Employability Re-Design

CENTRE
FOR
CIVIC
INNOVATION

Glasgow
CITY COUNCIL
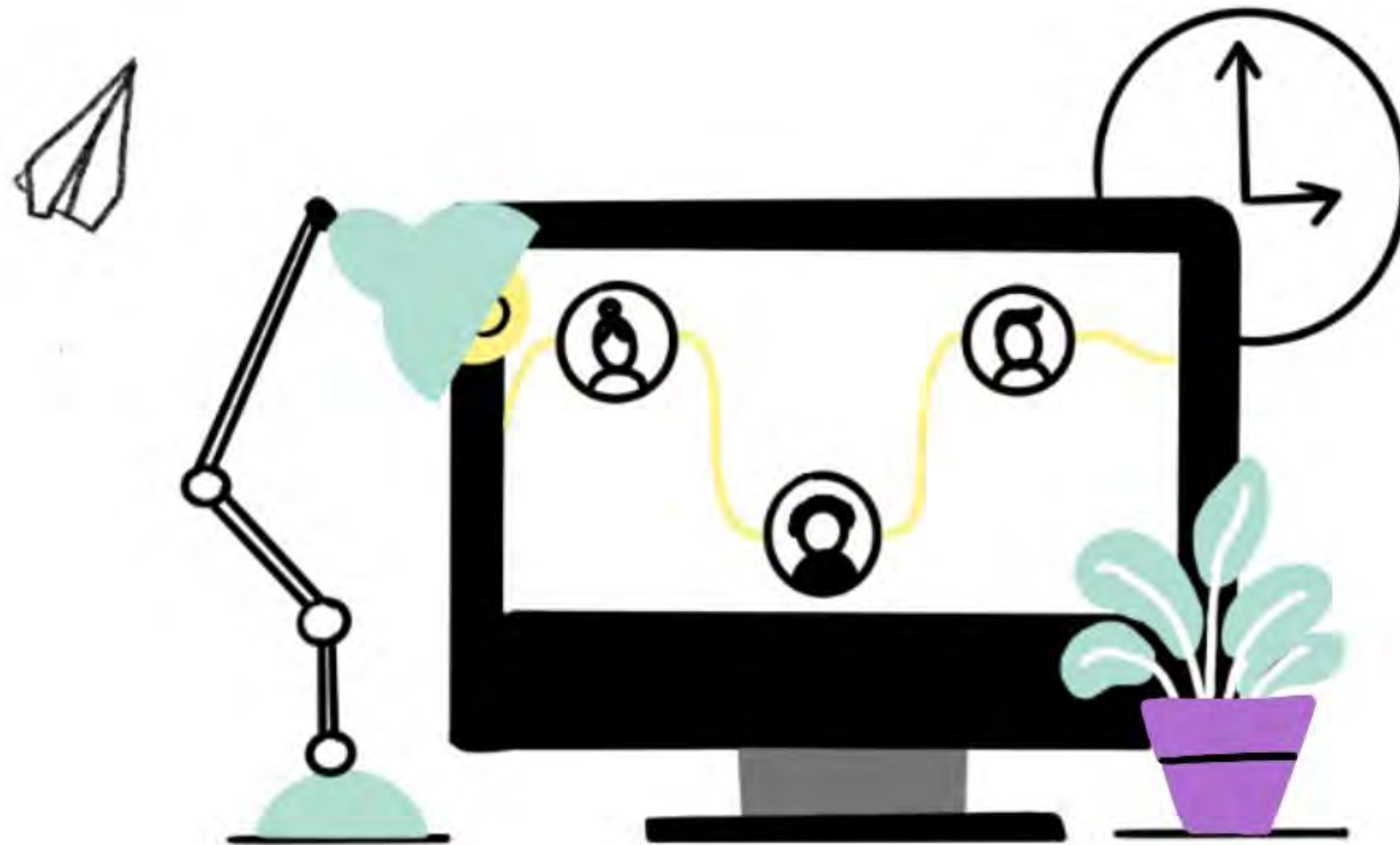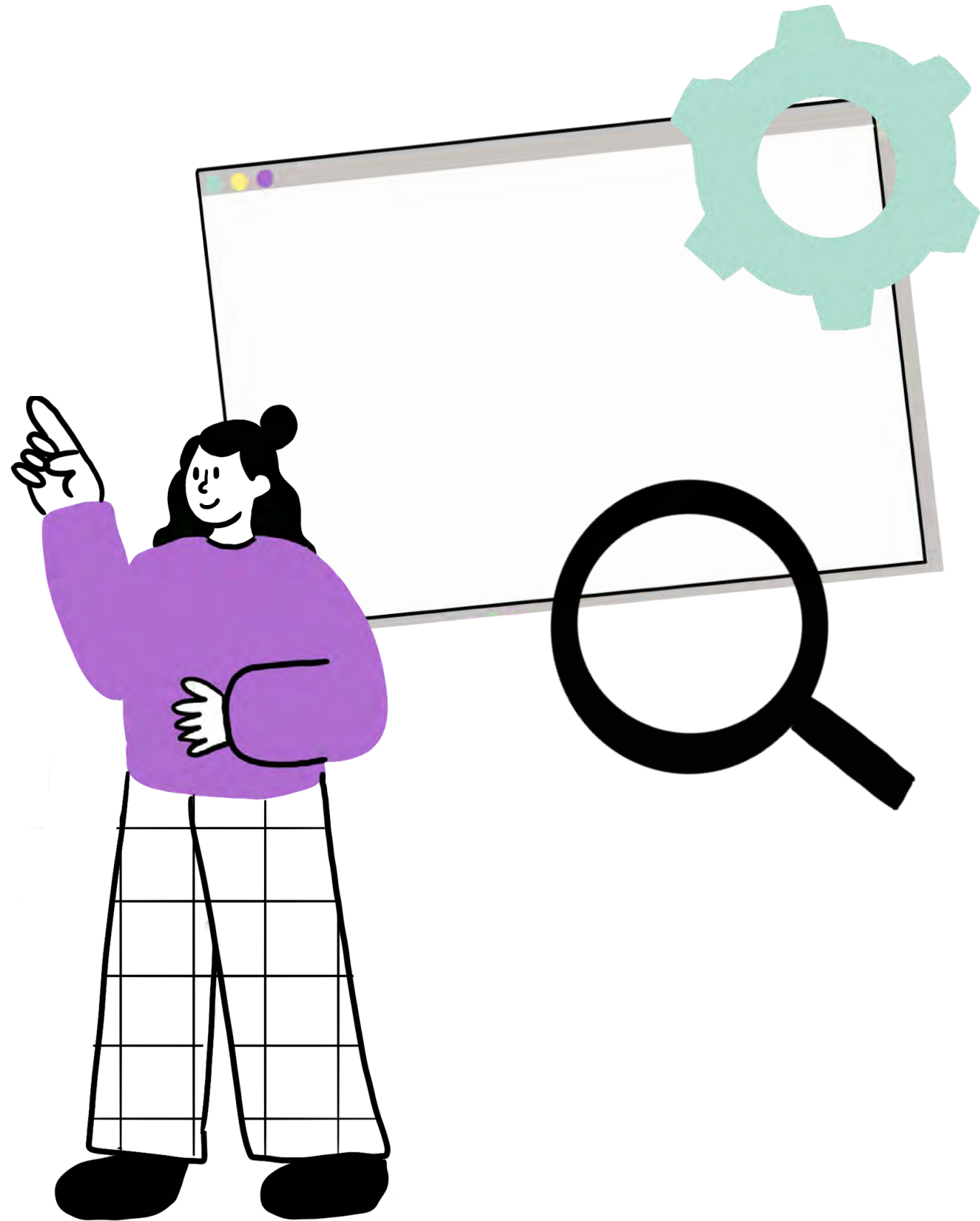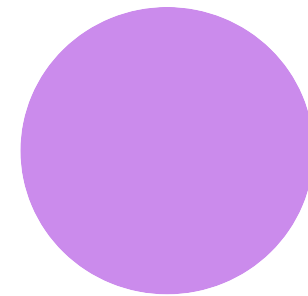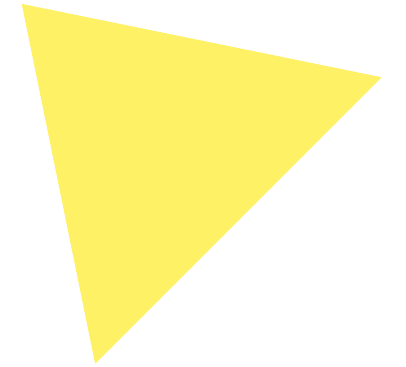
Redesigning how services can join up to improve outcomes for participants

Contents

Background &
Project Brief

Working with the Centre for Civic Innovation

The Centre for Civic Innovation is a pioneering citizen-centred design team within **Glasgow City Council**.

To help understand people's values, attitudes and behaviours towards local and city-wide policy and services, the team use a range of skills and methods including design thinking, creative problem-solving, service design, co-creation, and data science.

Our work is focused on developing the ecosystems to deliver on the four grand challenges of Glasgow's Strategic Plan:

- Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities;
- Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens;
- Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net-zero Glasgow;
- Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative, and efficient way for our communities.

As a creative collective, the team focuses their expertise on empowering our colleagues, partners and communities by working in partnership with them to find new, innovative, local and citywide solutions that create a Glasgow where all lives are better, and people and planet are the priority.

Key Achievements

Developed the **most accurate picture on Child Poverty in the UK** using data and design.

Led nine cities across Europe to **co-design a set of key principles and policies to end homelessness in Europe**.

Our radical civic strategy and social innovation work recognised by Bloomberg Philanthropies as one of **50 best ideas from a network of 634 cities worldwide to recover from Covid19**.

Collaborative Futures programme with GSA classed as an **"international case study for world-class service design"** and shortlisted for **Design for Good at Scottish Design Awards 2023**.

2023 Global Open Government Award Winner for Europe recognising inspirational projects reforming the way local government engages with their audiences.

Initial ask

The CCI was initially approached by the council's employability team to assist with the re-design of the overall employability service process in Glasgow. This is the way people are supported towards personal development, training, and employment.

Service design is highlighted as a work stream within the No One Left Behind delivery plan, a national strategy for placing people at the centre of the design and delivery of employability services.

The employability team had already undertaken a considerable amount of work using the Scottish Approach to Service Design to understand the current challenges and opportunities within the employability system. The overall challenge was:

"Co-designing people's employability journey and services in Glasgow. It's about transforming and improving employability provision with an approach that is truly accessible to everyone."

During initial workshops involving the employability team, potential directions were identified by reviewing what had already been generated and deciding what would be most impactful to be taken through a long-term service design process by the CCI. This meant targeting the projects which were of high strategic priorities, but complex to address.

The Local Employability Partnership (LEP) contributed to this process throughout. The LEP is a group with representation from key organisations in the city concerned with employability and are supporting the implementation service re-design.

Re-framing the ask

The issues raised via the Scottish Approach to Service design process included inclusion, accessibility, employer engagement, holistic support, funding and mental wellbeing. From these, several work streams were proposed including a communication strategy, reviewing the management information system, and creating a joined-up system of services and providers.

As work was ongoing to look at communications, and a digital re-design approach was required to tackle the management information system, it was decided that the CCI could make the most impact by focusing on improving the way all the stakeholders in the employability system join up. This meant using our design skills to engage with and bring together services, the council, the LEP and participants themselves.

It was decided that the project would centre around:

How might employability provision better join up to improve outcomes to participants?

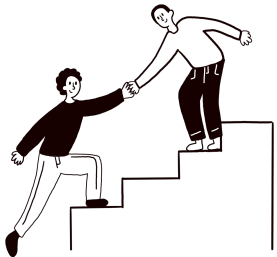# High Level Timeline

May to July

Understand the current provision across the city

July to September

Connect with key stakeholder groups
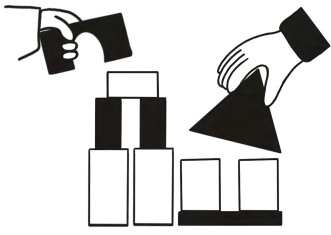
September to November

Co-design the new employability structure

November to December

Compile outputs and present recommendations

Review outputs across all stakeholder groups and confirm challenges to tackle in co-design phase

What we did
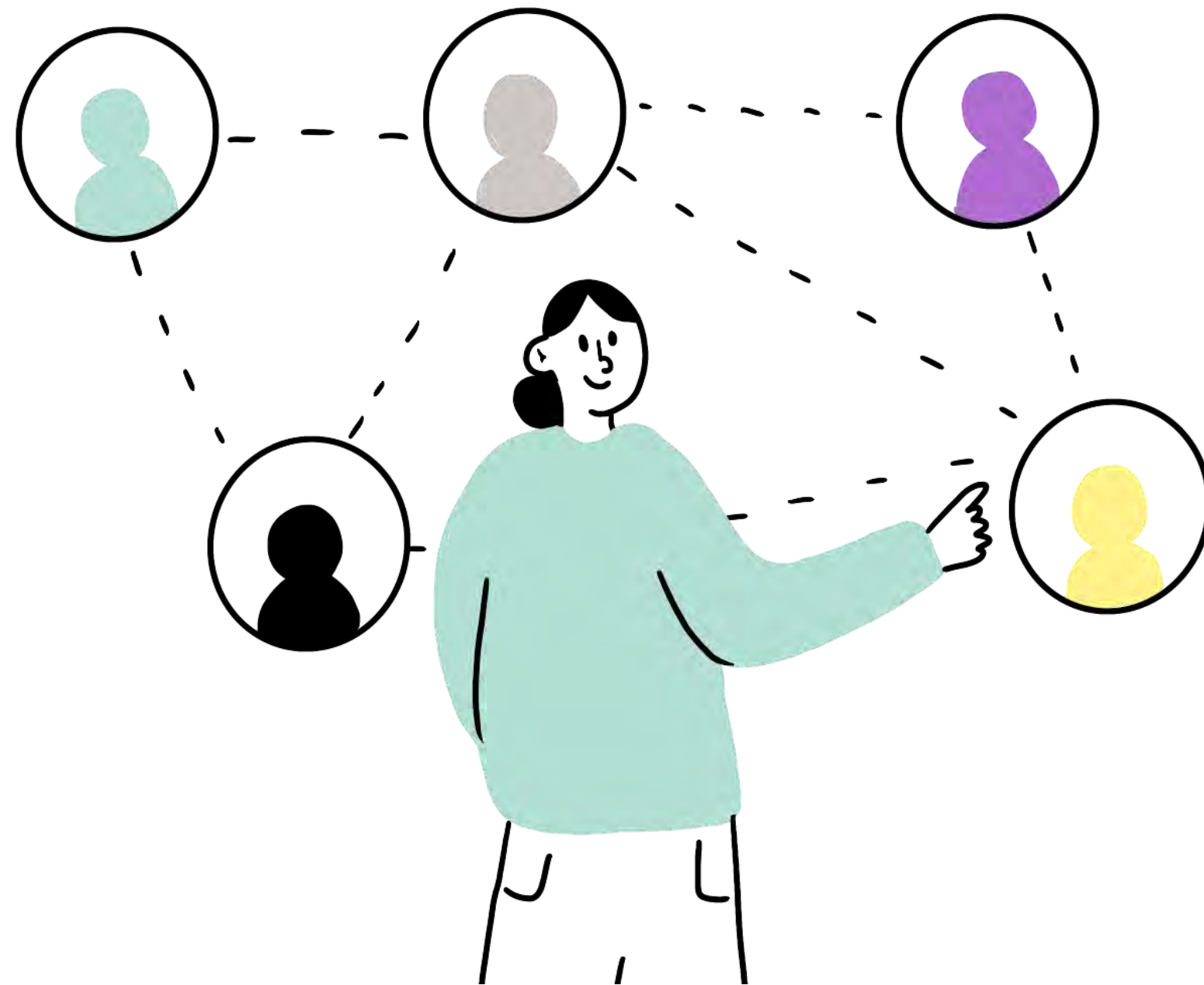
The CCI: how we do it

Our work addresses city challenges and complex problems to find new and innovative ways to make a difference to our citizens.

