

FFP and WFWF Information Sessions: Transition Year for moving into the Whole Family Support System Change Programme

24 June &
29 July 2026



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Background

The information sessions on 24 June and 29 July 2026 provided an opportunity for the Scottish Government to share initial work on the development of the Whole Family Support System Change Programme, which will bring together Fairer Futures Partnerships (FFPs), Whole Family Wellbeing Funding (WFWF) and the Whole Family Support (WFS) early adopter work. The sessions were attended by colleagues working across Fairer Futures Partnerships, Whole Family Wellbeing Funding Learning into Action Network, Adopt and Adapt and the Child Poverty Peer Support Network.

This output collates the slides, videos and the discussion from both sessions.

Glossary:

FFP: Fairer Futures Partnerships

WFWF: Whole Family Wellbeing Funding

WFS: Whole Family Support

CPP: Community Planning Partnership

PSR: Public Service Reform

LOIP: Local Outcomes Improvement Plan

CSP and CSPP: Children's Services Plan and Children's Services Planning Partnership

LEP: Local Employability Partnership

IJB: Integrated Joint Board

HSCP: Health and Social Care Partnership

Aims of the sessions

- Ensure all partners have a shared understanding of the aims of the Programme.
- Provide clarity on the approach to this transitional year and build a shared understanding of key milestones.
- Increase awareness of the core elements of the Programme, and identify any possible gaps, focusing on where engagement with partners will be crucial to the design.
- Share some of the existing learning that is feeding into the development of the Programme and gather early partner input.
- Create an open space to capture key issues and initial views to inform the developing approach.

Presentations

The sessions provided inputs from various units across Scottish Government on current plans for the transition year to the Programme:

- Steph Gray (Place Based Social Justice Division, which supports FFPs)
- Laura Holton (Whole Family Wellbeing Funding Programme)
- Tom Andrews (Public Service Reform and WFS Early Adopters)

View the presentation slides:

- [Session one](#)
- [Session two](#)

Watch the video recordings:

- [Session one](#)
- [Session two](#)

Key points from the discussions

Across the discussions, participants consistently emphasised:

The importance of not disrupting what works:

“Don’t break the relationships that are working well”.

The need for clarity and communication around the Programme, including funding and strategic planning:

“We need to know sooner... not at the point where services are already winding down”.

The challenge of balancing flexibility and direction:

“We just need a bit more direction than a free-for-all at the start”.

The reality of delivering system change and concerns around funding stability:

“How can you do long-term systems change with short-term funding? It feels impossible”.

Support for integration in principle, alongside a need for clearer links with wider policy agendas:

“How do we get strategic alignment with all the work happening across different streams”.

Recognition of the third sector as a key partner:

“A shared vision of WFS needs to recognise the third sector as an equal strategic partner, not simply as delivery capacity”.

Emerging discussion topics

Both sessions focused on outlining the overall plans for the Programme and providing space for partners to highlight key topics, questions and priorities to be addressed. The discussions formed part of the ongoing feedback loop to shape the Programme.

Discussions across both sessions primarily focused on:

1. Vision and core programme components;
2. Funding (including funding quantum and operational challenges);
3. Local governance;
4. Strategic planning and links across policy areas;
5. Integration and systems change;
6. The role of the third sector; and
7. Communications and engagement.

Key questions and discussion points from participants are outlined below under these themes.

1. Vision and core programme components

In the second session, the Scottish Government outlined the Vision for Whole Family Support:

Our vision is that families get the right support, at the right time, in the right place, for as long as they need it. Whole Family Support that is:

- **Person-centred and relational:** building trusted relationships and recognising the strengths and needs of the whole family;
- **Coordinated across services:** so families can access support (e.g. income maximisation, employability, mental health, childcare, transport etc.) without navigating disconnected systems;
- **Preventative:** tackling emerging issues earlier, reducing escalation into crisis services;
- **Holistic:** recognising that different needs are often interconnected;
- **Accessible:** delivered in places and ways that work for families, e.g., homes and community-based settings.

