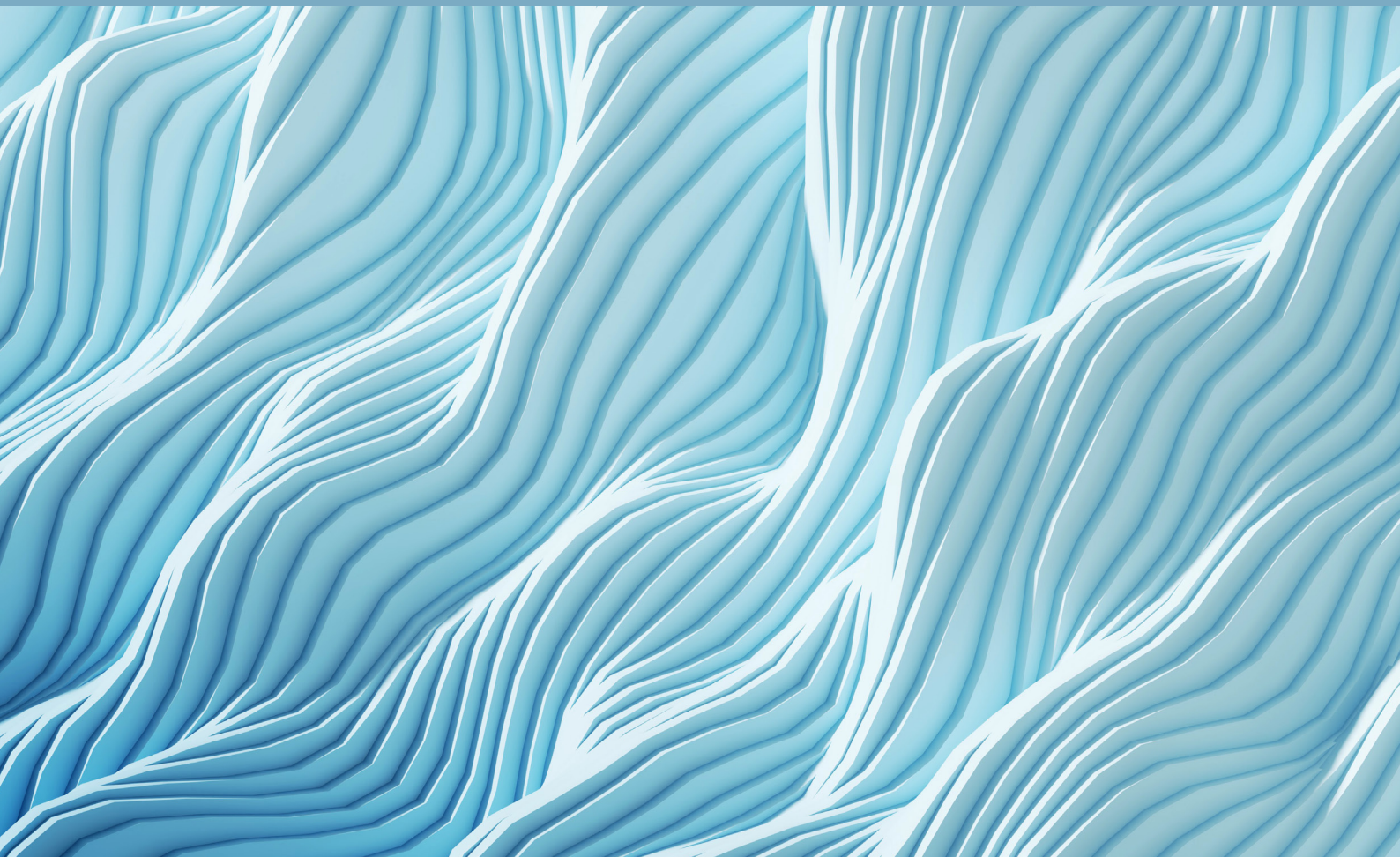




# Public Service Reform in Action: Learning from Glasgow's Approach to Tackling Child Poverty

## Executive Summary



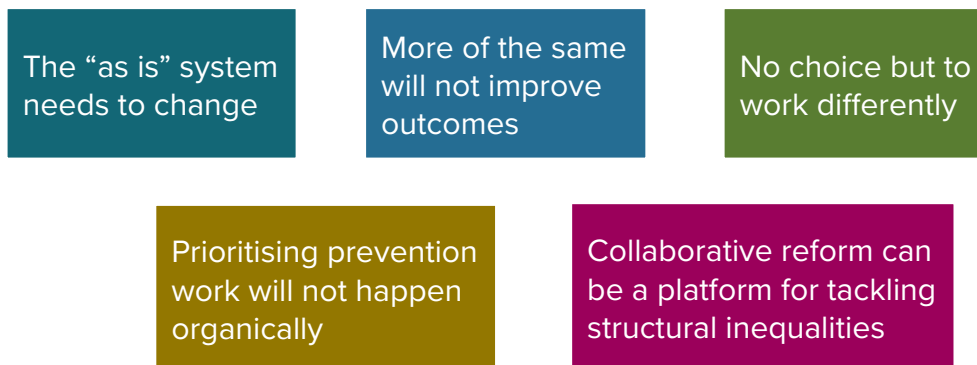
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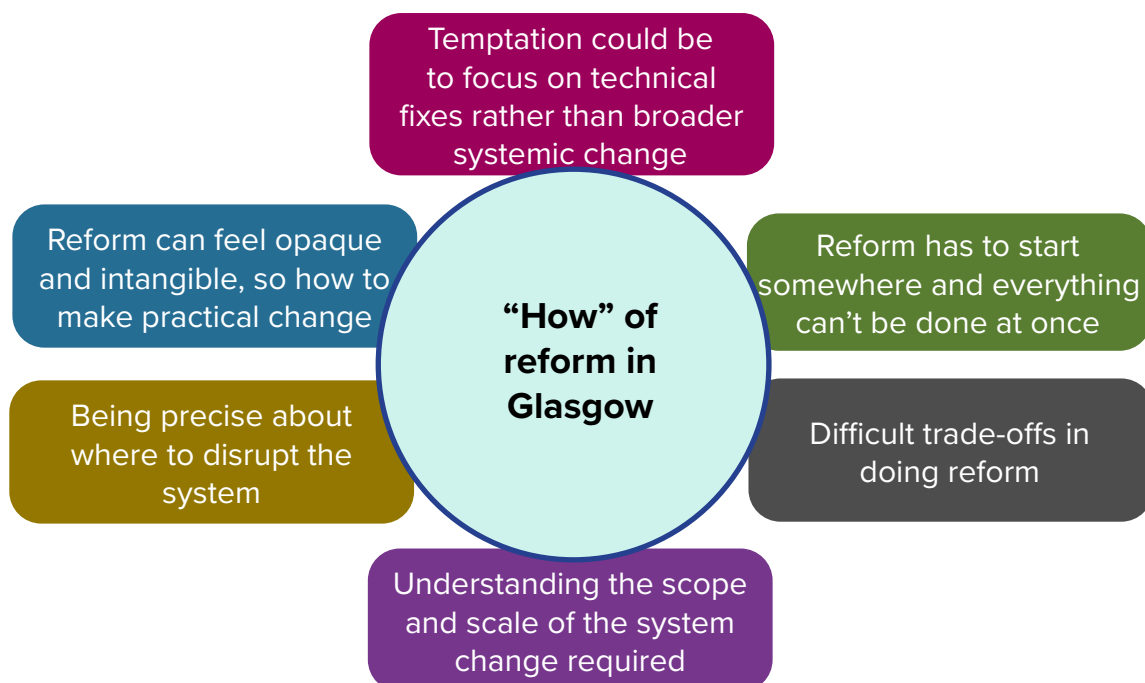
## Background

The Glasgow Child Poverty Programme is a ten-year, city-wide public service reform initiative focused on reducing child and family poverty through systemic change. The Programme is a growing multi-disciplinary, multi-agency team who are developing transformational approaches to tackle child poverty that address system-wide barriers as well as the way that services are designed, developed and delivered for families.