The **key stages of our approach** are:

Understand the problem

Doing our research

Develop new solutions

Challenge

Identify opportunities

Co-design new ideas

Results

Design Thinking

Data Science & Insights

Storytelling

CCI
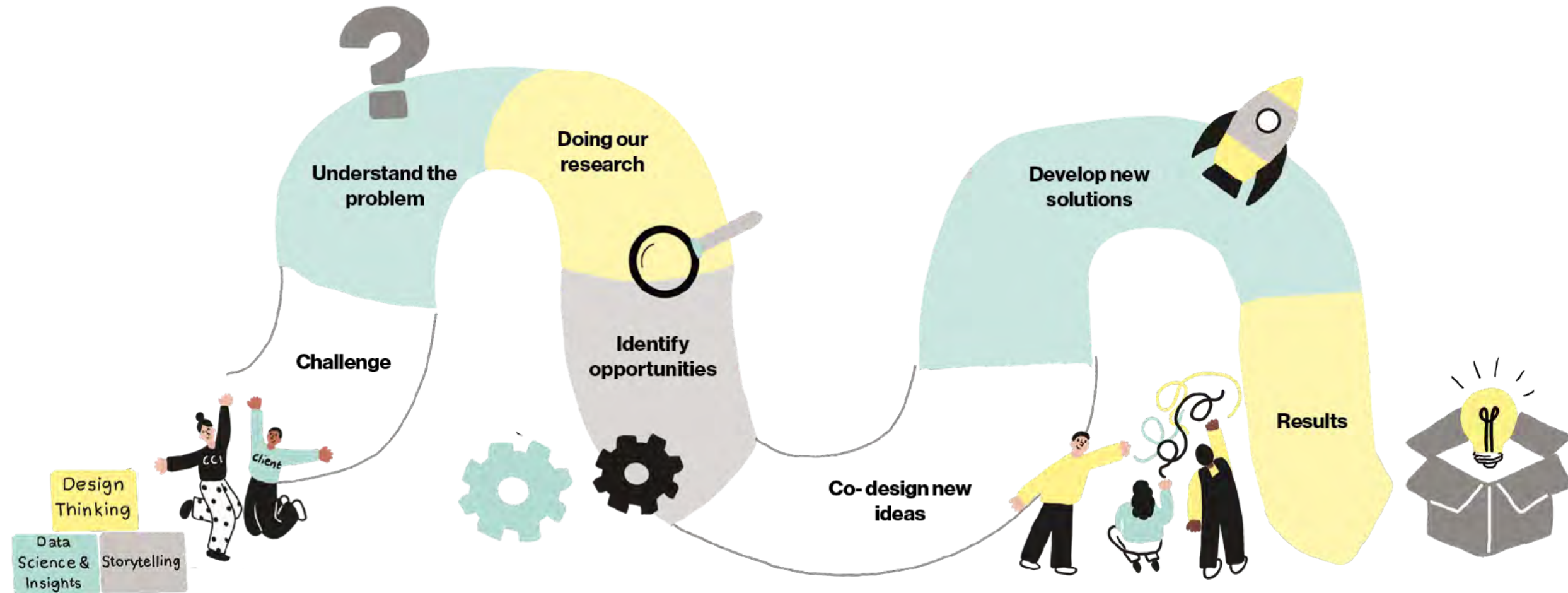
Client

We create joint project teams with clients to **enable the exchange of knowledge, ideas and skills** throughout.

By working openly and collaboratively, we bring people, skills and knowledge together. We empower everyone to contribute and **co-design new ideas to address our challenges**.

We use **design thinking, research and data science** to look at things differently, understand the current challenges and imagine a different future **in order to help solve complex problems.**

Our **design led methodology allows collaborative work across services and partners** to draw on a wealth of knowledge and expertise. **We use our storytelling expertise throughout this process.**

Designing with local people, organisations, council staff & more...

Connect

Understand

Review outputs

Compile

Co-design

Throughout the process we have co-designed with...

Priority groups that we engaged with throughout the process:

- people in recovery
- disabled people
- young people
- unemployed people

- people with community payback orders/ in prison
- asylum seekers
- people with autism/ learning disabilities
- parents
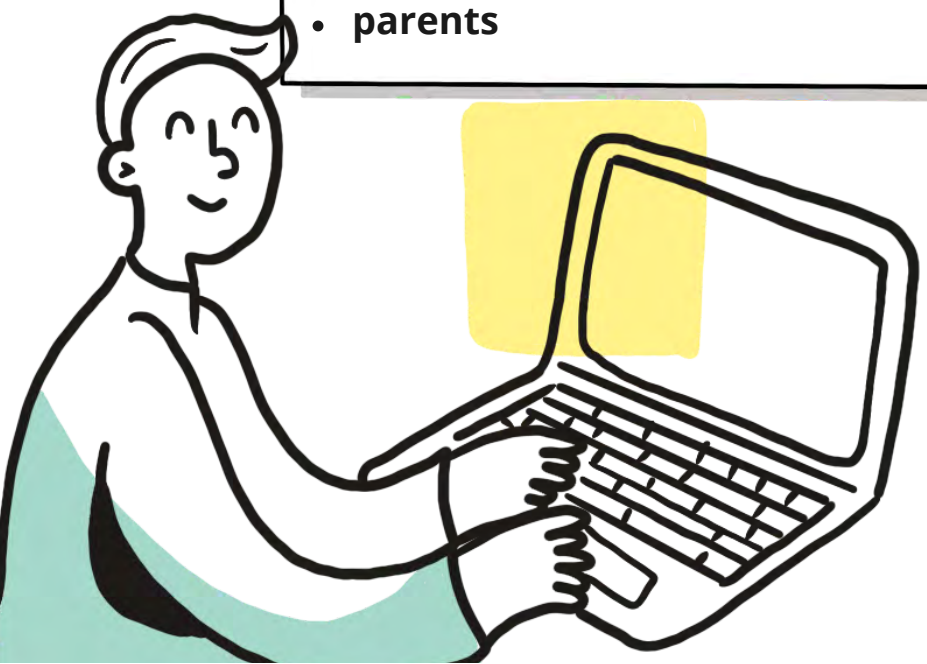
455

Total engagements across all methods

Responses via survey:

75
Participants

65
Service providers

36
Employers

31
People who have never worked with a service before

Attended face to face:

116
Service providers

70
Participants

53
GCC/ LEP staff

9
Employers

Methods used

Participants

Throughout the project, we engaged with different key stakeholders. For each engagement, we ensured that we used appropriate design and research methods.

For participants, we had a suite of methods which helped us engage with groups with complex barriers. This included informal focus groups within services' venues, printed materials which participants could complete individually or discuss with the group, and informal conversations had at job fairs.

We wanted to engage with empathy, patience, understanding and always value each person's voice, unique experience and perspective.

Service providers + employers + GCC

To capture insights and co-design with decision makers, service providers and employers, we used more formal engagement methods, such as workshops, interviews and surveys. These methods provided us with a large volume of information, while respecting the limited time of those involved.

Employing a diverse range of design tools and methods played a crucial role in obtaining the necessary outputs to advance through each stage of the project.

Overview
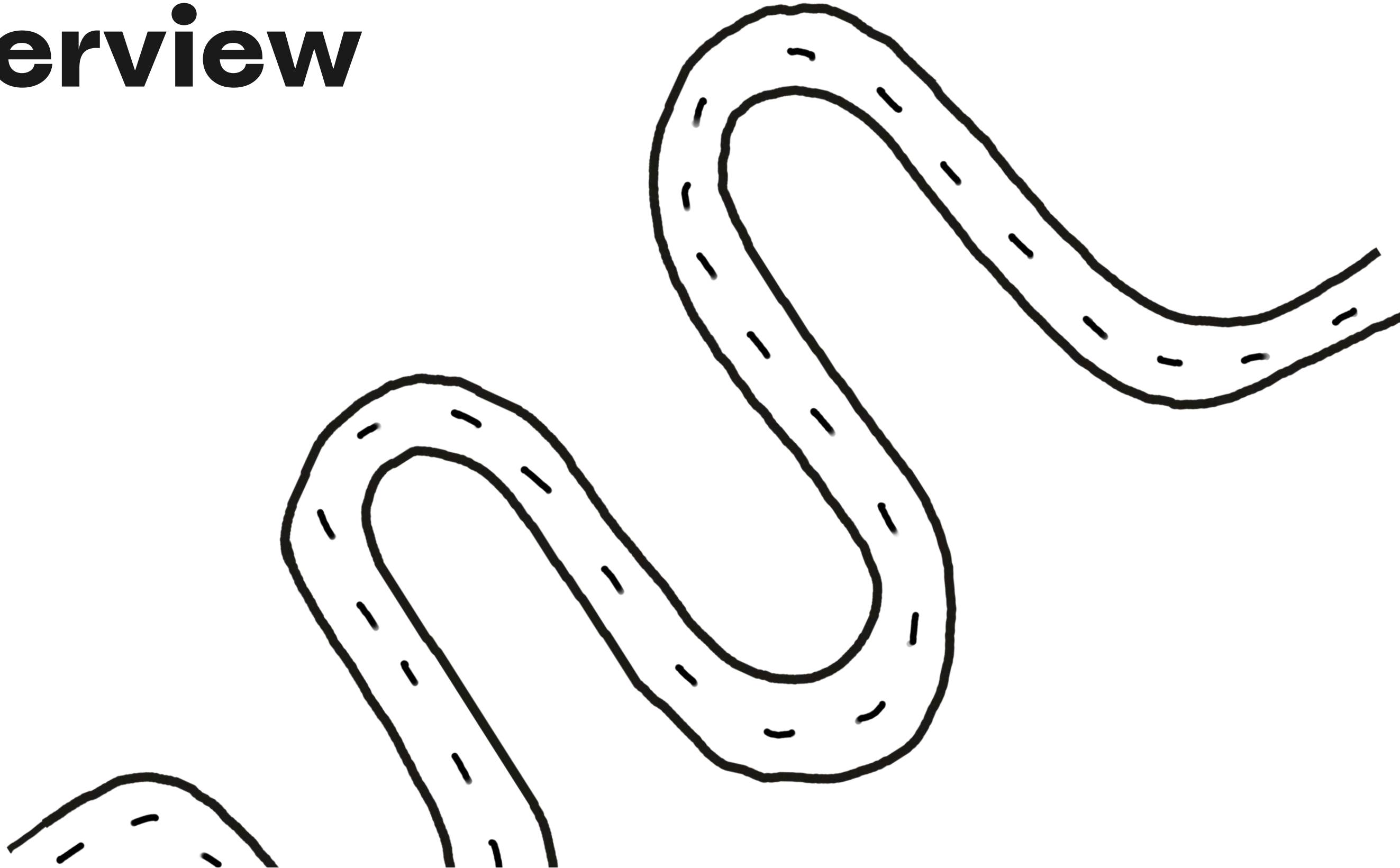
Overview

Through analysis of information gathered across all the engagement methods with all groups, 119 single and distinct ideas were identified in total.

Intensive analysis, mapping and theming was undertaken to group these ideas into 52 actions, which were then further condensed into 14 opportunities and 37 recommendations.

From this, five key themes emerged which could be tied closely to improving the way services join up and work together, and came directly from what people had told us over the course of the project.

These five key themes then fall into two overarching themes:

- Working together
- Building knowledge

Grouping, theming and collating all of the ideas put forward by those we spoke to throughout the project helped us to find common trends and shared experiences within the analysis stages. Each opportunity and recommendation outlined in this report is a result of this process.

5 THEMES   **14 OPPORTUNITIES**   **37 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Working together

INCREASING AWARENESS OF SERVICES AND SUPPORTING REFERRALS
- Connecting with support — 3
- Monitoring participant progress — 2
- Referring participants on — 3

FACILITATING MORE NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION
- Communications strategy — 3
- Networking — 3
- Forums and working together — 2
- Funding criteria — 3
- Internal collaboration — 1

ENABLE STRONGER LINKS TO EMPLOYERS
- Communication with employers — 2
- Supporting employers — 4

Building knowledge

USE A DATA LED APPROACH TO UNDERSTAND GAPS
- Collecting and analysing data — 2
- Qualitative data — 2

ENHANCE FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION
- Embedding lived experience — 3
- Feedback between services and funders — 4

What we learned

Opportunities Overview

1. **Connecting with support**
2. **Monitoring participant progress**
3. **Referring participants on**

FACILITATING MORE NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

4. **Communications strategy**
5. **Networking**
6. **Forums and working together**
7. **Funding criteria**
8. **Internal collaboration**

ENABLE STRONGER LINKS TO EMPLOYERS

9. **Communications with employers**
10. **Supporting employers**

USE A DATA LED APPROACH TO UNDERSTAND GAPS

11. **Collecting and analysing data**
12. **Qualitative data**

ENHANCE FEEDABCK AND EVALUATION

13. **Embedding lived experience**
14. **Feedback between services and funders**

INCREASING AWARENESS OF SERVICES AND SUPPORTING REFERRALS

1. **Connecting with support**

2. **Monitoring participant progress**

3. **Referring participants on**

Opportunity 1 - Connecting with support

Description

Create an open platform for service providers, employers and participants to access information about available support and get matched to services.

1 It can be a struggle for people to know where to get help from, and often they just choose services they hear about from family or friends, or go with who they are referred to

2 They approach a service for help and start working with them but it's not exactly what they had imagined

3 The service may be not equipped to offer the specialised support this participant needs

4 The participant isn't sure where to go next, and the service only has limited knowledge of what other organisations offer

Potential Benefits for:

Service providers

Service providers can see what other services are delivering, enabling them to refer with confidence or find partners quickly and efficiently.

Employers

Employers can find out about services to work with, and easily be connected to them.

Participants

Participants could see all the support available to them and decide where to go for help, or be matched with a service that is right for them.

Opportunity 1 – Connecting with support

We know this because...

The challenges around not knowing what support exists, who is offering it and how to reach them was shared across all groups we spoke to. We saw that for participants, this meant they had little awareness of any service outside of the one they were directly working with; therefore they may have been missing out on specialised support or training programmes from other services they do not know about.

For service providers, they expressed that the complexity of the employability offering across the city meant that it was very difficult to keep on top of what other services were offering. This was raised in workshops with service providers who pointed out they may not be equipped to provide the service a participant needs, but they sometimes are not sure where to refer them on to.

This issue is deepened by the fact that many services operate on short term funding for key worker posts, so this knowledge is lost when contracts end. They lose key staff who have had the time to build up the knowledge, awareness and trust of other staff and services.

Lastly, a lack of awareness of supportive services was also reported when engaging with employers. According to our survey, 67% of employers didn't know where to go to access support and advice regarding employing someone with additional barriers.

"I don't think there isn't enough support, but rather a lack of awareness of what support is actually available"

Employer responding to survey

"We need to understand what everyone is providing and who is best to support someone"

Service provider at a workshop

"Other service providers have the wrong perception of what we do"

Service provider at a job fair

"There's additional stress on staff when they end up dealing with issues they aren't equipped to deal with"

Service provider at a workshop

"Employers don't know about the support available to more difficult to place employees"

Service provider at a workshop

"The information is out there, the hard part is keeping it up to date, collating it and sharing it"

GCC staff at a workshop

Opportunity 2 - Monitoring participant progress

Description

Rework digital monitoring systems to track participants' progress and individual needs for service providers to share information and make better informed decisions when a participant has been referred on.

1 The service working with the participant has a strong understanding of a participant's journey and needs

2 The key worker feels they are ready to move to another service or another project

3 The new organisation doesn't have the full picture of the participant's journey, just a few details of past training courses

4 The participant is asked all the same questions again and mistakenly signed up for support similar to what they've done before, leading them to become frustrated and disengage

Potential Benefits for:

Service providers

Service providers can get a better idea of a participant's background, with as much information as possible to support them.

Participants

More detailed information will be shared between organisations, so participants will not have to repeat their stories and progress every time they connect with a new service.

GCC/LEP

A better understanding of how participants move through services and more detail of how specific groups work towards employment will inform decision making and future provision.

Opportunity 2 - Monitoring participant progress

We know this because...

Monitoring participant progress well is important to ensure a "warm handover" when participants are moving between partner organisations, or when passing over to a new member of staff within an organisation.

Service providers expressed a need for the recording of participant progress to be easier and more streamlined, with the time taken to complete it considered. We heard how the monitoring data collected, and the process of collecting it, when someone begins working with an organisation, can create a barrier, making it harder to form a relationship and build trust with the participant.

Providers also shared that the type of data collected is very specific to the council, often long and complex, and not information that the organisation necessarily needs.

For these reasons, sharing monitoring data is a key opportunity where organisation could join up and reduce duplication, but would require overcoming GDPR issues. Interestingly, while some expressed the feeling of overwhelm in themselves and the participants with the need to collect monitoring data, we heard at the same time that more data should be collected to record "softer" outcomes, for example including more things like personal development and informal training in monitoring.

