



FULLFILLING LIVES



Changing systems for people with multiple and complex needs

How systems have changed through the Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling Lives project

Interim report (June 2016)

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CHANGING LIVES



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1. Summary

Introduction

The Fulfilling Lives programme

Fulfilling Lives¹ is an eight-year programme funded by the Big Lottery aimed at people with multiple needs - individuals who are likely to experience at least three of the following: homelessness, reoffending, problematic substance misuse and mental ill health. The programme aims to bring different organisations and services together to offer people one co-ordinated support service that meets all their needs. One of the intentions of the programme is to change systems for people with multiple needs.

The Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling lives project (hereafter referred to as 'the project') is being delivered by Changing Lives in partnership with Mental Health Concern and Oasis Aquila Housing.

About systems change

Systems thinking is a way of understanding problems and how they can be solved. A system is made up of, for example, people, things and relationships, as well as perspectives, values and purposes.

The system someone with multiple and complex needs interacts with is a complex web of services including housing, criminal justice, substance misuse and mental health services. Within this broader system are sub-systems that might include (for example) hostels, support workers, families and individuals. These operate within wider systems including local commissioning and national policy. Systems are made up of elements including working cultures, values and power relationships as well as physical elements, policies and procedures.

Systems thinking says that:

- The systems that people interact with can cause problems, even when they are designed to help people.
- We can solve problems by seeking to change these systems.

Systems change requires radical change in our thinking, assumptions and ways of working. Systems change is not simply about implementing new projects; it is about doing things differently, and is a process rather than a project. It requires new facilitative forms of leadership and extensive collaboration. Systems change involves an ongoing process of innovation, reflection and learning.

The research presented in this report builds on a previous selective review of the literature conducted by the New Economics Foundation for Changing Lives and reported in *Changing Systems for people with multiple needs: Learning from the literature*.

Systems change in the Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling Lives project

The Newcastle and Gateshead systems change project has identified a number of principles underpinning its programme development and approach to systems change. These include:

- Meeting and understanding the needs of beneficiaries, based on service user involvement and the Experts by Experience group (which is made up of people with personal experience of multiple and complex needs).

¹ Big Lottery Fund (n.d.) *Fulfilling Lives: Supporting people with multiple needs*. http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_complex_needs Accessed on 01.09.2014

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- Using a combination of first order change (focused on improving current provision using existing models) and second order change (involving changes in practice and culture within or across organisations).
- The continuous practice of reflection by programme members.
- An ongoing dialogue with partners around influencing and evidencing potential change as opposed to directing change, resulting in a process of evolution and gradual change.
- Working with others to build movements and act as a platform for change.
- Using learning to adapt what we do and share with the wider community, including through conducting and evaluating pilots.
- Organisations are made up of people, and in order to change behaviour we must influence organisation culture to enable the people to effect systems change.

The project employs Service Navigators to support individual clients to navigate systems, and System Brokers who identify where the current system may prevent individuals from transforming their lives, work with the Service Navigators to evidence the real issues facing the client group, and lead on individual areas of systems change.

The project has established Experts by Experience, Operational and Strategic reference groups. The purpose of these groups is to understand and change the way services respond, are commissioned and are delivered, based on evidence of the real issues.

Aims and methodology of this research

This research aims to answer the question: *How have systems changed through the Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling Lives project, and how can this learning inform the future of the programme?*

This report explores in detail three selected areas of the system that the Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling Lives project (hereafter referred to as 'the project') is attempting to influence. It identifies barriers to and facilitators of systems change experienced by the project overall, and presents an emerging theory of systems change for the project.

Research was conducted in April and May 2016 and consisted of workshops and in-depth telephone interviews with selected external stakeholders (including local authorities, voluntary sector organisations and statutory services), Fulfilling Lives project staff, the Chair of the project's Strategic Group and members of the Experts by Experience group (a reference group for the project), and a review of selected project documentation. The research will be repeated in spring 2017.

Three selected areas of systems change

This research focuses on three selected areas of systems change:

1. **Local connection:** Councils commonly require someone to have a local connection to the area (for example, having lived in the area for a certain period of time) in order to help them with accommodation. However, returning to a home area with which they have a connection is not always in the best interests of people experiencing multiple and complex needs, who

may wish to start again away from, for example, exploitative relationships or peer groups with whom they used drugs or alcohol.

