

# What Matters to You: how do we go to scale?

Interim Report

Learning Partners

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## Executive Summary: Key Learning Points

WM2U has articulated a compelling purpose to provide early support to families which is recognised by parents, senior leaders, and practitioners in both localities. WM2U is about systems change through building relational working and there has been an important investment of time and resources to this end.

The WM2U delivery team take a strongly relational approach that relies on their ability to build trust and create the conditions in which people feel able to participate alongside others, whom they may not know; this includes parents and senior leaders.

WM2U is creating a 'safe zone' for parents where they can be open, ask for support and provide support for others. Parents have developed self-confidence, a sense that they matter, are important, talented, and valued, and have something to offer to others. They have a greater sense of their own creativity, strengths and skills and an understanding of their potential as leaders. In both areas, parents are committed to making a difference in the future and have clear ideas about the difference they want to make in their communities. Their energy and sense of enthusiasm is palpable. They are realistic that seeing change on the ground will take time, but they have trust in the process, and they appreciate the commitment required on their part. There is a strong sense that professionals are there to listen and support them to bring their ideas to fruition. Both ambition and expectations are high.

There are good relationships with senior leaders in both areas. These are built on the foundation established during the Columba 1400 leadership experience and consolidated through the support in place during lockdown. The time invested in cementing relationships, exploring differences, and sticking to purpose is beginning to pay dividends. Whilst it is likely that some form of Covid restrictions will continue for some time to come, this groundwork and the commitment and appetite for change that has been fostered are a strong foundation.

The overall 'theory of change' is unaltered. Nevertheless, WM2U has recently become more clearly understood as an approach underpinning a whole range of programmes, interventions and actions which contribute to system change. The modelling approach has helped to crystallise this thinking and influenced ideas about how to go to scale, 'scaling deep' by nurturing positive practices from the ground up, using the voice of parents as a touchstone.

Making an impact and achieving it at scale needs to be a conscious choice. The implication is that the design of the work itself, engagement in it, and learning about the difference it makes, all need to be fully integrated into the delivery plan moving forward. This will help to shape the legacy of the work in each place.

WM2U is positioned as a clear part of the evolution of thinking in Scotland about how best to engage with families where children's development, health and wellbeing are at risk. This evolution is most recently reflected in the findings of the *Independent Care Review* (March 2020) and in the report from the Social Renewal Advisory Board (January 2021). Whilst there is plenty of analysis of the need for different approaches in Scotland and the wider UK, there is little about 'how' to achieve change in practice. WM2U shows promise of being the kind of 'practical demonstration' that is needed.

## 1. Introduction and context

This interim report seeks to set the scene at an important juncture of the work of WM2U, and to inform decisions about the future direction of the work. It draws on material from earlier reports: a literature review (December 2019), a learning update (May 2020), a working paper based on interviews with parents, senior leaders, funders and delivery team members (Jan 2020) and meeting notes and Board papers dating back to the commencement of the work in early 2019.

What Matters to You (WM2U) started with a compelling purpose which can be summarised as families who need extra support are not getting the support they need. When there is a crisis, the interventions that may then be made, such as taking children and young people into care, can result in lifelong trauma.

Our literature review highlights that there has been an evolution of thinking in Scotland about how best to engage with families where children's development, health and wellbeing are at risk.<sup>1</sup> This evolution continues, reflected in the findings of the *Independent Care Review* (March 2020) and most recently in the report from the Social Renewal Advisory Board (January 2021). In brief:

- “The Promise” of the Care Review seeks a fundamental shift in how decisions are made about children and families and in the way that families are supported to stay together in Scotland.<sup>2</sup> It strongly endorses a person-centred and relationship-focused approach to care and support and seeks to make early intervention and prevention a reality, through ‘proper, holistic support for families’ and a ‘significant upscale in universal family support services’. Notably it also calls for a ‘concerted effort to be made to hear more from parents and wider family members with children who are on the edge of or in care’.
- The Social Renewal Advisory Board report highlights how the pandemic has made many of the existing problems of poverty and inequality that impact on children's lives worse.<sup>3</sup> The report calls for a commitment to ‘values-based leadership as a wholesale change programme’ and calls for a new partnership between people, government and services that radically challenges understandings of the relationship between people and public authorities and acknowledges and addresses issues of power and inequality:

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“Partnership needs to be based on responding to the needs of people, communities and places, building on strengths, rather than swooping in to ‘fix’ things, without taking the time to understand the real nature of the problem as well as what matters to the people organisations are there to help.”<sup>4</sup>

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- Our literature review highlighted other UK initiatives seeking to effect system change, operating in similar domains to WMTY and at different stages of development. These

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<sup>1</sup> See summary in Annex 1; full report available on request.