Service provider at a workshop

"There's an expectation on employers to complete paperwork which just seems old fashioned"

Service provider workshop

"We are asking people to share very personal information with people they don't know. They see no benefit to completing the forms. It increases service disengagement"

Service provider workshop

"The opportunity to record the true impact of employability is not always available, for example reduction of risk"

Service provider at a workshop

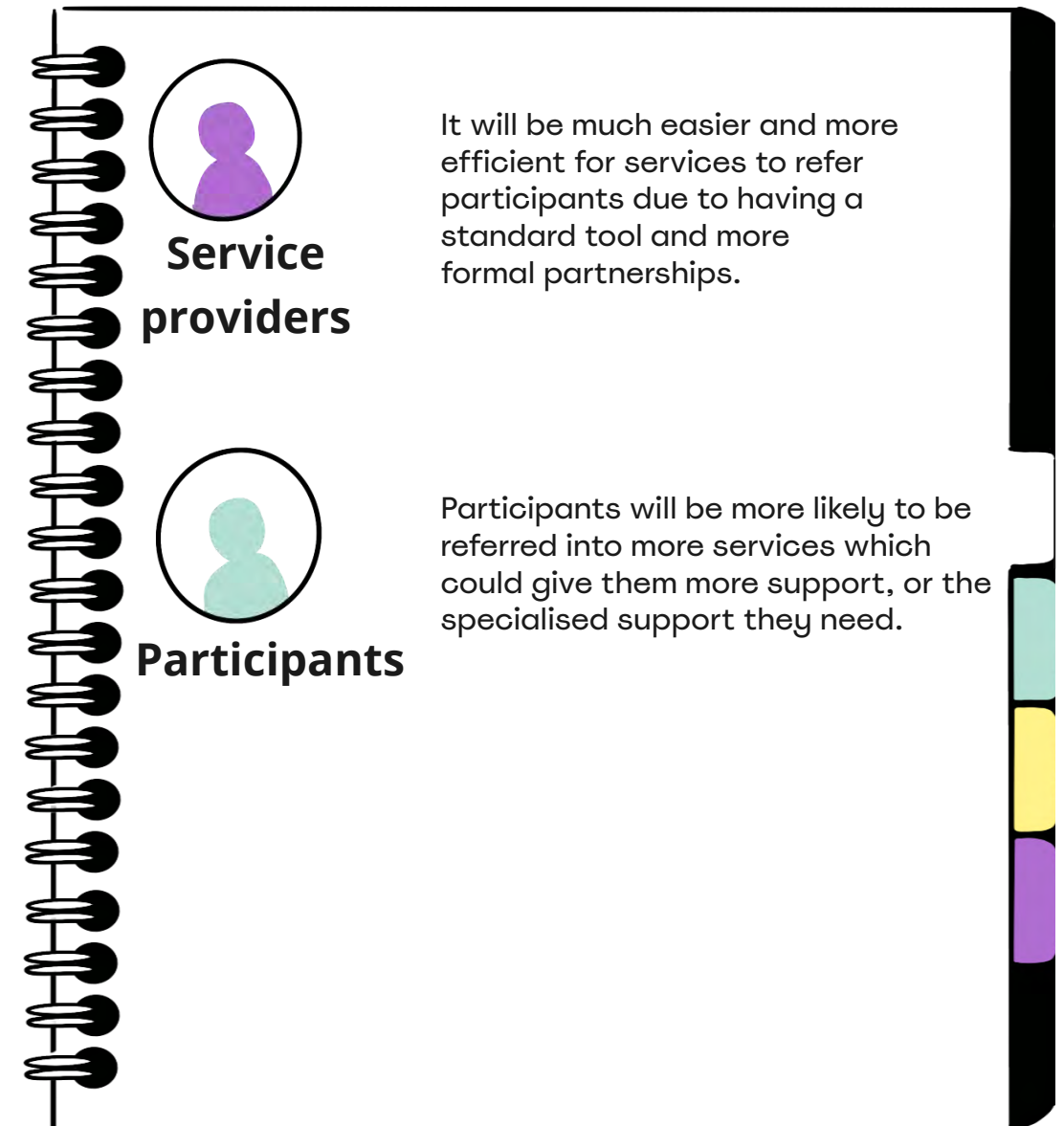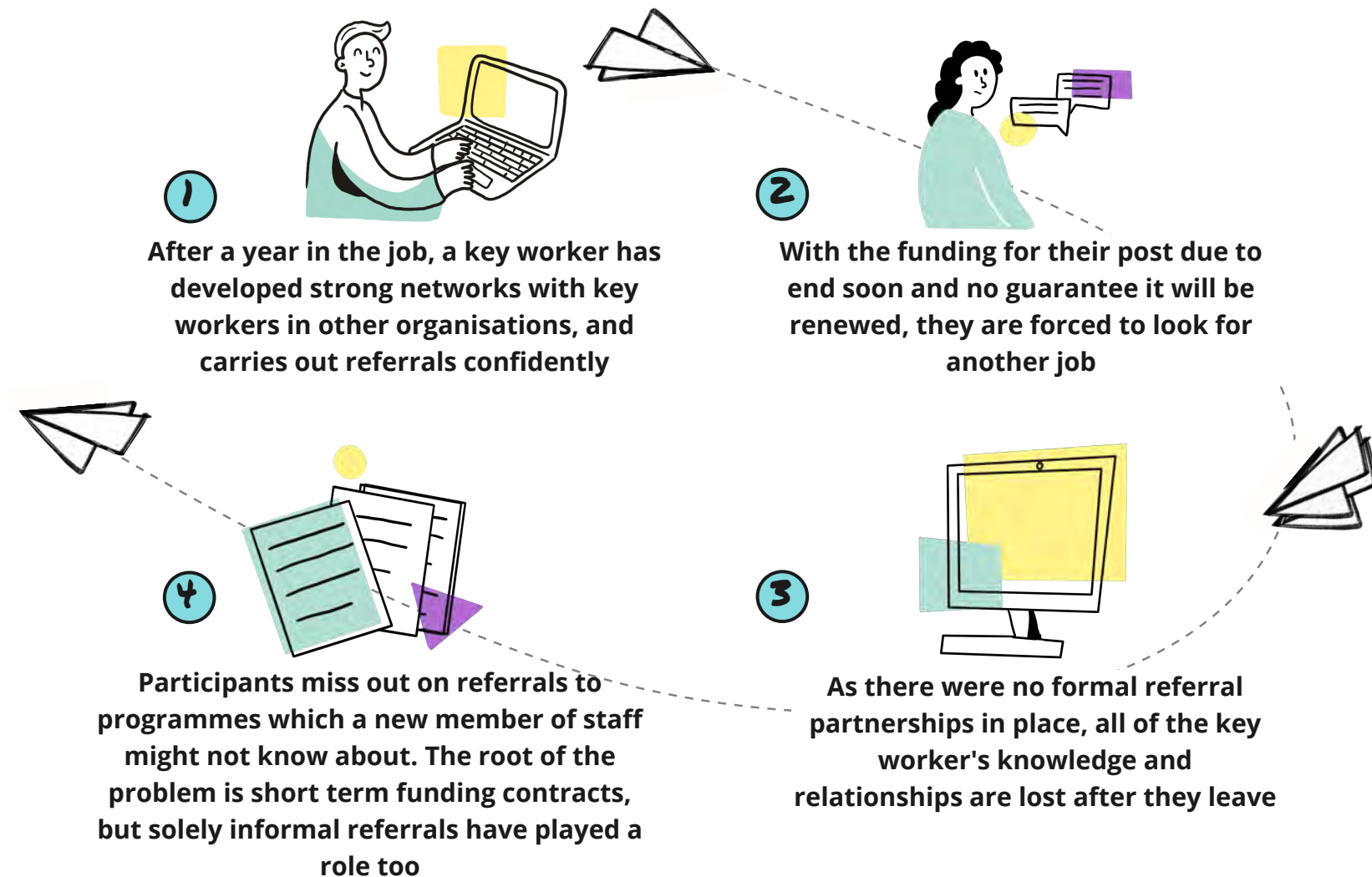"You end up prioritising paperwork over client needs"

Opportunity 3 - Referring participants on

Description

Create a referral system that is centred on a participant's journey, evolves with them and gives service providers the means to refer efficiently, easily connecting them to the right support or employment opportunity.

1. After a year in the job, a key worker has developed strong networks with key workers in other organisations, and carries out referrals confidently

2. With the funding for their post due to end soon and no guarantee it will be renewed, they are forced to look for another job

4. Participants miss out on referrals to programmes which a new member of staff might not know about. The root of the problem is short term funding contracts, but solely informal referrals have played a role too

3. As there were no formal referral partnerships in place, all of the key worker's knowledge and relationships are lost after they leave

Potential Benefits for:

Service providers

It will be much easier and more efficient for services to refer participants due to having a standard tool and more formal partnerships.

Participants

Participants will be more likely to be referred into more services which could give them more support, or the specialised support they need.

Opportunity 3 - Referring participants on

We know this because...

Improving how we refer between services came up as a big want from service providers and a key strategic goal of the No One Left Behind (NOLB) strategy. Delivering support in a holistic way is also key priority of the NOLB strategy, and cannot be achieved if organisations do not refer on participants. This is because one organisation will not be able to provide every service that every single person who walks through their door may need. In addition, nurturing a culture of referring participants on respects the intersectionality of barriers and needs that exist. Just because they may fit into the eligibility criteria to work with one organisation, they might be facing multiple other barriers.

Unfortunately, there is currently no standard or straightforward way to carry out referrals across all service providers, with many taking place informally based on the networks and knowledge built up by frontline staff.

Employers and service providers alike expressed that the sometimes see participants being referred to placements when they are not quite ready or fully supported for work yet. This may exist as a knock-on effect of target driven funding and monitoring requirements, but also indicates issues with the referral process as it stands.

"There's a high volume of need and different barriers often mixed together. One service can't always deliver everything a person may need"

Service provider at a workshop

"Young people will have a better chance if we all concentrate on what we can provide, and collaborating with others more"

Service provider at a workshop

Enhancing the process of referrals will enhance the integration of services, fostering a more comprehensive, whole-person approach. This concept is also acknowledged in the "Working Matters Evaluation: Final Report for Glasgow City Council" (Ekosgen, July 2019), where the positive impact is highlighted when participants receive support from additional services they need.

FACILITATING MORE NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION
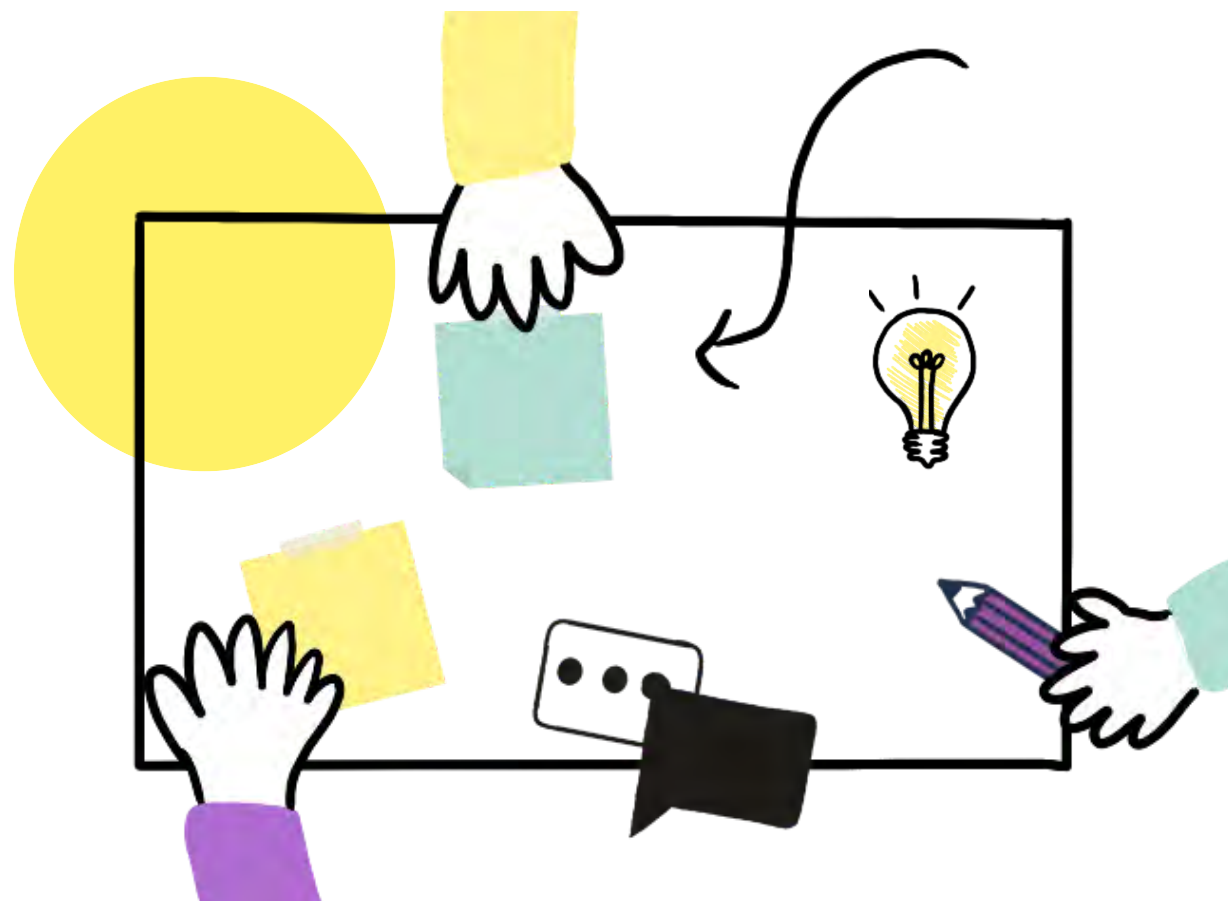
4. **Communications strategy**

5. **Networking**

6. **Forums and working together**
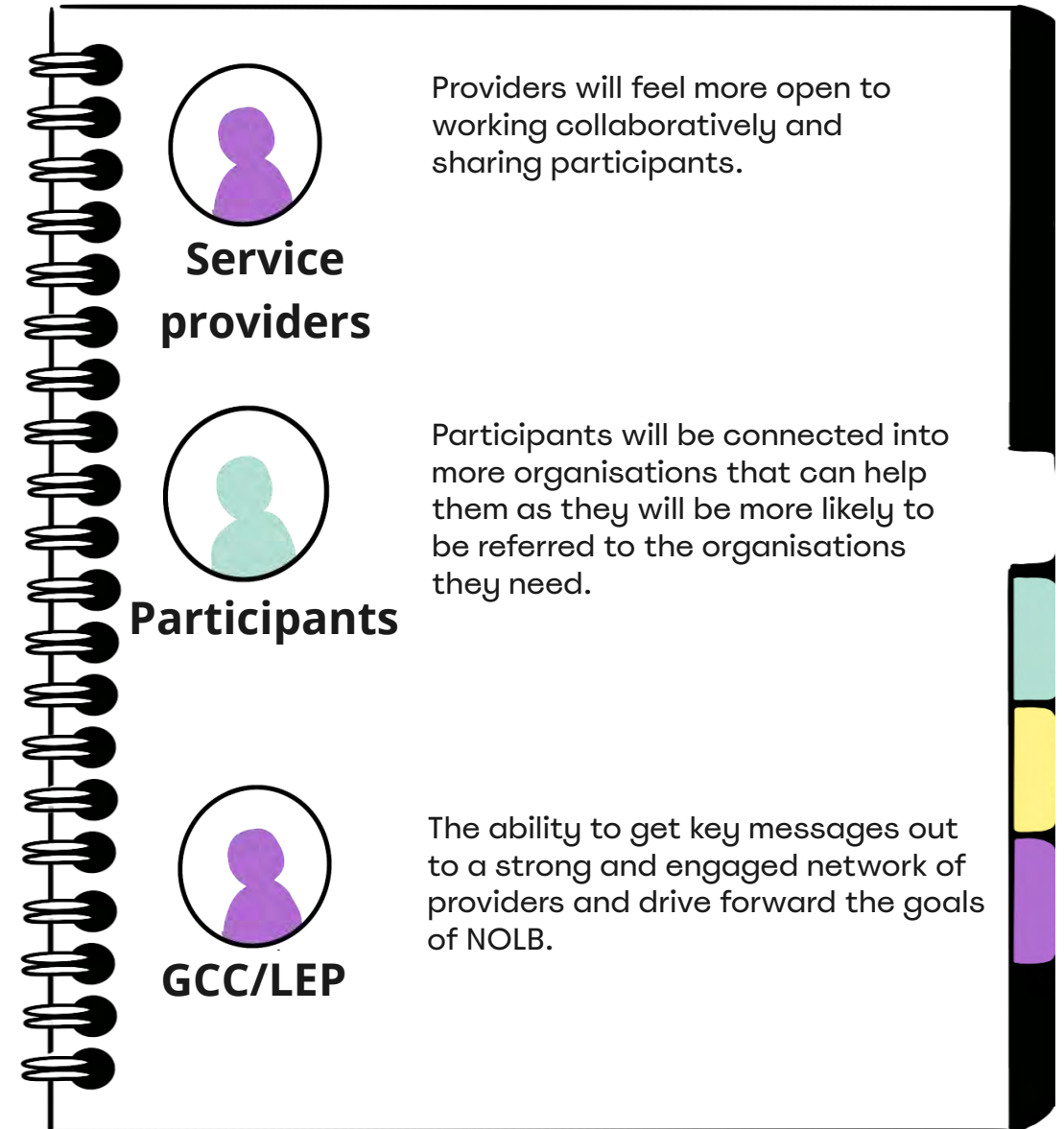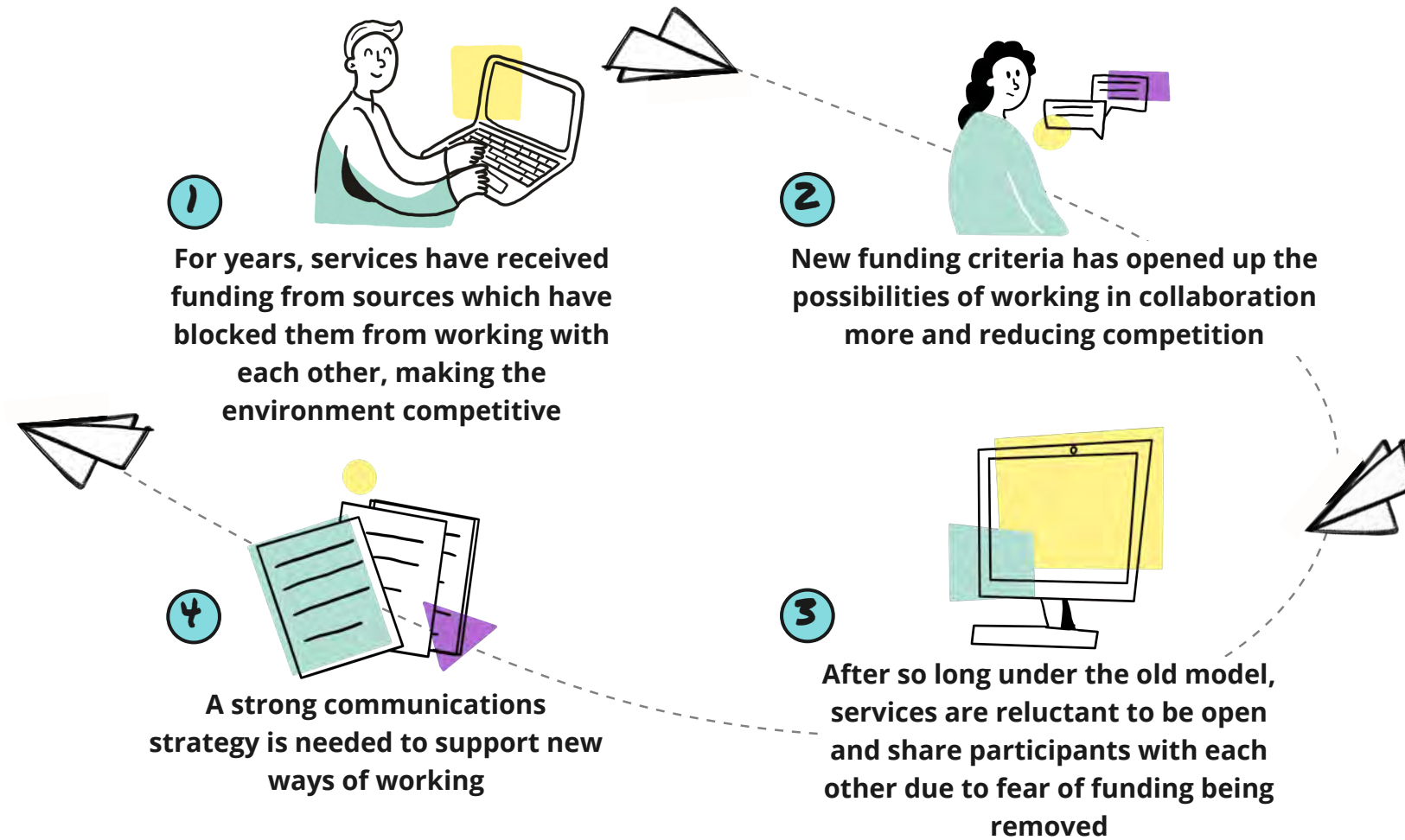
7. **Opportunities within funding criteria**

8. **Internal collaboration**

Opportunity 4 - Communications strategy

Description

Develop a communication and storytelling strategy for service providers to encourage collaboration, partnerships and celebrate the things that are working well.

