CAPITAL CITY PARTNERSHIP

WHOLE FAMILY EQUALITY PROJECT

Whole Family Equality Project Evaluation:

"It was good to see that my voice was valuable".

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September 2024

Acknowledgements

A huge thank you to all who were able to engage with the evaluation and share their invaluable experiences and insights for this report. We would also like to thank the Capital City Partnership Whole Family Equality Project team for all their support and help throughout.

A note on language

In our work, we use the terms people of colour, Black and Asian communities, communities of colour and people who have experience of racism. The Whole Family Equality Project uses the term "ethnically diverse" to describe populations who experience different forms of discrimination based on their ethnic and racial identity. For the purpose of this evaluation, we have used the terms Black, Asian and Ethnic Minority as well as ethnically diverse. These multiple definitions account for the complex legislative, policy and grassroots contexts around anti-racist practice.

We use the terms service users/clients interchangeably to reflect the language that service providers used in reports, interviews and focus groups.

Introduction

Across Scotland *"38% of the ethnically diverse population and 40% ethnically diverse children live in poverty, double the average for white population"* (Fraser Allander[1]). Of those who access employability support "*20.50% of service users are from non-white background, which is around 2.5 times higher than non-white population in Edinburgh"* (Fraser Allander). As such tackling poverty and underemployment must be done through taking an anti-racist lens, whereby the whole needs of the whole family are considered.

Capital City Partnership (CCP) is an arm's length company of the City of Edinburgh Council and is tasked with the operational development, management and support of local and regional employability and poverty reduction measures. The Whole Family Equality Project (WFEP) is a pilot project led by CCP, which tests system change through a partnership-based approach. The project is funded by The Robertson Trust, Scottish Government, National Lottery Young Start Fund and The City of Edinburgh Council.

[1] https://fraserofallander.org/economic-outcomes-for-minority-ethnic-groups-in-scotland/

The WFEP began due to CCP identifying that there was a *"high number of referrals from ethnic minority families. Through discussion in our steering group, we knew that staff didn't necessarily have the skills/cultural awareness to support these families effectively. We also knew from our data that people from ethnic minorities who engage with employability programmes were not converting to outcomes as quickly as others" (strategic lead, interview).*

Within the CCP WFEP Team sits the Strategy and Development manager, the Participation and Communications Assistant and more recently the Development Officer (Black and Minority Ethnic Employment). The team previously included a Youth Engagement Worker.

The WFEP *"aims to bring about significant and measurable improvements to the lives of individuals and families from ethnically diverse communities across Edinburgh, and to empower people by giving them a leading role in the decisions that are made about the project's design and delivery".*[2]

There are a multitude of partners and projects attached to this pilot project:

- **Whole Family Support** building on the success of the Maximise! model, "*aims to deliver transformational change, providing wraparound support that addresses family wellbeing needs, money worries and employability support simultaneously, to ensure each family has the capacity to move out of poverty, and achieve their goals. Recognising the entrenched nature of racial inequalities across the UK, and in Edinburgh, this project aims to identify and address the barriers faced by ethnically diverse families living in poverty".* This is delivered by the following partners: Children 1st, Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI), LinkNet, Volunteering Matters and Passion4Fusion.
- **Citizen's Panel** composed of up to 16 individuals representing ethnically diverse communities in Edinburgh. This panel is now an autonomous group who are seeking to establish themselves as a separate charitable organisation or community interest company.
- **Participatory Budgeting Project focusing on community-led delivery –** whereby *"communities [were invited] to collate and/or create ideas for small scale projects that will make a difference to their community, and address poverty and inequality in some way" through* the

[2] All quotes in the section are taken from Capital City Partnerships own notes.

Scottish Government Investing in Communities funding strand. This project ran from 2022 and finished in December 2023.

- **Support for Young People (aged 12 to 24)** from ethnically diverse communities, focusing *"on those facing long-term unemployment, those who have struggled to develop skills (including life skills), and those who have faced challenges as a direct result of social, economic and systematic disadvantage."* This led to the employment of a young person's worker through the National Lottery funding. This project ran from 2022 and finished in March 2024.
- **Sharing Learning** across partnerships and organisations to build on the learning and scale up changes across other areas. This was supported by both strategic and service meetings and collaboration between the delivery partners and across the partnership.

A detailed timeline of key milestones and activities is included below. The timeline reflects the different strands of the project, staffing support and roles, training and capacity building support provided by CCP for staff, the partners and Citizen Panel members, the strategic and contract management input of CCP throughout. Also reflected are the changes in funding and new delivery partners being contracted to further increase the reach. The timeline also includes the Participatory Budgeting project delivery and the development of the Citizens Panel and activities the members were involved in.

Timeline of WFEP

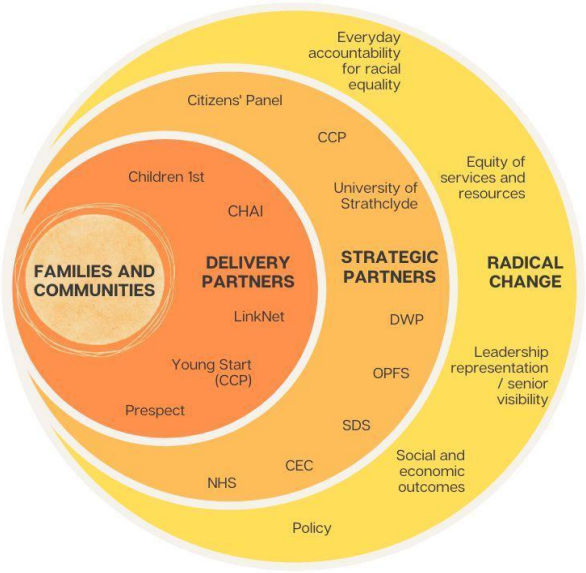
Timeline	Milestones and Key Changes
Feb -Mar 2022	● Investing in Communities Fund Grants Development Officer recruited. The mapping exercise of BME organisations in Scotland and Edinburgh was completed. ● Implementation Plan for Participatory Budgeting Project was developed. ● Implementation plan for WFEP including the Citizens' Panel was developed.
Apr 2022	● WFEP manager recruited and initial delivery partners (Children 1st, CHAI and LinkNet) agreed to be part of the project.
May 2022	● Family Well-being project worker in post at Children 1st ● Referral pathway/ one-to-one service review and evaluation framework was developed. ● Strategic objectives and 6 fundamentals for the WFEP were developed.

Jun 2022	• Marketing through online, flyers, community engagement and network development were underway. • Steering Group for WFEP was established. • First 5 referrals for Family Well-being transferred from Maximise! • Implementation plan was reviewed.
Jul 2022	• Participatory Budgeting projects with Ripple were underway. • Citizens' panel recruitment including interviews and induction were completed.
Aug 2022	• Youth Engagement Officer, funded by National Lottery Young Start Fund was in post. Service delivery started. • The Citizens' panel had the first meeting, chaired by an independent chair.
Sep 2022	• The WFEP evidence of impact framework was developed, with outcomes identified were co-produced and agreed by all delivery partners.
Oct 2022	• Participatory Budgeting project with Score Scotland underway
Dec 2022	• Citizens' Panel engaged with the City of Edinburgh Council on its Diversity and Inclusion Framework • Investing in Communities project complete and management of PB grants passes to WFEP manager
Jan 2023	• The Independent chair of the Citizens' panel departed. The Co-Chair system was voted and implemented by the panel members. • Jatin Haria, Executive Director of Collation of Racial Equality and Rights took on the role of Chair of WFEP steering group.
Feb 2023	• Marketing and Comms Intern recruited via Scottish Government funded Graduate programme. • Two representatives of Citizens' Panel began to attend the WFEP steering group, fully involved in service delivery, improvement and governance.
Mar 2023	• WFEP worked with the Citizens' panel on the design of the final PB project. WFEP co-produced the grants application, specification and voting process with panel members. Grants were allocated to Project Esperanza and ReAct Scotland.
Apr 2023	• Annual service review involving Citizens' Panel was completed. New version of service registration / referral form was co-produced with panel members/ service users to embed a culturally sensitive approach.
May 2023	• No recourse to public funds training was delivered to all delivery partners, and citizens' panel representatives.