<sup>2</sup> [Independent Care Review – The root and branch review of Scotland's care system.](#)

<sup>3</sup> [If not now, when? - Social Renewal Advisory Board report: January 2021 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> Quote from Social Renewal Advisory Board page 15.

illustrate broader interest in "Place-based Working" and collective or collaborative leadership and shared ambitions with those of What Matters to You: a common feature is an emphasis on listening and letting people who use services take the lead.

High profile and promising examples include the work of the Wigan Deal, the case examples included in the book 'Radical Help' and the work of the Ignite Children's Services Pathfinder in Coventry, part of the Early Action Neighbourhood Fund (EANF)<sup>5,6,7</sup>. A significant outcome for Ignite was the adoption of an early action 'blueprint' for children's services which focused on the provision of family support services working in preventative ways in local family hubs and is a useful example of how learning from a smaller-scale pilot can be translated into broader service change.

Whilst there is plenty of analysis of the need for different approaches in the literature and social media, there is little about 'how' to achieve change in practice and the evidence of impact does not necessarily meet the original expectations. For example, the final evaluation of the overall EANF projects shows that successful early action projects do not necessarily result in reductions in demand on public services or anticipated savings to the public purse.

Positively, the EANF evaluation does suggest that a shift to early action in public service systems is possible when funders, commissioners, providers, and wider system stakeholders invest in long-term relationships based on shared trust, understanding and accountability and with a shared commitment to early action. It offers a cautionary note that longer-term outcomes are hard to predict and may occur at different time points, which may be beyond the period of funding.

Donna Hall who pioneered The Wigan Deal and is chair of Bolton NHS Foundation Trust also sounds a note of caution, highlighting the need for organisations that espouse greater relational working to be able to provide practical demonstrations of how they have applied it in their own organisations.<sup>8</sup>

Our literature review flags up further useful lessons from this wider work, including the need to give sufficient emphasis to the 'systems change' and wider collaborative and partnership work being undertaken. For example, Lankelly Chase counsel that 'building trust between actors is hard, particularly when the cast keeps changing'. Their experience of place-based action inquiry encouragingly suggests that:

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"Amplifying the voices and sharing the authentic experience of people whom systems are supposed to be serving, seems to be a powerful mechanism for creating an impetus for change".<sup>9</sup>

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Such ambition, to amplify voice to drive system change, is at the heart of WM2U. Our first learning update (May 2020) outlines the WM2U methodology, describes elements of practice, and began to

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<sup>5</sup> [Lessons from the Wigan Deal | The King's Fund](#)

<sup>6</sup> Hilary Cottam (2018), *Radical Help*, Virago Press

<sup>7</sup> [Evaluation & Learning — Early Action Neighbourhood Fund \(earlyactionfund.org\)](#)

<sup>8</sup> ['Trendy' leadership talk on Twitter goes unpractised, says NHS chair | News | Health Service Journal \(hsj.co.uk\)](#) Health Care Services Journal July 2019

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in our literature review.

identify early signs of progress.<sup>10</sup> The update affirmed the ambitions of WM2U and underlined that systems change processes must always be a human process; this report provides an update and an expansion of understanding of how to create the conditions for change, outlining the solid foundation that is now in place.

## 2. Creating the Conditions for Change

WM2U is about systems change through building relational working and there has been a considerable foundational investment of time and resources. The WM2U delivery team take a strongly relational approach that relies on their ability to build trust and create the conditions in which people feel able to participate alongside others, whom they may not know; this includes parents and senior leaders.

The coordinators have invested in ongoing engagement activities with people whose voices have been marginalised and with locally based professionals and local voluntary and community sector organisations. The pandemic has slowed things down, but the last six months of 2020 provided an opportunity for the team to deliver more support and build relationships and networks with and amongst practitioners and families in both areas. This involved developing mutual confidence, enhancing communication, and supporting all those involved to see things afresh and adopt new capacities and behaviours, as they discovered both the possibilities for and their own roles in, bringing about system change.

In April 2020, a new role of WM2U Programme Manager was created by the Hunter Foundation to provide: an ‘anchor for the delivery team’. At the same time Columba 1400 created a new Head of Communities role. Both appointees come from playing a significant role in the Independent Care Review and in developing “The Promise”. Both roles have added much needed capacity and additional credibility and expertise to WM2U. They have also contributed to WM2U having a stronger identity as an integrated approach which puts what matters to parents at the heart of multiple and systemic interventions. All the delivery team have played important roles in creating the conditions for change amongst different stakeholders.

