



scottish social services
learning network
south east

Mission Possible

Report

20 May 2011

Making it Possible

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1. Preface

Wendy Paterson wrote to invite members of the groups working on specific parts of the workforce learning agenda in South East Scotland, to a final event ***Mission Possible***. In the packs for the day Wendy included the following:

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for joining us today for the final event run under the auspices of Learning Network South East. We hope very much that you find it useful - not as an ending, but as a catalyst to maintaining and developing some of the relationships and networks represented here today. This Learning Network is only a network because of your involvement to shared thinking, working and learning and to seeing the collaborative advantage this offers.

We want to thank members of our Management Group, past and present and several who have been involved throughout, for their support and leadership through good and through challenging times. This has been very much valued by Network members and by staff and the knowledge and experience which Management Group members have will help to ensure continuity of a shared and sharing philosophy.

Finally I want to say a special thank you to Paula and Beth who have been loyal and long-suffering, as well as very able and efficient colleagues. Without their skills this Learning Network would be stuck in a very different place – and, I fear, in a time warp!

The circumstances in which funding for the 4Learning Networks is coming to an end should not obscure our appreciation for the support and valuing of our work received from Scottish Government and Scottish Social Services Council. The opportunity to work closely with staff in SG and SSSC has been productive and supportive and we are aware that much effort will be made to ensure work is built on, not lost.

Heartfelt thanks and very good wishes to you all,

Wendy

2. Introduction

Bill Sim, Chair of the Learning Network-South East (LN-SE), introduced the day by bringing people up to speed with the situation in this area. The LN-SE will be closing its office on 31 May 2011 but the Management Group has agreed to continue to meet throughout the next phase. To maintain the capacity to communicate with members, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) Workforce Development Section has offered to hold the Contact Database. With this in place it is hoped that members can be kept up to date with the Re-imagining Project being carried out by the Glasgow School of Art for the SSSC and with developments from it.

Bill went onto say that today's event was going to enable the LN-SE to leave a legacy for all to benefit from. He encouraged everyone to use their voice to get across what they want and hope to see in the future and assured everyone that the report of the day would go to both SSSC and Scottish Government. We very much welcomed the participation of members of both organisations at this event.

Bill then passed over to Wendy Paterson.

3. Context Setting

Wendy Paterson, Co-ordinator of the LN-SE, presented a picture of the Learning Networks from its launch in October 2006 until today. She described the remits given to the LNs at the start and how these changed over time. Wendy described the range of activity and the involvement of a very diverse range of members over the life of this Network and very much welcomed the participation of many of the people and groups here today.

4. Working Groups

The room was split up into the partnership groups working with the LN-SE. Each of the groups were asked to respond to 4 questions over the course of 1 hour with answers, thoughts, comments to be written up on

flip charts. For the purpose of the report the four questions will be stated and the group responses to each will follow under each group heading.

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- i. What were the key achievements of your group?
- ii. What were the lessons learned?
- iii. What do you see as being the key challenges of your group?
- iv. What is the way forward now for your group?

NOTE: Responses can be from individuals and/or from the group as a whole.

a. East of Scotland Mental Health Officer (MHO) Award Steering Group

- i. Key achievements for this group:
 - Creating a Partnership
 - Bring 2 MHO programmes together
 - Working with 12 Local Authorities (LAs)
 - Working across 2 LNs
 - Working with Universities
 - Service User and Carer involvement
 - Developed, designed and had the programme approved
 - Programme delivery shift to University and set at Masters Level
 - Fits in CPD framework
 - Programme has now run for 2 years
 - Better outcomes
 - Positive experience for participants
 - Practice / academic integration – worked well
- ii. Under “what have you learned”, the group had these comments to make:
 - Change can happen

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- Relationships are central to partnership working
- We can learn from each other and use others' achievements for best outcomes
- Authenticity of service user and carer involvement is vital and possible

iii. They saw the challenges ahead as being:

