Final | Confidential

Cambridgeshire County Council

Changing Futures C&P. Framework for understanding systems impact

February 2025

Making Every Adult Matter

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the framework

Cambridgeshire County Council commissioned Cordis Bright and MEAM to develop a framework which helps understand progress towards systems change as part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Changing Futures programme. The overarching aim of this framework is to support Cambridgeshire County Council to undertake activities which improve local understanding and demonstrate:

- The impact the programme is having on how the local system approaches multiple disadvantage.
- The difference the local system of support is making for people experiencing multiple disadvantage in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The framework provides an overview of some of the considerations and theoretical models for evaluating programmes seeking to change systems. It then demonstrates how these concepts might be applied to the Changing Futures programme, including proposing ways to describe the programmes aims and actions for different levels of the system. It suggests methodological approaches which could be used to generate learning about the system in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and lays out some of the resourcing implications for these methods to help decision-makers to consider the internal and external resource that might be needed to carry out the activities effectively.

1.2 About Changing Futures

Fundamentally, Changing Futures is about improving outcomes for people with multiple disadvantage by improving the systems which can support people and also act as barriers to their success and fulfilment.

What is multiple disadvantage?

A person is said to experience multiple disadvantage if they experience at least three of the following five:

1. Homelessness
2. Substance misuse
3. Mental health issues
4. Domestic abuse
5. Contact with the criminal justice system

Figure 1 summarises the Changing Futures approach. It was developed based on reviewing programme documentation and discussion with the Changing Futures team in Cambridgshire and Peterborough, and refined in workshop with the Governance Group.

Continuous learning and adaptation is a core component of the Changing Futures model. It is one of the ways in which the programme aims to develop the capacity of system stakeholders to build on strengths and to understand and tackle barriers within the system, which might prevent its ability to deliver effective support and outcomes for people experiencing multiple disadvantage. Developing and applying a systems-focused framework for understanding systems impact is an important way for the programme to generate the learning that is core to the programme and its success.

To ensure that the framework supports both evaluation and continuous learning and adaptation, it includes methodological approaches that not only assess impact but also create structured opportunities for reflection and learning. These approaches help stakeholders engage in ongoing discussions about systems change, fostering a culture of adaptation and improvement.

A note on co-production

A core principle of the Changing Futures programme is that people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage must have a meaningful role in shaping the system that supports them. This framework is therefore designed to ensure that lived experience insights are not only captured but actively inform decision-making, service design, and policy change.

Co-production goes beyond consultation. It requires genuine collaboration, where people with lived experience are equal partners in shaping the direction of system change. The methodological approaches within this framework incorporate participatory methods that ensure lived experience is embedded throughout, from defining evaluation questions to interpreting findings and informing future action.

Figure 1: Changing Futures programme overview

2 Theoretical foundations of the framework

2.1 Models on which this framework builds

This framework is designed to account for the complexity of the system which both perpetuates multiple disadvantage and aims to address it. To achieve this, the framework is informed by systems thinking. This approach aligns with the principles outlined in the Magenta Book 2020, which highlights the importance of systems thinking as a means of understanding and evaluating complex adaptive systems (see for example this Supplementary Guide on Handling Complexity in Policy Evaluation).

The approach to developing this framework has been designed to reflect the complex nature of the system it focuses on. As Gates and Dyson (2017) emphasise, evaluative activities should work with rather than against the non-linear patterns associated with complex systems, and we consider framework development one of the initial steps involved in evaluation.

To help us build systems thinking into our approach, we selected two theoretical models which are (1) recently published (i.e. in the last four years), (2) freely available, (3) written in accessible language.

> The field of systems thinking and associated literature continues to evolve. The two models we have chosen build on a range of models which have come before. While much of the available literature focuses on systems thinking in the context of obesity, the key ideas can be translated to other complex public health issues, such as multiple disadvantage.
>
> Colleagues in the Changing Futures programme have chosen to develop an evaluation framework focused on the programme and on the system's response to multiple disadvantage. The principles and approaches in this framework could also be applied to other programmes or to other complex problems. The framework may therefore be useful to local stakeholders who are considering how to evaluate different areas of work in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The two models we have selected are:

1. **The Action Scales Model: A Conceptual Tool to Identify Key Points for Action within Complex Adaptive Systems (Nobles *et al.,* 2021).** Available here. The ASM conceptualises the different levels and scopes of actions necessary for systems change.
2. **The ENCOMPASS framework: a practical guide for the evaluation of public health programmes in complex adaptive systems (Pinzon *et al.,* 2022).** Available here. The ENCOMPASS framework is designed to guide evaluation of systems change initiatives and support sustainable and impactful change. It helps us to conceptualise the stages involved in

developing the framework and may be a useful tool for implementing evaluation activities in future.