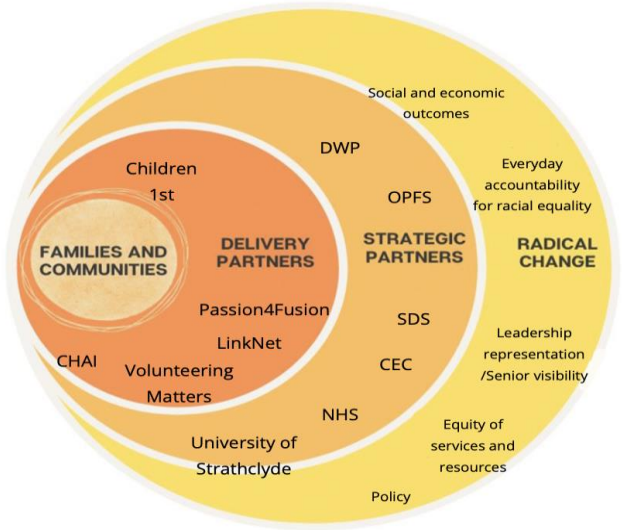
	• WFEP continues to work with the Citizens' Panel on capacity building.
Jun 2023	• Human Rights and employability training from CEMVO was delivered to all delivery partners and Citizens' panel representatives. • Citizens' panel representatives participated in the NOLB/ PESF funding scoring panel.
Jul 2023	• NOLB/ PESF LOT-B funding was announced to extend the WFEP service offers to an additional 86 minority ethnic families in Edinburgh, through services contracted to Volunteering Matters, Passion 4 Fusion, and CHAI.
Aug 2023	• Citizens' Panel's participated in pre-budget security work with the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, the Scottish Parliament. • The WFEP marketing and comm intern fund came to an end. • Part-time post of Participation fund was granted by the Robertson Trust. A Participation and communication assistant contract was issued to the previous intern post holder until Mar 2025.
Oct 2023	• The Citizens' Panel's participation in pre-budget security work with the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee for the Scottish Parliament was completed. Panel representatives put questions forward to the Equalities Minister and the Minister for Children and Young people. Panel Members demonstrated and continue to embed a rights-based participation at a national level. • Citizens' panel had their first anniversary celebration, supported by the WFEP, to reflect, review and re-set the journey ahead.
Nov 2023	• MSP and National Lottery visit to the Youth Engagement Project and WFEP.
Dec 2023	• The WFEP was shortlisted for Scottish Public Service Awards 2023 under the category of Diversity and Inclusion. • WFEP Manager moved on. • External evaluator was identified.
March 2024	• National Lottery funded Youth Engagement project comes to an end.
April 2024	• New WFEP Manager is recruited.
July 2024	• Citizens' Panel indicate that they wish to reformulate as an autonomous body. CCP gives ongoing support and signposting, but the panel is paused to allow this change to happen.

September 2024	• The partner feedback for the WFEP is positive. They are exploring options to carry on working through this model of delivery post March 2025.

Project start delivery model partners:



Current delivery partners:



Funding for the Youth Engagement Project came to an end in March of this year. As of July 2024, the Citizens Panel is an autonomous group.

The delivery model developed for the WFEP places families and communities at the centre, whereby they receive a timely response when and where support is needed. Fundamental to the delivery is the voice of families and communities, a joined-up whole family approach, equity of support, a relationship based and a rights-focused, trauma-informed approach.

Funding for this project will be coming to an end in 2025, and as such CCP, as the lead organisation, is interested in developing learning so far from the three-year project and finding out more around how well the outcomes have been met.

The outcomes of the project are:

- To maximise equitable support for ethnically diverse families and communities through a joined-up whole family support model of delivery,
- To reduce racial disparities through improvement of family well-being, attainment, education, job opportunities, job outcomes, and social and economic outcomes,
- To improve participation and representation through amplifying the voice of ethnically diverse families and communities,
- To make racial equality an everyday accountability through securing change at system and structural level.

Each objective is measured across the following outcomes: improve safety, health and well-being, relationship and home life, recovery, community integration, participation and representation, income maximization, education, employability and employment of ethnic minority families accessing services.

We were asked to provide an evaluation of the WFEP to explore if it has met its outcomes. Within this report, we explore to what extent each outcome has been met, and provide recommendations based on our analysis of the data sets we drew on, as well as from our expertise in working on issues relating to employability, anti-racism and racial equity and system changes.

Who we are

Iffat Shahnaz was the project manager and lead researcher for this evaluation. She undertakes an intersectional, feminist and anti-racist approach in all her work from service delivery, and programme development to co-designing lived experienced and participatory practices.

Ellie Hutchinson provided project support and evaluation expertise. She is an experienced researcher and facilitator who has worked in the social change space for around 18 years. Both members of the team are deeply curious about what makes social change happen, how it can be sustained and what works best to support communities, families and individuals experiencing multiple forms of oppression and discrimination.

Methodology

We used a multi-method approach to this project drawing on;

- Monitoring and evaluation data captured by partner organisations, including referral forms and reports to CCP,
- End of year progress report to funders,
- One-to-one interviews with former Citizen Panel members,
- Interview with the strategic lead,
- Focus groups with the delivery and strategic partners.

We invited a total of 26 people to interviews or focus groups. 15 Citizen's Panel members were invited to be part of the evaluation, of which 6 expressed an interest in being interviewed and 4 were interviewed in total. All 5 of the delivery partners were interviewed. We also held one-to-one interviews with the CCP strategic lead, and two focus groups were conducted. One focus group was held with the delivery partners, and another was held with wider external stakeholders who sit on the steering group. Interviews and focus groups were transcribed and checked within the evaluation team for clarification and agreement on themes. Data gathered from organisations and individuals was anonymised.

Limitations

Whilst we had initially intended to co-design the work with Citizen's Panel members, we were unable to establish a pathway to do this. However, we were able to speak with former Citizen's Panel members to capture their insights, expertise and wisdom. Due to timescale constraints for this evaluation, we were unable to gather knowledge directly about what worked from the

perspective of the targeted communities and the impact the partnership had on service users. However, we have been able to capture some of the impacts on service users via testimonials collated by organisations.

We were also unable to capture insight into families and young people's experiences due to timescale pressures and the end of funding for the black and minority ethnic young people's employment and engagement service in March 2024. However, we have been able to capture some of the impacts on young people via case studies collated by organisations and the end of project report.

We have also been unable to understand more about the impact of the programme on different groups of people who are accessing services. We recognise that ethnically diverse communities are not a homogenous group, and that this broad definition captures white Europeans, New Scots and those with experience of the asylum process as well as Black and Asian communities and people of colour. Similarly, we were not able to drill down into any gendered impacts due to the lack of disaggregated data at our disposal.

Recommendation 1: For future evaluations, creative and accessible tools should be used with both service users, service providers and strategic supports to understand both the impact and the processes of projects. Storytelling with all parties involved captures richer data and enables all stakeholders to share their wisdom in a non-extractive and more joyful way.

Recommendation 2: Whilst services do disaggregate data along some lines, it is important to understand that the needs and experiences of different client groups will be different according to their ethnic and racial identity. Further, it is important to understand what, if any, gender differences exist in order to better shape policy and practice responses according to the needs of specific groups[3].