The Scottish Government asked local partners to consider the following questions:

- Do you agree with this high-level vision and definition of Whole Family Support?
- Are the core components of the Programme where the Scottish Government can best add value?

Participants welcomed the vision and core components. Comments highlighted some key areas to consider for inclusion, including:

Emphasising staff wellbeing

Embedding the voices of lived experience of children and families

Emphasising children's rights

The role of leadership

The strategic role of the third sector

Highlighting the links with health inequalities

Emphasising flexibility around routes into and length of support

- Staff wellbeing: "We need to ensure staff have positive support and are trauma informed".
- Children's rights: "It looks great, the only thing missing is about children's rights, if we are aligning with national objectives, then children's rights ought to be there".
- "Listening to families' voices with a focus on support which empowers, building resilience which helps families to independently thrive." Others echoed "being explicit around children's rights and raising the voices and experiences of children and families".
- Leadership: "Where does the theme of leadership fit, particularly within officer level?"
- Reference to "reducing poverty inequalities and how that also impacts on health inequalities, particularly as we should be looking at holistic and wellbeing support." Others agreed on this point, noting that they are "looking at bringing together our work on poverty, WFWF and Community Mental Health and Wellbeing to address this."
- "A shared vision of WFS needs to recognise the third sector as an equal strategic partner, not simply as delivery capacity... the TSI can play an important role in this and do already in many areas which we have seen in FFP work and in Children's Services planning."
- Ensuring flexibility for whatever support people may need, for as long as they need it. For example, one participant highlighted that their service, Heavy Sound, "often reaches families through a trusted relationship with a young person who will not engage with statutory or conventional family services. Will the new Programme explicitly recognise the young person as a legitimate route into whole family support, and will funding cover the long-term relationship casework and coordination involved rather than only direct sessions or short-term outcomes?"

2. Funding

Discussion around funding centred on the need for greater certainty including multi-year settlements, earlier decision-making that recognises local planning timescales, and flexibility to support workforce and service sustainability.

In the second session, the Scottish Government asked local partners to consider these questions:

- Have we missed any key issues that will require consideration?
- Are there any risks and benefits of combining WFWF and FFP budgets to your current arrangements, service delivery and projects that you want to highlight at this stage?

2.1 Funding quantum

Participants highlighted key questions around:

- The need for multi-year funding
 - Possible changes to current levels of funding
 - The need to continue to support local and national activity
 - Considerations around funding distribution for rural and island areas
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- Multi-year funding was consistently raised as vital for supporting continuity, staff wellbeing and service delivery, and a focus on preventative and systems change work.
 - Questions centred around funding levels shifting with the new Programme: “Whilst funds are being combined, is there any indication of current levels being reduced?”
 - Questions were also raised about whether funding would shift to supporting only local areas/ organisations: “On the balance between national and local, national funding has helped build momentum and connect with others in local areas doing similar work, will there still be a feature of national funding in the next round?”
 - Others highlighted concerns about allocation. “Are you going to review the funding distribution mechanism / formula used to determine how much each area is allocated as I am not convinced rural and island circumstances are considered effectively?”. Others highlighted similar messages:
 - o “Regional implications need navigated and considered”.
 - o “We know that cost of living is much higher here, and the islands off islands situation here is really challenging”.

- o “The logistics and proportionate universalism needs of remote and rural (the increased cost of each step)”.
- o “It typically costs 15-30% more to deliver in rural areas but [that is] not always considered”.

2.2 Operational challenges

Participants emphasised:

- The risks associated with uncertainty in funding and timelines, particularly for workforce planning and continuation of service delivery. Participants highlighted the direct impact on the workforce and on families receiving support.
- The need for flexible, long-term funding to support long-term systems change, particularly given the often long lead-in times for systems change work.