Below, we set out some of the key principles we have drawn from these models to guide our approach to framework development.

2.2 Principles of complex adaptive systems

The environment which Changing Futures not only operates in but also seeks to transform can be described as a complex adaptive system.

> *"A **system** is composed of multiple parts… that are interconnected. A **complex adaptive system** is emergent; it is more than the sum of its parts."*
>
> The ENCOMPASS framework

A complex adaptive system can be characterised by the following principles (e.g., Pinzon *et al.,* 2022 and Nobles *et al.,* 2021):

- It is dynamic.
- The way it behaves is informed by its purpose.
- It may be influenced by factors inside and outside of itself.
- It adapts its behaviour and is characterised by interdependency and feedback.
- Interactions between different parts it are non-linear (i.e. a traditional logic model would fail to capture the complexity of the system).
- It can be unpredictable and uncontrollable.

Causal contribution and non-linearity

Causal contribution refers to how individual elements within the system contribute to an outcome. Rather than a straightforward, cause-effect relationship, factors within a complex system interact in dynamic and unpredictable ways. This means it is difficult to isolate the impact of any single element.

Non-linearity describes the nature of these interactions. It means that small changes may lead to disproportionately large effects, and that the same input may produce different outcomes depending on other factors and the state of the system.

Developing and maintaining an understanding of these concepts will be fundamental when seeking to measure and understand change within the Changing Futures system.

This requires a shift away from a traditional, linear approach to monitoring and evaluation. In the place of a traditional logic model which evaluation aims to test, this framework is therefore designed to:

1. Be practical and usable.
2. Support the monitoring of different types of actions happening in the system
3. Help to indicate how far these actions are helping the system to change in the desired ways
4. Explore how the changes caused by the actions are positively or negatively affecting other feedback loops or subsystems.

2.3 The key points for leveraging change in complex systems

In response to the need for a practical tool which could be applied in local contexts for aiding systems change efforts, Nobles and colleagues developed the Action Scales Model (ASM). The ASM conceptualises a system as being made up of four levels:

1. Events
2. Structures
3. Goals
4. Beliefs

Figure 2 provides examples of these levels in practice and suggests how to assess progress in each of the examples. The levels represent leverage points (i.e., places within the system where a small shift can lead to big changes (see Donnella Meadows: *Leverage Points: Places to Intervene in a System*)). To create systemic change, it is necessary to intervene across multiple levels of the ASM. Leveraging changes which are deeply embedded in the system (i.e., goals and beliefs) is more likely to cause rapid changes across the system to occur.

The four levels of the ASM are not static or linear. Rather, they are deeply interconnected, with changes at one level often triggering shifts at others. This means that evaluation approaches should account for feedback loops and non-linearity rather than treating these levels as separate, siloed categories.

Recognising these dynamic interactions will be critical when interpreting findings from the different methodological approaches presented in this framework. While some methods focus on tracking tangible outputs at the Events and Structures levels (e.g., output monitoring, social network analysis), others are more suited to capturing deeper cultural shifts at the Goals and Beliefs levels (e.g., surveys of system stakeholders, Ripple Effects Mapping). Using multiple, complementary approaches will help to paint a fuller picture of how the system is responding to changes and adaptations over time.

Figure 2: Overview of the ASM's four levels (Nobles *et al.*, 2021)

	Events	Structures	Goals	Beliefs
Description	Things that can be observed around us. Can be intentional and unintentional.	Patterns, relationships, physical structures. Cause events to occur.	The ambitions or targets that the system works towards. Can be discordant with structures and events.	The norms, values and attitudes of the people who influence the structure of the system.
Example action in the context of a local authority working towards active transport to school	Local authorities provide cycling training to school children.	Local authorities assess and improve the walkability of the environment surrounding schools.	Schools with parents and the community set a shared goal to reduce the number of short car journeys to school by 20% within five years.	Local authority creates a working group to promote active transport to senior leaders.
How to assess progress	Local authorities assesses the cycling self-efficacy of children and monitors the number of trips to school via active transport.	Audit changes made by local authorities and assess the impact of this on whether people are walking to school.	Analyse the number of people taking short car journeys to school versus other means of transport at different timepoints.	Interview senior leaders to determine their beliefs and whether these have changed.

