



Principles into Practice Learning Exchange Event Wednesday 9 June 2021

The second Learning Exchange event for the Principles into Practice universal and enhanced trial areas took place online on Wednesday 9 June.

It was attended by 25 people from 9 of the 10 trial areas, and focused on sharing successes, challenges and learning points as the programme continues. Participants had the chance to share their experiences with colleagues from other areas in breakout rooms, as well as being able to meet with people from their own local authorities to discuss some of the opportunities and challenges arising as a result of the trial programme.

Attendees heard from four parents about the impact of transition on the wider family, and also from a local authority about their engagement with parents and carers.

Morning session – making sense of complexity

The morning session was a chance to share experiences and reflect on learning so far.

Flash reporting

Attendees were reminded that flash reports are intended primarily as a chance for them to reflect on work taking place, to recognise and highlight useful learning, and to identify areas where further support would be helpful.

This information can be gathered and shared in many ways, but it was suggested it could feel less formal and/or intimidating if changes could be made to the existing template: perhaps using the word “reflection” rather than “report”, and reframing questions to make their value and scope clearer.

Key points emerging from reports submitted so far

- A huge amount of work is taking place across all the trial areas;
- Creating the conditions for change takes time;
- Areas reporting “wholesale commitment” and “enthusiasm across the board” for improving transitions;
- There are challenges around encouraging and maintaining engagement with key partners;
- COVID is continuing to have an impact:
 - Tier 4 restrictions leading to maximum attendance at meetings;
 - Timelines stretching as a result of the impact of coronavirus; and
 - Online engagement.

Suggested areas where more support would be helpful are data gathering and analysis, and the facilitation of groups.

Themes from the breakout rooms

The breakout rooms offered a chance to share thoughts and experiences with colleagues from other local authority areas. Feedback from the groups highlighted:

What's been going well?

- **Lots of “small successes and wins”**
Parent group up and running, successful practitioner survey, good work within Learning Disability service, successful training session with ILF Scotland for 70 attendees, pathway set up for 2024 leavers
- **Joint approaches and working**
Enthusiasm across the board, colleagues wanting to be involved and offer support, better engagement/link with Education Services, self-assessment questionnaire used to benchmark shared aims and aspirations, transition group meeting regularly
- **Learning and development opportunities**
Chance to think creatively, useful to have support from Principles into Practice and ARC, Learning Exchange event a great opportunity to network and share experiences
- **New ways of engaging with young people and families**
Councillors have met with young people and their families to hear about their experience of transitions

What hasn't gone so well?

- **Internal challenges**
Incompatible IT and data systems, changes in structure and personnel, engagement with education colleagues difficult
- **Pressure on time and resources**
Trying to move change forward while also doing “the day job”, scale of the task can feel overwhelming, competing priorities and responsibilities, lack of support for young people with mental health difficulties
- **External challenges**
Ongoing impact of COVID, uncertainty, things taking longer than ideal, difficulties outwith anyone's control

Things we should be doing more of?

- **More multiagency working**
Encourage understanding and use of a common approach/language, work for a joined up approach, recognise everyone's doing their best
- **Focus on specific areas/services**
Concentrate on making the changes we can before identifying next steps
- **Recognising successes**
Small steps are still significant and encouraging
- **Supporting young people into employment**
Challenging time due to COVID, processes around the Youth Guarantee difficult for young people with additional support needs

Things we should be doing less of?

- **Trying to do everything all at once**
Focus efforts on areas where change can be achieved, don't "set ourselves up to fail"
- **Bureaucracy!**

Making sense of complexity

Analysing and interpreting data in a way that is meaningful and useful is challenging, especially where data findings are varied and complex. Attendees were introduced to Pareto Charts as a way of identifying and highlighting the most important responses within a large set of data.

According to the Pareto principle, in most cases 80% of outcomes for any given event are the result of 20% of the effort expended on that event.

The purpose of the Pareto Chart is to identify responses with the greatest potential to bring about change, to allow effort to be focused where it is likely to achieve greatest effect/impact.

The session demonstrated how this was used in practice to analyse data gathered by the DIVERgent INfluencers Young Leaders Group through their national survey of young people's experiences around leaving school.

Afternoon session – engaging with parents and carers

The Transitions Jigsaw - Where do parents and carers fit in?

Four parents shared their experiences of supporting a young person through transition and discussed the questions:

- How does a young person's transition to young adult life impact on parents and the wider family?
- If you were to describe "the ultimate positive transition", what would it look like?
- How could professionals better include parents in their young person's transition (in both children's and adult services)? How can they better tap into the knowledge and experience parents have around a young person and their needs?