- Sustainability
- Developing the interface between workforce planning and operations
- Managing demographics of MHO population
- Sustainability of 3 year programmes

iv. Proposals for the way forward:

- Candidate selection – appropriate selection, consistent criteria for selection
- Explore development options with other programmes
- Keep looking outwards
- Evaluation
- Programme co-ordinator post to continue

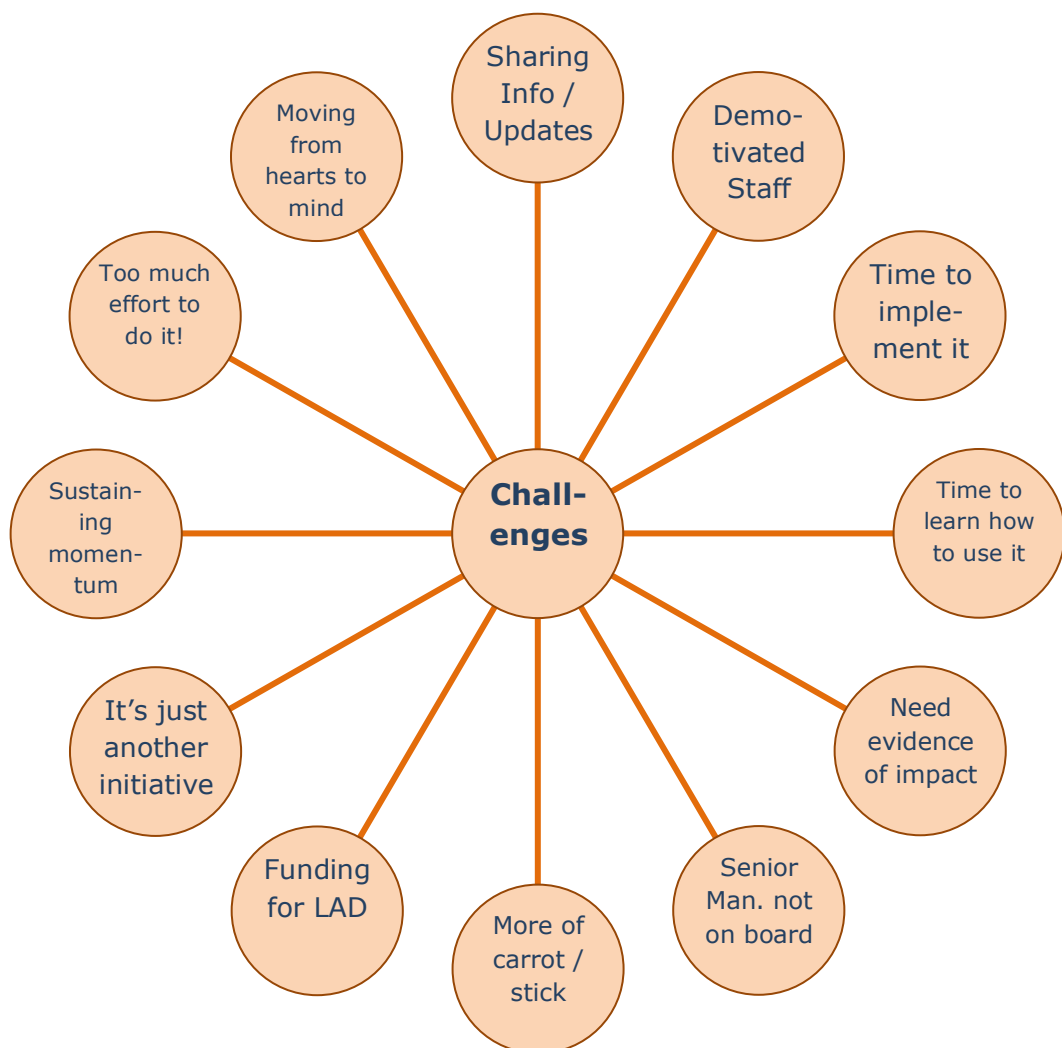
b. South East Continuous Learning Framework (CLF) Gathering Group

