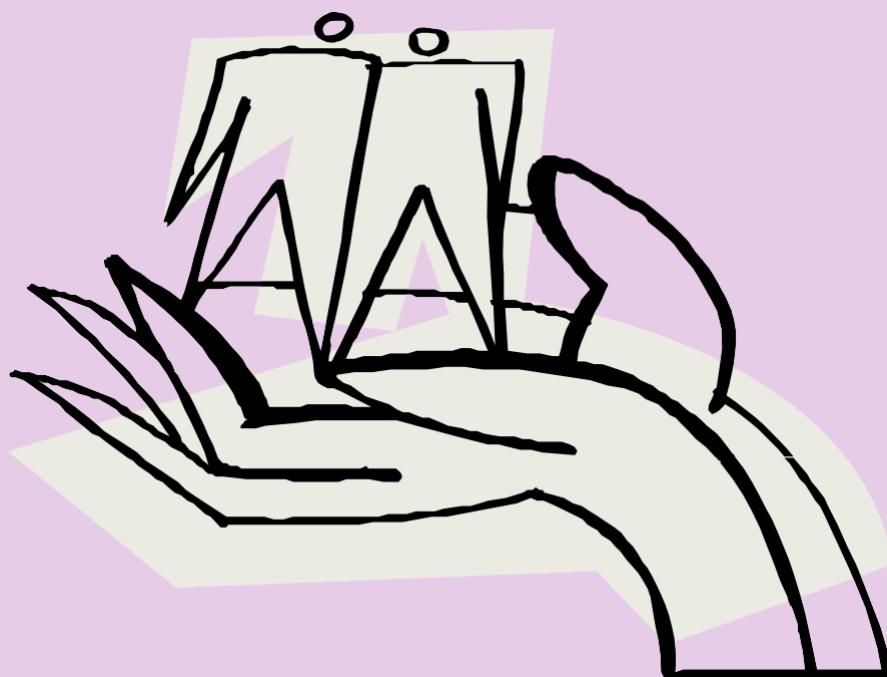


**&
Local
Engagement
Partnerships**

Present:

*2020: A year of
Relationships*



The Local Engagement Partnership and the NI Social Work Leadership Network hosted a virtual event reflecting on the practitioner and person experience in 2020 and the importance of relationships in all that we do.

It was an opportunity to consider our learning throughout the past year, how to overcome barriers and our hopes for the future, working together through co-production.

15th April 2021



*Improving and Safeguarding
Social Wellbeing*

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Summary

On April 15th the NI Social Work Leadership Network and the Local Engagement Partnerships hosted a joint event which was a reflection on the previous year in the pandemic. **2020: A Year of Relationships.**

Both the Leadership Network and the Local Engagement Partnerships were established by the Social Work Strategy. The Leadership Network comprises of leaders from all of the sectors where social workers are employed. The Engagement Partnerships are a coming together of people who receive and people who deliver a social work service.

The principles within the Strategy are **improvement, leadership, outcomes and co-production** and are very much reflected in the work we heard about through the event. Co-production and working closely with those in receipt of service and those who care for others are central to improvements in social work and ultimately improving and safeguarding social well-being.

The relationship between the Network and the Engagement Partnerships was underlined as really important. The Engagement Partnerships are represented in each geographical area across NI. Their role is to inform the Network of issues to develop social work practice through opportunities for co-production and service improvement. The event was very much the start of a strengthened engagement between the Network and the Engagement Partnerships.

At the event we heard the thoughts and experiences of people who are members of the Engagement Partnerships through moving image recordings. Throughout 2020, everyone has faced a variety of challenges and for some these have been significant. The Partnerships have been reflecting on Relationships throughout 2020 and what these mean to them.

The films opened with Ray Hamilton (southern area) setting out the benefits of working together and also how we can improve our engagement. Ray highlighted the importance of relationships in helping to build trust and improve communication. He expertly captured the essence of the Local Engagement Partnerships when he said 'working together today changes our tomorrow.'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0mqCIFJERk&feature=youtu.be>

Event Themes

What have I learnt?

Jane, Maire, Chris, Avery and Jean gave honest reflections with a strong sense of common interest and also of missing place and the impact of that. A shared view of equal voices and the need for consistently good and fair

treatment of people comes across to be at the heart of the work of the Engagement Partnerships.

[What Have I Learnt on Vimeo](#)

What does partnership mean to me?’

Maire, Teresa and Jane shared their thoughts on partnership working. Working together is at the very heart of the Local Engagement Partnerships and we heard about the importance of providing the opportunity to connect people together; to hear their voice and act on what we have heard; to actively support people to be able to contribute and to have their contribution recognised. Being open and inclusive, listening and learning from each other, and recognising that we are stronger together are key messages for us today.