Supporting workforce planning

- The issue of long-term planning and early reassurances around funding was repeatedly raised: “[We] want clarity about timeline[s] to ensure understanding of what this looks like over [the] next few years of [the] Programme.”
- Perth & Kinross highlighted that, “So much of the funding goes to people... we don’t want to lose good people in posts”. East Dunbartonshire echoed this – “76% goes on staff as it’s relationship-based practice”. In order to combat this, Perth and Kinross council has already begun the work of restructuring as they recognise that “restructuring at the right time is very important”.
- Participants highlighted key concerns around workforce and service sustainability: “We can’t give any assurance that staff will or won’t have a job until we know the financial envelope.” “Will the envelope be bigger or smaller? - knowing this will help manage expectations locally. For the sake of staff, but also because people are getting four years [into their role] and getting permanency rights to a job. Planning needs to happen earlier than March”. “Local delivery partners will be making tough decisions on redundancies on posts funded by these programmes by December. To avoid that, we typically need to provide financial certainty by October/ November at latest”. For example, delays in announcements around budgets last year had a “knock-on effect on projects, leading [one local area] to [lose] a project as they had to take the decision to prioritise a managed exit for young people they were supporting”.

Long-term change requires long-term, flexible funding

- The mismatch between short-term funding and long-term change was highlighted: “You’re not really in a position to spend some of that money until you’re quite a long way through.” “[This] is something we’ve seen across prevention services for the last number of years. The impact of short-term funding with last-minute notification of new funding/ extension funding. The impact it has on both families and staff is hugely detrimental”.
- “The timeline for decision making and announcing change does not match local government timelines for staffing and commissioning. It feels like the work should be done and completed fully and the funding should possibly be considered for change the year later, the lag in time is needed.”
- Participants highlighted that the ability to carry funding forward has been crucial, given that initial progress in systems change work can often take much longer than anticipated: “The capacity to carry over funding, develop local responses as issues arise and create new commissioning arrangements has been immensely helpful and we [in Clackmannanshire] would also struggle if we had been required to spend all our award within each financial year.”

Impact of funding uncertainty on service delivery and supporting families

- Participants highlighted the impact of funding uncertainty from a family-centred perspective. “[In East Dunbartonshire] typical support for a family lasts 9 months”, so there is a desire not to start any family support work that can’t be completed. To tackle this, “East Dunbartonshire are reserving funding this year to give continuity to third sector partners to support families” into the next financial year
- “In Highland we have a team delivering the WFWF and our model is a community-based locality model where we have invested in third sector delivery for better holistic supports and wellbeing. We need to be able to articulate what is going to happen beyond 26/27. We have also established an early help support service, Family Links, delivered by third sector and we need to think about the work that we have done and what we will be able to do. Currently, we can only commit to contracts up to March 2027 but we really need to start planning around developing that and being able to support our families now.”

3. Local governance

Participants highlighted the importance of retaining effective local governance arrangements and avoiding disruption to partnerships that are already working well, including:

- The need for flexibility and avoiding a “one size fits all” approach, given different approaches are working well in different local areas (e.g., through CPPs, CSPPs, etc).
- Considerations around which other policy areas need to be involved to support effective governance.
- Integration of FFP and WFWF is already underway in a number of local areas.

The need for local flexibility and recognising what is working well already

- There was emphasis on the need for flexibility across the system. “Need to be cognisant [that] local governance is important in next steps.... Local flexibility is really important”. There was strong concern that mandating a single governance route nationally could undermine local progress.
- Many areas noted that integration between WFWF, FFP, and wider local arrangements is already underway. In Edinburgh, the “WFWF, FFP fund given through council, joining this together and works well so far. [There is] interest in Edinburgh to pull funds together with shared outcomes to work towards with degree of flexibility. Want to ensure [we] don’t break relationships that are working well so far, a blanket decision to say funding is through one route or another just risks breaking up the governance. This needs to be a priority”.
- There was a concern from some participants that combining FFP and WFWF funding could impact progress. For example: “I think this highlights the challenges in bringing these funding streams together, especially around frontline delivery through WFWF, and how that, as a priority, could limit FFP activity”. Another participant highlighted the “need [for] a better understanding of what is happening locally with the WFWF...My concern is that the funding will be redistributed from the wider community/ families requiring lighter touch support but that still enables and empowers transformational change in families”.