[3] For more information on why a gendered lens is vital see here https://www.wbg.org.uk/article/dwp-data-reveals-women-continue-to-be-worst-affected-by-poverty/ and https://www.spi.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Gender_and_poverty_Bennett_and_Daly_final_12_5_14_28_5_14.pdf and https://www.gov.scot/publications/using-intersectionality-understand-structural-inequality-scotland-evidence-synthesis/pages/3/

The context in which the work happened

During our evaluation, many parts of the UK were experiencing public racist riots. These riots were inflamed by some politicians on the right and within social media spaces. Whilst no physical organised riots occurred in Edinburgh, hate speech and discriminatory language were prolific at this time. For many clients/service users, and professionals working in services, this was an extremely frightening and worrying time. Whilst we were still able to interview people, it was clear that people were deeply affected by the overt racism occurring across the UK. As such, it is important to acknowledge the emotional work that is required by communities of colour to "be ok" within a professional setting and to continue with the day-to-day demands of their work despite living within a state of hypervigilance. This work can cause high levels of stress, anxiety and increased risk of physical and mental health problems, particularly for those already experiencing trauma. Similarly, this work occurred during ongoing conflict in the Ukraine as well as in Palestine, impacting significantly on service users and staff.

Recommendation 3: The wider Third and Public sector should reflect on how to support organisations, service users, and black and minority ethnic professionals around experiencing public and private forms of racism[4] to ensure all those working for change are supported to enact it.

[4] https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/zoe-amar-uk-riots-turning-point-sector-fights-racism/management/article/1883476
https://www.jrf.org.uk/race-and-ethnicity/glasgow-communities-of-colour-failed-by-employability-services-and-workplace

Outcome 1: To maximise equitable support for ethnically diverse families and communities through a joined-up whole family support model of delivery.

In this section, we outline to what extent the project has been able to meet its first outcome; to maximise equitable support for ethnically diverse families and communities through a joined-up whole family support model of delivery.

A joined up whole family support model of delivery means understanding that individuals are part of a complex ecosystem of families and communities. It means understanding that the challenges people face, and the successes people experience are interconnected. It means understanding that agencies should work together as one front door, rather than as disparate revolving doors. It means that families should therefore expect to engage with a service and be triaged towards the right service for their needs.

To understand the extent to which WFEP has met this goal, we were interested to find out more about partnership working. How were services able to collaborate? Were organisations able to triage families and refer on to partner organisations? What was that process like for service users? And were there any barriers?

The WFEP delivery partners' referral group met monthly during the early stages of the project, and continue to meet regularly to discuss referrals, refer to the other partners with the specialist knowledge and staff on how best to support the service users. One of the key outcomes of the referral group has been the development of a cross-partnership shared referral system and form (translated into Urdu, Mandarin, Polish, Bengali, Hindi and Arabic). The form was co-produced in consultation with Citizens Panel members and service users to ensure that the language in the form was culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and person-centred.

The below chart outlines the referrals across partners as well as the ethnic identity of each individual. Most individuals identified as African (other), with a small number identifying as White Scottish.

	Whole Family Equality Project Advice Worker (PESF)	Whole Family Equality Project	Volunteering Supporting Parents (PESF Y)	Passion4Fusion (PESF Y)	Grand Total
African - Other	1	0	10	1	55
African, African Scottish, African British	0	0	8	1	46
Arab, Arab Scottish, Arab British	2	0	4	3	8
Asian - Chinese, Chinese Scottish, Chinese British	0	0	0	1	2
Asian - Other	1	0	3	1	6
Asian - Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish, Pakistani British	1	1	8	2	9
Black, Black Scottish, Black British	0	0	3	0	6
Caribbean or Black - Other	0	0	1	0	1
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	0	0	1	0	1
Not Known	0	0	9	0	12
Other ethnic group	0	0	5	0	5
Prefer not to say	0	0	0	0	1
White - Other	0	0	2	1	3

White - Polish	3	0	6	1	8
White - Roma	2	0	0	0	2
White - Scottish	2	0	0	0	2
Grand Total	12	1	62	16	171

The 6 priority family groups are identified by the Scottish Government are: one-parent families, minority ethnic families, families with a disabled adult or child, families with a younger mother (under 25), families with a child under 1, and larger families (3+ children).

The below tables show the background information on the minority ethnic families supported:

Lone Parent	Large Family	Disability	Child under 1	Young Parent under 25	Emotional
71	30	141	2	4	89

Unemployment	Violence	Temporary Accommodation	Substance Abuse	No Recourse to Public Funds	Issues with Benefits
6	0	6	0	0	5

Mental/ Emotional Health Issues	Care Leaver/ Experienced	Refugee Status	Low Income Household /Employed	Low/No Formal Education	Employment Deprived Area/Rural Area	Low Skilled	Physical Health Issues
27	9	6	67	25	11	14	11

Cultures of Collaboration

The key to partnership working is trusting relationships and cultures of collaboration. This means having a solid foundation of shared values and approaches in order for partners to work within and across systems. Firstly then, we explore how well service providers were able to build trusting relationships between organisations.

Whilst we were unable to gain insight into how service users experienced the partnership, we heard from service providers that they all aimed to create *"a warm handover for families"*. (service provider, focus group). We were told by many that *"what works well is the referral process, and you know, the good number of people, all of the partners...are sharing or are helping, and... the positive feedback from clients"* (service provider, interview). As such, many partners shared that they were indeed part of a culture of collaboration and trust within the partnerships. This resulted in being able to provide services to more families. According to funding reports *"the family well-being service (Children 1st) has supported 35 families with one-to-one intensive support and 56 children"*.

CCP also shared that through additional funding they were able to augment the programme with the partners to further increase the reach; *"With the Parental Employability Support Fund 2023-2024, Whole Family Equality is now able to extend its service offers to an additional 86 minority ethnic families in Edinburgh, through services contracted to Volunteering Matters, Passion 4 Fusion, and CHAI. All three new delivery partners are in the delivery phase. By the end of the financial year Volunteering Matters had 13 new engagements and achieved 2 job outcomes. Passion 4 Fusion has 74 new engagements against a total target of 40, with 10 job outcomes achieved. CHAI had 12 engagements for financial and benefits advice and work with those clients translated into financial gains of £35,454.56"* (CCP report to funders).

We also found that learning between organisations has occurred, for example anti-racist practice and learning within Children 1st was directly correlated with the involvement of Children 1st teams within the partnership. Another organisation shared that they have experienced a "*change in thinking and also feeling more connected and less isolated"* (service provider, focus group), highlighting the value of the trust and learning that has occurred within the partnership. One organisation told us that as a white organisation, the project has "*been really good to have... this other focus that people can share with us and looking at the work that we do through a different filter"* (service provider, focus group).

It was clear that people wanted to work together for better outcomes, with one sharing *"you almost don't want families to know it's different services, they are getting the support that they need"* (service provider, focus group).

Shared values

Part of being able to work well together was through having a shared set of values. This included having a shared trauma-informed, people-centred and a holistic approach. All the services we spoke with took a holistic approach to working with families and individuals. Indeed, one told us; *"We've always worked in a holistic manner, if a young person walks into our services, we look at what's going on at home, in terms of successes, both parental and whole family"* (service provider, focus group). One shared that a *"whole person approach is about life skills, learning, confidence building, changing mindset, understanding different cultural settings and contexts"* (service provider, interview). A view shared by all that we spoke with. However, some shared that they were concerned that the voices of children were missing, with some services more focused on adult employability than the experiences of children. This was due to funding streams that focused specifically on adult employability-oriented work through the Parental Employability Support Fund.

