partners

Culture and relationships

- Relationships between colleagues, supporting trust and relationships with families
- Better relationships developed between frontline workers
- Building better relationships across the area with the community and with services
- Good partnership working increases trust with clients
- We are building trust within communities
- Slow, but noticeable changes in organisational culture
- Strong local partnerships and community-based presence help build trust

The voices of lived experience

- Community led
- Using lived experience to inform approaches
- Embedding community voice, community empowerment in action
- Lived experience at the forefront of decision making

Engagement

- People are coming forward more easily
- Clear demand for services
- Reduction in barriers
- Great engagement
- Increased footfall through word of mouth
- Good, sustained engagement with priority families
- Increased engagement with schools

Prevention

- Problems are fixed before they become a crisis
- Better outcomes for those accessing advice and other services
- Able to respond quicker and more effectively, leading to better outcomes

Delivery models

- One key person who supports and coordinates support, warm handovers
- The role of key worker or navigator to negotiate systems
- One-stop shops, multi-agency drop ins with up to 30 organisations
- TSIs as an obvious one-stop shop
- Using Whole Family Wellbeing Funding to fill gaps in support
- Community resources

Shared practice

- Wider awareness of what is on offer from partners
- Spotlight sessions and professional networks
- Building a shared understanding of a community navigator approach
- Developing a positive culture and community of practice
- Using case studies to work through issues
- Staff awareness and training

Using data

- Use of local data to identify need and impact
- Improved data sharing

What is challenging for you locally in terms of embedding a No Wrong Door approach?

Respondents' comments have been grouped thematically below:

Funding

- Short-term, year-to-year funding
- Short-term funding versus long-term outcomes
- Pressure on funding and capacity across services
- Limited resources, hard to disinvest in one area to support another
- Trying to disinvest while investing in prevention
- Pooling funding streams and collating multiple monitoring and reporting requirements

Data sharing and information governance

- Data sharing is still an issue
- Data, access, sharing and appropriate storage
- Data sharing versus confidentiality and GDPR
- Fears around data
- Gatekeeping of data
- Lack of shared case management system
- Getting clean data

Workforce

- Staff time
- Pressure on frontline staff, busy day jobs limit capacity
- Staff skills, knowledge and capacity to work differently
- So much information for staff to know everything about everything
- Keeping up-to-date about services and where to signpost

System alignment

- Services working in silos
- Key services not engaging in No Wrong Door approach
- Partnership will is strong but sometimes policy makes this difficult
- Scottish Government policies and strategies not always aligning
- Role of TSI versus actual engagement with grassroots third-sector organisations
- Social work pressures slowing progress

Culture change

- Culture change takes time and needs reinforcing
- Needs to move beyond individuals to a systematic level
- Service pride and insecurity
- Leadership and funding and building trust with communities

Targeted engagement

- Families not visible enough to providers
- Questions around whether No Wrong Door is diluting targeted support
- Long waiting times

Evidencing impact

- Evidencing impact, outcomes realised in different budgets or organisations
- How do you measure a baseline to prove impact?

Speaker inputs and slides

North Ayrshire

North Ayrshire's presentation, led by Claire Coburn, outlined their No Wrong Door approach, including its core aims of embedding the approach across the council, raising awareness of cost of living support, and improving access to services. The presentation covers key delivery components, progress, challenges, and highlights a refreshed approach through the Access to Services project, with a stronger focus on leadership, impact, and extending support beyond cost of living towards whole family support. The [slides](#) and [presentation recording](#) are available to view.

West Dunbartonshire

West Dunbartonshire's presentation, led by Gillian Campbell and Maxine Robb, outlined the operational delivery of their FFP, focused on supporting those with experience of, or at risk of, community justice involvement. The presentation highlights a partnership-led model built around three core projects and a No Wrong Door approach centred on a dedicated key worker, strong partnership working, data sharing, and person-centred, trauma-informed support. Learn more about Jasmine and Jamie's respective stories in West Dunbartonshire's [presentation recording](#) and [slides](#).

Deep dive: Data sharing in West Dunbartonshire

- When [Ready2Thrive](#) was launched five years ago, it was felt that the team did not have the full picture of the lives of the young people they were supporting, and it was often difficult to identify a named contact within social work. There were concerns about not always having full information, which could create risk.
- Both the FFP and Ready2Thrive support operate on a one-to-one basis, so it was important for staff to be fully aware of risks, particularly when going into people's homes.
- Working with the Community Justice Partnership, the FFP and Ready2Thrive team developed a business case to access some social work information about the young people they are supporting.
- Access was set up under the 'FFP team', making clear their role and purpose. The team don't have access to full social work reports, only "observations, key information, and named contacts". This was not about full access, but about supporting partnership working and assessing risk.
- Having a named contact has been particularly helpful in improving communication and addressing queries. It has also helped relieve pressure on social work, with any steps to lighten the load seen as beneficial.
- Access was agreed via the Community Justice Partnership and Chief Social Work Officer on a trial basis, with a future review planned.

