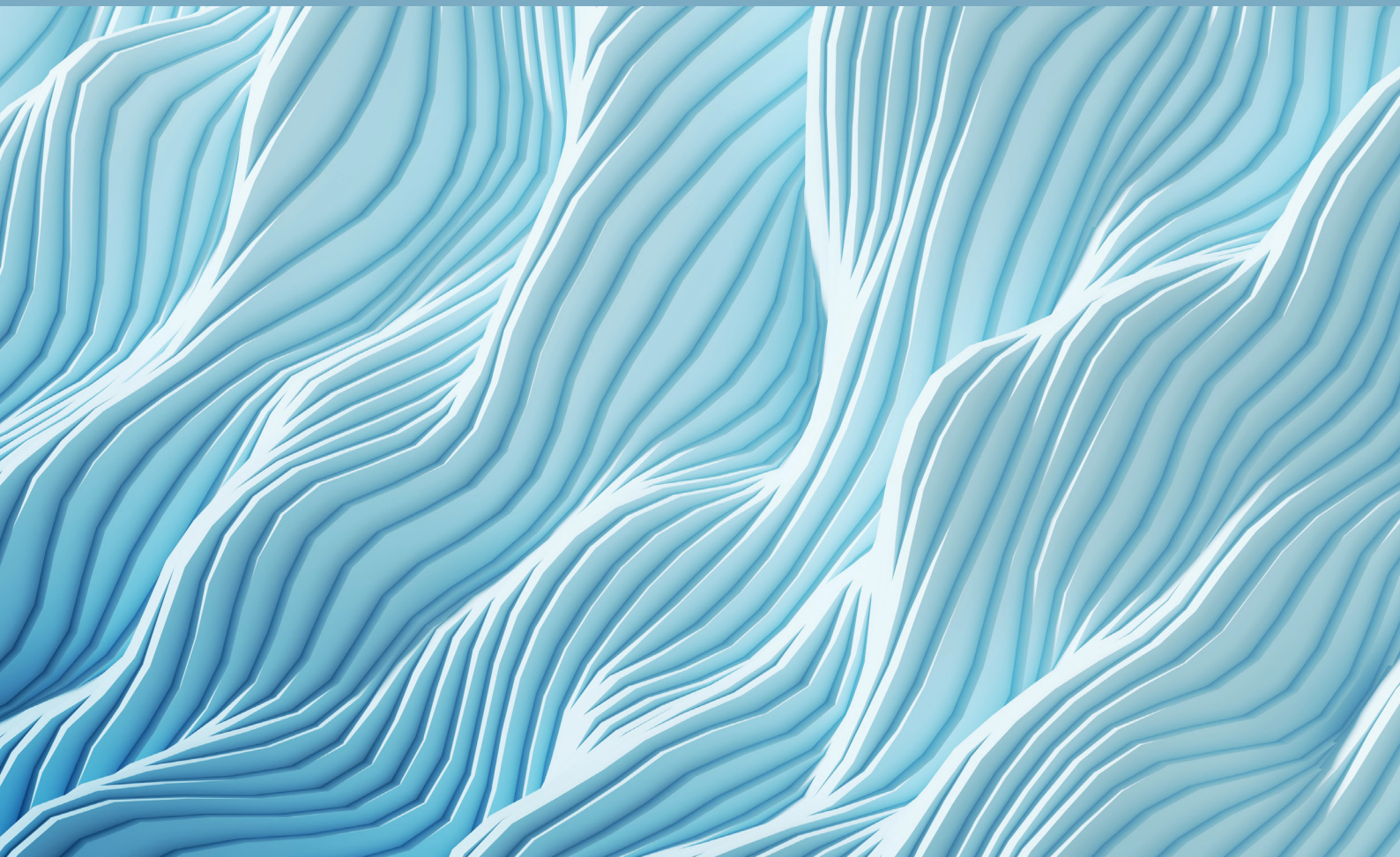




# Glasgow Child Poverty Programme: The Change Process and the Innovation and Learning Framework



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## Ingredients for success



- ◆ Recognising the need for and value of different expertise and skills in a design- and evidence-led programme.
- ◆ Building on the strong foundations of Glasgow’s data/ evidence landscape through the Child Poverty Reports and the Child Poverty Dashboard. These continue to provide an “in depth knowledge of what poverty looks like in the city”.
- ◆ Creating a shared, enabling space for people to cross fertilise ideas and knowledge is vital, as much as developing processes designed to support multi-disciplinary working.
- ◆ Building a culture of staying curious, challenging assumptions, and asking difficult questions.