Referrals: Shared systems

In order for services to be able to practically refer service users, they need to be able to access a user friendly and shareable database. One service provider told us that the increased referrals between services worked well as "*from a provider perspective it is time saving, you don't need to spend so much time trying to find out where to send people; they are trusting you"*, (service provider, focus group). Another told us that *"I think it's helped us support more single parents from racially minoritized communities"* (strategic partner, focus group). Another told us that "*we refer children to different services, and then you find that you're reducing, or you're supporting to reduce the stress... that comes with the whole family situation, parenting and working,"* (service provider, interview).

Helix, the database services used, was seen as helpful for employability services, but was seen as challenging for some. One service provider told us, *"how we report is difficult – [we offer] different support*, (service provider, interview). This was due to different funding streams and funder reporting requirements. Another told us that Helix was not fit for purpose. We also heard that there were **"***a lot of issues with there being two different systems on the data side and requirements for the project"* (service provider, interview).

We found that most partners were working with multiple funders, with multiple outcomes and reporting requirements. This meant that some found balancing project demands with their own

resource constraints challenging. This resulted in some partners feeling as though there were too many meetings and some duplication. This was particularly apparent for services that were only receiving a small amount of funding for this project. One partner shared that, *"everyone is working on their outcomes"* (service provider, interview) rather than working on the project's shared outcomes. Interestingly, whilst the one front door approach was welcomed by services, we did hear from a Citizens Panel member who told us that they would also appreciate ongoing engagement with the service who they initially worked with.

Accessing the right support meant that service users were able to build and maintain trusting relationships, and services were also able to build trusting relationships with each other. Where this worked less well was around the ending of the youth strand. One partner commented that the end of funding did negatively impact trust-building within this piece of work (focus group, strategic partner).

Achieving outcomes

To what extent then, did the project m*aximise equitable support for ethnically diverse families and communities through a joined-up whole family support model of delivery?*

In our evaluation, we have found that the project has indeed improved on providing equitable support for ethnically diverse families through a joined-up whole family support model of delivery. Services did indeed share that the programme has had a positive impact on the families they worked with and the way that they themselves delivered services. It was clear that the project has improved partnership working and has built positive relationships. There was a strong sense of collaboration, learning and shared values between partner organisations.

However, there were also difficulties with reporting systems, and services having multiple funders with multiple outcomes which limited their ability to understand the impact of this particular project on their work. Due to timescales, we were unable to gain an understanding of how the joined up approach directly impacted services users and whether they felt it made an improvement on their ability to maximise equitable support.

The project has generally met this outcome.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that any work going forward captures more deeply the experience of service users.

Recommendation 5: We recommend that funders work closely together to align their outcomes so as not to duplicate or complicate the work of service providers.

Recommendation 6: Drawing on the learning, delivery partners should explore how to continue to work together to co-design a new bid based upon this established consortium approach.

Outcome 2: To reduce racial disparities through improvement of family well-being, attainment, education, job opportunities, job outcomes, and social and economic outcomes.

In this section, we explore to what extent the project has met its second outcome; to reduce racial disparities through the improvement of family well-being, attainment, education, job opportunities, job outcomes, and social and economic outcomes.

Young people.

To find out if young people's wellbeing, attainment, education, job opportunities, job outcomes, and social and economic outcomes were improved due to this project, we looked at funding reports submitted by services and CCP, case studies shared by services and any additional information gathered by services and shared with us.

The Youth Strand of WFEP was established at the beginning of the project. A staff member was recruited to lead this part of the project and work with young people referred to them via the partnership. This strand ran for two years. Below, we detail how many young people accessed the service and what outcomes were achieved.

What service was offered?	How many young people?
Outreach	103
Intensive Support (one to one)	58
Advice and Signposting (outreach)	45
What outcomes were achieved?	How many young people?

Re-engaged with education	10
Entered higher education	12
Entered training	4
Volunteering	3
Progressed into jobs	2
Referred onto other services	16

In terms of qualitative impact, we found that the service did have a positive impact on the young people it engaged with. One young person shared that; *"I never thought that I would actually get to college and counselling just seemed like an unachievable dream. Seeing the journey from the access course to becoming fully qualified just made it feel so real"* (service user, in report to funders).

Young People's wellbeing; community, connections, support

In terms of wellbeing, we found that young people reported some improved outcomes around feeling positive about the future and improved mental health. One young person shared; *"I had new goals and a new reason to feel good about the future"* (report to funders). In the final report to funders, CCP shared that *"as a result of her participation and engagement at the Citizen's Panel, A reported a much-improved mental health, confidence, and self-esteem"*.

Young people were therefore able to improve their engagement with education, employment and training as well as take part in the Citizen's Panel. As CCP reported "*Young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, particularly recent migrants and refugees face increased barriers to progression than their white counterparts. Immigration restrictions in particular mean that accessing secondary and tertiary education can prove difficult and Edinburgh's housing crisis compounds existing issues. The project has shown that dedicated one-to-one support and advocacy can greatly improve the life chances of these young people"* (CCP report to funders). It was shared that *"key factors that contribute to youth employability outcomes are involving young people in goal setting, hopes and aspirations, relationship building, voices, advocacy support, personal resilience, and peer-to-peer support."*

The two-year National Lottery funding for this project was completed in March 2024. As such, it has been difficult for us to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of this work on young people directly as they are no longer in contact with CCP. However, learning was gained around the importance of community engagement and representation, ongoing relationships and peer support.

Adults

To find out if adults' well-being, attainment, education, job opportunities, job outcomes, and social and economic outcomes were improved due to this project, we looked at funding reports submitted by services and CCP, case studies shared by services and any additional information gathered by services. Below, we looked at the data collected from the referral database to explore what happened after people first engaged with partners.

Helix WFEP outcomes by organisation since beginning of time to 2024 Quarter 1 (01/04/2022-30/06/2024)

Organisation	Number of outcomes
Passion4Fusion	52
Whole Family Equality Project (Children 1st + Young People Engagement)	42
Volunteering Supporting Parents (PESF Y)	12
Whole Family Equality Project Advice Worker	3
Grand Total	**109**

Helix WFEP activities since beginning of time to 2024 Quarter 1 (01/04/2022-30/06/2024) by organisation:

Type of outcome	total number
Started Vocational Training	18
Employability Training	16
Re-Engage with Education	12
Job Start - FT	11
Progression: Education Full-Time	8
Progression: Education Part-Time	8
Progression: Vocational Training	8
Job Start - PT	6

Progressed along employability pipeline	6
Started Volunteering	5
Progression: Other	3
Qualification Gained	3
In Work Progression	2
Started Training Course	2
Retained Employment	1
Grand Total	**109**

Helix WFEP engagements since beginning of time to 2024 Quarter 1 (01/04/2022-30/06/2024) by organisation:

Organisation	Total number
Passion4Fusion (PESF Y)	102
Whole Family Equality Project (Children 1st + Young People Engagement)	69
Volunteering Supporting Parents (PESF Y)	17
Whole Family Equality Project Advice Worker (PESF)	17
Grand Total	**205**

One service user said that alongside "*taking a course with Edinburgh College [I am working with] a caseworker who is guiding and supporting me in achieving my goal of securing a full-time dream job in the future. I am truly grateful for all the opportunities I have received and hope to make my dream come true.*" (client testimonial). Whilst most service users reported no outcome yet, we believe this to reflect the complexity of need, and the time needed to support service users into education, employment, volunteering or training.

Adult wellbeing; community, connections and support

In this section, we explore to what extent adult service users were able to build community, connections and support.