Key learning

What's been working well in North Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire in embedding a No Wrong Door approach?

Strong partnership working

- Closed referral routes via social work in West Dunbartonshire have strengthened relationships between Working4U and social work. Weekly triage with [The Lennox Partnership](#) supports decision making and improves referral quality.
- For West Dunbartonshire, partnership working includes community justice, police and the third sector, enabling earlier intervention and shared understanding.
- Embedding Ready2Thrive within FFP work has increased system capacity and reduced the need to turn people away, realising the ambitions of the No Wrong Door approach.

Effective data sharing

- West Dunbartonshire described the agreement for their FFP project to access some social work as a significant step forward and gamechanger.
- Having named contacts improves communication and reduces pressure on social work.
- Practitioners do not need to ask individuals to repeat their stories, supporting a trauma-informed approach.

Key learning about the key components of person-centred support

- Services are:
 - Accessible and coordinated around needs
 - Integrated across agencies
 - Person-centred and tailored through a dedicated key worker
- Good practice includes:
 - Warm handovers between services
 - Keeping “the door open” and avoiding repeated storytelling
 - Systems for reviewing cases and adapting support
 - A strong emphasis on building relationships to improve outcomes
 - Building resilience – giving people the capacity to help themselves
 - Early intervention – addressing any needs/ issues before they escalate.

West Dunbartonshire case study

A recent example highlighted a young person referred through social work who, when asked about their most urgent need, said they were freezing in their home. Through the FFP, support was offered to carpet their bedroom and living room, helping to improve warmth. This demonstrates the impact of coordinated responsive support that truly meets the needs of the individual.

Innovation

Deep dive: Single Shared Assessment in North Ayrshire

North Ayrshire's Single Shared Assessment simplifies access by allowing people to enter details once and be directed to relevant Council services, rather than individually navigating multiple different Council services for each need. This is a work in progress but is a key delivery model allowing one point of contact for customers to allow people to be navigated to the right support. As part of the next phase of this work, North Ayrshire are exploring how to extend support beyond cost of living and into whole family support. This will require leadership support across the organisation and awareness raising with customers to help strengthen understanding of this approach.

- West Dunbartonshire's Thriving Voices uses lived experience personas to inform service design and to explore the impact that a No Wrong Door approach can have for people. Personas take insights from real people and turn them into a fictional characters. This gives decision makers a different perspective, and a broader overview of opportunities for change.

What are the challenges in North Ayrshire and West Dunbartonshire in embedding a No Wrong Door approach?

Conceptual clarity around No Wrong Door

- There is no single shared understanding of what No Wrong Door means in practice, and it varies across different services and local areas. Is it support at every point of contact or effective signposting between services, or something else?
- Different understandings of the approach can lead to fragmentation or siloed working, with services focusing on an individual's needs relevant to their service, rather than a person's holistic needs.

Moving beyond signposting

- A consistent challenge is moving from signposting to meaningful support.
- The concept of 'empty signposting' was highlighted, where individuals are directed elsewhere without active support to engage, risking poorer outcomes.

Demonstrating impact

- A key challenge is measuring and demonstrating the impact of the approach, particularly at the level of outcomes for families and individuals.
- While activity such as staff training and engagement can take place, it is difficult to evidence what this means for families, for example whether income is being maximised or employment outcomes are improving.

Workforce capacity and consistency

- Staff turnover creates challenges in maintaining a consistent approach and ensuring knowledge is embedded across services.
- There is a need to ensure that learning, information, and awareness of No Wrong Door are continuously shared with new staff.

Changing priorities

- Priorities have shifted following the peak of the cost of living crisis, with services now operating in a different context with evolving needs.
- Within this, No Wrong Door has not always remained at the forefront, reflecting wider pressures on services.
- Delays within systems, including access to appropriate pathways and waiting lists, also impact the effectiveness of support, requiring interim responses.

Engagement

- While generally working well, engagement can be difficult, with individuals often cautious about accessing services and support.
- Building trust and sustained engagement takes time, particularly for those with previous negative experiences of services.

Gaps in system coordination

- There are gaps in system coordination, for example where statutory throughcare support is not consistently delivered, meaning No Wrong Door approaches are required to respond to unmet need.

IS offer of support to FFPs

What could our support look like for your FFP?

The IS can provide support to your FFP with developing and sharing your story of change. This could include.

- **Supporting your FFP to work through any identified barriers/challenges** around this part of the work.
- **Supporting your FFP to identify what existing reporting mechanisms and data already exist** locally/nationally to help you understand and articulate your FFP's progress and impact.
- **Supporting your FFP to develop outputs** that capture learning, stories and evidence. Outputs could include: storytelling, case studies, infographics, short thematic reports, blogs, etc.

For full details of the support offer, please see the “Learning Approach” section of the [Fairer Future Partnerships: Learning, Engagement and Resources Space](#)

Please get in touch!

Contact us

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