1 For years, services have received funding from sources which have blocked them from working with each other, making the environment competitive

2 New funding criteria has opened up the possibilities of working in collaboration more and reducing competition

3 After so long under the old model, services are reluctant to be open and share participants with each other due to fear of funding being removed

4 A strong communications strategy is needed to support new ways of working

Potential Benefits for:

Service providers

Providers will feel more open to working collaboratively and sharing participants.

Participants

Participants will be connected into more organisations that can help them as they will be more likely to be referred to the organisations they need.

GCC/LEP

The ability to get key messages out to a strong and engaged network of providers and drive forward the goals of NOLB.

Opportunity 4 - Communications strategy

We know this because...

There is a need for engaging and informative communications to be shared across all services to let them know the value of working together and that they can work together without the risk of losing funding. We heard that there is sometimes confusion and risk aversion from service providers regarding working with other organisations as past models of funding had not always allowed for this.

Despite NOLB funding being set up in a way to enable and encourage more collaborative working, it will take consistent messaging to convey this to providers and change the ingrained ways of thinking.

Getting the communications correct will make or break the ability of the LEP and the council to bring about this change in mindset, therefore enabling a holistic approach to supporting participants.

We learned from staff within the council that gathering case studies and examples of good practice is not hard, but making these engaging and impactful requires expertise in storytelling, or even skills they do not have, like filmmaking. Through communicating the key messages around joined up working and sharing participants, service providers may embrace a more open and collaborative approach over time, leading to better delivery overall.
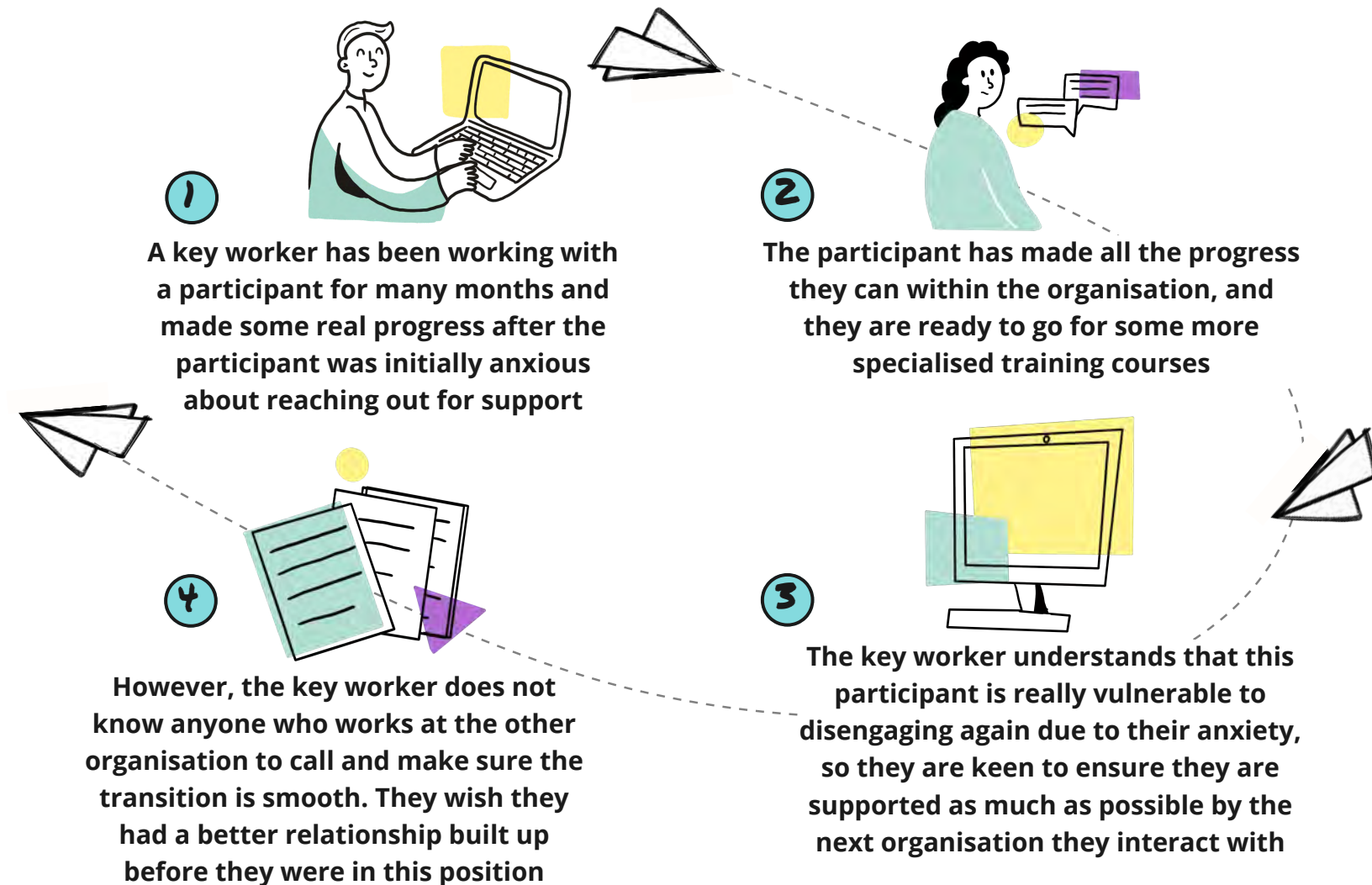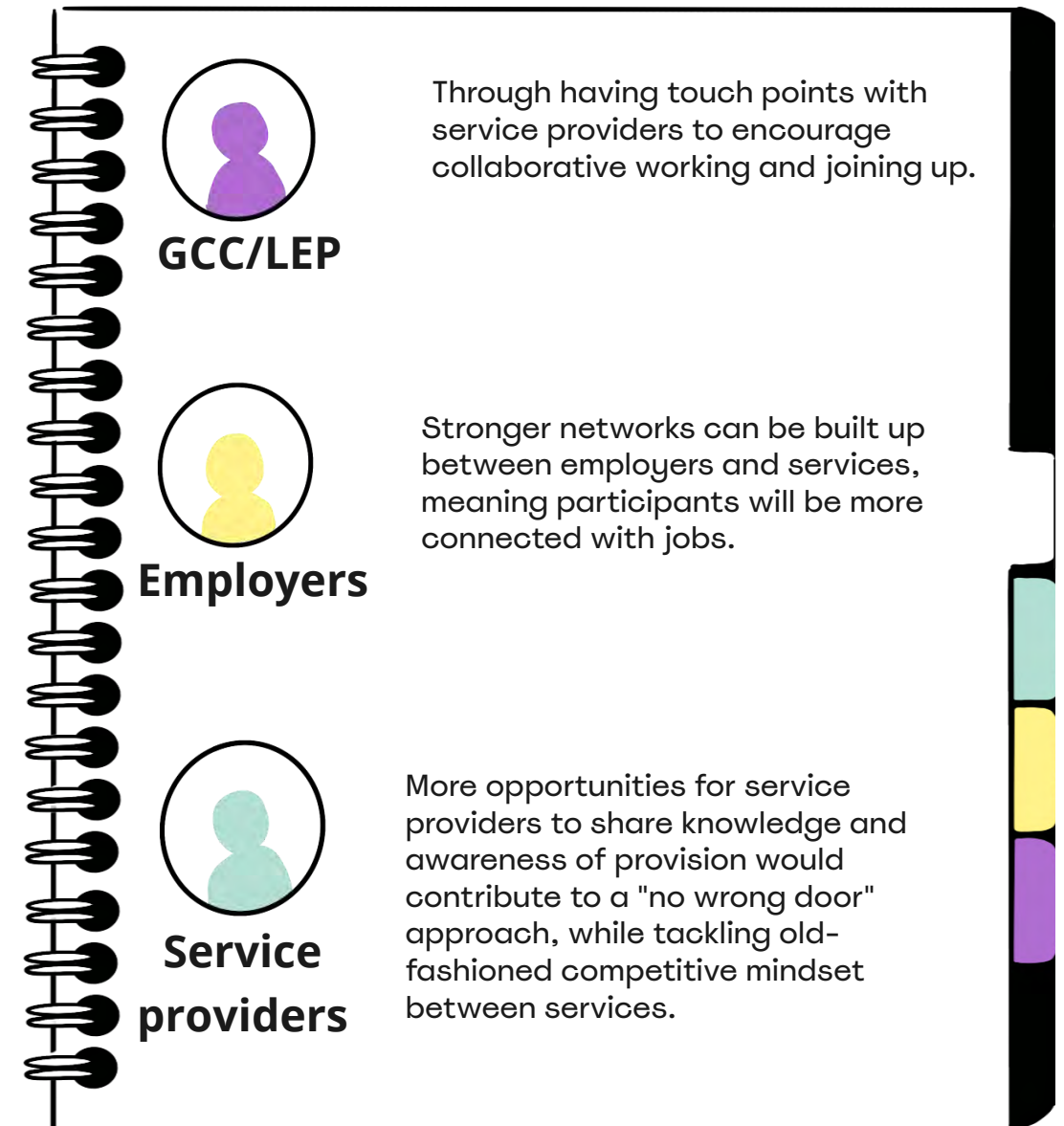
Service provider at a workshop

"People are still so set in their ways based on old modes of funding eg ESF. Key workers have a target driven mindset which needs to change with the change in funding structure"

Service provider at a workshop

"There's too much negative competition at higher level - we end up prioritising the organisation over the individuals we're actually supposed to help!"

Service provider at a job fair

"I go around telling everyone about our service and practically begging them to refer people into us. There shouldn't be any funding conflicts because we are purely funded through charitable sources, but services still think they can't refer to us"

Opportunity 5 - Networking

Description

Develop a set of networking opportunities for services providers, employers and frontline staff to build relationships, share feedback, opportunities, skills and best practices.

1 A key worker has been working with a participant for many months and made some real progress after the participant was initially anxious about reaching out for support

2 The participant has made all the progress they can within the organisation, and they are ready to go for some more specialised training courses

3 The key worker understands that this participant is really vulnerable to disengaging again due to their anxiety, so they are keen to ensure they are supported as much as possible by the next organisation they interact with

4 However, the key worker does not know anyone who works at the other organisation to call and make sure the transition is smooth. They wish they had a better relationship built up before they were in this position

Potential Benefits for:

GCC/LEP
Through having touch points with service providers to encourage collaborative working and joining up.

Employers
Stronger networks can be built up between employers and services, meaning participants will be more connected with jobs.

Service providers
More opportunities for service providers to share knowledge and awareness of provision would contribute to a "no wrong door" approach, while tackling old-fashioned competitive mindset between services.

Opportunity 5 - Networking

We know this because...

We heard from many participants that they were not clear where support was available, and they would prefer to get it from the services they were already connected with rather than only searching for it themselves. This is of particular importance from the perspective of the asylum seeker and refugee group we spoke to, as they found it hard to navigate information online and greatly preferred a face-to-face approach.

Through increased networking and building stronger relationships and understanding of what support is out there, service providers will be better equipped to provide information to the participants they work with. Ensuring that service providers have access to opportunities to meet other services, build trust and relationships with them would enhance guidance passed onto participants.

Through discussions with providers around their barriers to making referrals, some expressed the need for a level of trust with another organisation before they feel comfortable sending a vulnerable participant who they have invested a lot of time in. This demonstrates the value of networking not just to share information, but to build relationships.

"Networking sometimes exists at management level but not practitioner level - it's a problem because management don't always understand the day-to-day work"

Service provider at a workshop

"We still don't understand how we have one funding body who does not share information or bring us all together for networking events"

Service provider at a workshop

"You feel a lot better about referring someone onto a service if you can actually put a face to that service, if you've met the staff there and know what they're like"

Service provider at a workshop

"There's not an opportunity to share learnings, ideas, or network with others in the NOLB program"

Service provider at a workshop

The "No-one Left Behind Delivery Plan" (Scot Gov, 2020) mirrors this in stating that effective leadership is crucial from all partners. There should be openness to extend beyond our typical organisational boundaries, enhance collaboration, and foster trust as we collectively address the intricacies of system change in an already uncertain operating environment.
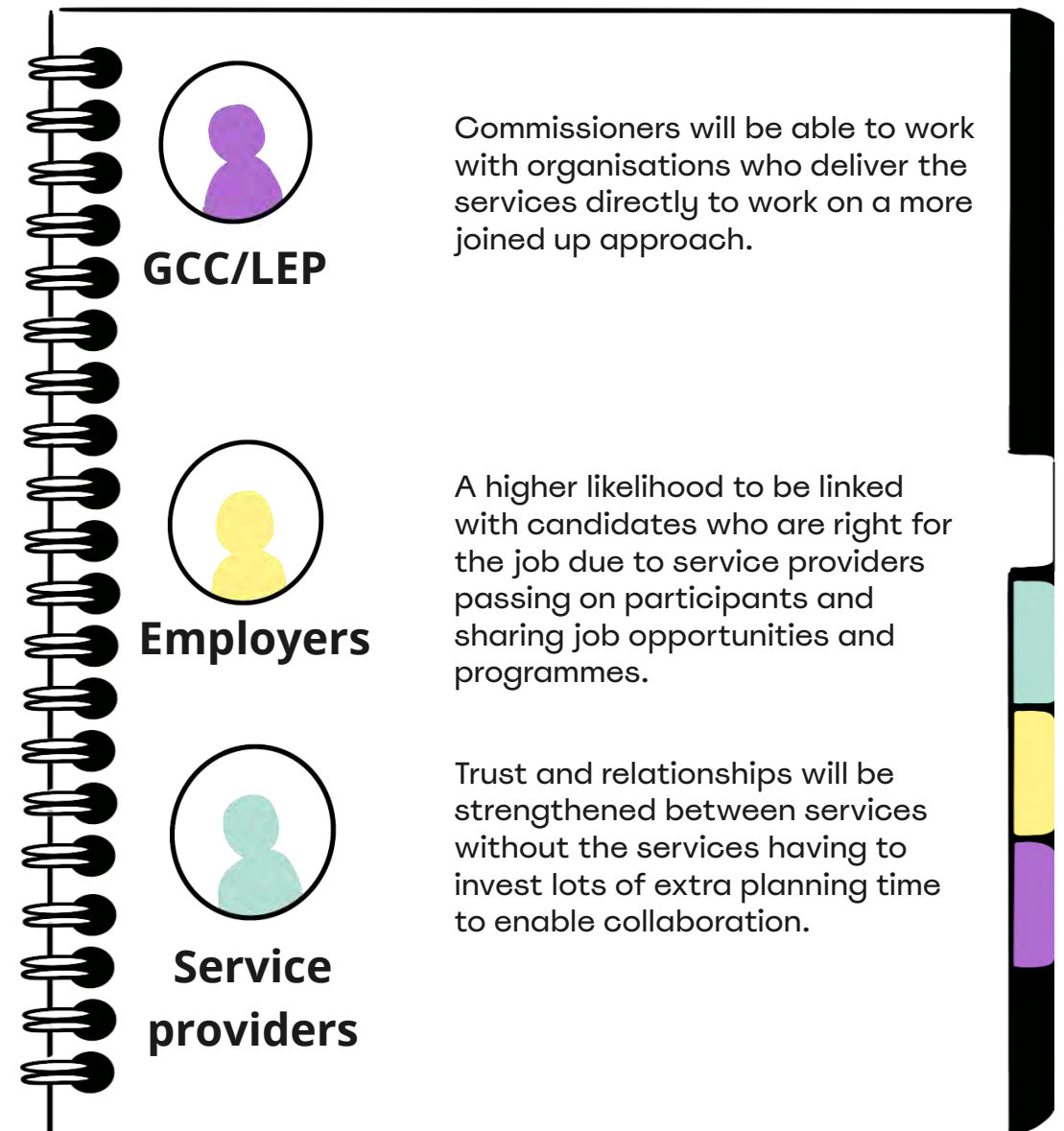
Opportunity 6 - Forums and working together

Description

Set up working groups and forums for service providers to provide opportunities for collaborative working and ensure everyone is on the same page with activity.