Having goals and dreams and being supported to make them happen was seen to have a positive impact on service users' wellbeing. Others spoke of services *"making my days brighter"* (client testimonial) *despite "going through a sticky patch in my life"* (client testimonial). Overall, the experience of working with services was seen as *"transformative"* (client testimonial).

One service provider shared that organisations have been able to convene social and informal peer support groups between service users via WhatsApp groups and social activities. This had resulted in an informal network of childcare and peer support. Similarly, one member of the Citizen's Panel also shared that she had supported a family to purchase food from their country of origin, that while being more expensive than British food, enabled them to feel more connected to their own culture which in turn supported their wellbeing. Part of the role of service providers then, has been to support people to find their peers and to build relationships around shared culture and language. Whilst incredibly positive, these informal networks could also be supported by more formal networks of support, particularly important for those at risk of, or currently experiencing workplace exploitation or abuse within the home. For example, for women with experience of domestic abuse it may not be safe to access support through shared friendships. If organisations were able to resource peer support networks, women could also access support via a dedicated worker or through specialist services.

One Citizen's Panel member noted to us that it was important for professionals to reflect the communities they worked for and highlighted a significant gap in the diversity of the workforce. One service provider told us that this was not isolated to this project, but rather that, *"in terms of the third sector as a whole, there's, you know, serious... workforce development issues"* (service provider, interview). However, we found that some of the specialist organisations did indeed draw some of their workforce from service users, providing a pipeline for engagement for people, from service user, to volunteer, to staff member.

Overall, we found that each service worked hard to maintain and develop meaningful and trusted relationships with service users. This in turn enabled service users to build on their skills and confidence in order to work towards some of their own aspirations. However, this was significantly limited due to wider systemic barriers. We will explore this further in section 4.

Support for organisations

In terms of supporting organisations to achieve this outcome, CCP provided joint training on No Recourse to Public Funds, Human Rights and Employability with CEMVO for staff, panel members and partners. Training was also delivered on General Data Protection Regulation requirements.

CCP worked with CEMVO on how to improve their internal recruitment practices and the diversity of their workforce.

Regular operational and cross-referral meetings take place with the partners. There currently is a steering group for the project which meets every quarter, the membership is made up of the delivery partners, panel members, CCP and external strategic partners. The steering group members receive progress reports on the outputs achieved, ongoing impact of the project, how and in what ways the learning is being used to influence wider systems change and provide a strategic overview.

For CCP, the wider impact of the project and *"work on equalities has brought new organisations into the 3rd sector employability landscape in Edinburgh. We are constantly learning from their practice and experience"* (strategic lead, interview). Due to the ongoing commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and the good practise developed through the WFEP a Winter celebration was held in December 2022 "*to ease costs but not focus on the Christian calendar*" and "*Eid was celebrated by the caseworkers"* (strategic lead, interview).

All meetings are supported and coordinated by the WFEP team. The team provide ongoing contract management support, identify funding for translation, interpretation and other support costs for the delivery partners. One of the delivery partners stated the positive impact of CCP funded translation and interpretation support on their own organisation. As a result of this learning *"translation costs need to be underwritten with all funding bids and support"* (service provider, interview).

Through the participatory budgeting strand, CCP worked with small community-based organisations Ripple and SCORE Scotland to support life skills, peer support and social inclusion. Working alongside Ripple, two projects were funded to address racial inequality, including one to promote social inclusion and mental well-being, and one to deliver a cultural art project. Two final projects were developed by the Participatory Budgeting Board within the Citizen's Panel, with support from the WFEP staff. The focus being to address key themes identified by the Citizen's Panel, including poverty, social inclusion, and mental well-being. The project funding was awarded to and delivered by Project Esperanza and ReAct Scotland.

Whilst we are unable to evaluate the impact of these funded programmes, CCP and the WFEP did provide opportunities and support for small community-based organisations to improve "family well-being, attainment, education, job opportunities, job outcomes, and social and economic outcomes" through the Investing in Communities Small Grant Fund.

Outcomes

To what extent then, did the project reduce racial disparities through improvement of family well-being, attainment, education, job opportunities, job outcomes, and social and economic outcomes?

Overall, we found the project has mainly met the goal of reducing racial disparities**.** Those who accessed support through services did indeed access greater wellbeing and social support, as well as move through the employability pipeline. We are unable to evaluate the impact on service users directly for funded projects, or the impact on young people, however, we were able to analyse information that suggests that the project did indeed support people to gain family well-being, attainment, education, job opportunities, job outcomes, and social and economic outcomes. Whether this resulted in reducing racial disparities is less clear. We believe that for families to access employment, training, volunteering and education they need to feel safe, secure and ready. This is reflected in Stage 2 of the employability pipeline around the importance of building confidence and connections. As we have seen from services and service users, building communities and support enables people to feel "ready" to enter the workplace. Through the work of the Whole Family Equality Project, people were able to develop and build communities of care. They were able to access childcare and other informal support that they needed, they felt more confident in navigating British systems and cultures, and they felt more able to improve their wellbeing because of these community connections.

The project has mainly met this goal

Recommendation 7: Going forward, employability work should continue to focus on Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the employability pipeline, developing people's confidence and networks alongside supporting them to seek employment. This could include resourcing formal peer support networks.

Recommendation 8: For the project's next steps, it will be important to clarify language around ethnic diversity, race and New Scots. Each of these groups will likely overlap and intersect with each other, but each of these groups will have different needs[5].

Recommendation 9: In order to fully understand how the project impacted service users, we suggest services work with a cohort from the beginning of the project to 'track' the progress made from support to employment, and sustained employment in particular. This can be done through creative and visual monitoring and evaluation tools such as filmmaking or photo voice, enabling those with differing literacy levels to take part. This will also support the development of knowledge around the more structural question of how and if programmes reduce racial disparities across groups.

[5] See https://unitedwaynca.org/blog/racial-equity-vs-equality/ and here on language https://equalities.blog.gov.uk/2022/04/07/why-we-no-longer-use-the-term-bame-in-government/ and here for background on our work on naming racism and experiences https://education.gov.scot/media/tdxpb0tm/brl-external-evaluation20240807.pdf

Outcome 3: To improve participation and representation through amplifying the voice of ethnically diverse families and communities.

In this section, we explore to what extent the programme was able to improve participation and representation through amplifying the voice of ethnically diverse families and communities.

The Citizen's Panel was composed of 16 people who had accessed services within the partnership and other voluntary and community organisations. The panel members were supported by the WFEP Strategy Lead and Development manager, the Youth Engagement Worker and the Participation and Communications Officer, who provided full time support as a peer mentor.

Overview and history of the activities and activities the Citizens Panel were involved in:

Jul 2022	• Citizens' panel recruitment including interviews and induction were completed
Aug 2022	• Citizens' panel had the first meeting, chaired by an independent chair.
Sep 2022	• The WFEP evidence of impact framework was developed, with outcomes identified were co-produced and agreed by all delivery partners.
Dec 2022	• Citizens' Panel engaged with the City of Edinburgh Council on its Diversity and Inclusion Framework
Jan 2023	• The Independent chair of the Citizens' panel departed. The Co-Chair system was voted and implemented by the panel members.
Feb 2023	• Two representatives of Citizens' panel began to attend the WFEP steering group, fully involved in service delivery, improvement and governance.
Mar 2023	• WFEP worked with the Citizens' panel on the design of the final PB project. WFEP co-produced the grants application, specification and voting process with panel members. • Grants were allocated to Project Esperanza and ReAct Scotland.

