LEP Meeting: 13th November

LEP: 13th November Notes

Attendees

Gareth (DWP), Anne Kain, Nicola Graham, Jim Johnstone (ACC), Lori Leslie (ACC), Jo-Ann De-Sykes (ACC) Chris Smillie (AHSCP), Margo Milne (DWYNE), Maggie Hepburn (ACVO)

Review of previous minutes

- Commissioning: positive conversations with finance around challenges faced due to delay in grant letter but still ongoing and no confirmations of any changes yet
- Pegs Bailey to attend full LEP: no issues but need to consider timing. Particularly useful to have around lived experience piece and focus.
- Commissioned activity from ETPF: being collated at the moment

LEP Maturity Assessment / Strategic Plan Feedback

- Thank you for any submissions to the assessment and next steps. Opportunity for members to reflect on any observations from the recently published strategic plan.
- 7 responses from the maturity assessment. 297 nationally.
- Next steps: national summary report by end of November. Aberdeen should get theirs soon also
- Feedback on process: positive experience and lots of opportunity for reflection on good outcomes that have been achieved over the past year. Easier to spot areas of improvement

Priorities

- Discussion ahead of the conference around the priorities of the LEP for the next year so members can agree messaging to be shared at the event.
- NOLB Strategic Plan priorities are:

  Continuing to improve the employability system
  Increasing awareness and uptake of employability support
  Tackling child poverty by increasing parental income from employment
  Supporting disabled people and those with a long term health condition
  Delivering jointly with wider public services
- Lori has put together a timeline of reporting timescales for committees for us to think about when we are putting together our plans and allows us to work backwards, particularly if delivering a new delivery plan, particularly to capture new workstreams
- Take the NOLB strategic plan priorities and use this to set the agenda. Emerging priority (working with employers) - priority may be best for another conference directly with employers

Workstream Updates

- Supported Employment
  - Rebecca and Dale unable to attend to be able to provide an update
- Conference
  - Agenda shared for discussion

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    - Martin Murchie would be a good speaker to help set scene on health and their research. Lori will reach out to him
- Commissioning
    - Mini-comps are now live for next round of commissioning
    - Positive conversations with finance internally on managing risks to allow for commissioning at an earlier stage in the year
- Data collection/ KPIs
    - Lots of data collected for supported employment piece.
    - DWP will get some data on local priorities and emerging trends. Spikes of unemployment. By end of Nov
    - Jo-Ann if any additional emerging priorities emerge from LIFT data I can update by end of Nov.

Employability and Training Providers Forum (ETPF) Update

- Looking at focusing on what is achievable and narrowing priorities
- ETPF members who have specialised roles can help with some working groups and willing to do more to support the LEP
- Feedback for conference agenda provided
- Tweaked form for gathering data with deadline of 29th Nov
- Improvement Service will be reaching out to providers for input in the service review

Q2 Update

- Lori shared data from Q2. Steady rise in referrals continues across all priority groups and demographics.
- Q2 has seen a rise in young people referred.

Meeting dates for 2025

- 8th Jan for first meeting in 2025. Then every 4 weeks thereafter.

Any Other Business

- Maggie: Increase in NI contributions for employers alongside rise in minimum wage will impact upon employers.

PARTNERSHIP ASSURANCE GROUP MEETING

Tuesday 26th November 2024

REPORT: DRAFT THEMES EMERGING FROM THE LEP MATURITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

This initial report to share with the Partnership Assurance Group was drafted by the Employability Partnership Manager, with support from Improvement Service Public Sector Improvement Framework team, SG Employability Improvement Team and Chat GPT. Given that there were 780 comments in total, across the six main sections, the IS PSIF team supported use of Chat GPT to analyse the comments and provide a summary on the top five themes in each section.

The information provided from Chat GPT was reviewed against a first read of the comments by the Employability Partnership Manager and was agreed as an initial high-level summary, with further manual review required to highlight examples and suggest recommendations. This will be carried out as part of the National Overview Report.

COMPLETION INFORMATION

Responses were collected between 23rd September and 8th November. There was a total of 438 submissions, with 141 incomplete responses. A total of 297 fully completed responses were made within the period. Only completed responses are included in the report.

Whilst responses were made by members from every LA area, the LEP with the most responses was Midlothian (17), with the least number of completed surveys being received from Shetland (2). Further analysis of each individual LEP will be undertaken to identify where there are gaps in representation, and to recognise where there is good practice with a wide range of organisations being represented and contributing.

Participants were also asked to identify which organisation they represented on their LEP. Whilst over one third of responses came from local government, across various directorates, there was excellent representation from Skills Development Scotland – 38 responses, with a full return across every area and additional officers contributing in some areas, Department for Work and Pensions with 21 responses and the third sector – with a total of 39 responses across Third Sector Interfaces and a number of other third sector representatives who are represented on their respective LEPs.

Further and Higher Education was fairly well represented, with 25 responses, with NHS including Workforce, Public Health and Health – Other, contributing 22 responses.

The sector least represented across the exercise was business and employer organisations. This has also been mentioned in some of the comments.