1 A service provider is working with a group of single parents and sees a gap in the support they need

2 The service provider doesn't have the resources to deliver this extra support

3 They raise this need when speaking to other providers, but no organisation can take on the challenge by themselves

4 As time goes on, with no forum to share this opportunity and shared resources to tackle it, it gets lost in the day to day

Potential Benefits for:

GCC/LEP

Commissioners will be able to work with organisations who deliver the services directly to work on a more joined up approach.

Employers

A higher likelihood to be linked with candidates who are right for the job due to service providers passing on participants and sharing job opportunities and programmes.

Service providers

Trust and relationships will be strengthened between services without the services having to invest lots of extra planning time to enable collaboration.

Opportunity 6 - Forums and working together

We know this because...

Many service providers shared their challenges with us around working together, being up to date on what is happening, and finding opportunities to work together to support people. Having a more structured approach to this would help service providers stay up to date on provision and ongoing developments in the employability strategy across the city.

There is a clear desire for service providers to deliver services in a more joined up way, but the structures like working groups and forums do not exist at scale to allow them to do this.

Services not coming together then has a knock-on effect for participants. We noticed during our focus groups that once they start working with an organisation, they often stay with them and do not want to go elsewhere. This was echoed by service providers, who reported it was especially true for young people.

Given that one organisation cannot provide everything that every person who walks through their door needs, services should be looking at ways to work more closely together to deliver outcomes.

"The LEP would need to provide the staff to coordinate and run the forum"

Service provider at a workshop

"This underpins what NOLB stands for in joining up services, sharing learning and being open with information across all stakeholders"

Council staff at a workshop

"It's hard to plan and commit to partnerships with other providers when it's all short term funding models"

Service provider at a workshop

"We have no lead agency whose rolerole it is to manage collaboration"

Service provider at a workshop

"We are still operating on individual programmes rather than an over arching NOLB approach"

Service provider at a workshop

"There is a strong need for collaboration with the candidate at the centre"

Council staff at a workshop

Opportunity 7 - Funding criteria

Description

Redesign funding models and criteria in a way which encourages more collaboration between service providers to bring about more formalised partnerships.

1. A service user is finding the pace a bit fast when working with an organisation, but the way the service is funded requires them to progress

2. The participant attends an interview, but they felt that they could have done with more practice, and they have no plan for childcare yet if they get the job

4. The participant ends up feeling that their situation has been misunderstood, and will now have to go through the process all over again with a new person

3. When catching up afterwards, their key worker lets them know that they are moving onto a new position in a few weeks because their contract is finished, so they'll have to work with a new key worker

Potential Benefits for:

GCC/LEP

A clearer picture of the success of services could be gained through measuring impact over time if funding contracts were longer.

Service providers

Greater security of programmes and the space and freedom to deliver people centred services without the pressure of funding deadlines, while valuable staff are not consistently being lost.

Participants

Participants would be more likely to progress at their own pace rather than working around tight and limiting targets, and have more consistency with staff they are in contact with.

Opportunity 7 - Funding criteria

We know this because...

A persistent theme in conversations we had with service providers was that current funding structures were having a detrimental impact on services working together and the experience of participants. Providers expressed to us that the competitive nature of some funding contracts means some do not want to share participants as they will lose their funding, or they are blocked from sharing as both services are funded by the same source.

The way services are funding through NOLB should mean that these issues have been addressed, but this has not reached all service providers yet.

Another aspect of funding which can disrupt connections between services is the fact that most funding contracts are short term, some only for six months. This means that services struggle to retain staff when their contract ends because there is no certainty that it will be renewed. All the networking connections and knowledge of services built up by staff is therefore lost when they move jobs.

It is key that funding systems are redesigned to enable all participants to get the support they need and to join up services. This is a very ingrained problem, and only possible to address at the highest strategic level.

Participant at a job fair
"The way that organisations are funded means I was turned away from one I went to for help. I would have liked to work with them, but I think that's just the way it is"

Service provider at a workshop
"Young people are unaware of the background to funding and may start working with one service not realising they are cutting themselves off from working with others"

Service provider at a workshop
"There needs to be a change in belief that the current expected targets and outcomes can be effectively monitored and reported on within 12 months"

Service provider at a workshop
"Short term funding doesn't give enough time for set up; it could easily be up to a year for a quality service to get going"

Service provider at a workshop
"Participants can have long term needs, but there's only short-term provision. When the funding ends, they are on a bit of a "cliff edge". It leads to a persistent transition from in work to unemployed, and this impacts mental health"

Service provider at a workshop
"Short term funding forces us to work short term with people and leads them into employment industries like retail and hospitality as it's an easy pathway being entry level and zero hours. Before you know it, the users are back needing more support. The funding model doesn't support or recognise the incremental building of skills"

Opportunity 8 - Internal collaboration

Description

Create information sharing and collaboration mechanisms for the employability team to connect with the business and data council teams to benefit from their skills and relationships with employers.

1. Multiple different teams within GCC may have different skillsets and professional connections which could enhance overall employability provision

2. Teams are not working closely together, risking duplication and resources not being used as efficiently

3. There are a lot of teams that have access to different data, systems or knowledge that could benefit other teams without realising

4. Syncing these divisions up could improve delivery internally

Potential Benefits for:

GCC

Skillsets, expertise and knowledge will be utilised to their fullest potential if teams are interacting and sharing practice more.

Service providers

A more joined-up approach internally will trickle down into the other levels of delivery.

Opportunity 8 - Internal collaboration

We know this because...

We heard from staff within the council that opportunities internally to share information and professional networks to inform decisions around employability provision are potentially being missed. This is due to the way different teams and departments work at present. More focus on a collaborative culture between multiple teams within the council is needed to ensure the best use is made of available resources.

For example, business development staff within the council have expert knowledge on the needs and perspectives of businesses. This could be harnessed more by staff supporting employability service providers when considering employer engagement.

Similarly, the data collected by the employability team must be analysed quickly to make funding decisions, a process which could be enhanced through engaging more closely with those experienced in analysing big, complicated datasets. Steps have been taken already to bring about more collaboration internally, but this challenge will need continued effort.

"We must be more data driven and use the groundbreaking data other Glasgow City Council departments are using to shape their services"

GCC staff at a workshop

"The business teams are bound to have connections we could make use of, there's so much potential to join up"

GCC staff at a workshop

ENABLE STRONGER LINKS TO EMPLOYERS
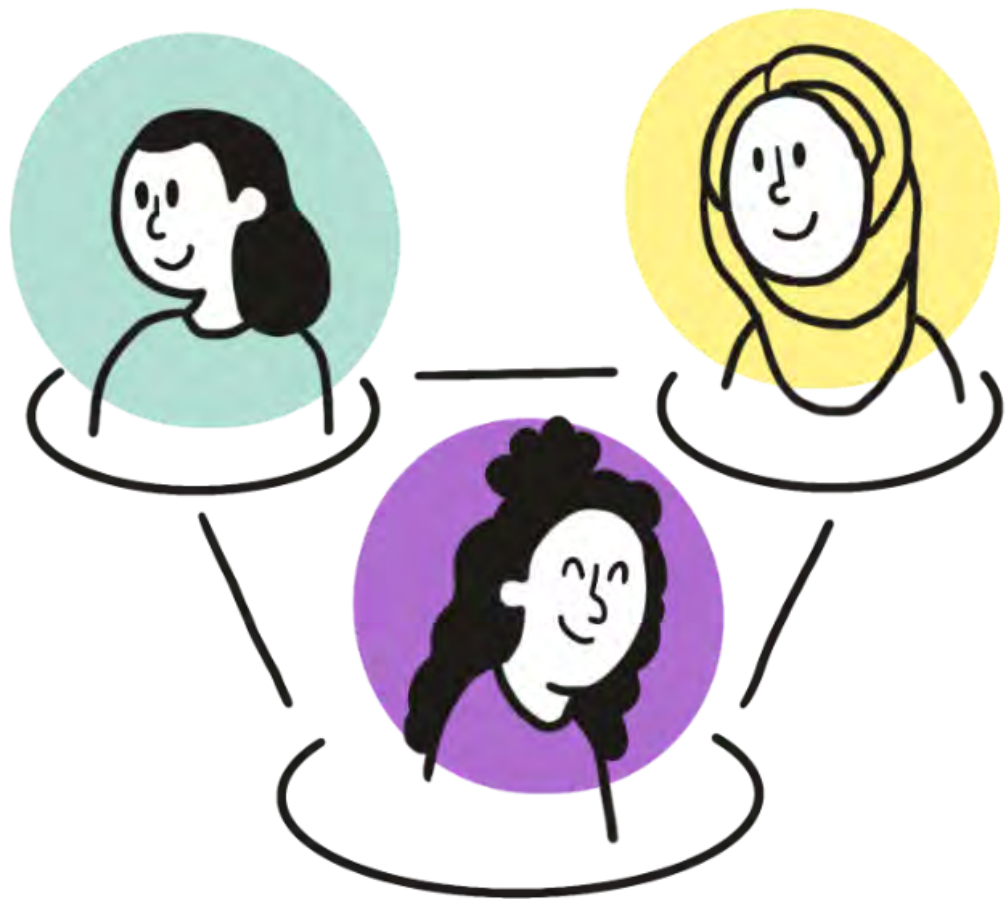
9. **Communications with employers**

10. **Supporting employers**

Opportunity 9 - Communication with employers

Description

Create a model for the employability team and service providers to reach, communicate, network and collaborate with employers to identify and develop partnerships and link participants with opportunities.

1 A service provider is keen to create new connections and opportunities for their participants

2 They reach out to many businesses who could support, but they do not hear back

3 There may be some employers keen to get involved but they aren't reached with the opportunities. On the other hand, there may be other employers who are overwhelmed with outreach

4 Services and employers struggle to make those connections due to there not being a consistent and efficient way to engage

Potential Benefits for:

Service providers

Service providers will have clearer paths to reaching and engaging with employers. They will have access to a network of engaged employers.

Employers

Employers will be involved to inform and shape a consistent approach to communication and engagement to ensure they get access to the right opportunities, and therefore, candidates.

Participants

Candidates will be matched with the right employers no matter which service they are working with.

Opportunity 9 - Communication with employers

We know this because...

Like the issue of service providers not having enough awareness of what other service providers are doing, businesses and employers also reported not having a good awareness of services who could support them to employ someone with additional barriers.

Similarly, service providers told us they often struggled to find employers who were willing to work with them and take on participants with additional barriers.

Employers need a better understanding of what organisations are out there to help them with people who may need in work support.

At present, there is no set method of employer engagement across services, leading to duplication and unequal access to jobs for participants depending on which service they work with.

Before they would be willing to refer a participant into a job, some service providers shared that it was often unclear who they should be speaking to in the employer's organisation to understand the details of the environment, culture, and past employee experiences.

Service provider at workshop
"It's hard to build a network of willing employers"

Service provider at workshop
"I need to be connected with employers who have proven to be understanding and supportive rather than wasting my time cold calling employers that won't engage"

Service provider at workshop
"The time spent looking for opportunities and guiding employers... it's hard to stay motivated as time goes on. It's stressful delivering this with limited funding, while it just gets more difficult to deliver results, on top of lack of job security"

Employer responding to survey
"Employer Engagement is complex and employers are often last to be asked what they want, so regular contact with employers is needed"

The "Working Matters Evaluation: Final Report for Glasgow City Council" (Ekosgen, July 2019) highlighted the potential benefits of adopting a regional approach to employer engagement, suggesting that such a strategy could increase participation numbers and conserve resources for Case Managers.

Opportunity 10 – Supporting Employers

Description

Create an education, support and awareness programme for employers in order to get them on board and open their eyes on how they might offer opportunities to participants.

1 An employer wants to offer support or opportunities to participants with additional barriers

2 They are unable to offer full-time paid employment and assume they are unable to help

3 Participants miss out on potential opportunities due to a lack of communication to employers on the different ways they can support

Potential Benefits for:

Service providers

Service providers will have better access to employers as a greater number will be on board and available.

Employers

More incentives and better collaboration and support will give employers more participants to fill their vacancies while making sure they are supported.

Opportunity 10 - Supporting Employers

We know this because...

When running workshops with service providers to understand their challenges, it was interesting to learn that they often felt that employers sometimes have a misconception that the only thing they could offer was a job. However, participants are eager to gain experience of any kind, even if it's just a week of work experience, or a placement of a couple of hours a week. Due to there being a lack of awareness of what services offer and how employers can get involved, participants are not gaining enough exposure or experience.

The level of communication has also had an impact on employers' experiences after they take on a candidate who is still being supported by a service. They need to be able to easily report back on what is and isn't working and ask for support. We heard how this isn't always possible, or employers either don't feel heard, or at worst end up feeling blamed or at fault if things don't work, causing them to disengage.

We head from employers that sometimes the level of support given to them is not up to standard, with delays or only basic help being provided. On the other hand, some providers shared with us that they could end up providing long term support to make up for what their employer should be providing but are not.

"Employers are missing out on people who are genuinely wanting to work, who may prove to be great workers and make a long term commitment"

Service provider at workshop

"We have taken on a profoundly deaf apprentice, and we are still waiting to receive support for her to use the office phones a couple of months later"

Employer responding to survey

"Please consider employers as customers not custodians. We need to be properly supported"

Employer responding to survey

"Employers are afraid to take risks with people with barriers or criminal convictions, disability, physical or mental health issues, young people with no experience or long term unemployed. There is a lack of incentives"

Service provider at a workshop

"If participants can't find ways to get experience they can't move forward in employment. It puts them at risk for relapse or criminal activity. It leads to a lack of motivation and self esteem"

Service provider at a workshop

"We have an autistic employee. There is very little actual support, lots of box ticking"

Employer responding to survey

USE A DATA LED APPROACH TO UNDERSTAND GAPS

11. **Collecting and analysing data**

12. **Qualitative data**

Opportunity 11 - Collecting and analysing data

Description

Set up a data led research programme for the LEP and employability team to understand gaps in provision, identify trends, and better allocate funding where it is needed.

1 Someone is keen to get started working with an organisation, but they either are ineligible or must be put on a waiting list for the services in their area

2 They don't want to travel a long distance if they aren't getting paid, and they wonder why there isn't more in their area

3 The participant feels stuck and held back. When talking to the organisation that could help, they learn that they aren't the only one in this position

4 Other organisations have spaces, but they are either not in locations close to where people need them, or they are only funded to support a specific user group which has lots of investment already

Potential Benefits for:

GCC/LEP

Funding decisions will be more informed by data as gaps in provision will be better understood and addressed.

Participants

More participants will have opportunities to connect with services they need as the provision will be better matched to the needs.

Opportunity 11 - Collecting and analysing data

We know this because...

Getting a clearer picture of employability support needs of participants is vital to making decisions on what sort of provision will be funded to meet demand. The correct level and variety of provision is key to ensure people are being connected with services which can help them. It is critical that services reach the right people, and it is important to draw out insights from data to evidence this. Unfortunately, the data to understand this is not always freely available or updated regularly, or does not exist at a local enough level to be useful.

There is strategic need for services within the council to be more data driven, and for data to inform the focus and direction of where services are targeted. We heard that this data could be analysed more regularly and consistently with regards to employability services. More teams could be working together to ensure the insights from this analysis are clear to everyone.

By not taking a data driven approach, services may not be well matched to participants' needs, meaning an imbalance in the level of support provided across the city. Having more clarity on what is being provided and the levels of engagement with the variety of employability services will not only help those who allocate funding to make decisions, but it will also allow service providers to target their services to those who need it.

"It's not clear how all the organisations fit together or overlap"

Service provider at a workshop

"We still have a linear approach with participants jumping service to service. We need to define what holistic looks like and map all the service provision to identify gaps and duplication"

Service provider at a workshop

"There's over-saturation in provision, with too many companies providing the same services. There's limited time to communicate or bring about a collaborative approach"

Service provider at a workshop

"The most vulnerable people miss out due to a postcode lottery of services, it leads to increased isolation"

Service provider at a workshop

The importance of collecting and utilising data is underscored in the findings and recommendations of the "Supported Employment Within Scotland" report, conducted by Social Research for the Scottish Government in August 2021. The report notes a deficiency in data availability across Scotland concerning various disabilities, posing a challenge in determining whether needs are being addressed or not.

Opportunity 12 - Qualitative data

Description

Create tools and creative methods for GCC's employability team to gather qualitative stories and evidence on participants' experiences to inform funding allocation and improve services.

1 A service provider and participant have been working closely together for a long period of time

2 The participant feels ready to move to a different service for additional support before they feel job ready

4 The service provider is reluctant to refer the participant on, as they feel the true positive impact will get lost in the current system of reporting, and they won't be able to justify their funding

3 The progress and positive transformation that the service has supported the participant with has been hugely evident, but have been mostly "soft outcomes", and not many that can be formally recorded

Potential Benefits for:

GCC/LEP

Improve the understanding of the impact of services on a deeper level to target funding more efficiently.