3 Changing Futures' core actions

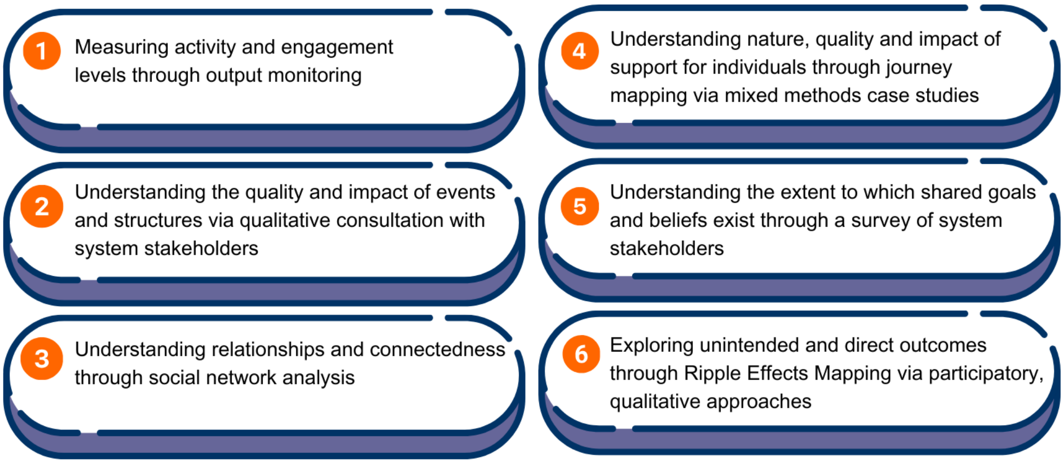
Figure 3: Changing Futures 'Actions' divided into ASM levels

4 Framework for understanding systems impact

4.1 Introduction

This framework sets out six core methodological approaches which would be useful in learning about the changing system as part of Changing Futures and which would support (1) continuous learning and adaptation of the programme and (2) demonstration of impact, both intended and unintended. The approaches outlined are designed not only to measure system change but also to facilitate reflective learning. Incorporating participatory and adaptive evaluation methods will support ongoing learning and adaptation.

Figure 4: Summary of six methodological approaches



For each methodological approach, the framework provides an overview of the method, guidance about which ASM 'levels' the method would primarily speak to, recommendations for how the method might be implemented in the context of Changing Futures and a summary of core resource requirements.

That said, the resource involved in delivering all six methodological approaches would be substantial and may exceed what is feasible in reality. The approaches may therefore be taken in isolation or in different combinations. The Changing Futures programme team and commissioners should consider (a) capacity, (b) expertise and (c) priorities when deciding which approach(es) to pursue.

A note on system mapping

System mapping is not presented as a core methodological approach in this framework. This is because the exercise of system mapping doesn't necessarily aim to 'measure' actions. However, it is a method which could help to build a more nuanced understanding of how the system is functioning and promote conversations about how to improve the system.

A note on co-production

A truly transformative approach to evaluation must account for power dynamics within the system. Many traditional evaluation models position professionals as the experts and people with lived experience as research subjects. However, co-production challenges this hierarchy, ensuring that those with lived experience are seen as experts in their own right.

This framework suggests embedding co-production principles in several ways:

- Co-designing evaluation questions with people with lived experience.
- Ensuring people with lived experience are involved in facilitation and analysis.
- Avoiding extractive approaches, where people are asked to share their experiences but see no tangible change as a result.

Co-production is not a checkbox exercise. It requires a shift in mindset from consultation to collaboration. This framework reflects this shift by embedding participatory approaches that not only generate insights but also empower those most affected by the system to shape its future.

4.2 Core methodological approaches

4.2.1 Method 1: Measuring activity and engagement levels through output monitoring

Overview

Collating and analysing monitoring data provides a structured way to track outputs and understand both the levels of activity and engagement. This method is useful for (1) demonstrating how resources translate into tangible outputs, and (2) assessing the impact of a programme in boosting activity and engagement, such as increased delivery of and participation in effective support services.

Which 'levels' would this method primarily measure?

- Events
- Structures

How would this method be applied in the context of Changing Futures?

Output monitoring would aim to 'count' the number, scale and reach of actions at the events and structures levels of the Action Scales Model, which are delivered as a direct result of the Changing Futures programme or are promoted by the programme as desired actions. It will generate a snapshot of levels of activity and engagement across a specified period of time.

This will help to describe and quantify what the programme entails, enabling a more accurate picture of the "what" of the programme. However, output monitoring speaks only to the volume of different actions and not to the quality of these actions, which would need to be explored via other approaches – mainly some of the qualitative approaches outlined in later sections.