The Programme Manager has worked with C1400 to engage strategic leaders in local authorities; whilst the coordinators have been supported by C1400 to raise awareness with local practitioners from the statutory and voluntary sector and to support parents in both East Ayrshire and Dundee.

### Creating trust: the approach

Open, trusting relationships are necessary for any effective dialogue between parents and senior leaders. The work of building trust is essentially about connecting with people who are needing extra support and asking them what *they* want (rather than what anyone else thinks they might need), and then helping them to access that.

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<sup>10</sup> Update May 2020 available on request

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“First she listened to us, then slowly, but surely, she brought people in to help us.” (Parent)

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The coordinators make sure that the parents know that they are there, available to offer support when needed. There is no ‘assessment’ process or delving into the past. They do not give advice, unless specifically asked, and use their judgement and skill to ask questions sensitively. They have been responding to immediate practical needs, facilitating contact to other professionals, using their own networks; accessing additional funding and benefits checks and providing immediate emotional support to the families. This ‘brokerage’ role ensures that families do not have to tell their story multiple times. Partnerships previously forged with other organisations are proving very helpful. It shows the value of networking and collaboration in a very small community.

The coordinators themselves can find it hard to be in a role which means just ‘being there’ to offer support rather than direction. They are taking the risk to listen, encourage and ultimately, trust parents, knowing that this is the only way they too will be trusted. Part of developing this trust is creating a space for reciprocity, responding more freely and naturally to questions about their own lives, than they might have done in the past or in other roles. The relationships they are developing feel more equal and real, preparing the ground for co-creating what might work for these families in the future.

The Covid-19 crisis has brought the very practical aspect of their approach into sharp relief. It is a test too for the local coordinators who are attempting to find a meaningful role in a context which is changing rapidly. They have been able to work alongside organisations providing direct support and the communication and sense of collaboration is strong.

### The leadership experience

The delivery of WM2U has at its heart an ethos of ‘warmth of welcome and hospitality and the commitment to being on a shared journey’. The delivery partner, Columba 1400, facilitates values-based leadership experiences to families and practitioners, separately in the first instance. The local coordinators have continued to stay in contact with parents afterwards, encouraging them to ‘lean on’ one another and if necessary, to ask for the support which is really going to make a difference to them and their families.

Columba 1400 describe their approach as relational, enabling, and empowering. Whilst it is an outcome orientated process, it starts from belief, encouraging people to have a different type of relationship with themselves, to improve the way they see themselves. This improvement subsequently enhances the other relationships they have. This applies to everyone, whether parents or professionals, and there is a strong element of peer learning.

The Columba 1400 group experience has been of immense significance as a platform for ongoing engagement. Once on the Columba 1400 programme, most parents describe a change in how they felt from nervousness and anxiety to finding themselves enjoying it and getting along with others very quickly. They have felt listened to and the understanding, kindness, genuine interest, and belief in their potential has enabled them to give a bit of themselves and listen intently to one

another. The lack of judgement is frequently mentioned. And a strong sense of fun has been important to being able to take part, interact with others and be able to learn.

The experience helps to change thinking about self and others. It opens up other perspectives, helps people see that they are not alone, enables them to ask for help and to offer help to others. The environment created is safe and challenging in a positive way. People feel seen and heard, sometimes for the first time. Several of the participants mentioned being able to do things that they would not have had the courage to do previously. It creates a sense of hope and possibilities for action. Some of these changes might seem small but are of immense personal significance and are necessary first steps in any change process for individuals, communities, and systems.

Practitioners and senior leaders benefit too in strikingly similar ways, and this experience enables their efforts to become more aligned with the difference they want to make. The Columba 1400 approach highlights: *'the importance of empowering leaders to make the changes that need to happen rather than what's on their to-do list.'* The reputation of Columba 1400 and the fact that the delivery team have strong links to "The Promise" has enhanced their credibility.

Amplifying the voices and sharing the authentic experience of people whom systems are supposed to be serving, is known to be a powerful mechanism for creating an impetus for change. The local coordinators have been doing this on an impromptu basis as they link parents with services which can support them. Parents, practitioners, and strategic leaders are now beginning to come together to develop a more strategic way forward in each local area. WM2U is beginning to show the potential for being the kind of 'practical demonstration' of system change called for by Donna Hall.

The ambition is for system change: establishing collective prioritisation, shared ownership and accountability for initiatives going forward. It raises a question about the role of external facilitation and delivery agencies in creating effective spaces for dialogue. Columba 1400 are taking up that role of stewarding or hosting spaces for dialogue; facilitating an experience for people to realise that change is possible and that they have the agency to affect that change. These spaces ultimately need to become owned collectively by the key stakeholders in the local system. This is a challenge for the next phase of the work.



