

Contract report: Changing Futures Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Programme Support

Introduction:

In October 2022, MEAM was commissioned by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to provide programme support for the development of its local Changing Futures programme. As we conclude this phase of the work to help lay the foundations of the Changing Futures Programme, we would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the collaboration and trust you have placed in MEAM. For over a decade, MEAM has been involved in multiple disadvantage related work in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and it has been our pleasure to support you on the latest stage of your journey.

This document sets out a brief summary of our support during the contract period and outlines several options for our ongoing relationship. It has been a privilege to work alongside the interim programme delivery team and the wider partnership, and we continue to be inspired by the ongoing commitment of every member to address multiple disadvantage in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Summary of work undertaken

Within our tender for this contract, we outlined six work strands directly aligned with the requirements of the ITT. Progress on each strand was regularly discussed with the programme lead and tracked on a [shared GANTT Chart](#). An overview is shown in the table in Appendix 1, but the highlights under each work strand include:

Work strand 1 - Recruitment

- In May this year, we supported the recruitment of a programme lead who demonstrated deep knowledge of multiple disadvantage and the local system; grasps the core concepts of systems thinking and can demonstrate systems change competency; and is able to build partnerships and relationships speedily and at scale.
- With the programme lead in position, we supported them to shape the outline of the programme team and begin recruiting to key positions.

Work strand 2 – Team development

- We carried out a systemic review of the team structure to support its development, taking into account budgetary constraints and prioritisation of workstreams, and leading to better resource allocation and collaboration between roles. This was adopted by the interim programme team.
- We facilitated discussions with the interim programme team to identify initial priorities for each manager position and help to anticipate the barriers and challenges each role might face.

Work strand 3 – Programme infrastructure and system relationships

- We developed a [collaborative systems map](#) to help establish a clearer sense of the boundaries of the work and delivered several workshops to encourage wider participation.

- We worked with the interim programme team to explore how the programme infrastructure and setup reflects the identity and principles of the programme, and streamlined and refocused the programme governance around a clear purpose and membership.
- We maintained a presence throughout by attending various forums and keeping linked in with key staff members, bringing in a systems lens and challenging non-systemic practices. This helped to create an environment where constructive challenge is encouraged and shared learning can flourish.

Work strand 4 – Vision and values

- We guided the programme to identify a universally agreed and well-defined [purpose and principles](#), and began embedding them across the wider system.
- We facilitated discussions with each level of the programme governance to refine the vision and values and helped to develop a collective understanding of the practical application of these at operational, strategic and system design levels.

Work strand 5 – Learning infrastructure

- We worked with a core group to develop a [framework for learning](#).
- We supported the development of the [Ecosystem of Learning](#), which illustrates the flow of information and subsequent potential opportunities for system transformation.
- We steered the ongoing development of the learning ecosystem, leading to the establishment of Change Forums whereby [System Inquiries](#) take place, informed by the [MEAM Systems Intervention Tool](#) (Build, Explore, Act, Learn).
- We helped to theorise and nurture a learning infrastructure which fosters a network of experiments and collective learning. This portfolio approach highlights the potential for a dynamic innovation mechanism, wherein the volume of inquiries amplifies with the increasing engagement of various stakeholders and interventions can generate positive change across different parts of the system, simultaneously.

Work strand 6 – Trauma Informed approaches

- We guided a working group to design and deliver several system-wide sessions and [analyse the output](#) to form the foundations of a trauma-network for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- We convened and supported a working group to scope out the initial workings of a trauma informed network drawing on outputs from system-wide sessions.

Extra Value Delivered:

In addition to the agreed-upon scope, we are pleased to highlight the extra value we brought to the programme, supplementary to the contract agreement:

Coaching and Mentoring

- We provided coaching and mentoring to key programme team members, particularly around the development and delivery of the Change Forums. Our emphasis centred on advancing systems practice and identifying future training needs and opportunities. This encompassed the provision of templates for systems tools and conducting 1-2-1 and group reflective sessions with change agents following their trial implementation.

Trauma informed network

- We committed additional MEAM resources to enhance the development of a Trauma-Informed network. This initiative has flourished into a distinct entity of its own, garnering significant interest and commitment from stakeholders across the system.

Skills and Attendance Gaps

- We stepped in to cover skills and attendance gaps, taking on tasks such as writing, facilitating, and other essential responsibilities to maintain project momentum.

Strategic Group Meetings

- We played a key role in planning and delivering four strategic group meetings, fostering collaboration and ensuring alignment with programme objectives.

Outcomes framework

- We contributed to the development of a robust and expansive [outcomes framework](#), integral for measuring the programme's success.

These additional contributions were made with a commitment from MEAM to the field of multiple disadvantage in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and were integral to overcoming challenges and advancing key initiatives. We believe these efforts have not only added substantial value but have also contributed significantly to the programme's long-term sustainability and success.