Comparing outputs at different time points may also help to understand the contribution of Changing Futures to desired actions within the system (such as the delivery of support incorporating Trusted Person or trauma informed approaches). In order to understand contribution, output monitoring will need to be triangulated with data generated via other methods such as qualitative consultation with system stakeholders (method 2).

For example, if output monitoring reveals an increase in the number of services providing trauma informed support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage, stakeholder consultation will be required to understand whether Changing Futures activities played a role in catalysing this increase, which activities contributed and what enabled or limited the success of these activities.

Building on the programme's core 'Actions' (see Section 3), the indicators detailed in the table would be relevant to Changing Futures. The table groups indicators into 'Events' and 'Structures' according to the 'Actions' they most closely speak to, but some indicators may speak to 'Actions' across more than level. For example, indicators relating to co-production are likely to provide evidence of progress towards actions listed under 'Structures' as well as actions listed under 'Events'.

Figure 5: Suggested indicators for output monitoring

Action Scales Model level	Indicators
Events	• Number of services delivering support to people experiencing multiple disadvantage and engaged with the Changing Futures programme. • Number of people experiencing multiple disadvantage who are engaged by these services. • Number and type of learning events/spaces facilitated (e.g. training or reflective discussions on Trusted Person approaches). • Number of people/organisations attending learning spaces/events. • Number and type of engagement activities involving people with lived experience and focused on co-production and/or learning and adaptation. • Number of people with lived experience contributing to co-production or learning and adaptation activities. • Number and type of communications produced (e.g. newsletters, social media posts). • Number of people reached by communications campaigns.
Structures	• Number and nature of relevant cross-system working groups and governance structures in operation. • Number of services or organisations represented at cross-system working groups and governance structures. • Number of meetings of cross-system working groups and governance structures. • Attendance levels at cross-system working groups and governance meetings (invited attendees vs actual attendees). • Number and type of multi-agency teams/forums focused on delivering coordinated support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage. • Number of services or organisations represented in multi-agency teams/forums. • Number of meetings of multi-agency teams/forums.

	• Number of service level resources (e.g. policies) reviewed through the lens of trauma informed and Trusted Person approaches.

Balancing quantitative metrics with meaningful interpretation

While output monitoring provides valuable insights into levels of activity and engagement, it is important to recognise its limitations. Numbers alone do not fully capture the quality or significance of system change. For example, an increase in the number of multi-agency meetings does not necessarily indicate improved collaboration; it is the nature of those meetings and their impact on decision-making that ultimately matter.

To avoid misinterpretation or over-reliance on numerical indicators, output monitoring may be triangulated with qualitative insights from stakeholder consultations, case studies, and participatory methods like Ripple Effects Mapping. This helps to ensure that:

- The meaning behind the numbers is well understood (e.g., whether an increase in service users reflects improved accessibility or growing unmet need).
- Success is not solely defined by scale (e.g., smaller numbers may sometimes indicate a more targeted, effective intervention rather than lack of impact).
- Metrics are aligned with system learning (e.g., tracking not just attendance at learning events but also how insights are applied in practice).
- A mixed-methods approach ensures that quantitative outputs inform, but do not dominate, the overall evaluation narrative. This is particularly important in systems change work, where some of the most significant shifts (e.g., changes in trust or collaboration) may not be easily quantifiable but are central to long-term impact.

What are the core resource requirements associated with this method?

This method relies on analyst capacity within the Changing Futures programme team to collate, clean, analyse and present data at pre-determined intervals. Software such as Excel or Power BI would be necessary.

Future opportunity: One of the 'Structures' Changing Futures is working towards is effective multi-agency data sharing. Analyst capacity permitting, this exercise could also include formalising multi-agency data sharing which might include (1) service level data and (2) individual level outcomes data which services might be collecting.

It also relies on stakeholders responsible for collecting data having an understanding of why it is needed and collecting it to a good enough quality to enable analysis.

What would be the next steps for implementing this method?

The first step is for Changing Futures staff to review the list of indicators alongside what is already being counted and assess the quality of existing data. Based on these findings, they may work with stakeholders to improve data quality or expand the scope of data collected.

Some indicators may require the ability to link datasets from different organisations or to identify duplication within these datasets. For example, in order to count the number of people experiencing multiple disadvantage who are engaged by services you need to be able to identify whether individual people are engaging with multiple services (to avoid double-counting them within the analysis).