### 3. The impact of What Matters to You

This section is based on interviews with parent and senior leaders which took place in October and November 2020 and summarises what they told us about what is changing for them.<sup>11</sup>

#### What is changing for parents?

Speaking to parents provides insight into how their engagement in WM2U, including participation in the Columba 1400 leadership experience, and subsequent activities and support, are making a difference, not just in building trust but in enhancing confidence, self-esteem and hope in the future. The parents have continued to be supported by the Columba 1400 facilitators and the coordinators through a variety of means, influenced by both prevailing Covid-19 restrictions and individual preferences. These include online groups and other forms of practical and emotional support, including work in the community garden in Dundee and the Walking Group in East Ayrshire.

WM2U is creating a 'safe zone' for parents where they can be open, ask for support and provide support for others. A recurrent theme amongst parents is the development of self-confidence, a sense that they matter, are important, talented, and valued, and have something to offer to others. Many have a stronger sense of personal significance, for themselves, in their family lives and in the wider community, of the potential for something beyond or bigger than their everyday experience.

They have developed a greater sense of their own creativity, strengths and skills and an understanding of the potential for themselves as leaders in their own lives and in their communities. Forming important relationships has meant that the parents were able to ask for and offer help more often, finding that they can make friends whom they can turn to for support. For some, the group has enabled them to develop their own purpose and plans for personal development, perhaps continuing studies or finding a job.

Other parents have discovered a sense of collective purpose and there is a strong shared will to make a difference in their community.

- In East Ayrshire parents have articulated a number of concerns, including mental health and well-being, transitions and support in the Barony Campus, the length of time it takes to get help, meeting Additional Support Needs, the isolation of parents, a lack of choice of food for families and concerns about their homes, including living in unsuitable accommodation and a lack of outdoor garden space. They have proposed a community space linked to the Barony Campus, with the intention of parents providing support to each other.
- In Dundee the focus is on the community garden, which has become a real area of common learning, interest and purpose as well as a catalyst for connection and for the development of relationships.

In both areas the energy and sense of enthusiasm is palpable.

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<sup>11</sup> We have conducted interviews with 11 parents across East Ayrshire and Dundee and facilitated a group discussion for 4 parents in East Ayrshire. A small number of interviews with senior leaders have also taken place.

Many of the parents maintain contact with each other through the WM2U facilitated on-line meetings, and some use social media. In both areas, parents appreciate that they will have a unique contribution to make as ‘parents serving parents’ and that seeing change on the ground will take time. Their experience to date enables them to place their trust in this process and they appreciate the commitment required on their part. There is a strong sense that professionals are there to listen and support them to bring their ideas to fruition. Both ambition and expectations are high.

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“I’ve been given the opportunity through WM2U to have that voice and say ‘I think maybe something is needed in the community. This might help a lot of people.’ And they’re actually listening. They’re not dismissing it, they’re actually saying ‘aye, we kind of agree...’ That, in itself, is such a proud feeling for me. Not just to be heard, but to be appreciated.” (Parent)

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#### What is changing for Senior Leaders?

There are good relationships with senior leaders in both areas, built on the foundation established during the Columba 1400 leadership experience. There is also agreement that the time invested in cementing relationships, exploring differences and sticking to purpose is beginning to pay dividends.

The leadership experience was effective in part because it was unusual and ‘well-protected’ time with colleagues. The approach created a safe space enabling people to reflect, explore and share their personal and professional motivations and values. Like the parents, the senior leaders felt valued; some noted that this was unique and unlike anything similar they had previously experienced. They relished the opportunity to have time to think and talk together about how to make the impact they want to see. It is also helpful that there is seen to be a synergy between the WM2U approach and local developments already underway.

This positive platform has by no means been a straightforward development. Some senior leaders have acknowledged that there has been a necessity at times to overcome initial wariness and scepticism and tackle the historical disconnect between initiatives which started at different times for different purposes.

Senior leaders are impressed with the process so far and are cautious about the need to have both big ambitions and realistic goals. Some have questions about how to achieve greater reach to more parents, so that they can be more confident that the approach is well-grounded and provides ‘value for money’. Despite acknowledgement that it is not realistic to expect all parents in a locality to attend a Columba 1400 experience, there remains a need to establish greater confidence that the ideas of parents resonate amongst a wider group of people in the community.

Securing time from senior leaders to focus on creating the conditions for long-term change when much of their attention has been absorbed in tackling the existing crisis created by the pandemic

has been almost impossible at times.<sup>12</sup> Even so, they are showing what commitment they can and appreciate the skill, commitment, energy and ‘the push’ of the Delivery Team:

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“They keep at you! They let us be busy, but they still us pull back into the meetings and make it happen ...” (Senior Leader)

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They are clear that the goal is not to provide services, but to work with a set of principles that enable families to tell their stories and use them to co-design services for the future.