Service providers

The risk of the positive impact of services being overlooked due to lack of hard outcomes is reduced, as personal or softer outcomes are just as valuable.

Opportunity 12 - Qualitative data

We know this because...

When exploring the topic of data, it became apparent that the challenge was not only around the level of collection and analysis, but also the type of data that was being gathered and used. There is a need for more qualitative data to be considered, meaning more descriptions, stories, and participants' journeys to be shared, rather than just the hard statistics. Important context and participant experiences are not being fully considered when analysing what is working or not working in service delivery due to this data being hard to collect and measure.

This is a key challenge when considering the impact of services and was raised several times as a frustration for service providers. The opportunities to record "softer outcomes" to evidence and track participant progress are vital to getting the full picture on impact made by the provision, and for individual participant progress.

Qualitative data can be hard to collect, and even harder to analyse. It can be more open to interpretation, and time consuming to consolidate and draw insights from. However, including it when considering funding allocation service delivery, as well as participant progress, would give a more accurate picture of delivery and opportunities for improvement to meet participant's needs.

"The opportunity to record the true impact and softer outcomes of employability is not always available, for example the reduction of risk"

Service provider at a workshop

"Funders only see the numbers, not the person's journey"

Service provider at a workshop

"It's a bit of a fundamental shift away from quantitative reporting... a move away from just looking at "how many", to looking at the quality of the service"

GCC staff at a workshop

"We have to listen to the providers and the participants and adapt. We can't keep ploughing on as is"

GCC staff at a workshop

ENHANCE FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION
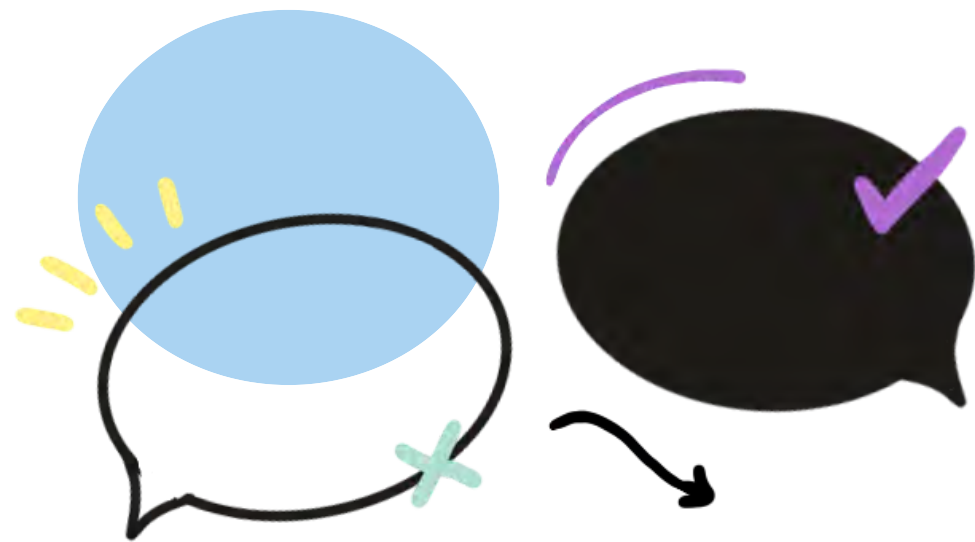
13. **Embedding lived experience**

14. **Feedback between services and funders**

Opportunity 13 - Embedding lived experience

Description

Develop a model to embed participants and their lived experience in the co-design of services for the LEP and GCC employability to improve services, inform policy and provide recommendations for service providers.

1. A participant has been receiving support from a service and is getting on well, but they feel that aspects could be improved

2. They raise some of their thoughts with their key worker, but they aren't sure if this will change anything

3. Their issue isn't so much with the service being delivered, it's more about the way people in their position are supported in general throughout their whole journey into a job

4. The participant wishes they could be heard by the people who make decisions on services, and then see how this has been taken forward

Potential Benefits for:

GCC/LEP

The council and the LEP will have a clearer understanding of complex barriers, experiences and needs from participants, meaning better informed decisions.

Participants

Feedback is taken more of a matter of course, and it is used to directly shape the services by participants for participants. Participants and service providers will be more involved in the overall picture of change.

Opportunity 13 – Embedding lived experience

We know this because...

Involving the voices of those with the experience of using employability services is a highly valuable and effective way to improve how services are delivered, and influence where funding should be allocated. However, there is currently no clear system or consistent method of bringing services user to the forefront in this way, or a formal way to collect this information.

Gathering evidence of lived experiences can be time consuming and often unachievable due to there not being an embedded approach. This is a challenge considering the pressures and constraints on funders to make quick decisions.

In some instances when engaging with participants, they felt an accurate understanding of their experiences or challenges was not being represented. As a result, they could see improvements to be made but had nowhere to voice these. Ensuring that participants are considered, and their thoughts and needs taken onboard, would improve the way that services connect with and retain them.

"I want to feel spoken to and understood, it doesn't feel that higher up people have any realistic awareness or empathy"

Participant at a focus group

"In order to improve employability provision, it is crucial to know the needs and wants of participants"

GCC staff at a workshop

INSIGHT: According to a recent report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, minority ethnic communities are not being heard, and are having poor experiences around engaging with employability provision. We heard in workshops about the need to address systematic racism and barriers to progression, including making sure racialised groups can contribute to the design and delivery of services, and for services to understand and meet their needs better.

Opportunity 14 - Feedback between services and funders

Description

Develop a system for feedback and learning between service providers and those who fund services to bring about a better understanding of what's working and where the needs are.

1 A service provider is contacted by the council letting them know about changes to funding based on a new change in policy from Scottish Government

2 This change has a new ask of service providers, which in this case, has caused implications to their process and delivery

3 The service provider feels stressed and wishes they had been involved or consulted on the changes before they are implemented, as they know what's actually happening on the ground

4 They would like space to discuss the changes with those who have made the funding decisions to understand and and contribute what they think

Potential Benefits for:

GCC/LEP

The council will better understand what is needed for providers through a more open dialogue, and be able to apply this when allocating funding or having discussions with the Scottish Government.

Service providers

Transparency with funders would be improved, so service providers would understand better why certain things are being asked of them. This could shift the negative view of the time taken at present for reporting.

Opportunity 14 - Feedback between services and funders

We know this because...

Hearing the perspectives and experiences from both those who fund services and service providers, it was clear that they sometime felt uncoordinated with one another. For service providers, they felt out of the loop with changes, decisions, and new implementations which affect their delivery. They have shared with us a need for more direct communication with funders to understand why decisions are made, and understand the directions funding for provision is going.

Service providers have made it clear to us that they would like to be more involved, heard and considered within decisions which impact their delivery. This way, funders can make more informed and effective decisions based on information and feedback coming from service providers. Service providers also need to know when funding will be made available, how much and for how long, so they can plan and ensure staff resourcing.

Service provider at a focus group

"I need to have direct, quick and efficient contact within the network to feel well supported and in sync with decisions which could affect my delivery"

"I need an open and joined up approach which will help commissioner's listen to organisations"

Service provider at a workshop

Service Provider at a workshop

"We need engagement from the funders to supply the required information, so we all know who is doing what on a local level"

Recommendations

Recommendations Overview

1. Connecting with support
2. Monitoring participant progress
3. Referring participants on

FACILITATING MORE NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

4. Communications strategy
5. Networking
6. Forums and working together
7. Funding criteria
8. Internal collaboration

ENABLE STRONGER LINKS TO EMPLOYERS

9. Communications with employers
10. Supporting employers

USE A DATA LED APPROACH TO UNDERSTAND GAPS

11. Collecting and analysing data
12. Qualitative data

ENHANCE FEEDABCK AND EVALUATION

13. Embedding lived experience
14. Feedback between services and funders

Within the co-design phase of the project, we used various design thinking methods and tools with service providers, GCC staff, LEP members, Participants and employers to ideate and compile recommendations on how they would address the opportunities within the service re-design. All of the ideas which you are about to read come directly from these key stakeholder groups.

INCREASING AWARENESS OF SERVICES AND SUPPORTING REFERRALS
Recommendations

1. **Connecting with support**

2. **Monitoring participant progress**

3. **Referring participants on**

Recommendation 1 – Connecting with support

1

CREATE AN OPEN DIRECTORY OF ALL SERVICES, PROVIDERS, AND OPPORTUNITIES

A single point of contact would be responsible for maintaining the platform and marketing to providers, and an information sharing policy would need to be in place.

Build a service directory of all provision, kept up to date and open to everyone. This would include all course dates and opportunities across different partners, showing clearly how this links to employment. This has also been described as a co-ordinated central provider database, or one-stop shop for priority and needs-led signposting.

INSIGHT: Instead of starting something from scratch, existing databases or apps could be reviewed to explore how they can be built on, marketed or updated, for example Glasgow Helps, Let's Get!, and Glasgow Welcomes.

2

DEVELOP A NEEDS ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR PARTICIPANTS

Develop an online needs assessment tool for participants to match them with services by generating a list of organisations who could help them based on what they input. This may look like a service interface app which lets participants enter their info directly into one place, which is then shared with multiple organisations and updated as they progress. This would be dependent on mapping out what each service provides and storing this in a central place so that a service user can be quickly matched with who is best to support them.

Recommendation 1 - Connecting with support

3

CREATE A MATCHING SERVICE FOR EMPLOYERS TO CONNECT WITH SERVICE PROVIDERS

A matching service for businesses to find suitable employability partners to work with, and for service providers to connect with employers willing to work with them. This may involve more engagement with DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) to better match participants with opportunities to work with services or willing employers.

INSIGHT: THIS WOULD REQUIRE PEOPLE WITH TECHNOLOGY SKILLS TO COLLATE AND BUILD AN INFORMATION PLATFORM, EMPLOYABILITY PROVIDERS AND KEY WORKERS SHARING INFORMATION, AND MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS EXPERTS TO RAISE AWARENESS.

TO KEEP A PLATFORM LIKE THIS UP TO DATE WITH INFORMATION WOULD BE VERY RESOURCE INTENSIVE.

Recommendation 2 – Monitoring participant progress

1

IMPROVE TRACKING OF PARTICIPANT PROGRESS THROUGH ONLINE SYSTEMS

Re-design the management information system so that one piece of evidence can be linked with multiple services, meaning services are not duplicating data collection. This would mean creating a monitoring system which monitors a person's whole journey, not just disjointed facts about them stored in various places.

This has been described as an interactive action plan that moves with the person from service to service throughout their journey, being updated by multiple providers as they go. GDPR issues would have to be overcome to share data on participants between services, as well as looking into data sharing on Hanlon (the online system used currently by many service providers).

INSIGHT: Hanlon is already being used to track participant progress and work is underway to build on this, particularly around data sharing.
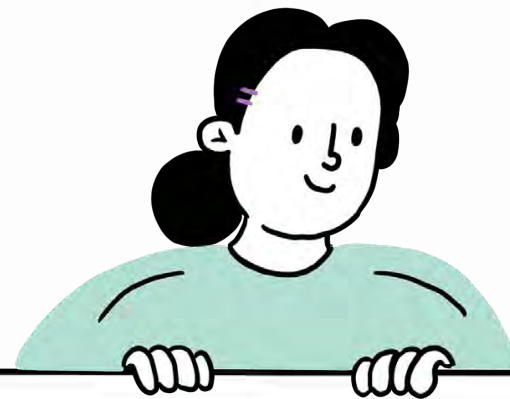
2

REFINE THE DOCUMENTATION PROCESS AROUND RECORDING PARTICIPANT EVIDENCE

Make paperwork required between services, funders, and participants shorter and less complex, with more focus on digital rather than paper when recording evidence. More training or a simple user guide on how to complete paperwork, particularly for inexperienced staff, could also be provided. On a broader level, re-evaluating how outcomes are measured may be needed to more accurately measure how participants are progressing, for example through considering softer outcomes such as personal development or attendance at programmes.

INSIGHT: Multiple agencies all have different data priorities over the client journey, and will have their own data compliance policies. It will take gradual change over time and buy in from agencies before things change.

Recommendation 3 – Referring participants on

1

Create an online tool to facilitate referrals and share information about the participant's journey

A referral tool to make sharing participants easier through sharing information and streamlining the referral process. This would involve information about the outcomes a participant has met being shared automatically online whenever a participant is referred to another service, meaning data sharing agreements would be required.

In this scenario, participants would only have to register and share all their details and story once. The transition to a new service would be smoother as the information on their progress and the work done to support them would be easily accessible to both the service provider and to the participant. The capabilities of the Hanlon system which service providers already use could be further explored to investigate the data sharing capabilities, as well as the potential to embed referral forms. Part of this online system could also look like a noticeboard for providers to share opportunities across all sectors.

2

More training for staff to support them to make referrals

Training sessions for developing skills in staff to refer to other organisations. They may take the form of organisations sharing best practices with each other, or individual organisations refreshing their referral processes to be more in line with NOLB principles.

Insight: Opening up monitoring data to the participants themselves means they know what data they would be consenting to being shared. It also means they have all the work they've done to hand when it comes to writing applications.

Recommendation 3 - Referring participants on

3

Develop a key worker role that oversees the whole journey

Roll out and scale up existing work around a key worker service delivery model. This means one point of contact having an overview of all services and working continuously with one person throughout their whole journey to refer to multiple services where needed. This would effectively change the way most employability service providers work, and help to deliver a more person-centred approach.

Insight: There are examples of key worker models already working effectively, for example Glasgow Life's Family Finance key workers. Work needs to be done to understand existing best practice, build on it, and have it written into procurement.

Insight: Described in the report "Outcomes from Making It Work - Lessons and Challenges for Scotland's Future Employability Services" (July 2017), the partnership-based services initiated by Making It Work effectively facilitated various progression outcomes. Subsequent research consistently demonstrated notable benefits to the confidence and social engagement of vulnerable parents. This positive impact was attributed to the one-to-one, intensive support delivered by Key Workers.

FACILITATING MORE NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION Recommendations
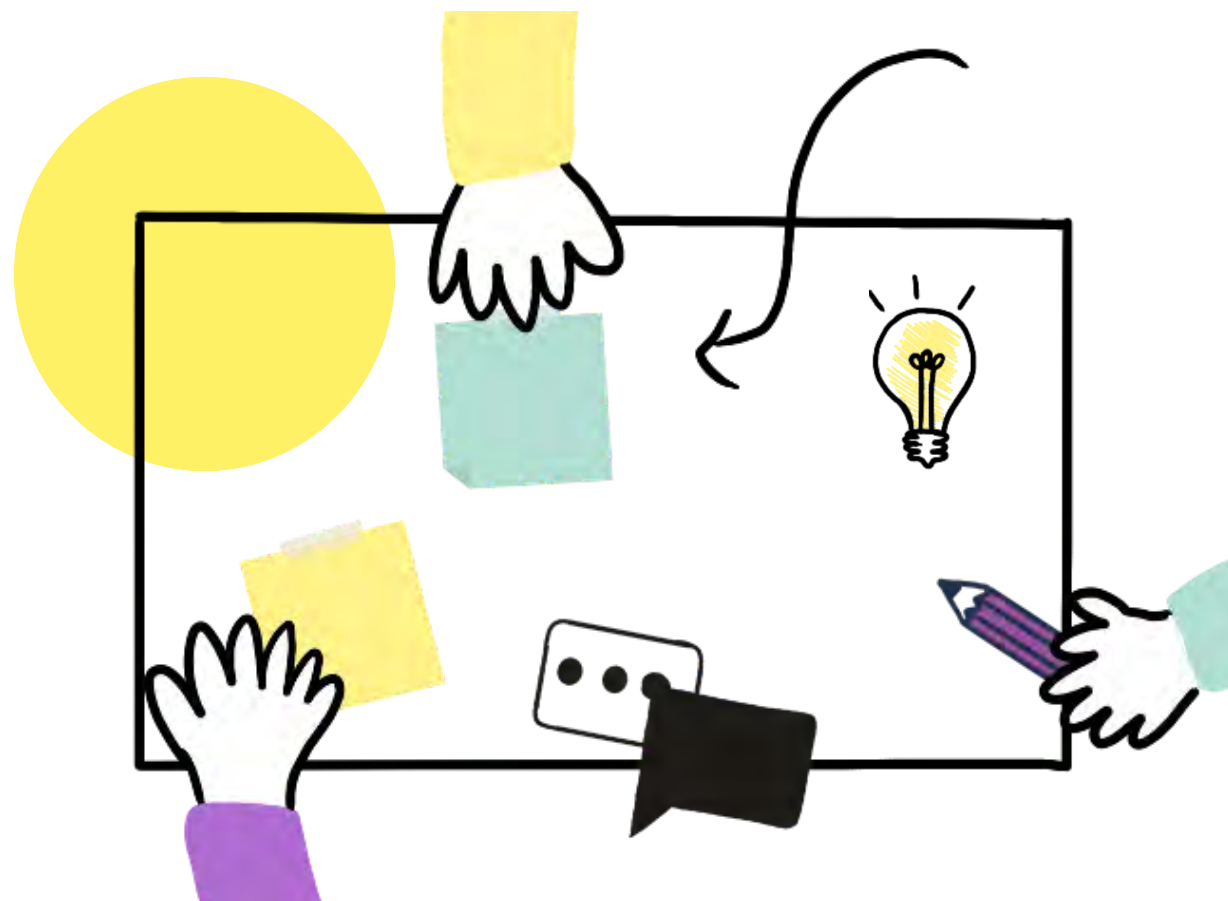
4. **Communications strategy**

5. **Networking**

6. **Forums and working together**

7. **Funding criteria**

8. **Internal collaboration**

Recommendation 4 - Communications strategy

1

Create a mechanism for sharing information on partnership opportunities

This approach could involve flash emails once a week to all providers highlighting a particular service with details of how to refer participants, and a process where the LEP are involved in sharing information to staff. This could be supported by marketing materials and resources to encourage collaboration, which communicate the process around making referrals, especially directed towards inexperienced staff.