## What challenge is the Innovation and Learning Framework trying to address?

Glasgow’s Programme’s experience of the change process is centred around several inherent and unavoidable tensions:

- ◆ doing systems change while working in the “as is” system;
- ◆ being precise and deliberate in understanding the system but feeling pressure and desire to demonstrate progress at pace;
- ◆ being flexible, innovative and agile while needing to provide coherency and structure for a change team; and
- ◆ attempting a collaborative leadership approach across the public and third sectors while working with more traditional accountability, funding and governance structures.

There has been a continual tension between “balancing...innovation...[and] permission to do things differently with programme management”: “You don’t want to do a rigid programme management structure [for] something [that] is not well defined and therefore just drives you in the wrong direction, but also in large public sector agencies, we do have frameworks within [which] we must operate, but also...we need a direction”. Much of this challenge has played out in terms of how to approach devolved authority in a programme designed to innovate but which is still operating within a “system of controls”. “How do you devolve responsibility and empower teams to do things but within a structure that doesn’t lead to just chaos?”

This led to the development of the Innovation and Learning Framework, led by the Centre for Civic Innovation, with support from Glasgow’s Health Determinants Research Collaboration. The Framework offers a consistent approach and brings rigour to how the Programme tackles key challenges, supports colleagues from across organisations and workstreams to collaborate meaningfully, and provides clarity around decision making, roles, aims and objectives. The Framework formalises a design-led, person-centred approach, and the intention is that it becomes a way of working that is “owned” and led by everyone in the Programme.

## What is the Innovation Framework?

The Innovation Framework is an eight-stage process, based on the [Design Council’s Double Diamond](#).

Stage 1: Understanding the vision, key outcomes and expectations

Stage 2: Setting up for success: Deciding what roles and expertise is needed

Stage 3: Understanding the challenge, embedding robust evidence and learning from families, communities and other stakeholders to understand what change is required at different levels of the policy and public service landscape

Stage 4: Moving from challenge to opportunity, through collaboration with leadership, critical friends and stakeholders

Stage 5: Co-designing and co-producing potential solutions

Stage 6: Prototyping and testing on a small scale, proof of concept

Stage 7: Making it real, exploring and developing mechanisms to scale and embed the idea as part of the city’s business as usual

Stage 8: Review and evaluate the process and outcomes

## Why is the Innovation and Learning Framework important for reducing child poverty through progressing public service reform?

The Framework:

- ◆ Aims to shift how local and national government approach challenges and work together, moving away from a “one size fits all solution” that “often fails once deployed but has already used all the budget and staff”.

- ◆ Supports deeper understanding of the implications of “changing the system”—for example, better understanding the opportunities and unintended consequences for different services and parts of the system.
- ◆ Develops better understanding of what can be scaled up across the city and what is “specific to an area or to a group of people” and which elements can be replicated elsewhere.
- ◆ Shifts the focus from continually developing new services, to taking learning that doesn’t just solve a problem in one small area of the city, but can change how the system works across Glasgow or even across Scotland.
- ◆ Reinforces the mindset that the Programme is not only about developing the solutions to poverty in Glasgow. Instead, the Programme is also here to understand “what is stopping people developing the solutions”, and what needs to change in the wider system to enable those solutions. It focuses on “what we need to do to change the system”.

## What has been the impact of the Innovation and Learning Framework so far?

Consistent approach to tackling challenges

Ensuring the right skills at the right time

Embedding citizen voice

Supporting strategic decision making

Embedding a data- and design-led approach

### The Framework:

Provides a vehicle to facilitate multi-agency change capacity through a consistent approach to how the Programme tackles identified challenges. Previously, workstreams risked working in siloes, but now work is seen much more as a “collective”. Learning has showed that a “fixed way to bring [everyone] together is essential for “creative problem solving”

This consistent approach has led to a change in mindset across the Programme. The Framework allows people to bring challenges to the table, with people offering different skillsets, expertise and views, and has created “cross-fertilisation of ideas and knowledge” across more teams. This has also provided more certainty for colleagues about “why they’re doing things” and a “safety to try things”.