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“It’s the right thing at the right time, hosted in the right way. Everyone else is trying to remodel and work out how they fit with The Promise. WM2U has been set up as a ‘Promise Service’. That’s unique.” (Senior Leader)

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#### 4. Dynamic Impact Analysis: understanding and learning about our impact.

The practice of ‘learning as we go’ is a fundamental part of the ambition of WM2U. The role of a learning partner is to help the people and organisations playing the various roles to be able to reflect on their work and build understanding about the process of place-based systems change. We need to develop forms of accountability for learning that best serve this work based on wider involvement in decisions about which measures matter. We need to find ways to integrate learning into the day-to-day work that also provide enough reassurance for all parties that resources are being well used.

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“We need to measure what matters, because it matters, rather than because we have the data, so there is not dissonance from our focus on ‘what matters to you’”.<sup>13</sup>

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As learning partners, we seek to develop an explicit and systematic approach to experiential learning that uses primary data, encourages deeper exploration of assumptions and practices, and promotes the embedding of insights to enhance the immediate work, assessment of impact and wider learning about investment in prevention, service redesign and potential cost savings. The building blocks of this Dynamic Impact Analysis approach are:

- **Grow as We Go (GAWG):** regular 4-6 weekly ‘action inquiry’ meetings facilitated by the learning partners as part of the regular delivery team meeting. Funders are also invited to join this meeting. This approach promotes collaborative analysis and reflection, and a focus on action and future development.

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<sup>12</sup> This has also limited our opportunities to interview senior leaders.

<sup>13</sup> Reporting Requirements Framework (Paper 3) 9 August 2019, Learning Partner paper to East Ayrshire Council

- **System Dynamic modelling (SD):**<sup>14</sup> This supports a dynamic and systemic approach to cost-benefit analysis. We have completed a first phase in East Ayrshire with a small model building group which has enabled us to engage on-the-ground service practitioners and others as active participants and co-producers of the evaluation design. A similar approach is underway in Dundee.
- **“The Measures That Matter” - Development of a Learning Framework:** These parallel streams of our approach come together in the development of a ‘learning framework’, a tool for planning and evaluation, concerned both with what WM2U plans to do and how we wish to consider the impact of that work. This is work in progress and will form an important part of the delivery plan for 2021-22.

### Creating a culture of inquiry and mutual learning

Our ambition is to create a culture of inquiry and mutual learning. Modelling has provided a powerful visual tool for exploring inter-connections through conversations and helped people to see a ripple effect and gaps or disconnections. The approach has helped to crystallise thinking about WM2U, not as a single coordinator-led project with limited capacity to reach people in the community, but as an *approach* that crucially depends for impact on the wider involvement of key groups of practitioners and agencies. This insight has influenced thinking about how we go to scale, by nurturing positive practices from the ground up, using the voice of parents as a touchstone. The current timeframe of the model is 10 years, whilst long, this was felt to be reasonable and will be addressed further in the next stages of this work.

Now that contact between the learning partners and the local ‘actors in place’ has been initiated, we expect to engage with them more routinely and systematically, working with them to think about the design of the learning framework and arrangements for regular data collection and further collective analysis. We will seek structured and informal opportunities to work, reflect and learn together in creative and engaging ways, as an embedding part of the developing community of practice.

At this important juncture, the overall ‘theory of change’ is unaltered: if you support senior leaders, practitioners, and parents to come together in a safe and facilitated space, they will be able to co-create the support families need. However, impact cannot be assumed to follow from agreement about a theory of change or reconnection with a common purpose. The precise nature of the work, the theories of action, are being defined on an ongoing basis by parents, practitioners, and the delivery team together; these theories are many and varied, conscious and tacit. This has implications for the engagement of key stakeholders, including parents, in the design and conduct of on-going evaluation of impact and understanding of how it is created.

An important insight that has emerged in our Grow as We Go meetings, is that making an impact and achieving it at scale needs to be a conscious choice. Questions of scale are discussed more fully in section 5, but in considering the implications for learning and evaluation, a lesson is that the design of the work itself, engagement in it, and learning about the difference it makes, all need to be fully integrated into the delivery plan moving forward. This will help to make the most of our

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<sup>14</sup> System Dynamics provides a way of understanding how complex systems change over time by creating useful computer simulation models. See McKelvie D (2013), Modelling social care complexity: the potential of System Dynamics, National Institute for Health Research – School for Social Care Research, London [www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk/PDF/MR/MR14.pdf](http://www.sscr.nihr.ac.uk/PDF/MR/MR14.pdf)

learning, avoid setting up parallel processes between the delivery team and the learning partner and help to shape the legacy of the work in each place.