Suggestions for future governance mechanisms

- Some partners emphasised the value of established structures, and recommended that governance sits within children’s services planning. “[We] want clarity first, and then have an offer of scope. We would like [the programme] to go into children’s services planning as we have built up governance and capacity and it’s strong at the minute, then we can work with the CPP to identify other partners and examine how to mobilise and distribute it”. Another participant echoed this, noting that “Each [local authority] has a Children’s Services Planning Partnership that is multi agency and should be coordinat[ing] all new funding/ investment opportunities and making decisions re these based on data and Children’s Plan”.

- However, other participants also highlighted that “there are often wider partners not included” in the CSPP, including “employability, community learning and money advice, housing”. Another participant also highlighted that, “We feel that Children’s Services Planning still isn’t sufficiently well linked to community-led planning – a growing priority for Scottish Government in new local democracy legislation”.
- One participant recommended that it “may be helpful to consider a model similar to Scottish Government No One Left Behind funding where every Local Authority has a Local Employability Partnership (LEP) as part of the framework providing multi-agency strategic oversight. A comparable child poverty-focused partnership could bring together education, employability, health, housing, social work and the third sector to oversee investment and ensure funding is aligned to local child poverty priorities, while building on existing structures rather than creating additional bureaucracy. [West Dunbartonshire] have started this key step to governance with a Family Prosperity Network.” This should include wider partners such as “employability, community learning and money advice, housing. Our CSPP lead sits on the Family Prosperity Network.”
- Others highlighted they felt what would be helpful is less “ringfencing: let the funding lose its identity but align to local strategy with collective accountability [from the] CPP”.
- One participant suggested the Scottish Government should “maximise the use of the CPP and the Place Director role.”
- There was a suggestion for further discussion around “form following function”, e.g., flexibility in partnership structures at a local level and different funding flow mechanisms to support system change. One participant highlighted that, often, “standing thematic partnerships inhibit innovation and change”.
- One participant asked whether “the future plans take account of the need to better integrate this agenda into other very current developments in community-led place-based planning such as Community-led Action Planning, Local Place Planning and the transfer of power to communities re funding envisaged by Democracy Matters?”
- Another participant noted that “there is an opportunity to use the unique place of the TSI in each local authority to support distribution of funding and aligning the TSI & LA & HSCP reporting structures.”

4. Integration and systems change

The Scottish Government noted that the initial aim is to integrate FFP and WFWF funding. Through the PSR/ WFS early adopter work, work is ongoing to consider funding and reporting flexibility over a wider group of funding streams all focused on similar outcomes. Through the WFS early adopter work, the Scottish Government have identified the following funding streams:

- Trauma Plan Funding
- Community Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Rapid Rehousing Transition Funding
- Homelessness Prevention
- Alcohol and Drug Partnership Funding (Mission Fund elements)
- Young Carers Funding
- Parental Employment Support

Work is ongoing with the WFS early adopter areas to consider and test funding and reporting flexibility further, and the learning will be incorporated into the WFS Programme.

5. Strategic planning and links across policy areas

Participants highlighted the importance of:

- Aligning the Programme with local planning cycles and timelines, including LOIPs and CSPs, and noting the upcoming 2027 local elections.
- Making links across related policy areas, such as childcare and employability.

Local planning timelines

- Local areas will already be developing key strategic plans over the next year: “This is a crucial time for local government... LOIP will be the driver of change and WFS will be a crucial part of it”. “Can’t let [the] timetable slip too much, [as] LOIP genuinely drives improvement.” “Our new LOIP is currently in development, as is our new CSP... it would be great to have sight of relevant information in the planning of these so that they can reflect what’s coming”.
- Participants also highlighted that strategic planning this financial year needs to navigate 2027 local elections.
- Participants highlighted the ongoing work locally to “integrate [many] of our plans into alignment this year: LOIP, Council Plan, IJB Strategic Plan and CSP Plan”. Others highlighted they are “looking to align the LEP and the Financial Inclusion Plan. It has

become a report writing bureaucracy, so guidance to include WWF, Children's Services and Community Planning would be welcome".