- ◆ Helps form test of change teams in response to the challenges identified, ensuring the team has the “right skill sets at the right time”, allowing flexibility and more impactful teams.
- ◆ Brings to life ways of embedding citizen voice and broader stakeholder perspectives in the change process. Examples include micro grants and working with third sector partners “as our researchers”.
- ◆ Brings a rigour to processes and decision making, and ensures more robust ways of capturing evidence, driving and supporting change within the Programme and beyond.
- ◆ Supports leaders with strategic decision making and approaching key challenges, such as in the Glasgow Community Planning Partnership (CPP), and engagement with national government. The Framework has also supported other programmes across the Council to come together around a “shared vision and focus”, which has led to a more strategic approach to cross-team working and a smarter use of budgets, pooling funding and resources.

## Key learning about change and innovation in Glasgow



### Appetite for risk and readiness for change

- ◆ **The importance of assessing and understanding readiness for change**, within individual organisations and across collaborative partnerships. Change work requires more than conceptual buy-in; it demands a realistic appraisal of whether teams and departments are truly prepared to engage with the process. This includes assessing leadership commitment and the organisational capacity to absorb the discomfort that often accompanies transformation. Glasgow highlight that effective leaders must be in touch with their own “pain threshold” - a metaphor for how much disruption and challenge they, their teams, and their organisations are willing to endure to pursue meaningful change.

Change often involves stopping familiar default practices and establishing new ones, which can be difficult. Leaders need to anticipate these demands early and be willing to carry the emotional and operational weight of that transition.

- ◆ **The need for individuals/ teams to reorient their work.** This challenge extends to the wider public sector landscape: asking directors, managers and operational staff across organisations to reassess existing priorities to allow for a bigger focus on child and family poverty.
- ◆ **Clarify the extent of change you are seeking.** “Is it changing what you do? Is it trying to cover over some gaps? Or are we prepared to change how we do things—and what does that mean?” Public sector organisations “need to be honest” about whether they are “really willing to try things that are a little bit outside, or is that going to make you nervous every single time?”
- ◆ One key shift has been **accepting uncertainty**: Traditional public sector approaches tend to be plan-driven: “You get a plan together and deliver it... milestones... budget... that’s the plan.” In contrast, the Programme’s work requires “horizon scanning” and a more adaptive mindset. Strategic leadership is crucial here, with staff requiring leaders to do “a very good job of encouraging that way of working where it’s okay not to know the answer... to be collaborative... to ask the difficult question... to resist working in a silo”.

- ◆ Even in transformation work, we are often encouraged to work within existing system constraints, accepting workarounds when barriers arise. In contrast, the Programme **actively challenges those constraints**. Instead of accepting barriers as fixed, the team are encouraged to interrogate and push against them. Rather than adapting to the “as is” system, the Programme creates space to question why things cannot be done and to pursue breakthroughs. This mindset is starting to generate real movement and change within the system.



### Investing in different kinds of expertise

- ◆ The need for different kinds of expertise and skills at different points in the journey—data analysts, lawyers, storytellers, service and system designers, operational and service delivery expertise, procurement expertise, leadership and programme management, learning partners. The challenge within local government can be fostering an understanding that different roles and expertise are required for this kind of work.
- ◆ We cannot expect expertise from a specific policy/ service area to neatly shift to delivering transformation, or to know how to bring about systems change, when this may be the first time a colleague is approaching this kind of work.
- ◆ Developing “ownership” across the Programme for the approaches, techniques and tools within the Innovation Framework, and that the Framework becomes an integral aspect of business as usual. This requires time to develop a shift in mindset across a large, multi-disciplinary programme, and requires building capacity, capability and confidence across the Programme.

#### Notes:

1. All quotes are from Glasgow Programme and Scottish Government colleagues.
2. This document is part of a wider briefing pack.

## Contact us

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