A co-designed learning framework can help to engage key participants in thinking about the next steps of the work and engage more people who have an interest in, and ability to notice and share their experience of system change. It will articulate how best to assess the impacts, enabling factors and barriers to system change.

Early 2021 will see the completion of the learning framework in each area. It will be based on an analysis of learning from the delivery thus far, and on the lines of inquiry identified by the modelling group and other activities. In each area it will have as a central focus:

- How parents become engaged, and what changes for them and their families from their engagement
- How practitioners are influenced by the approach WM2U approach and what changes for them as a result
- How senior leaders engage, and how their engagement is demonstrated through changes in local policy and service design.

This is all work in progress and there is potential to deepen and extend protected and structured spaces for learning. The further engagement of parents, practitioners, and senior leaders in these aspects of the programme will be crucial to creating the local sponsorship to amplify and sustain change, once the external funding has ended.

## 5. Looking ahead together: how do we go to scale?

Now that the parents are engaged and clearly stating what matters to them, there is a strong imperative that they start to see change, in a timescale that may well be challenging to the way statutory services normally function.

There is every likelihood that this work will be continuing under Covid restrictions for some time and we can realistically anticipate that most delivery activities will have to be undertaken on-line. In terms of work already underway, the joint meetings between parents and senior leaders are just beginning and the challenge will be to deliver the leadership experiences online, sustain the momentum and follow through in a timely way.

The coordinators and Columba 1400, as those closest to families, are very aware of the risk of letting people down. They are also acutely aware of the fine balance between the need to address individual and collective needs. These concerns are shared by Senior Leaders who are also interested in how resource allocation can be justified and with issues of voice and representation, which have long been at the heart of community development and engagement.

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“The goal will be to shape our services in line with what these parents need. We have to see these parents as the voice of these communities...” (Senior Leader)

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The success of the initial engagement means that it is now possible to continue dialogue and begin to consolidate and go to scale in both localities. The delivery team are talking with senior leaders and officers about how to support them to make the changes that need to happen. No-one anticipates that it will be easy. It was variously described as ‘wading through treacle’, or ‘turning the ship around’. But there was also a recognition that the pandemic, as well as being an obvious threat to resources, has also provided an opportunity to dispense with some bureaucracy and enhance collaborative working.

In Dundee there is active interest in expansion of the WM2U approach, with a focus on community schools and creating alignment with the redesign of family support services. It would require WM2U to work directly with parents in other areas and communities and expand support for leadership activity amongst both parents and strategic leads.

### Going to scale as a conscious choice

This work is dynamic: the precise nature of the work, the ‘theories of action’, are being defined on an ongoing basis by parents, practitioners and the delivery team together. As the Learning Partner, we are actively working with the delivery team to facilitate conversations on the prevailing theories of action about *how* to achieve scale. This is often thought of as being about achieving impact through extending the reach of the work to greater numbers of people, ‘rolling out’ a successful intervention or programme.

**Figure 5: Theories of action to go to scale**

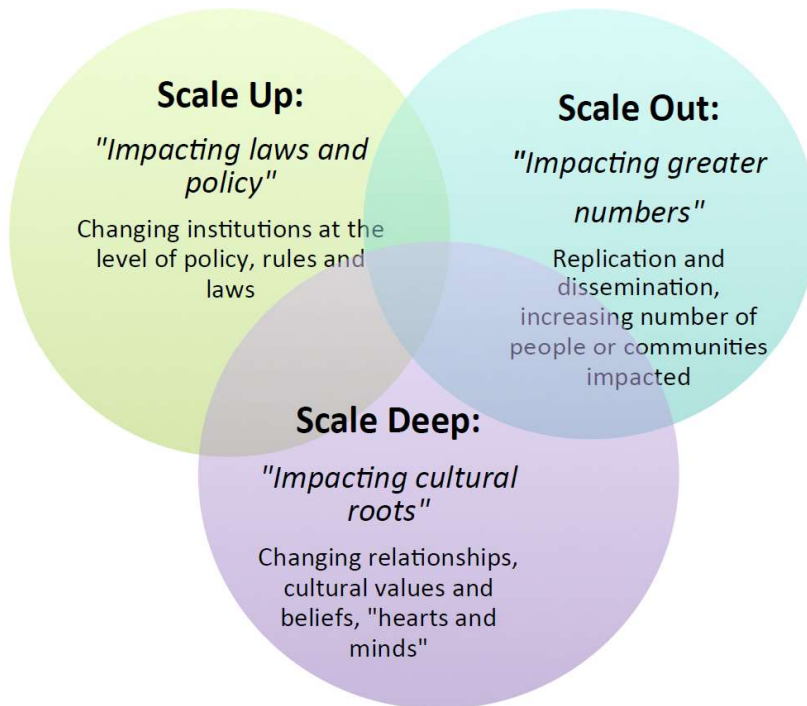


Figure 5 distinguishes between three types of scaling, all of which have merit.