[What Does Partnership Mean To Me on Vimeo](#)

Overcoming barriers together

Maire, Hazel, Jane, Ray and Ruth spoke honestly about the barriers they have experienced and overcoming these. Staying in touch has been such a strong theme in the Engagement Partnerships work in the last year. Hearing how ambition and momentum has been affected has amplified the importance of every relationship, every connection and every opportunity to be heard. It is good to know the Partnerships have made every effort to protect relationships and friendships between members with lived experience and social workers through such a difficult time.

[Overcoming Barriers Together on Vimeo](#)

What needs to change? What would we do differently?

Jean and Jane provided their insights and proposed some challenge. As Jean said - what does doing better look like? What we heard is that it is about recognising that social injustice is not just a concept it is a lived experience and we do not all live equal lives. Walking the journey together, giving voice to people who feel disempowered, finding ways to advocate for equality of access to resources, and promoting social wellbeing is at the core of the work of the Local Engagement Partnerships.

[What Needs To Change on Vimeo](#)

In the future I would like to see....

Chris, Jane, Avery and Jean provided the last film setting out their ambitions for the future. All of the co-chairs talked about building and strengthening the Partnerships through lessons learned and maintaining new ways of working. Strong messages about openness, representation, listening and being heard

came across, all with co-production and partnership working at the foundation. The co-chairs also highlighted very real and practical challenges to enable people to work together with ease which we will have to look at in order to ensure the Engagement Partnerships work remains authentic.

[In The Future on Vimeo](#)

The breakout rooms afforded interactive time with event participants and the Engagement Partnership co-chairs. A number of recommendations were proposed in these sessions and also in the films.

We will be taking our learning back to the Leadership Network for reflection and response; ideally, we will be working closely with the Engagement Partnerships to determine next steps and recommendations.

Recommendations

1. Review arrangements across the region for the setting of criteria to define carers, the registration arrangements for carers and the benefit of having a NI Carers Charter.
2. Retain a blended approach to meeting and communication arrangements. Future plans to incorporate digital technologies should be co-produced.
3. The Engagement Partnerships will identify practical barriers to member's engagement and propose solutions. A resource may be sought for this via the Social Work Strategy.
4. Promote the expansion of the Engagement Partnerships membership across the whole social work system and with advocacy groups and advocates. Allow protected time for employees to engage with this work. The Engagement Partnerships need a communication plan and resource to support this.
5. Develop experiential learning opportunities for student social workers through the Engagement Partnership membership.
6. The Engagement Partnerships will raise issues of inequality of provision with Network members should this be identified. This will include consideration of what services should look like as we emerge from the pandemic, linked to 'building back better'.

Contact Us

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Feedback from the delegates

No	Q1: Something I have learnt	Q2: Something important I have felt or experienced from being part of this event	Q3: Something Useful I will take away	Q4: What was not helpful today that we could do different next time
1	I have learned how co-production can be used to empower service users and carers.	I understand how co-production links in with social work values of equality, empowerment and social justice.	The opportunity to see the faces and hear the experiences from social workers in other trusts.	Could maybe have lasted for slightly longer as I felt the learning was excellent.
2	How vibrant the LEPs continue to be.	Power of relationships based on inclusion and equality.	Change to make things better.	Nothing to bin - All good!! The Zoom process worked brilliantly.
3	The high levels of co-production happening at the LEPs.	Proud that we are part of a profession that is learning how to increase the voice of those who use our services, and applying that learning.	Ideas around increasing social work student capacity to understand and empathise with the carer role and the life of someone with a disability.	Nothing – it was excellent in terms of presentations and the opportunity to engage via break out rooms (and the introduction music!).
4	Importance of networking and local engagement partnerships.	Importance of basic human interactions to build relationships and trust.	Issue of returning to “normal” is this good enough!	I thought the presentations and agenda/flow was slick and informative, I couldn't stay to participate in break out rooms unfortunately but good that this opportunity was available thank you ...sorry can't suggest anything to “bin”!!.

No	Q1: Something I have learnt	Q2: Something important I have felt or experienced from being part of this event	Q3: Something Useful I will take away	Q4: What was not helpful today that we could do different next time
5	I haven't had any involvement with LEP's prior to the meeting so learnt a lot and like the energy!	I can see the benefits of user involvement and co-production more.	I will bring this back to the sensory team and try to find ways of involving users more.	Thought it was all useful and enjoyable.
6	About the work of the LEPs and how to engage with them.	Shared experience of working through COVID and sharing the achievements.	Connecting with SHSCT LEP.	Can't think of anything.
7	There are huge variations in service between Trusts. This is about fundamental levels of inequality rather than pursuing tailored, flexible approaches where 'one size does not fit all'.	Very proud of Ray and Jean.	Ray and Jean have given us the foundation of a regional agenda for the Local Engagement Partnerships as we emerge from the pandemic and go about the business of deciding what a better normal should look like. 'One size should not fit all' but we need to watch Trusts like a hawk to ensure that does not become cover for fundamental inequalities between Trusts and a lack of inclusion.	I thought it was very good. The homemade quality of the videos was entirely right for the time we are in and reflect the level of resource that has been available for this work. I think we could have had another ten minutes in the breakouts without it feeling like too much.