Apr 2023	• Annual service review involving Citizens' panel was completed. New version of service registration / referral form was co-produced with panel members/ service users to embed a culturally sensitive approach.
May 2023	• No -recourse to public funds training was delivered to all delivery partners, and citizens' panel representatives. • WFEP continues to work with the Citizens' Panel on capacity building.
Jun 2023	• Human Rights and employability training from CEMVO was delivered to all delivery partners and Citizens' panel representatives. • Citizens' panel representative participated in the NOLB/ PESF funding scoring panel.
Jul 2023	• NOLB/ PESF LOT-B funding was announced to extend the WFEP service offers to additional 86 minority ethnic families in Edinburgh, through services contracted to Volunteering Matters, Passion 4 Fusion, and CHAI.
Aug 2023	• Citizens' Panel's participated in pre-budget security work with the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee, the Scottish Parliament.
Oct 2023	• The Citizens' Panel's participation in pre-budget security work with the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee for the Scottish Parliament was completed. • Panel representatives put questions forward to the Equalities Minister and the Minister for Children and Young people. Panel Members demonstrated and continue to embed a rights-based participation at a national level. • Citizens' panel had their first anniversary celebration, supported by the WFEP, to reflect, review and re-set the journey ahead.

The below table outlines the ages, ethnicity and gender of members;

Age	**Ethnicity**	**Gender**
45	Black British	Female
53	South-East Asian	Female

25	East Asian	Male
41	Black African	Female
33	White Eastern European	Female
55	Black British	Male
49	Black British	Male
31	East Asian	Female
40's	Black African	Female
43	White Eastern European	Female
40's	Black African	Male
52	Black African	Female
42	Black African	Female
20's	Arab	Female
20's	Arab	Male
20's	Black African	Male

As such, we can see that most members were identified as female. The oldest member was 55 and the youngest was in their 20's.

The Citizen's Panel is the most clear example of how ethnically diverse families and communities were able to participate in policy and practice formation. When speaking with former Citizen's Panel members we found that people were recruited from services they were engaging with as a way to *"to push for a change"* (CP member, interview). Most shared that they were motivated by their own experiences and desire to help others. We asked people to share with us what happened as panel members and what worked well with their involvement.

They told us that it supported skill building, that *"it's helped me to develop new skills …it opened the door"*. One Citizen's Panel member *"was part of the interviewing panel for the new WFEP [whole family equality project] Strategy and Development manager in February. She was able to ask her*

questions to the interviewees. She reflected positively on being part of the panel with the CEO and deputy CEO of CCP" (CCP report). Another Citizen's Panel member told us that, *"I was very shy and quiet. And I know that I work this way, and it takes time for me to open up. But I also think because I was part of the panel, I became a bit more outspoken with time."*

The Citizens' Panel members who as experts by experience were involved in the Pre-Budget Scrutiny work with the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee of the Scottish Parliament from August to October 2023 in supporting the Committee on how to best influence the Government in their public spending. Through their own lived experiences, the Panel members identified what the barriers where to participation, solutions and the importance of embedding a rights-based approach at all levels of decision making to ensure equitable public spending.

For panel members, their engagement with the Scottish Parliament was seen as one of the biggest achievements for the group. From attending meetings in person and online they were able to understand the working of the Parliament and Pre-Budget Scrutiny Work. One shared that *"being a Citizen's panel member opened the door for me to be able to, to go to the Parliament, sit with parliament members, ask them those questions that bothers me"*. This was echoed by members of the strategic board who shared, "*the panel itself has gone on to do some really good work around budget scrutiny, etc, which I think was quite unusual to see a group of people getting so involved in something at parliamentary level"* (strategic partner, focus group).

Citizen's Panel members also told us that it supported their own empowerment and belief in their own voices. They told us that, *"I think it's woken up another being in us"* (CP interview) and that "*it was good to see that my voice was valuable"* (CP interview). Many shared the importance of having a supportive co-ordinator, with staff from CCP seen as crucial to establishing and building trusting relationships. The staff provided hands on support, help in preparing for the meetings, mentoring and encouragement throughout.

The panel also brought together the delivery partners and services users and allowed services users to understand what was happening on the steering group. It was felt that this approach *"really worked"* (service provider, interview). We were told that the strength in this collaborative

approach was that "*someone is thinking about these people, you have hope in yourself that things are being done when you provide the right support throughout"* (service provider, interview).

We were interested in what changed because of the panel. We were told that from CCPs perspective, they were more able to share insights with strategic partners grounded in lived experience. We heard that "*they've taken the time to build those relationships and to really kind of understand some of the barriers that are faced by the communities"* (strategic partner, focus group,) and that this time and care impacted on how CCP were able to lobby for changes.

The Panel also had great success in supporting the Participatory Budgeting strand, whereby they set the themes and supported the distribution of funds to black and ethnic minority groups through their own Participatory Budgeting Board. CCP shared that *"The final two [participatory budgeting] projects were delivered by ReAct and Project Esperanza. ReAct delivered welcome packs to young people which were available in English, Arabic and Pashtun and included school backpacks and baby essentials pack. As expected, most families were from Ukraine, Iraq and Afghanistan but the project also reported a growing number of Sudanese refugees who require support. Project Esperanza's SistaCircle also completed in this period. Their women-only project was focussed on trips out, therapeutic gardening and learning through food"* (CCP report to funders).

Overall, then the panel was seen to have worked well in supporting participation and representation of ethnically diverse groups. We now turn to finding out what the learning was, what did not work so well and what the recommendations are for next steps.

What did not work so well?

We heard from some panel members that there seemed to be a lack of training around more softer skills that would enable group dynamics to bed in. People did receive training on "data protection", and "human rights" but we did not hear about how the group was supported to build skills around communication, listening, and holding space for conflict. In part, this was due to a sense of there being "*not enough time"* (CP interview), and not enough support around panel members' own experiences.

Some felt like they weren't always included in decisions, and some felt like their experiences or knowledge wasn't seen as valid due to their lack of confidence. One told us that she saw herself as "*just a simple person who just came from the street, so I didn't have nothing [to offer]"* (CP interview). Whilst members did receive support, one person felt her English was limited and prevented her from understanding some of the language (and jargon) around complex issues such as participatory budgeting.

Another shared that after CCP staff left, the meetings could be dominated by *"over passionate and at times overpowering dynamics and people"* (CP interview), signalling a need for groups to be supported consistently during their set up phase. We found there was also some misunderstanding for some of the panel members about why they were involved within the WFEP, pointing to a need for clear and concise communication.

We also heard that there were some tricky times around what they wanted to do as a group, with group outcomes not necessarily representing the priorities of services or other families. We heard that the changes they wished to see were sometimes *"not within our gift"* (strategic partner, focus group). We also heard that some power holders didn't attend meetings, or weren't able to engage with the group, and this resulted in *"sticking points in trying to get someone to come and speak to the Citizen's panel*" (strategic partner, focus group).

However, these "tricky" elements are to be expected in the work of participation. Recurring challenges occur around time, resource, relationship dynamics and communication. One service provider shared that "*it's not helped that we've been trying to do something really quite transformational and quite challenging for some of the mainstream organisations at a time when resources have become tighter and tighter for them in other areas"* (service provider, interview).

Outcomes

To what extent did the project meet its outcome whereby it has *improved participation and representation through amplifying the voice of ethnically diverse families and communities?*

The project has met this goal. Trickiness is where learning happens. We heard that "*it's a piece of learning that you hadn't anticipated that these things don't go to plan necessarily, because of people's lives, particularly when you're looking at participation and you're doing it well, which means that the*

group is beginning to feel empowered and is empowering it empowering itself." (focus group, strategic partner). Learning and experimentation is a crucial part of participation.