Alongside this, the team should determine whether setting targets across the indicators would help to monitor progress. They should also consider how they would like the analyst to present the findings according to the likely primary audience.

After auditing the current data collection practices, the team should establish a process to regularly review the data and indicators, ensuring alignment with programme goals. This should include a feedback loop where data is shared with key stakeholders to support continuous adaptation.

4.2.2 Method 2: Understanding the quality and impact of events and structures via qualitative consultation with system stakeholders

Overview

Qualitative consultation with stakeholders is a useful way to elicit their views on activities, structures and behaviours within a system, and the impact of these. It is very versatile and can be used to explore a wider range of topic areas.

How would this method be applied in the context of Changing Futures?

Qualitative consultation can be applied to address several different types of research question about the Changing Futures programme:

1. It can help to gather evidence to understand the nature and quality of the events and structures being delivered or promoted by Changing Futures. This complements output monitoring (method 1) in enabling a more detailed description of the "what" of the programme.
2. It can be used to gather stakeholders' perspectives on the impact of these events and structures for people experiencing multiple disadvantage and for the ways in which the system functions around them.
3. If stakeholders identify any impact of the Changing Futures programme, it can be used to explore their views on how this impact was achieved – i.e. which actions have contributed to the impact and what is it about the way they were implemented which has helped them to contribute to this impact.

It is not necessary to address all of these different types of research question simultaneously. In fact, consultation might become unwieldy if it tries to cover everything. Instead, it will be important to determine the priority questions which Cambridgeshire and Peterborough colleagues want to use the qualitative consultation to answer, and to develop a focus and approach from there. For example, if journey mapping (method 4) is being used to understand the impact of the system for individual people experiencing multiple disadvantage, the priority for qualitative consultation (method 2) might be to understand more about the nature and quality of events and structures instead.

A note on co-production

Traditional consultation methods risk positioning people with lived experience as research subjects rather than active participants. To align with the principles of co-production, Changing Futures should adopt participatory approaches, where people with lived experience help design consultation activities, co-facilitate discussions, and interpret findings alongside professionals.

This could include:

- Peer-led interviews and focus groups, ensuring that insights are gathered in ways that feel safe, relevant, and empowering.
- Advisory groups made up of people with lived experience, providing advice on consultation questions and approaches and/or contributing to data analysis and interpretation.

Which 'levels' would this method primarily measure?

- Events
- Structures

What are the core resource requirements associated with this method?

Conducting qualitative consultation requires sufficient capacity for developing research materials (including formal discussion guides and consent materials) and organising consultation sessions. It also requires time and input from stakeholders who participate in consultation.

Whether qualitative consultation is conducted internally or as part of a commissioned piece of work is likely to depend on the primary aim of consultation. If consultation is primarily being used to support continuous learning within Changing Futures, external support may not be necessary. However, if consultation is required to generate more robust evidence of impact, external researchers may be beneficial. This is because (1) a commissioned learning partner would likely help participants to feel able to speak candidly and give people reassurance about the independence of the findings from the consultation, and (2) analysis of qualitative data (and potential triangulation with data from other sources such as output monitoring) may be resource intensive.

What would be the next steps for implementing this method?

The three next steps for conducting qualitative consultation would be:

- Refine the focus of the consultation and identify the stakeholders who might provide the insight and range of perspectives required.
- Develop a consultation approach that will be most practical and effective with these stakeholders (e.g. semi-structured interviews, focus groups, workshops) and corresponding research materials.
- Collate contact details and organise consultation.
- Analyse consultation responses to generate findings.

4.2.3 Method 3: Understanding relationships and connectedness through social network analysis

Overview

Social network analysis (SNA) involves stakeholders from across the local system who support people experiencing multiple disadvantage completing a survey. The survey may gather data on the number, quality, and nature of relationships between organisations, and how these evolve over time. Repeated at multiple timepoints, SNA captures changes in the structure and scale of relationships and can provide evidence of the likely impact of Changing Futures. It can also highlight key organisations that act as central connectors or those at the periphery of the system.

For more information about the context, benefits and limitations of SNA, please see the Home Office's 'How to guide'. This method is currently being used as part of the evaluation of the national Changing Futures programme. The Second Interim report includes a description of the method and the findings from the baseline SNA.

How would this method be applied in the context of Changing Futures?

In the context of Changing Futures, SNA would help to map the relationships between key organisations supporting people experiencing multiple disadvantage, or involved in planning, commissioning and monitoring this support. This method could also be applied to measure how well services are integrated and whether relationships between different services and parts of the system have become more cohesive over time. The analysis could reveal shifts in network dynamics, helping to identify which organisations or sectors are becoming more central to developing and delivering coordinated care and support.