The wider impacts of national policymaking, funding and timelines on local planning

- Participants noted that timelines for how this Programme is to be delivered are "not aligned with the new Children's Plan publication" timelines. "They are being published by 32 local authorities/ CSPPs but content can't reflect the new changes" from this Programme.
- Participants also highlighted that directly commissioned projects by the Scottish Government "are there to fill gaps, but sometimes it can lead to fragmentation where local delivery has already identified local gaps".

Strengthening links with other key policy areas

- Participants highlighted the need for "earlier conversations on how to integrate the Programme into existing delivery and systems to ensure everyone benefits – this feels like an easy win".
- Questions were also raised about links to wider policy areas. This included:
 - o Childcare: "How does this link to school-age childcare funding for next 12 months and beyond? With other funding for childcare, how is this joining-up?"
 - o "Employability – is this a longer-term plan to bring that into this group?"
 - o "Disability is a critical issue and impacts families in relation to how and why they need support. Lack of support for disabled parents and poor choices for disabled children and young people needs addressing within this systems change programme. Services provided by both public and third sector need to be disability aware and proactive."
 - o Care experience: "There is a real risk that the focus on care experience is diminished as we move toward a focus on poverty - we have seen real improvements in [Clackmannanshire's] care experience stats as a direct result of WWF."
- The question of linkages across existing workstreams that don't necessarily fit within the FFP or WWF space was also raised: "How do we think big and how do we get strategic alignment with all work going on across different streams or not considered as part of this work?" "How porous is the boundary of the programme and how do we ensure it links well with other work happening across Scotland?"

6. Role of the Third Sector

The role of the third sector came up throughout discussion, including:

- How best to ensure smaller, local third sector groups/ organisations are embedded in this work.
- The third sector's role in the development of the Programme, as a strategic partner.
- The role of the third sector and community-led organisations in driving forward prevention work.

Local, community-led support

- “There’s a bit of anxiety around smaller local third sector groups [...] about what will happen to them”.
- “What safeguards will ensure the combined funding reaches independent and grassroots third-sector providers, rather than being retained within local authority systems or offered only through short-term, low-cost commissioned contracts?”
- One participant asked whether there is “sufficient investment [...] going in, or is envisaged, for local community organisations by means of deep wellbeing enabling prevention. That is the youth clubs, parents groups, local sports organisations or community-led health projects which support families and young people before situations deteriorate. Our sense is that this hasn’t been obvious and there are huge gaps in the wellbeing-enabling infrastructure at local level in many places”.

Third sector role in the development of the Programme

- “In our North Ayrshire FFP developments, our third sector and lived experience communities have been fundamental in the co-design of approaches now being tested and delivered, as well as monitoring and evaluation. I’m curious about engagement with national and local third sector organisations in these stages of stakeholder engagement?”
- “And in tandem to the implementation support mentioned in the core components, what attention and activity will be given to capacity building (we’ve been learning about some of these needs through FFP) for the third sector to be equal partners in WFS decision-making and delivery?”

7. Communications and engagement

Participants emphasised the need for:

- Clear, consistent communication and engagement throughout the transition year, both for partners directly involved in delivery and wider strategic partners locally.
 - Continued opportunities to come together and share learning throughout the transition year and beyond.
- There was interest in understanding linked programmes and opportunities for learning and peer support: “Want to know more about PSR early adopters”. “I’ve found lots of value in FFP shared learning spaces. Is there the possibility of an early adopter peer network?”.
 - There was also a suggestion for more coordinated communication: “a suggestion for an overview brief via our Scottish Government Place Director / single communications we can cascade to support discussion and engagement in our partnership system as we reset the LOIP”.
 - Broader examination of current communication flows at the national level was identified as vital: “It’d be helpful if there was a close look at how the communication around funding is working across government departments... it felt like there was a breakdown in communications with [the Scottish Government]” due to budget delays. This had a knock-on effect on projects, leading to the loss of one project after taking the decision to prioritise a managed exit for the young people being supported.
 - Another participant commented on the public image of FFPs: “The public need to see how we are investing funding and they need to be assured it’s linked to local evidenced need. Co-production is important and needs more emphasis by the Scottish Government.”