- i. The key achievements of the CLF are varied, for instance we see organisations sharing learning and information around CLF at the holding of a National Conference on CLF in September 2010. The CLF itself is seen to be flexible, adaptable, inclusive – for everybody, inspiring, having positivity, cost effective and giving everyone a shared understanding.
- ii. What has been learned through this work:
 - It develops each and every one of us as a person – (individual) not just for organisations, e.g. Carers
 - It focuses on the positives – Good Practice

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- ➔ It focuses on the organisational capabilities as well as the individual
- ➔ It is progressive – small steps ...
- ➔ Helps us reflect on our practice both individually and organizationally
- ➔ Helps get the right staff in the right place at the right time!

iii. Challenges for taking it forward



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iv. What proposals / steps will you take to ensure there is continuity?



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c. *Countering Inequalities Group and South East Long Term Conditions (LTC) Partnership*

Due to numbers present for these groups it was decided to pull both groups together to discuss the 4 questions.

i. There were a number of key achievements for this group with events such as Enabling Age as Asset, Launch of the Self Management Online Toolkit, Tackling Inequalities for Edinburgh's Children and Young People and then the **development** and **participation** in **Learning Communities**: SE (NHS) Education Forum; strategic partnerships – CIG, SEAT LTC, SWeDAG, etc. The development and or use of new resources was another: LTC Toolkit, Multi Agency Self Management User Guide, Online Catalogue of Educational Provision Related to the Management of Long Term Conditions, CLF, Maintaining of Services (for BME learners). Being **influential** within the writing of key policies: Edinburgh's Children Plan and Policy framework for NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (with regard to LTCs). The working in **partnership** across: 3 NHS Boards, 2 LNs, voluntary and statutory organisations.

ii. Learning from these groups:

- There is a need to have strategic conversations in safe places – no '**business as usual**' breaking away from traditional forms
- Everything crosses health and social care – lots of opportunities
- Projects and their findings are not rolled out – we therefore do not learn, no-one listens to or hears key messages
- Don't always have the capacity to implement – short term and ring fenced budgets don't help
- Health services not patient-centred and not safe (same for social care)
- Inequalities need to be on every agenda if not embedded within each organisational culture

iii. The challenges touched upon by this group were:

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- How do we build on learning?
- Short-termism of political agendas
- Financial climate
- Real '**personalisation**'
- More flexible and fluid collaboration
- Traditional power structures
- Pooling budgets

iv. Proposals for steps forward are:

- Sustain the will to **learn, share** and **connect**
- Learning continues and work carries on in different environments
- Key people move into key new roles e.g. with SSSC / SWeDAG
- Stronger links between health and social care e.g. Reshaping Care for Older People Agenda, SSKS, Knowledge Managed Network
- Be optimistic and just do it, keep on tracking
- Invest in new groupings
- Don't let things fall off the agenda
- Keep up to date using new technology e.g. Twitter, blogging, online Communities of Practice

d. South East Practice Learning Qualification (PLQ) Partnership Management Group and South East Scotland Practice Learning Planning Group

i. Key achievements are numerous and there is at times a wonder at how these have happened:

'Somehow (!) we manage to provide enough high quality placements each year.'

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Other achievements are continued commitment and loyalty between Practice Learning colleagues and universities to solve continual placement shortages. Maintaining a partnership approach is crucial and has played a part in the broadening range of learning opportunities there are. This is encouraged with a move towards evidence based practice. There is also anecdotal evidence that Practice Teachers (educators) are contributing to the development of learning cultures. There is also an increase in the number of Practice Teachers (educators) in the South East of Scotland. There has also been the successful development of a Link Worker Programme (which is a step towards increased placements) and 2 high quality Practice Learning Awards.

ii. Learning evokes some strong feelings in this group such as:

'We have to stick together!'