1. LEADERSHIP AND RELATIONSHIPS

In all sections of the survey, the overwhelming majority of the responses – between 70 – 90% for each question – was made against 'Agree' and 'Strongly Agree'. It is important to note that the wording of the free text questions allows for comments and suggestions on areas which could be improved, rather than asking feedback on what was going well. However, there are many comments stating that respondents thought that activity – whether that be collaboration, data, information sharing etc - in their area was going well or was improving.

The first section of the survey focussed on the balance of representation, in line with the existing LEP Framework. It sought to identify whether there was a level of representation across the public, third and private sector, and whether there was agreement that members worked effectively together and shared a vision and voice.

This first section had most comments, with 167 responses. The top five themes are:

1. **Leadership and Governance**: Concerns about the level of influence the Local Authority (LA) has over decision-making in the LEP, with calls for more shared leadership and active involvement from other sectors in the decision-making process.
2. **Collaboration and Partnership**: The importance of strong relationships and collaboration between the public, private, and third sectors is emphasised, with a particular call for increased private sector/employer involvement and more active participation from all partners.
3. **Equality of Voice and Participation**: There are concerns about uneven levels of participation, with some partners contributing more than others. The desire for more equal representation and collaborative decision-making is a key point.
4. **Private Sector Engagement**: The underrepresentation of the private sector/employers in the LEP is highlighted as a significant issue. There is a call for greater involvement from businesses, either through direct participation or advisory roles, to ensure employer needs are addressed.
5. **Clarity and Transparency in Decision-Making**: A need for greater transparency in decision-making processes, particularly regarding funding allocations and resource use, is stressed. Clearer communication, better tracking of progress, and the use of performance indicators are also seen as essential.

2. GOVERNANCE

A focus on roles and responsibilities, vision, strategic direction, and the sharing of information to support understanding and decision making were the main topics of section 2.

The top five themes from 130 comments made in this section are:

1. **Communication and Information Sharing**: A central theme is the need for improved communication within the LEP, especially in terms of sharing meeting minutes, decisions, and updates across member organisations to ensure alignment and transparency.
2. **Governance and Decision Making**: The comments highlight the importance of strengthening governance structures and decision-making processes within the LEP. There is a desire for

clearer roles, responsibilities, and processes to enhance overall functioning and accountability.

3. **Sub-Groups and Collaboration**: The effectiveness of sub-groups is a key theme. Members express a need for more focused and structured sub-groups that encourage collaboration across sectors and regions to address specific issues and challenges.
4. **Strategic Direction and Planning**: The need for a clearer strategic vision, long-term planning, and better alignment with regional goals is emphasised. There are calls for a more focused and forward-looking approach to planning within the LEP.
5. **Engagement and Accountability**: Active engagement from all members is essential. Some members raised concerns about inconsistent participation and attendance, with a call for stronger accountability to ensure members are contributing meaningfully toward shared goals.

3. USE OF DATA AND EVIDENCE

Data and evidence were the focus of this section, with questions around whether the LEP had enough access to data and effective data sharing between partners to support development of delivery plans. It also asked whether delivery was reviewed, and service users were consulted to support evaluation of quality and suitability.

Based on 146 comments, here are the top five themes that emerge in this section:

1. **Data Collection and Sharing**: A major theme throughout the comments is the challenge of data sharing, especially among different agencies and stakeholders within the LEP. There are concerns about inconsistent data collection methods, data protection issues, and the difficulty of accessing or sharing essential data across various organisations. There's a push for improved data sharing agreements, standard platforms, and more systematic collection methods.
2. **Lived Experience and Service User Feedback**: Another prominent theme is the need for more involvement from service users and individuals with lived experience in decision-making and service design. Many comments suggest that while data is available, it doesn't always capture the qualitative insights that could better inform decisions. Increasing the voice of service users in LEP activities, including through dedicated panels or more structured feedback systems, is repeatedly emphasised.
3. **Data Maturity and Evidence-Based Planning**: There is a strong emphasis on improving data maturity to better support planning, monitoring, and decision-making. LEP members are calling for a more coordinated approach to collecting and using data, a "gold standard" for datasets, and the development of a more evidence-based approach to planning, which would lead to more targeted and effective strategies.
4. **Collaboration and Co-ordination**: Many comments highlight the importance of stronger coordination between different organisations within the LEP, including local authorities, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Skills Development Scotland (SDS), and other stakeholders. There are concerns that data is sometimes siloed within organisations, which can hinder the LEP's ability to have a holistic understanding of local needs and gaps in service provision.
5. **Performance Monitoring and Accountability**: The need for more effective performance monitoring is discussed frequently, with calls for clearer data on the impact of funded

programs, service outcomes, and whether these efforts are truly addressing local needs. There is also a desire for better tracking of the effectiveness of different service delivery models, ensuring that funding is appropriately allocated, and its impact is clearly demonstrated.

4. STAKEHOLDERS AND RESOURCES

Section 4 of the survey sought to understand whether the LEP had developed wider relationships and links with local stakeholders, and to help understand whether they were making best use of relevant services, local knowledge, and resources to offer a more holistic support.