2. **Access to benefits:** People wishing to make new claims for benefits must telephone the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) Benefit Delivery Centre to do so. Those with multiple and complex needs can struggle with what they can experience as an inflexible call-centre style approach. This can make it difficult for them to claim the benefits they are entitled to.
3. **Supporting people with no recourse to public funds:** The Fulfilling Lives project is supporting five people experiencing multiple and complex needs who do not have recourse to public funds but wish to remain in the UK. These people fall into two groups:
 - Destitute asylum seekers, who have been refused refugee status but do not wish/are not safe to return to their home country.
 - People from EU countries who do not have access to benefits.The project's Service Navigators have encountered several difficulties in supporting these individuals, and local stakeholders report that the system for those without recourse to public funds does not work as well as it should for people experiencing multiple and complex needs. Discussions suggest that many systemic issues for this group are at a national policy level.

Selected outcomes

Important outcomes in the three selected areas of systems change are:

Overall outcome: stronger relationships

- Trusting relationships have been established/strengthened with a range of decision makers and providers, including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), local councils, and local services, as a result of dialogue and collaboration.

Local connection

- Gateshead Council is piloting new procedures around local connection which mean that people experiencing multiple and complex needs can be housed without a local connection.
- A local connection working group has been formed with representation from many councils in the North East of England, with the aspiration of developing a regional local connection agreement.
- One woman who was formerly street homeless has been housed in Gateshead despite not having a local connection with the area. She has remained in her tenancy for nine months at the time of writing this report.

Access to benefits

- A single point of contact model of support for residents of one hostel wishing to make new claims for benefits has been piloted in partnership with DWP.
- One man completed the pilot, and he had his claim for benefits 'resolved quickly and efficiently'.²

During the pilot period, the introduction of full service (ie fully implemented across all groups of benefit recipients) Universal Credit in Newcastle in May 2016 was

² As reported in the evaluation of the pilot. His experience contrasts with the man in the control group who accumulated arrears as a result of difficulties making his claim and was ultimately evicted.

announced by the DWP nationally. This was sooner than expected and was also found to be fully-online (without a Benefit Delivery Centre), meaning that partners are now reassessing this work. Enduring outcomes are that:

- A strong relationship has been built with the DWP locally.
- The evaluation of the pilot has provided some indication of the need for different approaches for people experiencing multiple and complex needs.
- The issue is on the agenda, and local DWP partners are open to continuing to work with the project.

Supporting people with no recourse to public funds

- This work is in its early stages. So far, relationships have been built with local charities working with this group of people, and early ideas for systems changes have been produced through discussion of the situations of individual Fulfilling Lives clients.

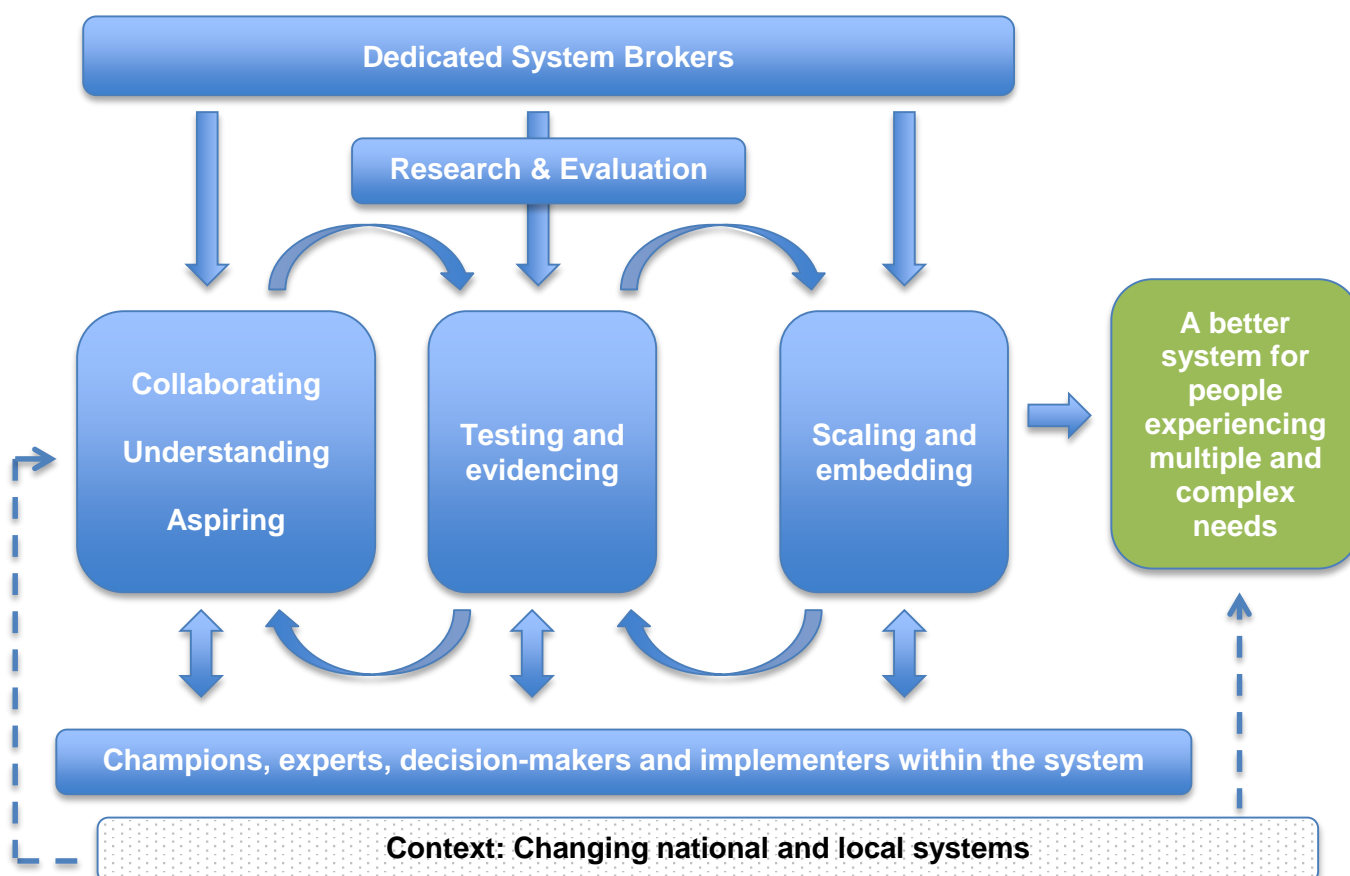
An emerging theory of systems change for the project