It may also be helpful to make people more aware who else is part of it the NOLB network to settle any worries about conflicts in funding and build connections through work practices in common. Lastly, more advertisement and direct engagement with employers could be in place to let them know about available opportunities to partner with services.

2

Communicate and share stories to show the impact and value of collaboration

More communications, for example events, newsletters, social media, to highlight the value of working together. The LEP could host information sessions regarding partnership opportunities and the value of collaboration, or sessions to give hands-on support.
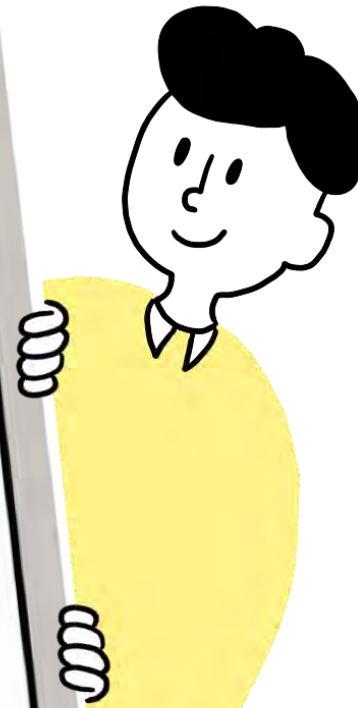
Recommendation 4 - Communications strategy

3

Create communication and storytelling materials to showcase success stories and good news

Develop more engaging and creative ways to highlight case studies of good practice, important learnings and any information service providers would like to share with others. This may look like roadshows to share successes and information about services on offer. This could involve developing a consistent communication method to share case studies between services regarding placements or relationships with employers, or involve getting the help of agencies to make short films.

Insight: Work is ongoing within the council on a new employability website which could help to address these issues, as well as the newsletter developed recently.

Recommendation 5 - **Networking**

Utilise existing networking events and forums, as well as creating new ones with specific focuses and attendees if required

Holding regular networking events at a large city centre venue, for example the Concert Hall. These could involve "speed dates" with other services to help create partnerships, or be user group specific events, where all services who support a specific user group can meet.

There could be spotlight sessions within events which highlight the work of one service more in depth and encourage others to share where they see opportunities for joint working. There should be a special focus on having networking opportunities for frontline workers rather than only management staff, as they need the space to develop strong professional relationships to help them make referrals for participants.

Networking events could line up with funding periods, as this is when services are most keen to find partners to work on joint funding bids. A dedicated team could support the networking activities and issue clear communication on where and when to get involved. It would also be important to engage with existing forums and networking which already exists, for example GCVS (Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector), GSEN (Glasgow Social Enterprise Network), and NOLB networking events.

INSIGHT: IN THEORY THIS SHOULD BE EASY TO SOLVE AS THERE IS SUCH A HIGH DEMAND. HOWEVER, IT REQUIRES STAFFING RESOURCE AND/ OR SERVICE PROVIDERS TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED AND TAKE ON A SHARE OF THE WORK INVOLVED.

Recommendation 5 - Networking

2

PROVIDE SHARED SPACES FOR PROVIDERS TO INTERACT

Create more shared working space for providers to interact, such as a face-to-face hub with drop in working desks and break out space for providers. This would be a non-competitive shared space where providers would commit to sending staff on rota to network, share ideas and knowledge.

It could also be a place to share information on employers and vacancies, leaflets, and documentation, or to hold training and talks.

This could be organised and run by the council, or the LEP, and could either be in a central location or within different neighbourhoods to encourage place- based connections to form. This means service providers would have stronger relationships with the services geographically close to them.

INSIGHT: THIS WOULD REQUIRE COMMITMENT FROM SERVICES TO GIVE TIME FOR KEY WORKERS TO ATTEND, AND POTENTIALLY TAKING OWNERSHIP FOR ORGANISING THE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES.

3

SINGLE POINT FOR CO-ORDINATING ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN SERVICES

One organisation takes the lead on networking and collaboration. This could be approached through the council creating a database of potential lead partners who would be willing to lead on collaborative working, or through funding a dedicated post or collective leadership forum through the LEP.

INSIGHT: TO BE USEFUL, THESE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES WOULD HAVE TO GO BEYOND JUST INFORMATION SHARING, AND INCLUDE FEEDBACK AND MAKING REAL CONNECTIONS.
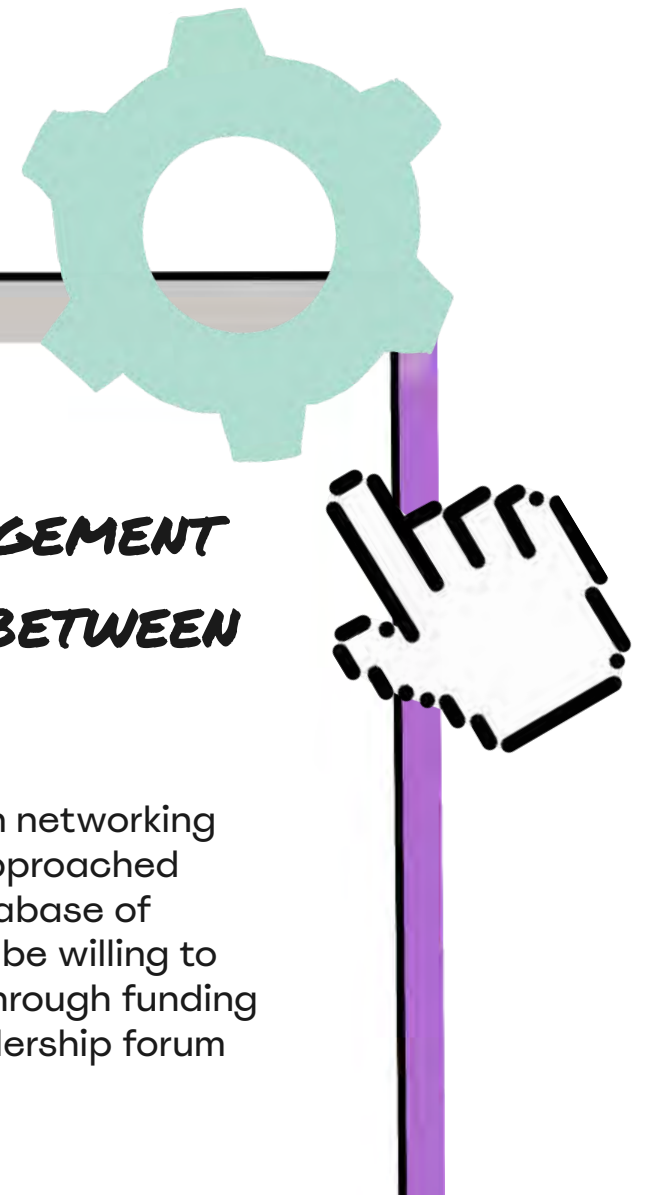
Recommendation 6 - Forums and working together

1

Create opportunities to share skills and knowledge

Building a community of sharing through making information and resources for key workers, and anyone else working in the employability field, widely available and easily accessible. This may also look like establishing practitioner forums or guidance forums for service providers to share expertise and knowledge around what has worked for them, and learn from other organisations' experiences.

This could be supported by creating communications agreements between organisations to enable a standard process for sharing knowledge, and may have a mix of online and in person aspects.

2

Create working groups co-ordinated by the LEP

Create subgroups as a part of the LEP to build relationships and share expert input between service providers around certain priority groups. How this expands out to a wider audience should also be considered so that the right people are in the room to solve problems being tackled by the working groups. The council could also develop working groups of service providers based on their networks, then over time hand it over to providers to drive and coordinate going forwards.

Insight: More work would be required to understand what the best use of time would be for any working group, as well as what attendees would need out of them, the frequency and the venue.

Recommendation 7 - Funding criteria

1

ENCOURAGE FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS TO FORM BETWEEN ORGANISATIONS

Build on currently successful informal partnerships between organisations by putting in place more formal working agreements. Additionally, influence funding bodies to make collaborative working a bigger part of their criteria.

INSIGHT: IN OUR SURVEY, MOST ORGANISATIONS REPORTED ONLY WORKING IN INFORMAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS, WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS SUCH AS GLASGOW GUARANTEE AND JOBS AND BUSINESS GLASGOW.

2

REVIEW COMMUNITY BENEFIT CLAUSES AND FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

Change community benefit clauses to make sure contractors are working more closely with organisations to support participants and are offering proper jobs. Change funding requirements to make sure services are open to as many people as possible to tackle any issues around referrals or postcode lotteries.

INSIGHT: THE ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF FAIR START SCOTLAND, RELEASED BY THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT IN MARCH 2022, HIGHLIGHTS THE NECESSITY TO REASSESS FUNDING STRUCTURES TO AVOID THE RELIANCE ON INCENTIVE PAYMENTS TO PROVIDERS. WHILE THE LONG-TERM BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPANTS MAY NOT ALWAYS ALIGN WITH CONVENTIONAL JOB OUTCOMES, THERE IS A POTENTIAL RISK OF DIMINISHED ACHIEVEMENT IF RELIANCE ON INCENTIVE PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS PERSISTS.

Recommendation 7 - **Funding criteria**

3

Extend the length of funding contracts to enable longer term provision

Review feedback from services and create a funding allocation model which addresses concerns around joined up working, and makes a commitment to longer term multi annual year employability funding. Help funding commissioners and the Scottish Government recognise the need for longer term contracts. This would enable organisations to maintain strong connections with the partners they refer into through retaining staff for longer periods.
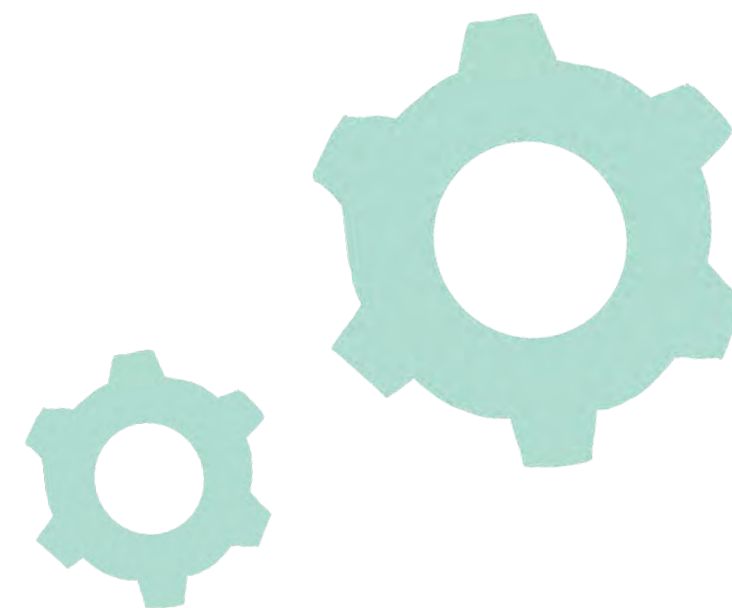
Recommendation 8 - Internal collaboration

DRIVE CLOSER COLLABORATION BETWEEN EMPLOYABILITY, BUSINESS, AND DATA TEAMS WITHIN GLASGOW CITY COUNCIL

The council's employability team could work more closely with other teams who have strong relationships with businesses and employers to make use of these good connections and networks. Ongoing engagement with teams outside the employability team who have expertise in data analysis is also key to allow as many insights as possible to be gained from the data collected. This will be enabled through an ongoing culture change away from the same old ways of doing things, to embrace new and relevant skillsets and knowledge existing across different departments.

INSIGHT: THERE IS SIGNIFICANT UP TO DATE DATA THAT COULD AND SHOULD BE USED TO DRIVE OUR SERVICE DESIGN, FOR EXAMPLE CHILD POVERTY DATA. THE CHALLENGE MAY BE DECIDING WHAT IS USEFUL TO LOOK AT, AND WHAT DATA WOULD BE REQUIRED TO MAKE A WELL INFORMED DECISION.

INSIGHT: THE BUSINESS TEAMS HAVE INFORMATION ON BUSINESS GRANTS WHICH COULD BE SHARED WITH THE EMPLOYABILITY TEAMS TO SHOW TRENDS IN DEMAND.

ENABLE STRONGER LINKS TO EMPLOYERS
Recommendations

9. Communications with employers

10. Supporting employers

Recommendation 9 - Communication with employers

1

CREATE AN EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

Encourage more networking opportunities between service providers and employers to build more streamlined paths into employment for the participants of the services. A dedicated team within the council could be set up to actively engage with employers and link them with services to share opportunities between the two.

Marketing and communication through existing employer networks should be explored as quick a straightforward way to raise awareness of opportunities, as well as making use of organisations like the Chamber of Commerce to attract employers.

INSIGHT: AN EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT GROUP ALREADY EXISTS WITHIN THE COUNCIL, AND IT IS GOING THROUGH A REDESIGN FOCUSING ON HOW TO BEST LINK PROVIDERS WITH EMPLOYERS, AND HOW THESE TWO GROUPS CAN COMMUNICATE BETTER AND WORK TOGETHER.

2

BUILDING STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SERVICE PROVIDERS AND EMPLOYERS

Setting up a more consistent and efficient way to link employers to service providers would build engagement and collaboration between these groups, particularly employers willing to take on participants who may need more support, for example disability confident employers. Evaluating the ways employers are currently being connected with service providers, such as Glasgow Guarantee, could raise opportunities to make the process more user friendly. Bringing employers and service providers together, perhaps in events attended by both groups, would provide an opportunity to discuss the needs and expectations, particularly how the needs of those with the most barriers can be balanced with the business needs.

Recommendation 10 - **Supporting employers**

1 CREATE AN EMPLOYER EDUCATION PROGRAMME WITH DEDICATED EMPLOYER SUPPORT

Employer liaison roles could be put in place to improve the transition between a supportive service and employment for both the participant and employer. This is dependent on how much the services deliver this in-work support already to avoid any duplication.

The support provided to employers could also look like having a single point of contact they can reach out to for practical in-work support, and raising awareness of the different things they can get help with. For example, how to support those with additional barriers and understanding the laws around this.

Lastly, employers could be provided with more information on the various ways they could offer opportunities to those engaging with services with different levels of commitment if they aren't in the position to take on more permanent staff, for example work experience, placements, or reduced hour contracts.
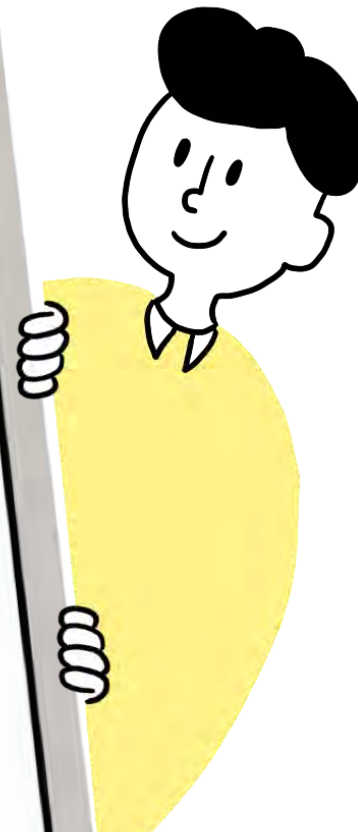
2 EMPLOYER INCENTIVE PROGRAMME

More incentive funding programmes for employers, and/or expand the reach of Glasgow Guarantee. Raise more awareness in employers of the wide variety of ways they can bring about community benefits and provide incentives for these. For example, if they cannot offer a job, they may be able to offer work experience or placements.

Targeting information to socially conscious businesses may be a way to offer incentives which are not just financial, but more focused on the community benefit.

INSIGHT: SOME EMPLOYER SUPPORT ALREADY EXISTS, BUT THIS COULD BE EXTENDED TO A WIDER EMPLOYER BASE AND ACROSS ALL NOLB PROJECTS.

Recommendation 10 - **Supporting employers**

3

Review how employers and participants interact before employment begins to set expectations

Review the way participants are matched with jobs to ensure the employer has been given as much information as possible, meaning the workplace will be appropriate and they will be able to support the participant. Ensure employers who work with services share as much information as possible about the role ahead of time, especially the amount of flexible working, including any working from home.

Insight: Work is ongoing to address how services work with employers, including the Glasgow Guarantee re-design, employer engagement review group, paid work placement and training for work projects.

4

Employer engagement which links employers to participants

A dedicated service or team who would familiarise themselves with all the service providers and then use data and their knowledge of industry demand to identify and match employers to providers and their participants. This could be led by existing structures like Glasgow Guarantee, through expanding their existing offering to include a wide variety of opportunities, not just those with part funding.

Insight: Jobs and Business Glasgow have a key worker model to link participants with jobs; this could be replicated or expanded across more services.