Key messages

Impact on family life and family members

- Impact on other family members, e.g. siblings.
- Impact on family finances: inability to work or to continue in work.
- Concern, awareness and planning starts early for parents – in one case from when their son started school at age 5.
- Impact on relationships.
- Difficulty doing "normal family things" such as holidays, outings, family occasions.

"The ultimate positive transition"

- Finding a knowledgeable professional and building a relationship of trust can make all the difference – even turning around a transition that isn't going well.
- Transparency around funding and early confirmation of budgets essential.
- Contingency planning important – a plan B (and C) if something doesn't work out.
- Long term element to planning – "the bigger picture".
- Needs proper resourcing. Professionals often overloaded themselves.

How can parents' knowledge and experience be included in the transition process?

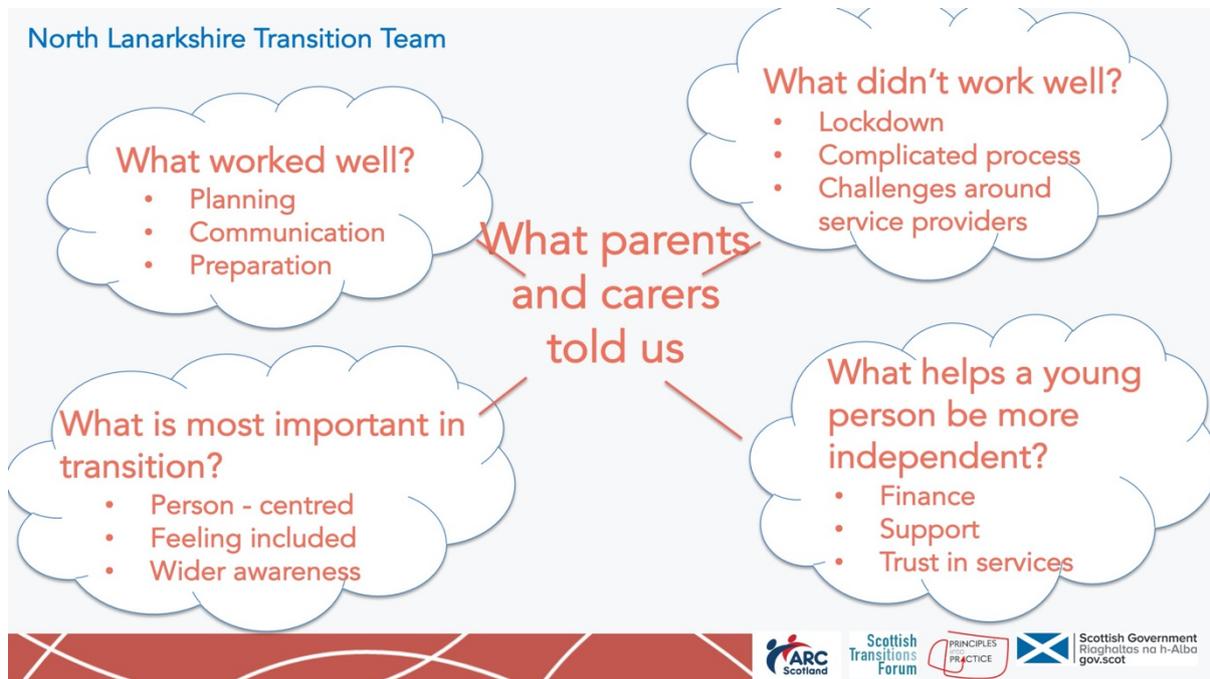
- Parents/carers often the only people who see and understand the full picture.
- A consistent key worker throughout who knows the family.
- A summary of all reports/assessments would be useful, to give a timeline of development – often parents/carers are the only ones who know the whole story.
- Communication.
- Backing up supporting information provided during assessments, to evidence need.

Parent engagement in North Lanarkshire

Claire Leslie, Transition Team Manager

Following the parents' input, Claire Leslie spoke about the steps being taken in North Lanarkshire to engage more actively with parents and carers around transition. A survey of

parents and carers flagged up things the team were doing well, and things they need to improve – the key learning points from the survey are shown in the slide below.



Claire stressed the importance of learning from the people who use the services, and not being afraid of seeking feedback – even negative feedback can be constructive and lead to positive change. In particular, understanding the needs of parents in the process can be crucial in working together to arrive at the option that's best for the young person. Avoiding jargon, being aware of good communication and building a relationship of trust are all key.

Summary and next steps

The Ask!