Which 'levels' would this method primarily measure?

- Structures
- Goals

What are the core resource requirements associated with this method?

Social network analysis is resource intensive, involving survey development, distribution and subsequent network analysis. Additionally, it relies on participation from a wide range of stakeholders who would need to consent to participating in the survey more than once. An alternative to this which could reduce the burden would be to ask representatives of organisations to complete a single entry for their organisation (rather than individual staff members completing the survey).

Implementing SNA effectively in the Changing Futures context would hence require specific skills, analytical tools, and software expertise that may not be available in-house. Specialized SNA software can support the complex data visualisation and network mapping necessary for this analysis but requires experience to set up, interpret, and tailor to programme needs. External support from a team experienced in SNA could help to:

1. Develop targeted surveys that capture nuanced relationship data tailored to Changing Futures' objectives.
2. Provide expertise with network analysis software to manage and interpret complex data sets, including the identification of central or peripheral organisations.
3. Generate actionable insights from longitudinal SNA data, contextualising changes in network dynamics over time with specialised analytical techniques.

4.2.4 Method 4: Understanding nature, quality and impact of support for individuals through journey mapping via mixed methods case studies

Overview

Journey mapping via mixed methods case studies involves tracking the experiences of individuals over time to understand the nature, quality, and impact of the support they receive. This approach combines qualitative insights from consultation with quantitative service use and outcomes data to create a comprehensive view of the individual's journey through the support system. The goal is to identify where support is effective, where gaps exist, and to demonstrate changes over time in both service provision and outcomes for individuals. This approach could also be used to provide examples of costs and cost avoidance associated with support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage.

How would this method be applied in the context of Changing Futures?

Journey mapping through case studies would capture the individual-level impact of Changing Futures, focusing on whether key elements such as Trusted Person and trauma informed approaches are being effectively embedded into practice.

By combining qualitative and quantitative data, this method would provide a detailed picture of how support is received, experienced, and its outcomes. Conducting case studies at multiple timepoints would offer insight into changes over time.

Which 'levels' would this method primarily measure?

- Events
- Structures
- Goals

What are the core resource requirements associated with this method?

Journey mapping requires careful planning, including creating tailored research materials (e.g., discussion guides, consent forms), conducting qualitative research, and gathering relevant quantitative data (e.g., data relating to service use).

This method also relies on meaningful engagement with individuals with lived experience of multiple disadvantage. Close coordination with service providers is essential, ensuring that professionals can support participant engagement and facilitate ongoing communication between the research team and people at the heart of the case studies. Involving experts by experience as researchers is also often an effective way of promoting participants' engagement and of producing conversations and representations of journeys that convey the most important elements in an accessible way that resonates with other people who have had similar experiences.

Conducting journey mapping in-house would likely maximise opportunities for continuous learning and adaptation. It would create opportunities for action learning and multi-agency reflection, which aligns closely with the programme's goals. It would also facilitate deeper engagement with experts by experience, which is another core aim of the programme.

However, it may be helpful to bring in external support to help to develop the approach and research tools, and/or to support with setting up and delivering any analytical approach relating to cost avoidance or savings.

What would be the next steps for implementing this method?

The three next steps for conducting journey mapping would be:

- Developing a suite of research materials (e.g., an approach to journey mapping/consultation guides/consent materials) which would facilitate effective consultation, and connecting with professionals who could broker contact between the research team and people with lived experience.

- Establishing whether the service use and outcomes data that would complement the qualitative data can be accessed, and whose role it would be to collate and share this.

- If cost and cost avoidance analysis is a priority, develop an approach to calculating this, including sourcing tariffs and agreeing an approach to projects for future cost avoidance or savings.

4.2.5 Method 5: Understanding the extent to which shared goals and beliefs exist through a survey of system stakeholders

Overview

A survey of system stakeholders can reveal the extent to which shared goals, beliefs, and values are present across organisations. This method is useful for understanding whether stakeholders are aligned with the core principles of a programme.

How would this method be applied in the context of Changing Futures?

Changing Futures is underpinned by a set of beliefs and values and is striving to increase the extent to which these are held by stakeholders who form part of the local system. A survey presents a resource-efficient method for capturing the extent to which a range of stakeholders working in different parts of the system hold these beliefs and can enact them in their work. Repeating this survey at different time points can help to explore any change over time in the extent to which such beliefs and values and may help the case for any contribution of Changing Futures to this change. It may also highlight any areas of misalignment and therefore help to shape the direction of future activities.