Additional questions from participants

Participants were invited to share any further questions/ comments via Menti following the sessions. These included:

- How will Scottish Govt remove barriers such as short-term funding; funding silos; dating share and support neighbourhood-level integrated teams operating around families/ community needs
- What outcomes are expected 3,5, & 10 years, and would Scottish Govt consider routing funding through CPP to enable flexible, place based commissioning and reprofiling of resources?
- Will there be any additional flexibility arranged for data sharing e.g. from Social Security Scotland or the DWP?

- In terms of Outcomes, what is expected in terms of reporting on them? What level of progress is anticipated?
- How will something like 'Tell Us Once' be implemented within WFS to avoid families having to tell their stories to multiple organisations?
- Is the expectation that the Whole Family Support Integrated Programme will be delivered through Children's Services Planning Partnerships as the WFWF was?
- Will there be assurances on funding levels and multi annual commitments?
- I would also...like to know if there will be any provision for further Element 3 support for LA areas that did not benefit from previous rounds of that fund/ support.

Scottish Government responses

The Scottish Government welcomed comments and committed to considering the issues raised in the session as part of the co-design process. Key points highlighted by the Scottish Government included:

- Continued engagement and co-design opportunities throughout the transition year.
- Recognition of the key challenges raised around funding, local planning and the need for strategic alignment.

Continued engagement and co-design opportunities

- The Scottish Government reiterated that they want to ensure the planning for this work is "a genuine partnership opportunity". These sessions are one opportunity in terms of ongoing engagement and co-design activity throughout the transition year, noting the phased approach set out in the slides. There will be:
 - o Continued co-design opportunities
 - o Use of existing networks and forums as opportunities to share updates and cascade information
 - o Development of an integrated learning offer and communications plan for the Programme
- The Scottish Government highlighted the key role of the third sector in this work. They noted that they will be engaging with a range of partners and stakeholders, including third sector partners such as Ending Child Poverty Coalition, the Child Poverty Action Group, and the TSI network.

Recognition of key challenges raised around funding

The Scottish Government noted they recognise the key challenges partners raised around funding uncertainty and local planning timelines, highlighting that:

- Funding reduction is not the intention: “the driver behind this work is not to reduce funding... it’s about systems change.”
- There is recognition that distribution mechanisms will need to be reviewed as programmes are combined. However, the Scottish Government confirmed no decisions have yet been taken around how funding will be distributed. They emphasised:
 - The importance of co-design and learning from what is already working locally
 - An intention to support rather than disrupt existing governance arrangements
 - The need to balance clarity with flexibility across different local contexts
- Ongoing work will consider regional and rural impacts as part of Programme design.
- Their understanding of the need for early clarity to support planning. The Scottish Government noted they are actively seeking to understand local planning timelines and would welcome further detail from partners on their key milestones.
- A commitment to share decisions as soon as possible, where possible.
- Recognition that systems change requires long-term, flexible funding approaches that can align to local need.
- Funding levels remain subject to budget decisions and Ministerial approval, and the learning around the need for funding certainty and flexibility will be reflected in relevant advice to Ministers.

Recognising the need for strategic alignment

The Scottish Government highlighted a recognition of local strategic planning processes and how the Programme will align with other policy areas, noting that:

- They are aiming to align with LOIPs, CSPs, and other planning processes where possible.
- Integration currently focuses on core programmes, but there is ambition to “look at what other policy areas might work”.
- Engagement with wider policy areas is ongoing to ensure necessary alignment.
- One of the key issues to consider over the coming months is around whether the Programme should invest in other areas to support systems change beyond direct investment to local areas.

Useful resources

Useful resources highlighted in the sessions:

- [Analysis of Year 3 \(2024-2025\) Whole Family Wellbeing Funding Programme Templates](#)
- [WFWF KHub: Home - Learning into Action \(LiA\) Network - Whole Family Wellbeing Funding \(WFWF\) - Knowledge Hub.](#)
- [Fairer Futures Partnerships: Learning, Engagement and Resources Space](#)

To sign up for the FFP newsletter, please contact: placebasedsocialjustice@gov.scot

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