That the Citizen's Panel is "empowering itself" represents a double-edged sword for CCP. Whilst it shows great success that a panel that was formed for this project was able to establish itself as an autonomous group, it also requires a rethink from CCP on how to support service user participation whereby service users aren't an "add on" to services, but rather an integral part of project design going forward. This would require the work to be focused, resourced and supported throughout. CCP WFEP team designed a participation policy as a result of this work. There was a remuneration system set up for the citizens panel members for their time and contributions online and in person. Similarly, whilst the panel did represent the voices of panel members, it is important to reflect on how those who aren't part of formalised groups are able to participate in a way that works for them.

The project has met this goal.

Recommendation 10: To undertake a re-engagement piece with those who were unable to stay involved with the Whole Family Equality Project Citizen's Panel or chose not to continue as members. This could be a project reference group to evaluate the work and co-develop the next steps for the project with the strategic steering group.

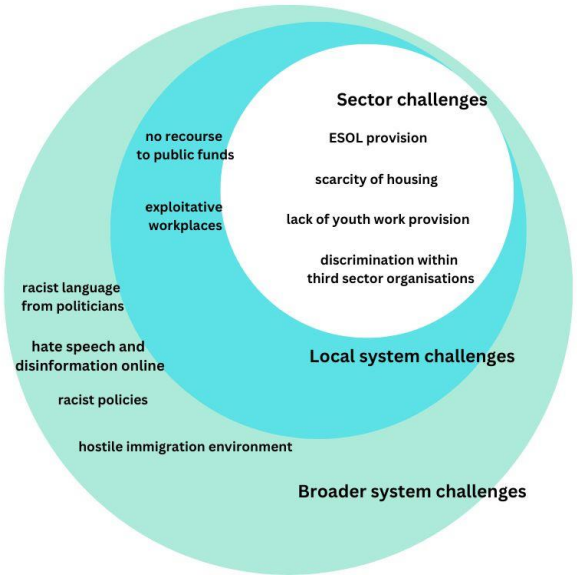
Recommendation 11: That there should be a new iteration of involvement. Any new group should have translation, ongoing support and confidence building in order to support individuals in taking part more fully. This also includes jargon-free meetings embedding accessibility and neurodiversity throughout the design of the activities and future engagement spaces.

Outcome 4: To make racial equality an everyday accountability through securing change at system and structural level.

In this section, we turn to the final outcome to explore to what extent the project was able to make racial equality an everyday accountability through securing change at system and structural level.

Whilst services have clearly been working hard to support service users in improving their wellbeing, building connections and support, developing spaces to be heard and supporting education, training and workplace opportunities, they have been severely limited by the systems in which they are living. These are multi-faceted and complex systems which exist beyond Edinburgh City; however, these have real world implications on how able services and the partnership is to make racial equality an everyday reality.

The multi-layered systemic barriers are detailed in the diagram below: [6]



[6] For more information see https://www.acevo.org.uk/2020/01/what-are-the-barriers-to-increased-racial-diversity-within-the-third-sector/, https://www.bond.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/bond_racism_power_and_truth.pdf

As such, the project has and is experiencing difficulties around enacting broader system change in relation to racial equality. This encompasses both the difficulties service users face in securing decent work and service users being able to meet their basic needs. We have identified two main levels of systemic failure, nested within the broadest, and according to those we spoke with, the most pertinent barrier that families are facing. That is, a *"hostile immigration environment" (focus group attendee).* This environment is based at the UK government level, which is replicated across the national and local level causing a ripple effect of failures across systems.

1. **No recourse to public funds**

As we have seen, the hostile immigration environment enables other forms of systemic discrimination to occur. This includes most clearly the no recourse to public funds policy, which puts communities at risk of exploitation, abuse and discrimination. All partners within the programme received training around no recourse to public funds, which may have increased their knowledge and understanding of where they could access funds for their service users and thereby improve outcomes for these families.

We heard that the consequences of a hostile immigration environment are; the increased risk of exploitation and abuse due to relationships being tied to visas (either intimate, employer or education relationships) and people experiencing a high risk of destitution and poverty. Many organisations working in this space believe that these outcomes are not the result of system failures, but rather the result of a hostile system working precisely as it means to.[7] As such, organisations should explore how to challenge the system as it is and work in partnership, across sectors, to support the development of a more compassionate, humane and caring immigration environment.

[7] https://www.resolvepoverty.org/a-slow-violence-how-immigration-control-forces-people-in-greater-manchester-into-destitution/#:~:text=The%20report%2C%20based%20on%20five,people%20simply%20for%20being%20here.
https://pure.hw.ac.uk/ws/portalfiles/portal/141149624/DESIGNED_MASTER_Fair_Way_Scotland_Evaluation_End_of_Year_2_Report_FINAL_Sept_10th_copy.pdf

2. Visas and workplaces

The case study below from one service's quarterly report highlights how challenging it is for services to support service users navigating the visa system whilst they are working in exploitative settings and coming into contact with racist workplace practices.

[some service users are] arriving on a healthcare visa…these workers continued to work long hours—for example, from 8 am to 10 p.m.—but were only compensated for 8 hours a day, clearly indicating that their travel expenses or breaks were not covered. Some of the clients lived in perpetual fear as a result, coupled with immense financial and childcare pressures. …Fears of being victimized or having their sponsorship revoked if they brought up the problems were among the clients' main concerns. Most especially among clients from ethnic minority backgrounds, these difficulties are a major source of family and mental health problems.

Some of our clients find themselves working in low-skilled/low-paying roles despite having high or excellent qualifications. Such clients became discouraged as a result of this discrepancy between their qualifications and career chances. Even with our assistance, many of those who held professional certificates or advanced degrees found it difficult to find work that fit their education and skill set. In addition to undermining their self-worth and confidence, this mismatch forces them into survival mode and leads them to feel as though they are trapped in the system because they must make ends meet.

According to services, clients/service users don't feel able to challenge exploitative practices for fear of repercussions. For services "*this is challenging [as it prevents them from raising issues] and also service users are concerned of the consequences on them"* (service user, focus group).

One way the programme has attempted to engage with these systemic failures is through engagement with employers. This is primarily occurring through joint online webinars and networking with workplaces and government bodies. One service provider reported to funders that "*as a team, we have recognised that we need to establish more connections with employers to help us better advocate for beneficiaries and secure opportunities for them"* (funding report). We also heard that the partnership *"did …try and upskill people so that was more of an even playing field, and I think that's a real systemic change around this"* (focus group, strategic partner).

In terms of tackling destitution, one service provider suggested that CCP's role going forward may be around working with businesses to provide sponsorship to families. They said,
"a lot of our workers are healthcare workers. Yeah, they came through the healthcare visa route. And so, if we know that these are healthcare employers that are connected with CCP, they're looking for workers, they can sponsor people, then we take them through the process" (interview, service provider).

3. **Housing scarcity**

Coupled with the challenge of racist workplace practices is the scarcity of housing within Edinburgh City. One service provider shared that; *"although the daughter's disability could mean that an assessment for Gold priority might be a possibility, this level of priority does not always meet family's needs in the way people assume, as it limits bidding to ground floor properties only and due to the high numbers of people waiting for such limited properties, can mean that rather than being re-housed quickly, an offer of suitable accommodation can in fact take much longer. Explaining this to families who are already unstably housed can be challenging" (quarterly report to funders).*

Overcrowding was also reported to be an issue, whereby, *"a lot of people are in... shared communities with families...It's not a multi-generational living...its, different families, different people living different people from different cultures"* (service provider, interview).

As such barriers within the visa, employment and housing systems continue to present difficulties for families across the city.

Systems change

However, there are early signs that there are some areas of systemic change within Edinburgh. One strategic partner shared that the project *"has [had] an impact on the wider strategy...the new equality, diversity and inclusion framework"* (strategic partner focus group).