Timescales:

It's important to acknowledge unforeseen challenges or scope adjustments during the course of the work. Most notably, it became apparent early on that the initial timeline to recruit to the programme lead position was not achievable due to Cambridgeshire County Council (host organisation) announcing a restructure and a resultant recruitment freeze. Consequently, there was a six-month delay in recruiting the programme lead and team, which led to an over-reliance on the local interim programme team whose contributions, although substantial, were in addition to the duties of their core roles.

Despite this reduction in local team capacity, we persisted in our efforts to foster system relationships, cultivate a learning ecosystem, and integrate the values framework into the wider system infrastructure. MEAM support, and the efforts of the local interim team, remained flexible, ensuring the programme is now well-positioned to achieve its stated aims.

Resourcing:

The contract provided for **38.5 days** of support from MEAM. Due to the changing timescales outlined above, our support was extended, at our own expense, to **80 days**, which included things like regular attendance at team meetings. This is in addition to the three days per month offered from May 2022 to May 2023 as part of our TNLCF grant-funded systems intervention support offer.

These adjustments, while challenging, underscore our commitment to the success of the Changing Futures Programme in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, and we are confident that the groundwork laid will contribute to its future achievements.

Next Steps:

Now that the foundations of the programme are embedded, local partners are considering the next stage of the journey. Below we present our thoughts on the possible next steps for the work and our potential future collaboration:

General support

It would be useful for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to continue to access external support to help shape the next stages of the Changing Futures programme. This support could include:

1. Establishing an evaluation framework and identifying an appropriate partner to help measure the progress and outcomes of the programme.
2. Continuing to build and develop the Trauma Informed Network, identifying local skills and resources to support and strengthen this priority across the local area.
3. Providing ongoing support to the programme lead and team, inducting and onboarding new programme team members, offering coaching, mentoring and workshopping to ensure ongoing cohesion and collaboration.
4. Providing ongoing support, advice and a national perspective to the Changing Futures partnership.

Systems Leadership Programme (SLP)

Following local discussions, we are of the view that a bespoke Systems Leadership Programme would help shape the next stages of development of the Changing Futures work in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This would have a focus on both training/knowledge development for staff across the system and the practical implementation of this learning to support the Changing Futures programme delivery. The design of the SLP would need to be bespoke for the locality, and build on the learning from the System Inquiries and other system-wide work already developed. A programme may include:

1. Delivering a bespoke learning and leadership programme that seeks to build workforce capacity and capability around complexity and multiple disadvantage.
2. Establishing a network of Systems Change Agents who have completed a tailored systems leadership programme and supporting them to implement the learning within these roles to enable delivery of Changing Futures aims and objectives.
3. Aligning the SLP with the wider work of the Changing Futures programme, in particular the System Inquiries work, both in its design (for example the MEAM Build, Explore, Act, Learn framework) and ensuring that its outputs contribute to the core values, vision, change models, and key components of the Changing Futures programme.

Conclusion and contacts

We hope that this overview of the work to date is helpful and we look forward to speaking in more detail about future work together.

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December 2023.**

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Appendix

Appendix 1:

Table 1: Work schedule

WS1: Recruitment	
Identify/agree scope and scale of role and recruitment process	100%
Support to establish recruitment pack (JD etc.)	100%
Support creation of job advertisement	100%
Support with shortlisting and the development of value-based interview questions	100%
Participating in interview panels	100%
WS2: Team Development	
Carry out a systemic review of the team structure	100%
Support programme lead to set out initial priorities for each manager role	100%
Support the programme lead to develop recruitment packs for manager roles	100%
Support the creation of job advertisements	100%
WS3: Programme infrastructure and system relationships	
Governance structure development (including workshops with each tier)	100%
Support to develop a systems map (including core group systems workshop)	100%
Support programme team to establish reporting framework	75%
Attend weekly check-ins with core project team	100%
Report to monthly operational, tactical & strategic meetings	100%
WS4: Vision and Values	
Convene a working group to focus on the purpose and principles	100%
Facilitated discussions with each level of programme governance	100%
Support the programme lead and project team to communicate the vision and values	100%
WS5: Learning Infrastructure	
Create a health check survey to measure the current strength of learning	100%
Support programme governance to set out an outcomes framework for learning	100%
model a web of systems change agents that feeds into the programme governance	100%
Scope and develop a systems learning and leadership programme	100%
WS6: Trauma-informed approaches	
Reconvene a working group to lead, act as advocates and trial new approaches	100%
Support the project team to plan a session to establish a trauma-network	100%
Facilitate a session to establish a trauma-network	100%
Scope out priorities for action at each level of the system to be implemented	100%