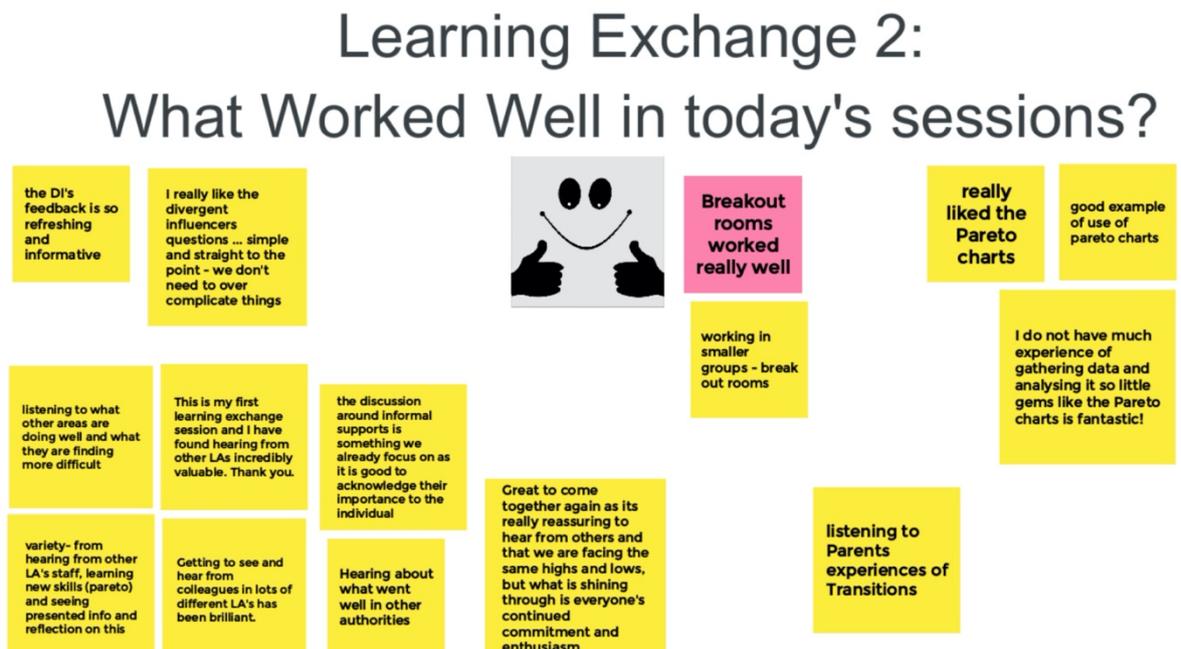
We are looking for people willing to share their learning at future events to support each other in developing new approaches and ways of working.

Whatever aspect of transitions your area is focusing on, you will be gaining insights that will benefit others – things that have gone well or not so well, new ideas and ways of working. If you have something you'd like to share with others, please let your ARC contact know.

Attendees had the chance to discuss their next steps with colleagues from their area in small groups, before reflecting together on learning from the day.

Feedback and reflections were gathered on a jamboard:

Learning Exchange 2: What Worked Well in today's sessions?



the DI's feedback is so refreshing and informative

I really like the divergent influencers questions ... simple and straight to the point - we don't need to over complicate things

Breakout rooms worked really well

really liked the Pareto charts

good example of use of pareto charts

listening to what other areas are doing well and what they are finding more difficult

This is my first learning exchange session and I have found hearing from other LAs incredibly valuable. Thank you.

the discussion around informal supports is something we already focus on as it is good to acknowledge their importance to the individual

working in smaller groups - breakout rooms

I do not have much experience of gathering data and analysing it so little gems like the Pareto charts is fantastic!

variety- from hearing from other LA's staff, learning new skills (pareto) and seeing presented info and reflection on this

Getting to see and hear from colleagues in lots of different LA's has been brilliant.

Hearing about what went well in other authorities

Great to come together again as its really reassuring to hear from others and that we are facing the same highs and lows, but what is shining through is everyone's continued commitment and enthusiasm

listening to Parents experiences of Transitions

Learning Exchange 2 - What would have made these sessions even better?



bigger discussion group in breakout room

In our breakout rooms people spoke about the baseline surveys they have put to yp/families and colleagues, would people be willing to share these ?



Suggestions for future Learning Exchange events

- Bigger discussion groups in breakout rooms.
- The guarantee of employment offer.
- How to make and sustain good engagement/relationships with education/schools.
- What we've learned from COVID, and where it's worked well.
- How to communicate effectively – what is enough information and what is too much? How can we best to present this information for young people, parents and carers, and professionals?