No	Q1: Something I have learnt	Q2: Something important I have felt or experienced from being part of this event	Q3: Something Useful I will take away	Q4: What was not helpful today that we could do different next time
8	Strengths of LEPS in other HSCTs.	Collective passion to make life better for people who draw on services.	Consciously always avoid jargon, acronyms.	Increased service user involvement.
9	Absolute importance of commitment to working together.	Power of relationship, irrespective of mode of engagement.	Continued variation in provision across Trust areas- how we must continue to address these inequalities.	N/A- all extremely relevant- short and focused nature of the session was particularly impactful.
10	That people are working to improve lives.	People are trying to improve things, but can they? Have they the resources and skills required? Empathy is incredibly important and not everyone has it.	Hope	All videos were interesting and helpful. Format excellent. Everything helpful except not sure what the next step is and how helpful this event was.
11	The range of ways the LEPs are making a difference across NI The importance of LEPS connecting with senior leaders.	A passion and commitment for coproduction in social work – the power of relationships in coproduction.	Jean Reynolds way of illustrating one size does not fit all.	Nothing
12	All LEP's have faced the same challenges.	The solutions to our challenges are within our grasp if we listen to what everyone has to say, find solutions together and act.	We need to take some basic steps, for example define who and what is a carer.	Give examples of what LEP's have actually achieved so far.
13	I didn't even know there	Encouraging hearing what good	Knowledge of LEPs	You could start the meeting by giving

No	Q1: Something I have learnt	Q2: Something important I have felt or experienced from being part of this event	Q3: Something Useful I will take away	Q4: What was not helpful today that we could do different next time
	was such a thing as LEP. I found out about the meeting on the Belfast HUB page. Bit wiser now.	work is being carried out in local communities.		bit of background for those of us who knew nothing about them. There were quite a few people who were linked in for first time so I think it might have been helpful for others also.
14	Important information about the core principles of the social work strategy and its focus on partnership working.	I felt I was listened to and that an issue about inequality that had concerned me for some time was heard.	I felt more engaged with service provision and encouraged by the commitment to re energise LEPs.	It was all useful and the videos were excellent. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to take part. Next time it would be useful to hear the specifics of the way forward. For example I would like to learn about initiatives to promote partnership working for families of care home residents. The pandemic has disempowered them severely.
15	Powerful presentations. Importance of co design from the beginning.	Importance of involving service users. Trying to promote service users within MDT.	Powerful messages of lived experiences and positive relationships.	N/A
16	The LEP has been amazingly effective, even during Covid. It is not a tick box meeting but one where we all work well together and the importance of it was seen	The friendships that have developed shone so clear and I believe that has made our work effect because there is a genuine desire to see services improved.	The work that is coming out of this and the importance of virtual as well as in person meetings going forward.	Apart the hiccup with the videos in the breakout rooms I can't see anything from today I would bin. It was well put together and a real credit to all involved but particular thanks to Evelyn for all her work...a few late nights I would say!!!!

No	Q1: Something I have learnt	Q2: Something important I have felt or experienced from being part of this event	Q3: Something Useful I will take away	Q4: What was not helpful today that we could do different next time
	today.			
17	That everyone continues to be committed to the development of the LEPs.	That the road ahead will be challenging in terms of navigating the new “normal” and ensuring inclusivity.	Hope	Nothing! Thank you ☺
18	Of the work of the LEPs and steps taken to progress despite Covid.	That there is an opportunity for change; to develop flexible learning days to include the experiences of the individual and their carer. I would hope that this would be considered beyond social work and AHP's to include medical and nursing professions.	That not one single digital solution will suit everyone and need to consider people needs going into the new normal.	Nothing comes to mind.
19	Local Engagement Partnerships enable people to have their voices heard and to effect change.	How important cultivating relationships are and to always be open and inclusive.	Act on what I hear to effect change.	It was all useful
20	One size doesn't fit all; there is a myriad of ways to manage the LEP and this should be dynamic.	That social work really is about the people we provide a service for, to improve their lives; that gets lost too many times.	Thinking about how I can encourage users of services and carers to join the LEP; Belfast LEP seems to have good ideas about this and I will contact them.	There was a lot to take in from both the presentations, videos and spoken word; 1 hour was just too short to absorb it all so a bit longer the next time. Face to face would be great too!

No	Q1: Something I have learnt	Q2: Something important I have felt or experienced from being part of this event	Q3: Something Useful I will take away	Q4: What was not helpful today that we could do different next time
21	The importance of the role of the Local Engagement Partnerships and the influence that they can have on future policy making.	The benefits of partnership working/co production and how important it is to listen and be open to learning and being challenged. The enthusiasm of the members of the Local Engagement Partnerships is very encouraging.	To be open to not only doing things differently but doing things better.	There was nothing that I would change.