Similarly, we saw in funders' reports that *"WFEP [Whole Family Equality project] continues to engage with local e.g., City of Edinburgh Council and Southeast Regional Council colleagues, and national working groups, e.g., the First Minister's Advisory Council on Women and Girls, to share learning and promote awareness of challenges faced in employability/ parental employability landscape through the lens of racial equality."*

In the same report, we also heard that CCP has;

- *"As a result of learning through engagement with clients, the Citizen's' Panel, delivery partners and the steering group Capital City Partnership have undertaken further work in racial justice to enhance Edinburgh's strategies relating to people from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities.*
- *In November 2023 we convened our first 'Employment and Ethnicity Roundtable' bringing together providers from black-led and ethnic minority-focussed projects around Edinburgh.*
- *As a result of wide-ranging discussion, the group decided to work on a short action plan which would raise issues to Edinburgh's Community Planning Structures. In February 2024, we presented the action plan to the Local Employment Partnership (Local Outcome Improvement Plan Priority 2 – Access to Work, Learning and Training Opportunities). The priorities were agreed, and work continues measuring impact.*
- *Alongside CCP's Employer Engagement Team, WFEP continues to promote diversity, equity and inclusion in recruitment and retention."*

Whilst there are some signs that systems (particularly employment, education and training within the city) are becoming more aware of the needs of the groups the programme works with, we also heard that some of this work may be more focused on supporting people to *adapt* to the systems rather than focusing on *"how the system's changing"* (focus group, strategic partner). The next steps of this work should ensure that "*learning from this inform[s] the design and delivery of employability services, financial inclusion services*" across the city (focus group, strategic partner).

Outcomes

To what extent did the project meet its outcome whereby *racial equality is an everyday accountability through securing change at system and structural level?*

Throughout this evaluation process we have been struck by the dedication and hard work of services in working together to make better lives a reality for the families they work with. CCP have been able to shift the dial on employability, on voice and participation and on joined up working between specialist and mainstream organisations. However, there is much work to do around systemic change, and as such the project has begun to meet this goal.

Where they continue to get stuck is related to systemic discrimination and failings within employment and housing. We believe it was incredibly ambitious to work towards this goal within a three year project and welcome the next steps as being more focused around systemic change. Systemic change must be supported by the knowledge and participation of those with lived experience of discrimination and racism, connections with partners working across systems change and holding Government bodies accountable. Speaking truth to power is a courageous and sometimes dangerous act to undertake, particularly within competitive funding environments and working with vulnerable groups. However, without this courage and risk, it is unlikely that systemic change will happen, and black and ethnic minority families will continue to bear the brunt of systemic failure, discrimination and harm.

The project has begun to meet this goal.

Recommendation 12: A learning event with mainstream services should be held to share knowledge and insights to support them to change their systems.

Recommendation 13: Work in partnership with organisations also working at the higher systemic level to shift racist norms within social media and political spaces. This may include work that intersects across other inequality issues such as gender-based violence, disability activism and LGBQTI work.

Recommendation 14: Continue to develop strategies from systemic change drawing on lived experience and wisdom from clients/service users and service providers, including practical ways in which the CCP could challenge the risk of destitution (e.g., through supporting sponsorships with local businesses and workplaces).

Conclusion

We believe that overall, **the WFEP Model has been able to broadly meet its goals and enact change.** We have found that many of the outputs are being met. Cross partnership collaboration is becoming stronger, and clients/service users have been able to amplify their voices and participate. We have found that there exists some areas of tension and learning, primarily around wider systems change and ongoing participation. As a three-year project, there is much to draw on in terms of next steps. This includes developing actionable and accountable stages around systemic change with partners and clients/service users, supporting more dedicated time to capture impact stories through storytelling approaches, supporting more and deeper participation with those with lived experience, including young people and those experiencing intersecting inequalities (e.g. women with experience of a hostile immigration system entering the labour market), collecting sharable intersectional data on where there are gaps and more knowledge around how race and poverty is experienced in the changing labour market and Edinburgh more broadly.

Overall, we have found that relationships have been crucial to this work. Relationships between clients/service users, between services, between strategic partners and between systems. As with all relationships, the ones within this project require trust, vulnerability, sustainability, consistency and time. They are not simple or linear. They require having hard conversations and learning "troublesome knowledge"[8] in order to make change happen. These relationships are then supported by day-to-day logistics, shared databases, disaggregated data, accessible meeting spaces, translation, support, access to WhatsApp groups, training opportunities and so on. Allowing relationships to grow and flourish over time will undoubtedly support the project to meet more of its outcomes and goals. As Rev Jennifer Bailey shares *"relationships are built at the speed of trust, and social change happens at the speed of relationships"*[9].

[8] Troublesome knowledge is knowledge that challenges the learner and can cause cognitive conflict as learners compare new ideas with their prior knowledge https://www.igi-global.com/dictionary/troublesome-knowledge/57399

[9] https://www.strivetogether.org/social-change-happens-at-the-speed-of-relationships/

Complete list of recommendations

Recommendation 1: For future evaluations, creative and accessible tools should be used with both clients/service users, service providers and strategic supports to understand both the impact and the processes of projects. Storytelling with all parties involved captures richer data and enables all stakeholders to share their wisdom in a non-extractive and more joyful way.

Recommendation 2: Whilst services do disaggregate data along some lines, it is important to understand that the needs and experiences of different client groups will be different according to their ethnic and racial identity. Further, it is important to understand what, if any, gender differences exist in order to better shape policy and practice responses according to the needs of specific groups.

Recommendation 3: The sector and partners should reflect on how to support organisations, clients/service users and black and minority ethnic professionals around experiencing public and private forms of racism.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that any work going forward captures more deeply the experience of clients/service users.

Recommendation 5: We recommend that funders work closely together to align their outcomes so as not to duplicate or complicate the work of service providers.

Recommendation 6: Drawing on the learning, delivery partners should explore how to continue to work together to co-design a new bid based upon this established consortium approach.

Recommendation 7: Going forward, employability work should continue to focus on Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the employability pipeline, developing people's confidence and networks alongside supporting them to seek employment. This could include resourcing formal peer support networks.

Recommendation 8: For the project's next steps, it will be important to clarify language around ethnic diversity, race and New Scots. Each of these groups will likely overlap and intersect with each other, but each of these groups will have different needs.

Recommendation 9: In order to fully understand how the project impacted on services users, we suggest services work with a cohort from the beginning of the project to 'track' the progress made from support to employment, and sustained employment in particular. This can be done through creative and visual monitoring and evaluation tools such as filmmaking or photo voice, enabling those with differing literacy levels to take part. This will also support the development of knowledge around the more structural question of how and if programmes reduce racial disparities across groups.

Recommendation 10: To undertake a re-engagement piece with those who were unable to stay involved with the Whole Family Equality Project Citizen's Panel or chose not to continue as members. This could be a project reference group to evaluate the work and co-develop the next steps for the project with the strategic steering group.

Recommendation 11: That there should be a new iteration of involvement. Any new group should have translation, ongoing support and confidence building in order to support individuals in taking part more fully. This also includes jargon free meetings embedding accessibility and neurodiversity throughout the design of the activities and future engagement spaces.

Recommendation 12: That a learning event with mainstream services should occur to share knowledge and insights to support them to change their system**s.**

Recommendation 13: Work in partnership with organisations also working at the higher systemic level to shift racist norms within social media and political spaces. This may include work that intersects across other equalities issues such as gender-based violence, disability activism and LGBQTI work.

Recommendation 14: Continue to develop strategies from systemic change drawing on lived experience and wisdom from clients/service users and service providers, including practical ways

in which the CCP could challenge the risk of destitution (e.g., through supporting sponsorships with local business and workplaces).