- ‘Scaling Out’ is most akin to the traditional view of ‘going to scale’ or rollout where the focus is on replication of a successful intervention with greater numbers of people.
- ‘Scaling Up’ refers to impacting on the formal and institutional structures that might hold a problem in place.
- ‘Scaling Deep’ refers to the embedded cultural values and beliefs, whether formally expressed or otherwise, that continue to reproduce unwanted patterns in complex systems that act as barriers to change.

The contention is that for any systemic change, scaling needs to happen at all three levels and that there is a need to ‘make scale and impact a conscious choice’.<sup>15</sup>

Scaling Deep will necessitate ‘*nurturing the myriad of relational and conversational practices that take place on a daily basis*’, encouraging positive practices from the ground up, using the voice of parents as a touchstone. Ultimately, questions of scale and sustainability are linked as it is ‘*only if such change processes are owned that they can go to scale*’.<sup>16</sup> This seems pertinent to the work of WM2U at this time: ‘scaling deep’ is a route to ‘scaling out’, shifting hearts and minds to fundamentally alter the conditions that continue to hold the problems in place.

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“The meeting with the senior leaders was brilliant. It’s looking good. I’m really excited about it. We came away from the meeting, really quite happy and ready to go. Everybody was just singing from the same hymn sheet – it was very apparent. There needs to be a huge, big difference - but off the back of that discussion yesterday – they went on to say about the change in Children’s Services, and would we be a part of that as well? What became something small-ish has become even bigger now! They obviously saw something in us – very much it’s about listening to people now.” (Parent)

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No one underestimates the extent of the challenge ahead, but beginning to bring senior leaders, practitioners, and parents together to work on what really matters to all of them is generating hope and possibility.

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<sup>15</sup> Riddell and Moore (2015) Scaling Out, Scaling Up and Scaling Deep: Advancing Systemic Social Innovation and the Learning Processes to Support It: October [https://mconnellfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ScalingOut\\_Nov27A\\_AV\\_BrandedBleed.pdf](https://mconnellfoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/ScalingOut_Nov27A_AV_BrandedBleed.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Danny Burns, quoted in Sharp, C (2018) Collective leadership: Where Nothing is Clear, and Everything Keeps Changing, Collective Leadership for Scotland, <https://workforcescotland.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/collectiveleadershipreport1.pdf>



## Annex 1: Literature Review Executive Summary<sup>17</sup>

### **The edges of care**

- “Edge of care” is a useful conceptual device that reflects professional concerns despite the fact that there are challenges in being confident about who and how many are on the edge.
- The “edge of care” concept implicitly includes a recognition that there may have been preventative opportunities at earlier stages and that even at this late stage there may be ways of retrieving the child’s place in the family.
- It is important to question the assumption that services are aware of the families who most need help, to consider what factors are limiting that awareness, and what other approaches might contribute to connecting families with help that they need.
- While the “edge of care” concept can be strategically helpful in framing the purpose of a change programme it is probably not helpful presentationally when working with families or communities because of its connotations and risk of stigmatising.

### **Obstacles to getting help**

- Many families who need help are not accessing it. The scale of service provision is not nearly adequate to meet the level of need; there are large numbers of children and young people who are in high-end need but not receiving an appropriate service; and, there are large numbers of children and young people who are receiving high-end services despite not being in high-end need.
- In relation to getting help that is needed, stigma is one of the most important obstacles to parents’ engagement with support. Families value the independence of that support from statutory services, especially independence from social work.
- Restricting a professional focus to the family’s quality of care for children is an obstacle to building a constructive working relationship – triggering fear of stigma, fear of professional intervention, and failing to take account of cultural patterns of help-seeking.
- An alternative approach seeks alignment with families’ and individuals’ own understanding of the difficulties they face, providing family support rather than ‘technical interventions’.

### **Adverse childhood experiences and trauma informed practice**

- Adverse and traumatic childhood experiences are certainly important in the subsequent lives of those who have undergone them. Childhood adversity may take many forms, and the pathways and mechanisms linking to adult outcomes are complex.
- In the midst of debate about ACEs, understandings and concerns, for example about poverty and inequality have not been superseded by the ACEs perspective, and existing practice that is informed by awareness of the impact and dynamics of trauma will continue to be essential.