Summary of the 112 comments in this section focus on the following key areas:

1. **Stakeholder Engagement & Communication**: There is a strong focus on improving engagement with various stakeholders, including service users, employers, public services, and third-sector organisations. A recurring suggestion is to enhance communication strategies, such as developing formal engagement plans, improving internal and external communication, and increasing visibility through digital platforms and shared spaces.
2. **Co-production & Lived Experience**: The importance of involving service users and individuals with lived experience in service design and delivery is a key theme. There is a call for more formal structures to include service users' feedback in co-design processes, and some suggest employing a lived experience officer to strengthen this involvement.
3. **Resource Sharing & Collaboration**: Many participants highlight the need for better sharing of resources, both financial and in-kind, among partner organisations. This includes sharing physical spaces, training, and staffing resources to maximise efficiency and reduce duplication. Collaborative efforts across organisations, including local authorities, the third sector, and employers, are seen as critical to success.
4. **Funding & Strategic Planning**: Issues around funding are a consistent theme. Concerns include the delays in Scottish Government funding, the impact of short-term financial arrangements on long-term planning, and the need for more multi-year funding options to ensure sustainability and allow for forward planning. There is also a call for better understanding of funding streams and more flexibility in resource allocation.
5. **Improvement of Service Delivery & Holistic Support**: A recurring theme is the need to improve the delivery of services, including addressing silos within organisations, enhancing co-operation between different departments, and making services more integrated and accessible. Participants advocate for a more holistic approach to employability and related services, ensuring that various public and third-sector agencies work together more effectively to meet the needs of individuals.

5. PERFORMANCE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPACT

Many of the questions in this section were around reporting requirements, how data and other evidence is used to review and drive improvement and how the LEP use this to improve accessibility, reduce duplication and ensure value for money in line with NOLB principles.

From the 106 comments in this section, below are the five key themes:

1. **Data and Evidence Usage**: The importance of using data to inform decision-making, track performance, and measure impact is a recurring theme. There is an emphasis on improving data collection, sharing, and analysis to guide future actions and ensure more effective and targeted interventions. This includes the development of tools like an Employment Index, better tracking of data from multiple partners, and using evidence to assess the effectiveness of programs.
2. **Duplication and Coordination**: Several references discuss the challenge of reducing duplication in services across different organisations, ensuring that funding is used efficiently, and avoiding overlap in service delivery. There is a call for more collaboration and better coordination to streamline services and reduce inefficiency.
3. **Performance and Impact Evaluation**: The need for a consistent framework to assess the effectiveness of funding and programs is highlighted. There are calls for more frequent and transparent sharing of performance data with all stakeholders, as well as using that data to continuously improve service delivery and achieve better outcomes for the target populations.
4. **Funding and Resource Allocation**: The text highlights concern about the timing and uncertainty of funding, especially with year-to-year allocation processes. There is a need for better planning and long-term investment strategies to ensure sustainability and value for money in employability initiatives.
5. **Targeting and Inclusivity**: There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that employability services reach the most vulnerable or underrepresented groups, such as economically inactive individuals, ethnic minorities, and those facing multiple barriers to employment. Efforts to improve targeting and ensure services meet local needs are a key theme.

6. No One Left Behind Products

This section of the survey focused on the awareness of No One Left Behind products and tools, with a specific ask on Shared Measurement Framework (SMF). It also sought to identify how active LEP members were in encouraging delivery partners to utilise these products and tools and gauge appetite for further training.

Based on 119 responses, here are key themes that emerge:

1. **Need for Regular Refresher and Overview Sessions**: Many comments emphasised the importance of offering refresher sessions or overview workshops for all tools and products related to the LEP. These sessions would help new members understand available tools and resources and allow existing members to stay up to date, ensuring all partners can use these tools effectively.
2. **Importance of Induction and Onboarding for New Members**: A recurring suggestion is to provide more formal onboarding for new members, particularly by offering induction sessions on the NOLB tools and frameworks. This would help new members quickly grasp how to navigate and contribute to LEP activities, ensuring they understand the tools' relevance and application.
3. **Specific Interest in the Data Toolkit and Shared Measurement Framework (SMF)**: There is a strong focus on increasing awareness and usage of the Data Toolkit and Shared

Measurement Framework. Respondents highlighted that further training or a refresher on these tools would be valuable, as they are key resources for evaluating effectiveness and measuring progress.

4. **Training and Support for Wider Engagement**: Several respondents pointed out the need for continuous training, especially for partners with less direct involvement in the tools or those who may not be as familiar with them. Smaller training sessions, either for front-line staff or specific partner groups, could help improve engagement and utilisation of these tools.
5. **Sharing Best Practices and Cross-LEP Learning**: Some respondents suggested that regular sessions focused on sharing best practices and learning from other LEPs would be beneficial. This could involve discussing how other LEPs are using the tools effectively and integrating that knowledge to improve the practices within their own LEP.

This is a summary of the main themes that emerged from a first review and AI supported summary. Further analysis and review of comments to support the identification of recommendations require to be carried out before this is presented more widely.

SUSIE DONKIN
Employability Partnership Manager
25 November 2024