'Together we can have a voice in relation to Practice Learning → Gov / SSSC (not necessarily listening!).'

'Together we can do more and achieve what we can't alone'

There is a need to recognise a range of contributions to Practice Learning and be flexible about how we work together. There is comfort in knowing a core group of people who share ideals, values and aims. Trust and communication are key and personal relationships get results. It is noted that having a gap in programmes is not helpful, they need to be kept going. Therefore it is import to have people in key roles in order to keep practice learning going, the role to manage this needs to be structural. With this comes the need for leadership from our own agencies / bodies / SSSC / Scottish Government on this issue, or do we have to take it on ourselves?

iii. Challenges are:

- Knowing what qualifying social workers need in the future
- How to continue to be supported by our agencies in order to continue in our partnerships
- How to keep voluntary and independent sectors involved

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- Less people, less time, less money and more demands
 - Decision, direction re continuing Practice Learning Awards
 - Where does the cohesion come from?
- iv. Proposals for the way forward include: consider engaging with HE and FE providers, using other templates and / or strengthening new partnerships.
- Make decision re PLA in the short and long term
 - Use MHO Template
 - New partnerships and target Universities
 - Get local HE/FE involved as providers
 - Keep meeting, keep discussing, keep partnership – rotate chair and venue
 - Keep saying to SSSC what our expectations of them are
 - Explore how to streamline course – if using local one
 - Need to think workshops – refresher and to support existing PTs (at university!)
 - Need to sustain Link Worker course
 - Think about service level agreements
 - Get rid of SSSC and use money to re invest – voluntary sector funded units and learning networks

e. South East Citizen Leadership Planning Group

- i. Key achievements have been events held both in Moray House and the Brunton Hall, Citizen Leaders in the Borders were involved in courses, Carers Centre has allowed a Citizen Leader who has co-trained with family carers to health and social care workers (carers gaining a ***bigger voice***). The Borders saw individual involvement e.g. Community Councils, Newsletter, Campaigns, on the ground work. There was Citizen Leaders training within the South East.

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- ii. The group had learned the positivity of being involved at grass roots level in all aspects of development within social services. That the '**can do attitude**' instead of the 'can't do' works best. That there is a real need for **Champions** to keep the Citizen Leadership agenda alive.
- iii. The challenges seen for the way forward are:
 - Professional attitudes
 - Professional listening and working together
 - Lot of talk but not enough action e.g. Citizen Leadership materials left on shelf
 - Consultations with not enough **time** to involve people
 - Scottish Government not talking anymore
 - Easy to read language
 - Citizen Leadership is not visible '**Where has C.L. gone?**'
- iv. Proposals for the way forward include us taking responsibility for Citizen Leadership and speaking up when we see it not working or where it isn't happening. Look at widening the net of people who can speak in favour of this, don't have the same services users and carers all the time, give other people the opportunity and support to speak up. Help people with training to enable them to speak out. Re-focus people's attention and commitment to Citizen Leadership, consider everyone in this NOT just the area of learning disabilities. Consider a Citizens Panel – make it **real** not just a consultation but **action**. Be persistent! For this to be recognised, acknowledge and taken forward we need to develop within the Social Services Leadership Strategy a Leadership Pathway for services users and carers.

f. Leadership and Early Years

- i. Through the LN-SE giving validity and acknowledgement to the need of leadership development we see '**changing managers into leaders**' as a key achievement as are the skills of

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leadership within the Early Years Workforce – could be seen as common skills across sectors.