### **Engaging with families when they need help – promising practices**

- There has been an evolution of thinking in Scotland about how best to engage with families where children’s development, health and wellbeing are at risk.
- The *Getting It Right for Every Child* (GIRFEC) approach has broadened both the range of families and children who are in focus and greatly extended the set of professionals who

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<sup>17</sup> December 2019 (reviewed February 2020)



have a role in responding to the need for help. It has opened the way to develop family support that responds to experienced need at whatever level rather than being constrained by thresholds.

- Awareness of the importance of certain issues in children's lives is an essential element in ensuring helpful responses. Many of these issues are comparatively well recognised such as living with domestic abuse, being a young carer, having a disabled sibling or a mentally ill parent. In terms of engaging with families when they need help, we highlight the prevention and mitigation of poverty and the impact of parental imprisonment.
- We highlight two examples, at both 'early-intervention – upstream' and 'high-end - downstream' levels, to identify principles and practices that seem to be promising in this changing and evolving environment: the *Maximise Family Advice and Support Project* in Edinburgh which offers flexible multi-dimensional support and *The Stepping Stones for Families' Family Wellbeing Service* that provides holistic support to the parents of pre-school children attending nurseries in Glasgow.
- Many features highlighted in the literature about what is thought to be effective family support are influenced more by what parents and workers identify as important in keeping families engaged, than evidence about what is known about the impact of services on outcomes; evidence of impact on outcomes tends to be patchy and complex.
- Potential areas for further examination in the area of community and strengths-based family support include developing a better understanding of the skills needed to build responsive relationships with a family as a whole rather than with particular individuals in the family; how parenting support can be more appealing for fathers, and to identify if fathers and mothers benefit from joint or separate input; and increased knowledge of the lived experience of children and families, especially young mothers.

#### **Supporting families 'at the edge'**

- In relation to supporting families 'at the edge of care', we highlight that local authorities are required by law to make available services to help children who are at risk of becoming looked after (near 'the edge of care') and their family members.
- The legislation specifically refers to *family group decision making* (FGDM), whereby the family group is supported to make a plan for the care of the child. FGDM is a strengths-based approach that includes principles of collaboration, participation and dignity, involvement and informed choice.
- Notably, when FGDM is used in cases where a child is at risk of being removed from parental care the impact is to significantly reduce "the odds of removal", especially in high-risk cases.
- Exposure to domestic abuse has been increasingly recognised as a major issue for children. *Safe and Together* is a strengths-based alternative to the common practice of focusing on the 'failure to protect' a child from being exposed to domestic abuse. This approach has now been adopted in 10 Scottish local authority areas.
- In relation to children moving into adolescence, the LB. Enfield developed their *Family and Adolescent Support Hub* (FASH) as a response to the needs of families struggling with caring for their adolescent children and young people, with significant positive impact including keeping children and young people out of care and a reduction in safeguarding concerns.

#### **The wider policy climate, effecting system change and learning from others**

- The Independent Care Review seeks a fundamental shift in how decisions are made about children and families and in the way that families are supported to stay together. It strongly

endorses a person-centred and relationship-focused approach to care and support and seeks to make early intervention and prevention a reality, through 'proper, holistic support for families' and a 'significant upscale in universal family support services'. Notably it also calls for a 'concerted effort to be made to hear more from parents and wider family members with children who are on the edge of or in care'.

- There are some concurrent initiatives seeking to effect system change, operating in similar domains to WMTY. There are some emerging interesting lessons particularly about how to build in learning and evaluation from early action system change and emerging examples of practices that can help to navigate the complexity of people, issues and systems.
- There is broader interest in "Place-based Working" and collective or collaborative leadership with much synergy between the themes and lessons and the experience and ambition of What Matters to You.
- Transferable lessons include the importance of reviewing the original theory of change, so that it reflects the experience of delivery of early action and enables exploration of assumptions that may be open to challenge. There is also a need to give sufficient emphasis to the 'systems change' and wider collaborative and partnership work being undertaken.
- For WMTY, the Lankelly Chase counsel that "building trust between actors is hard, particularly when the cast keeps changing." Their experience of place-based action inquiry encouragingly suggests that "amplifying the voices and sharing the authentic experience of people whom systems are supposed to be serving, seems to be a powerful mechanism for creating an impetus for change".
- Their learning suggests that all partners and roles within the action inquiry should be encouraged to adopt a learning approach and be involved in the process of developing a 'Learning Framework'. They found that there was ambiguity surrounding the boundaries between the roles within the action. They propose that the learning mechanisms for the action inquiry must be able to work with the inevitable ambiguity and uncertainty, bring these to the surface, enable conversation about them and build a container to hold the uncertainty.