USE A DATA LED APPROACH TO UNDERSTAND GAPS

11. **Collecting and analysing data**

12. **Qualitative data**

Recommendation 11 - **Collecting and analysing data**

1

INCREASE THE LEVEL OF DATA ANALYSIS TO IDENTIFY GAPS AND TRENDS IN EMPLOYABILITY PROVISION

More analysis on the data already collected and held by organisations is needed to understand where the needs are in relation to employability provision, and matching this with appropriate services. This may be done through understanding things like which type of participants are accessing particular services and what they need.

A better understanding of this data would enable better allocation of funding, and employability provision could be targeted to where it is most needed, reducing over saturation in other areas.
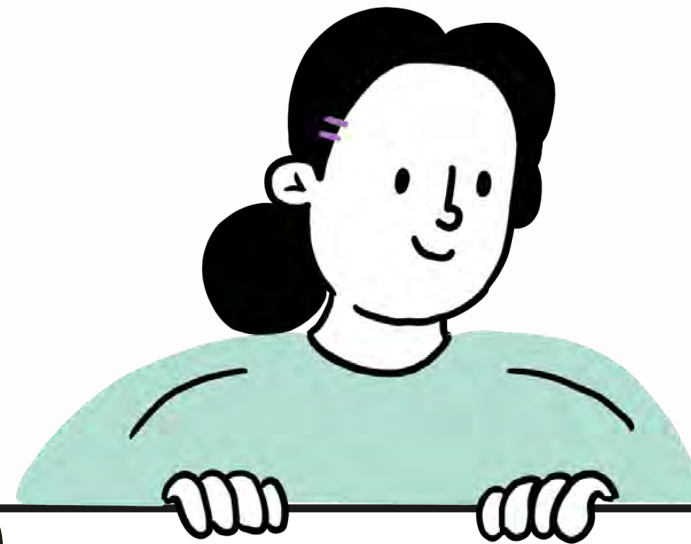
INSIGHT: Many of the actions relating to data analysis are interlinked and dependant on each other.

2

BRING TOGETHER VARIOUS DATASETS INTO A DATA HUB

Building a data hub as a central place to store and analyse data. This would involve tackling GDPR issues, and require data analysis skillsets. Workshops could be held with council and LEP staff to determine where any data gaps exist, and what insights are needed from the data to inform decisions. As well as making more use of the council's data analysis expertise, this could also involve bringing in external organisations like the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. In addition, more focus should be brought to qualitative methods of data collection and analysis such as gathering stories from participants to further help build understanding.

INSIGHT: Work had been completed recently to develop a Shared Measurement Framework which considers many different strategies when measuring the effectiveness of an approach.

Recommendation 12 - **Qualitative data**

1

Expand funding requirements to include "soft" outcomes

Through asking the participants to tell their stories, either in a case study format or otherwise, and then comparing this with a key workers, it will show what is having the most impact and what is most important to the participants.
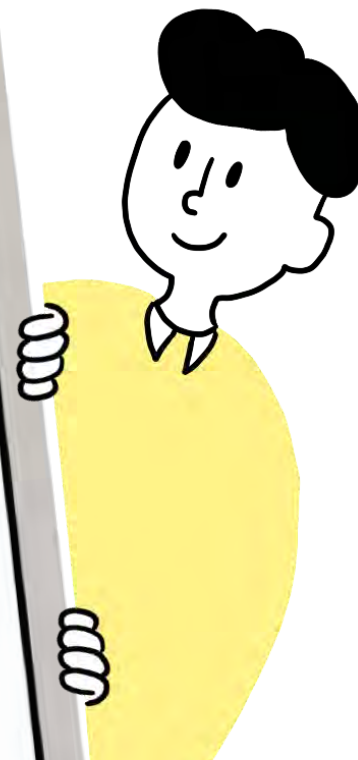
Change the way we measure outcomes to include softer outcomes, such as personal development and attendance to programmes. Put more importance on these softer outcomes and even bring them into service funding requirements through understanding how they could be evidenced and measured. Investigate the collection of case studies to do this, for example asking services to upload more case studies, while carefully considering the design of these to prevent them being too resource intensive.

2

Making better use of data to generate insight and implement the quality standard

A dedicated team to implement the quality standard and capture evidence on a rolling basis in a quality standard database. Develop new ways of working to value qualitative data, and influence the Scottish Government in consider this approach in the reporting requirements. In addition, investigate data tools which are designed to draw out insights from qualitative data efficiently.

Insight: The Quality Standard tool (developed by the council with input from participants) is qualitative, and once it is in place, it may give rise to these larger scale changes.

ENHANCE FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION
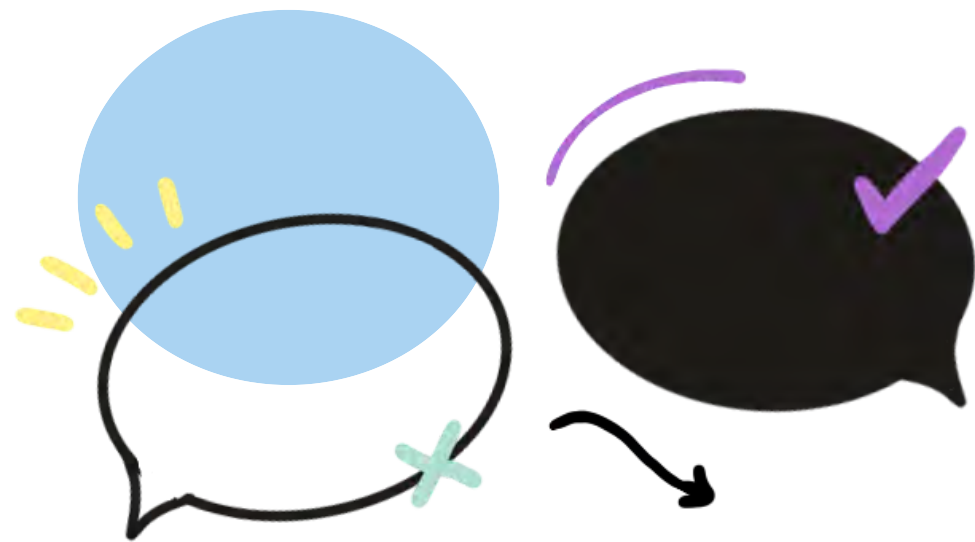
13. **Embedding lived experience**

14. **Feedback between services and funders**

Recommendation 13 - Embedding lived experience

1

MORE INCLUSIVE REPRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANTS DURING EVALUATION, AND INCREASED VISIBILITY OF WAYS TO FEEDBACK

Develop engagement methods which enable more representation and higher visibility of diverse groups and experiences. Explore participant facing meet ups or physical hubs to gather feedback and ideas regarding employability provision.

Make it easier for participants to see and access online and in person methods to share their experiences. This could be supported by making sure the staff collecting this data have training in equalities and anti-racist approaches to make sure the feedback received is as representative of as many perspectives as possible, and no groups are underrepresented.

INSIGHT: Online or informal methods can be limited by the skills and software available to staff for engagement. However, this approach is important as it is difficult to retain participants to regular in person engagements.

2

EMBED LIVED EXPERIENCE TO INFLUENCE POLICY AND STRATEGY

Create a user panel or a lived experience panel to influence change based on what those who have used services think. The LEP could bring together their resources to create a co-production team, where each organisation brings several of their participants together to share their experiences. There could also be representation of participants and service providers on funding panels to influence funding decisions. Feedback on specific topics to inform forward planning could be gathered via focus groups of participants.

Recommendation 13 - Embedding lived experience

3

## CO-DESIGN SERVICES WITH PARTICIPANTS FOR BETTER OUTCOMES

More feedback collected from participants, including suggestions to make things better, and case studies gathered from participants to get their perspective and needs. Involve participants more in the design and delivery of NOLB work plan.

INSIGHT: IT IS DIFFICULT FOR PARTICIPANTS, ESPECIALLY THOSE FURTHEST FROM THE LABOUR MARKET, TO TAKE PART IN A PANEL AND BE RETAINED. THERE NEEDS TO BE A LOT OF SUPPORT IN PLACE AND SIGNIFICANT FUNDING TO SUPPORT THEM AND TO PAY THEM FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTION.

INSIGHT: PARTICIPANTS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED TO CREATE SIX COMMITMENTS AND SHAPING THE FRAMEWORK OF THE QUALITY STANDARD, AN EVALUATION TOOL FOR SERVICES DEVELOPED WITH THE COUNCIL AND THE LEP.
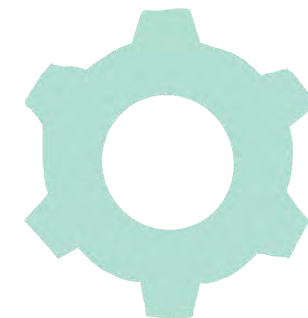
Opportunity 14 - Feedback between services and funders

1

HOLD EVENTS OR MEETINGS TO BRING SERVICE PROVIDERS AND FUNDERS TOGETHER

Build an open dialogue between service providers and funders where they can listen to each other's ideas and concerns. This may look like "meet the buyer" events where services can get to know the funders and what they are looking for. There could be annual sessions where services can share their feedback on what is needed, and funders can share their funding strategy.

This could also include "you said, we did" type forums between service providers and funders to share progress and understand strategy.
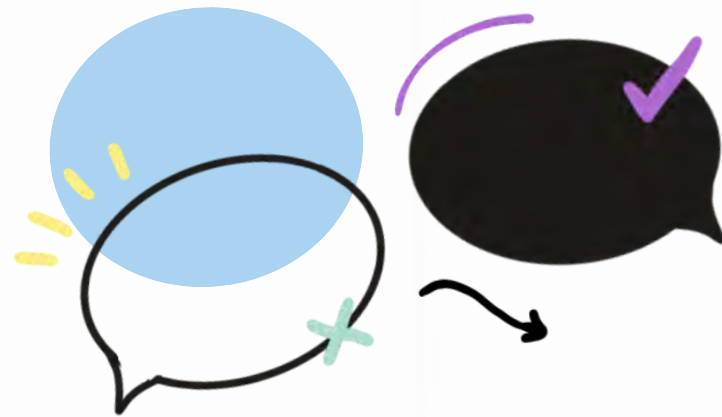
2

HAVE A POINT OF CONTACT IN THE LEP FOR SERVICES

Every service could have a clear communication link to the LEP, be it through having a dedicated member in the LEP to reach out to, or LEP having subgroups which include frontline staff.
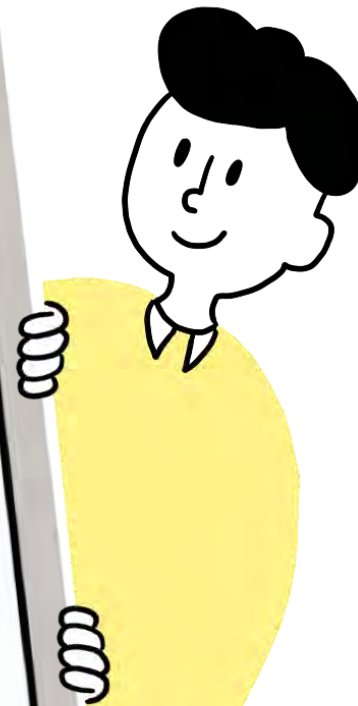
Opportunity 14 - Feedback between services and funders

3

FUNDERS PROVIDING FEEDBACK TO PROVIDERS ON A REGULAR BASIS

When service providers write reports and case studies of their work, funders could write reports in response back to give them feedback and let them know what they would like to see more of based on funding priorities.

4

FUNDERS SPENDING MORE TIME UNDERSTANDING THE SERVICES

Funders could be more on the ground where services are delivered to talk with services and participants and see directly what they are delivering. This could look like the LEP visiting different services, or holding their meetings in different venues.

INSIGHT: Once funding has been set, there wouldn't be much more information to give out. However, communications could be kept up to gather feedback on whether funding levels are adequate, or if funding is being used properly to inform future opportunities.

Proposed next steps

Proposed next steps....

**Prioritisation of Opportunities**

Throughout the design process we identified several opportunities whilst engaging with the key stakeholder groups that aligned to our project brief. Our intention was to review all opportunities with the view to proposing which of these should be prioritised moving forward. It was evident however that to do this effectively it would require an in-depth knowledge of both the current and future employability landscape.

In December last year we worked with the GCC Employability Team to get their input around the importance of tackling each opportunity as well as gaining their views on how difficult it would be, in terms of resourcing and time. Although this exercise was valuable in providing us with insight as to how these opportunities tied in with other existing Employability programmes, there is scope to take this wider and consider the opportunities existing across the city.

We recommend the next steps would be to work with the Local Employability Partnership to review the list of opportunities and develop an action plan as to how each of these may be taken forward.

Outputs from this process would see the identification of which opportunities CCI would take ownership of and continue to explore these with the various stakeholder groups using the Service Design process.

The aim would then be to share an update at the planned Employability event in June.
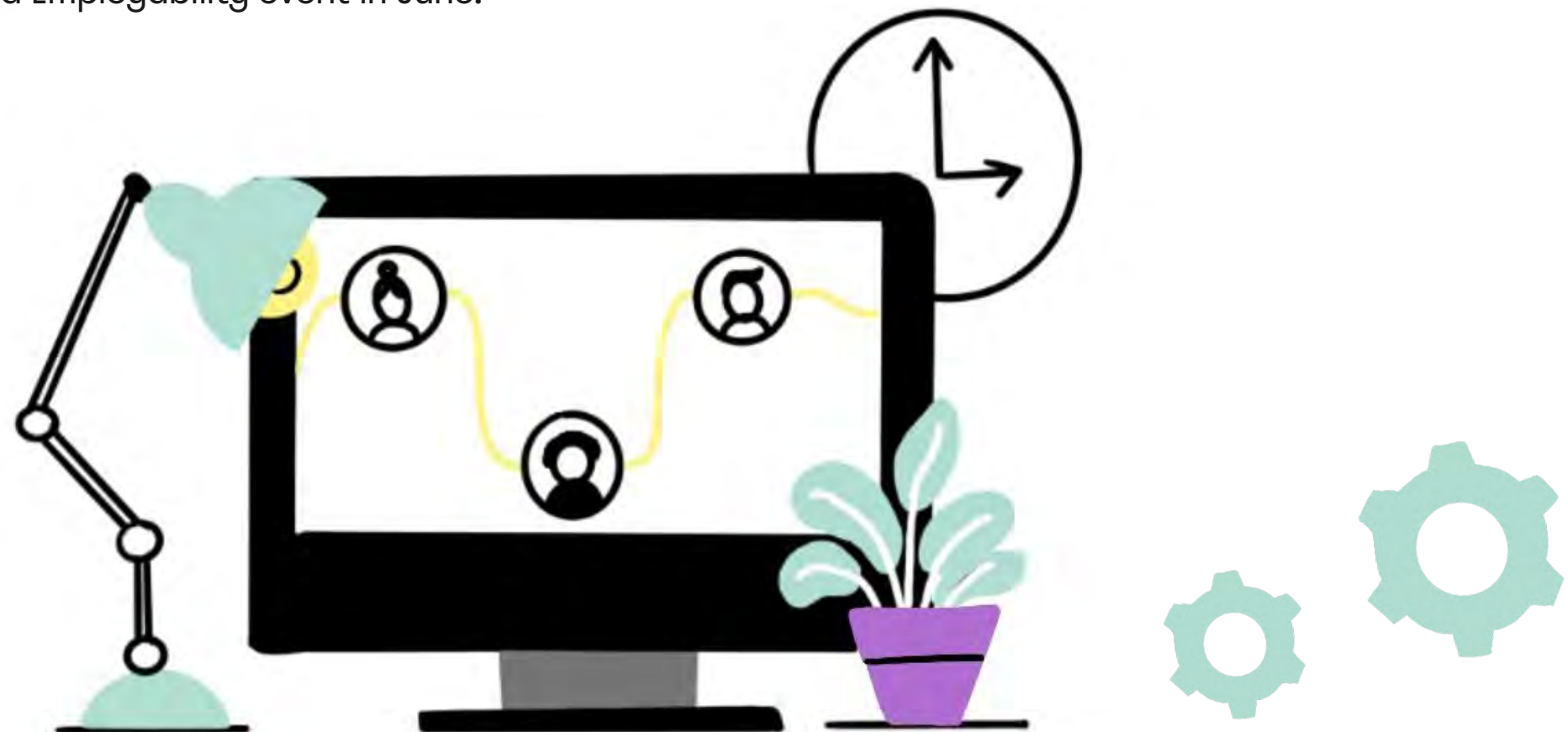
Proposed next steps....

Building capacity

Due to the number of opportunities identified it is unfeasible for the Centre for Civic Innovation to be able to take forward all of these without a significant increase in resource.
However, we believe, that with the knowledge we have built during the design process, there are opportunities which could be taken forward either by GCC Employability Team or LEP partners.

We would recommend that the Centre for Civic Innovation work with the Local Employability Partnership to develop a formal capacity building programme in design and innovation. This would be developed in collaboration with industry and academic partners that would look to empower employability staff to develop in partnership new and innovative solutions that put participants are at the heart and focus of employability services across Glasgow at both local and city-wide levels.

Knowledge Sharing

Throughout the design process we gained invaluable insight that relates to work that is either underway or is planned across the employability. eco-system. There was also a vast amount of insight gained around other key theme's that did not directly align to our revised brief.

Within our engagement phase, for example, we managed to speak to hard-to-reach participant groups across the City, as well as collecting pressing insights from service providers and employers. We are aware that most of these insights could inform other strategic objectives which are currently underway, and if not utilised, would risk duplication
To ensure that this insight is not lost, CCI would recommend exploring with the Local Employability Partnership how might we best consolidate this insight and share with partners