- Thinking positively about the motivation of staff
- Coaching staff who need guidance and help
- Praising staff appropriately to help change attitude

ii. There was a lot of learning in this group, people now see different services with same issues, and that SSSC could be more consistent and customer focused. This would help in identifying a clear vision, goals and a leader and with this it is vital to get the **right language** at the right level and for it still to be **meaningful**. It was agreed that leadership development is **generic** across sectors or maybe topic specific (some felt that the delivery may benefit from some **strategic** language). Other learning was:

- Good to learn as leaders together
- Share experiences
- Sounding boards
- Similar context shared solutions

iii. The two challenges identified by this group were **resourcing** and **time**. Resourcing is seen as **vital**. Time is something that is not always given to staff for training or for support to carry out either formal or informal learning. Time is equated to money and is not seen as an **investment**. There needs to be **protected time** to share ideas and think.

iv. The proposals for the way forward are many and cover partnership working, valuing individual and local voices and expertise to what is needed to meet requirements. They are listed below:

- Feedback and evaluations to SSSC for them to identify what works and what is needed
- Continue the report and provide a high profile in local government

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- SSSC needs to keep up the momentum and needs to engage locally bringing consistency, fresh thinking and energy
- Fight for what we need to help us meet requirements
- Continue to practice the value of cross sector training and encourage participation
- Giving our all and encouraging everyone to have a voice
- Contribute actively to consultations with SSSC on the value of their role as sector “leaders”
- Share personal leadership and be proactive – keep networks alive by making contacts with others and tell SSSC what you think
- Work alongside my manager to contribute effectively to the agenda
- Continue to think positively, coach staff, praise them and show appreciation
- Have a clear and precise task/plan with deadlines
- Encourage peer support
- Communicate effectively
- Important that future contacts are approachable and accessible – ***'key to success is people!'***

g. Care Homes

- i. The Care Homes Group split their key achievements across areas and people. The first lot of achievement was seen through their work with **Scottish Care** as there was recognition and validity creating a desire to develop this throughout AHP. They are seeing this as a model and platform for further development.

The second was for the **Care Home** itself, here they saw that the integration of the work across social work and nursing was very positive with **care staff** learning a lot from the students.

- ii. Learning

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The **student** was also able to highlight key achievements the prime being a different way of learning about: self, relationships and working practices.

And then there are the **Practice Teachers** who have said that they have learnt what to do to create opportunities:

- Analyse the environment
- Knowing when to fill gaps
- Understanding that there needs to be more consideration around who can do what
- Identify learning resources
- Communication, glossaries
- Students must be self starters

iii. Challenges for taking this forward are seen to be:

- Development of a system for getting placements, there needs to be a sustained network – ongoing!

'We must not lose you for a few years'
Care Home Manager

- Communication needs to be clear
- Management of the process
- Link Workers: refresher courses should be very much shorter than full training

iv. Forward direction is to have:

- 3 day Link Worker initial training, this would be better, as some of the detail at present is confusing
- Placements need to be project managed as a whole
- Must not lose the expertise and knowledge that has been built up in the Care Homes
- Role of care home manager could be more tightly defined

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- Need for organisation to take this forward across the whole of Scotland

5. Recommendations

Key themes have emerged from the work in this event.

- The importance of good communication and the accessibility and visibility of communication channel is paramount.
- Evaluation is crucial and too often an afterthought. It is essential to evaluate if we are to appreciate, share, learn and action the messages in our work.
- Specific specialist areas such as MHO need to be connected to wider workforce development strategies at Scottish Government level.
- Agencies need to understand the value of CLF to workforce learning and development so that it informs links with SCISWIS so that there is a shared framework which will enhance the workforce and the services it delivers.
- For Citizen Leadership to be recognised, acknowledged and taken forward we need to develop within the Social Services Leadership Strategy a Leadership Pathway for service users and carers.
- Greater clarity and direction as well as guidance is wanted by organisations and individuals across sectors to make sense of the perceived complexities of the workforce development landscapes.
- The core groups of people in each of the work areas described above share much in terms of ideals, values and aims. They very much want this culture of sharing and partnership to be nurtured and encouraged to grow.

We hope this is truly a ***Mission Possible!***