Which 'levels' would this method primarily measure?

- Beliefs

What are the core resource requirements associated with this method?

A survey would require sufficient capacity for survey development and potentially piloting, survey roll-out (including follow ups to optimise completion rates) and analysis. It is possible that survey development could build on the Changing Futures Health Check survey, which may save some time.

It would also require a short amount of time from stakeholders to complete the survey. Ideally, the same people would complete the survey at different time points. This would mean that the survey would need to be disseminated as widely as possible in order to achieve a decent sample size, allowing for drop-out at the second time point amongst those who completed the survey at the first time point.

Conducting this survey in-house would likely be more manageable compared to more complex methods such as Social Network Analysis; it requires minimal specialised software or expertise, may allow for faster adaptation based on learning as the team has access to emerging findings, and may also support internal capacity building (e.g., internal skill development). It may, however, be beneficial to bring in external support to develop the survey questions.

There is a risk that stakeholders may experience survey burn-out if asked to complete multiple surveys (i.e., a Social Network Analysis survey and a beliefs survey). This would result in lower engagement with surveys and lower response rates. Mitigating this could involve combining these two methods into one survey which stakeholders complete at multiple timepoints, or opting for only one or other of these methods.

What would be the next steps for implementing this method?

The first step would be to refine the focus of the survey, and then to draft questions which speak to the intended focus. Conducting desk-based research to identify existing, validated scales may help streamline this process and ensure reliable measurement of beliefs and values. Once the questions are refined, the survey can be piloted, then widely distributed to maximise initial participation and allow for follow-up at subsequent timepoints.

4.2.6 Method 6: Exploring unintended and indirect outcomes through Ripple Effects Mapping via participatory, qualitative approaches

Overview

Ripple Effects Mapping (REM) is a participatory, qualitative approach designed to uncover both intended and unintended impacts that a programme generates over time. Through collaborative workshops, stakeholders map activities and their direct and indirect effects, visually tracing pathways through which outcomes emerge. REM is especially valuable for identifying unexpected outcomes, offering a structured way to understand complex, system-wide change.

REM is particularly valuable for its ability to highlight unintended outcomes and generate learning about how changes ripple through the system. This method serves as both an evaluative tool and a mechanism for ongoing adaptation, encouraging stakeholders to reflect on emerging impacts and refine their approaches accordingly.

For more information about how to facilitate REM, please see this suite of online materials and this paper published in 2022 (Nobles *et al.,* 2022).

How would this method be applied in the context of Changing Futures?

In the context of Changing Futures, REM would be an effective tool to explore the broader impacts of the programme beyond its immediate objectives. By engaging stakeholders from across the system, including service providers, people with lived experience, and other community members, REM workshops could trace the ripple effects of Changing Futures' activities, identifying both expected outcomes (e.g., improved service coordination) and unexpected results (e.g., incorporation of Trusted Person approaches into services in the wider system).

A note on co-production

REM is a powerful tool for capturing the unintended impacts of system change, but its effectiveness depends on who is in the room when the ripples are mapped. To ensure meaningful inclusion:

- Workshops should actively involve people with lived experience as equal contributors.
- Facilitation should be designed to be accessible and inclusive, ensuring that everyone feels able to participate fully.
- The results of REM should feed back into co-production structures, so that perspectives of people with lived experience continue to shape the next phases of system development.

Which 'levels' would this method primarily measure?

- Structures
- Goals
- Beliefs

What are the core resource requirements associated with this method?

REM requires a substantial time commitment from those involved, including both facilitators and participants. Facilitating REM sessions involves careful planning and skilled facilitation to ensure that all voices are heard, especially when exploring unintended outcomes. Additionally, analysing the outputs from REM sessions demands expertise in qualitative methods to interpret, distil and present findings effectively.

While it would be ambitious, REM could be conducted internally if the Changing Futures team has sufficient expertise in (1) facilitation and (2) analysis. Like journey mapping (method 4) in-house delivery might maximise the potential of this method to support continuous learning.

Alternative options might include:

1. Commissioning capacity building support, whereby a consultant would support the set-up and facilitation of initial REM sessions, equipping the Changing Futures team with the necessary skills to facilitate future REM sessions independently.

2. Commissioning the entire REM process to an external provider. This would reduce the workload for Changing Futures staff (potentially creating space for the delivery of other learning activities) and ensure that sessions are run by experienced facilitators.

What would be the next steps for implementing this method?

