

Welfare Reform in Kirkcaldy

**Strengthening Partnerships
for a Fairer Fife:
Working collaboratively
with data that matters**



Kirkcaldy Welfare Reform ‘Partnership Innovation Team’ and What Works Scotland hosted a partnership event in Kirkcaldy on 18 May 2016 to explore the question:

How can we improve our knowledge of what data is available across partner agencies in Fife? And how can we use this to prevent people from being sanctioned, and better support those who have been sanctioned?

We used vignettes to explore the services available to support people affected by benefit sanctions, and how we could work more effectively together.

Knowledge	Data protection
<p>What people know, or don't know, emerged as a key theme, knowing what support was available to help an individual, what staff know, and knowing how and where to access that support. Participants discussed how knowledge might be developed and shared. What the individual knows, and when they are known to services is also an area to consider. Relationships, and knowing who to contact, were identified as important. A minority of comments relating to knowing if what they are doing is making a difference, but also on knowing limitations in relation to being able to cope with increasing demand for services.</p>	<p>Key themes that emerged around data protection were the difficulties involved in ensuring that relevant information was shared in an effective and uniform manner. Discrepancies across services and within services were identified, with participants highlighting that workers were often reluctant to share information due to an unfamiliarity with key legislation. Participants were agreed that failure to share information in this manner not only had significant ramifications for the quality of service that members of the public received, but increased the difficulties faced by organisations in trying to assess the wider context of the problem at hand.</p>
Next Steps	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get better at knowing who does what • Share good practice and activities across Fife, both within and between areas, between local groups / centre • Have simple up to date list of contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are examples of good data sharing practice that can be unpacked • Review paperwork and systems to make it easier to share data to protect the most vulnerable

Referrals	Resources
<p>There is generally good knowledge locally of who to refer people to. It is important to build relationships and trust, and to provide hands on support to assist people, and make sure that they get the support that they need. Upskilling frontline staff across sectors, including health, is key to improving referral pathways. There are some concerns about the ability of services to cope with increased demand resulting from referrals.</p>	<p>A number of issues were identified as contributing to strain on resources: funding, time, service approaches and the diverse approaches of individual workers. The demand placed on organisations was a key concern for participants, particularly in how this affected the quality of service and the successful transfer of knowledge. The difficulties in keeping staff upskilled, particularly at a time of short-time contracts and funding issues – was likewise a key concern.</p>
Next Steps	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A warm handover is needed for the most vulnerable people. • Build relationships and networks • Making sure the right people are involved and knowing who is best placed to support an individual. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan together more effectively • Be honest about resources we've got • Change is constant, find more effective ways to upskill staff and raise awareness of support available to those who need it

What we have learned about public sector reform



Performance

We can work to ensure that systems support the processes

Partnership

We can create some simple rules about how we can work effectively together

People
Relationships are at the centre of public services, and we need to connect people to decision-makers

Prevention
Research is important for prevention and Vignettes are a particularly useful tool for supporting conversations about difficult topics and action for change.

Further information

For the full report from the Kirkcaldy Welfare Reform event contact:

Julie Dickson, Community Development Manager, Kirkcaldy julie.dickson@fife.gov.uk or

Coryn Barclay, Research Consultant coryn.barclay@fife.gov.uk

You can find out more about What Works Scotland, and the Collaborative Action Research Work Programme in Fife at <http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/casesites/fife/>