## The “why” of reform for Glasgow



## The “how” of reform in Glasgow



## National policy context

The Scottish Government's Public Service Reform Strategy (2025) sets out the government's commitment to change its model of service delivery, particularly for people with the greatest disadvantage or most complex circumstances, to integrate support, and empower the front line to bring together all the resources people and families need to thrive. This approach builds on the lessons learnt from the pandemic and the way we worked together. Specifically, the Covid Recovery Strategy (2021) identified a number of practical issues including: lack of flexible funding; disproportionate reporting requirements; competing priorities; and barriers to data and intelligence sharing.

By supporting the Glasgow Child Poverty Programme, the Scottish Government is seeking to enable better integration of services at a local level and support the third sector to be a key delivery partner.

## What key areas of work has the Programme focused on?

Shifting the strategic foundations: What do we need to do things differently?

- Influencing city-wide vision and priorities
- Shaping city's understanding of the "why" and "how" of reform
- Building on political and strategic leadership commitment, locally & nationally
- Developing levers for accountability & mechanisms for measuring impact
- Culture change
- Funding and reporting flexibility

Shifting ways of working: How can we do things differently?

- Building & following the evidence
- Taking an evidence-based, design-led approach to tackling challenges
- Engaging with communities to better understand their needs
- Multi-agency collaboration
- Investing in change & innovation capacity
- Embedding a learning culture in all that we do
- Adapting systemic processes (e.g., funding, procurement)

Shifting what we do: How can we support families better?

- Shaping holistic support and pathways for families
- Identifying ways to reach families earlier
- Testing approaches with communities to see what works and what doesn't

## Ingredients for success for Glasgow's reform work



- ◆ Local political and official leadership's appetite to do things differently in the short and long term
- ◆ Sustained investment in change capacity, rather than adding systems change on to people's day jobs
- ◆ Engaging with different kinds of data and intelligence to develop a more robust understanding of the system and how to be precise with where to disrupt
- ◆ A willingness across governance structures to measure things differently, focusing on impact and outcomes, not outputs
- ◆ Developing a single, shared purpose—tackling child and family poverty—across the Programme, Council and key partners, reflected in key levers such as the Community Planning Partnership, the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and the Public Service Reform Taskforce
- ◆ Seizing opportunities when they arise
- ◆ Creating time, space and change capacity to build relationships across the public and third sectors, attempting different ways of multi-agency working and collaboration, accepting this will be challenging and time consuming
- ◆ Drawing on multiple kinds of skills, expertise and knowledge
- ◆ A willingness to be uncomfortable, to not have the answers and to take learning from iterative hypothesis and testing approaches
- ◆ Willingness by parts of national government to work differently with local government, recognising their role as a partner rather than solely as a funder
- ◆ Funding flexibility

## Challenges and barriers to Glasgow's reform work



- ◆ Precarity of slipping into ways of working that support the “as is” system
- ◆ Simplifying the complexity of this work for multiple audiences and communicating learning
- ◆ Articulating the work as systems change/ reform work rather than as a short-term intervention or service
- ◆ Evidencing progress and impact of work that does not fit neatly into short-term funding or political cycles
- ◆ Developing a clarity of vision and ambition for how the Programme operates
- ◆ Balancing innovation, flexibility and collaboration with governance, accountability, funding and programme management
- ◆ Balancing slow pace of systems change work with natural desire to immediately support families
- ◆ Losing focus and impact if trying to do everything
- ◆ Different kind of relationship between local and national government not being structurally embedded into all ways of working going forward

## Key highlights of the Programme's impact and “ripple effects”



- ◆ Streamlining strategic thinking towards a single priority for the Community Planning Partnership, Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and partners across the city
- ◆ Driving a shift towards evidence- and citizen-voice based decision making, strategically and politically
- ◆ Creating scalable and replicable ways for public and third sectors to work together differently
- ◆ Making tangible progress in data sharing/ use across public sector agencies
- ◆ Clarity of vision contributing to brave decision making at strategic and political levels
- ◆ Developing different model for how local and national government can work together
- ◆ Progressing different that provide holistic support to families, such as Glasgow Helps and No Wrong Door

More details can be found in the rest of the briefing pack.

## Contact us

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