The initial step is strategic planning to determine (1) which stakeholders should be involved and (2) the most effective delivery model for REM within Changing Futures. Planning should also establish the number of required sessions and clarify the intended outcomes of the exercise. Based on this foundation, the programme team can decide between in-house, capacity building, or outsourced approaches to maximise REM's value.

4.3 Matrix: Which methodological approaches are most likely to measure which actions?

Figure 6 provides an overview of the methodological approaches most likely to measure each of the actions of the Changing Futures programme (see Figure 3 for the overview of actions). The numbered methods in each column correspond to each of the methods outlined in Section 4.2 and are:

- Method 1: Measuring activity and engagement levels through output monitoring.
- Method 2: Understanding the quality and impact of events and structures via qualitative consultation with system stakeholders
- Method 3: Understanding relationships and connectedness through social network analysis
- Method 4: Understanding nature, quality and impact of support for individuals through journey mapping via mixed methods case studies
- Method 5: Understanding the extent to which shared goals and beliefs exist through a survey of system stakeholders
- Method 6: Exploring unintended and indirect outcomes through Ripple Effects Mapping via participatory, qualitative approaches.

Figure 6: Matrix of methodological approaches and actions

Method → Action being measured ↓	**Method 1**	**Method 2**	**Method 3**	**Method 4**	**Method 5**	**Method 6**
ASM level: Events						
Services delivering support to people experiencing multiple disadvantage (may be incorporating Trusted Person approaches and/or a trauma informed approach)	✓	✓		✓		
Delivering **training** and creating spaces to **facilitate learning** (e.g., on Trusted Person approaches)	✓				✓	✓
Running activities and capturing feedback to **involve people with lived experience** in continuous development and learning	✓			✓		
Leading **communications campaigns**	✓				✓	
Collating **monitoring data and evidence of impact**	✓					
ASM level: Structures						
Establishing **cross-system working groups** and a **cross-system governance structure**	✓		✓		✓	
Forums, networks and relationships enabling effective **multi-agency data sharing**	✓	✓		✓		
Co-ordinating **co-production forum(s)**	✓			✓		
Co-ordinating **multi-agency teams** which promote Trusted Person approaches and flexible, creative support			✓	✓	✓	
Refreshing service level resources, policies and procedures so that service delivery includes Trusted Person approaches and is trauma informed		✓		✓		

Method → Action being measured ↓	**Method 1**	**Method 2**	**Method 3**	**Method 4**	**Method 5**	**Method 6**
The system **works around individuals** to provide them with the support they want and need		✓		✓		
ASM level: Goals						
The system holds the ability (e.g., the required infrastructure, skills and attitudes) to implement **co-production**		✓	✓	✓		✓
Integration and **effective collaboration** is built into the system so that its different parts operate as a whole rather than in silos		✓	✓			✓
The system underpinning effective support for people experiencing multiple disadvantage is **sustainable** and does not rely on the external resources and expertise in the longer term		✓				✓
The system **empowers people** to feel in control of their engagement with support to prioritise their goals				✓		✓
ASM level: Beliefs						
Co-production, including people with lived experience and professionals alike, via structured engagement will help the system to meet its overarching goal				✓	✓	✓
Embedding **Trusted Person approaches** and **trauma informed approaches** across the system will also help the system to meet its overarching goal		✓			✓	✓
People who need support are capable of **determining their own goals** and have an important role in deciding what support should look like for them as individuals				✓		
Being **flexible** to adapt based on learning is more effective than creating new structures		✓				✓
Part of Changing Futures' impact will be creating **'ripple effects'** which cannot be measured through traditional means						✓

Appendix one: Framework development process

This framework has been developed through a dynamic, iterative process. This means that at every stage, we have incorporated revisions and refinements based on discussions with a range of different people in the system to reflect the complexity of the programme and the different perspectives of those engaged with the system.

We would like to extend warm thanks to everyone who has participated in discussions which have helped shape this framework.

The key stages involved in developing this framework have been:

- **Scoping** to develop our understanding of the programme and the aims of this framework. This included:
  - Reviewing programme level documentation.
  - Having discussions with people with detailed insight into the programme.
- Developing a list of the key **actions** associated with the programme, which can be seen in Figure 3.
- Conducting an initial **workshop** with the Governance Group to consolidate our understanding of the programme and the aims of this framework.
- Framework **drafting** and **sense testing** with core members of the Changing Futures team.
- Conducting two further **workshops** to consolidate the workshop with (1) key stakeholders from within the system and (2) experts by experience.

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