Figure (i) presents an emerging model of the process of systems change for the project.

The main processes by which the project aims to influence change include:

- Collaborating, understanding the system, and aspiring for a better system.
- Testing and evidencing the need for and effectiveness of change.
- Scaling and embedding change.

Figure (i): The process of systems change in the Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling Lives project: an emerging theory



The work is supported by:

- The dedicated System Broker and Research and Evaluation roles.
- Others within the system, including:
 - Experts (by experience and professionally, including Fulfilling Lives clients, Service Navigators, and the project's three reference groups, as well as external experts).
 - Decision-makers (such as senior managers, who are in a position to sign-off change).
 - Implementers of the change (such as frontline staff and managers, who may need to change ways of working).
 - Champions (to help scale and embed the work and potentially take ownership of it).

These individuals shape the project's work, but are also shaped by it; for example, as collaboration develops and evidence is built, people may be more likely to support and champion the work.

The work is taking place within a context of complex and ever-changing national and local systems. Ultimately, the aim is to create a better system for people experiencing multiple and complex needs.

Facilitators of and barriers to change

The project has encountered the following facilitators of and barriers to systems change across its systems change work.

Facilitators of systems change

- **The project's open, non-directive approach** to change facilitates genuine collaboration, enables a flexible approach to change, and enables the project to seize opportunity as it arises.
- **Building and connecting with networks** enhances the expertise the project can draw on, and gives access to decision-makers and potential champions.
- **Dialogue and collaboration** with a wide range of people within the system enhances understanding of the issues and buy-in from those who may need to change.
- **Trusting relationships** between Fulfilling Lives staff and others have encouraged other organisations to get involved in the systems change work.
- **The dedicated resource of System Brokers and the Research and Evaluation Lead** have enabled busy partners to take part in initial testing of new ways of working with reduced resource implications.
- **The tenacity and resilience** of System Brokers has helped them move work forwards and keep issues on the agenda, despite some delays and obstacles.

Barriers to systems change

- **Difficulties securing the desired level of involvement by some decision-makers**, which may stem from lack of time, lack of sufficient evidence to secure their involvement, anxiety about the consequences of change for their own organisation, or a disinclination to tackle complex or controversial issues.
- **Resistance to change by some frontline workers**, which may stem from anxiety or a context of other pressures.
- **Challenges in securing evidence**, both from partners and from a transient client group.
- **Unpredicted changes within the national and local system** can disrupt systems change work that is being conducted.

- **National policy**, in some cases, has restricted the project's ability to make changes at a local level.
- **A context of budget cuts and financial pressures** can make services more open to change, but may also mean that changes can only be achieved where there is evidence that they will save money.

Conclusions and recommendations

- Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead has begun to influence change in local systems. It has brokered the piloting of a new local connection policy in Gateshead, and its work has initiated conversations among many Local Authorities in the North East region around developing a regional local connection agreement. It has built strong working relationships with the Department for Work and Pensions locally, and conducted a pilot project that has provided some indication of the need for a supported approach to accessing benefits for people experiencing multiple and complex needs.
- Early indications are that the project has adopted an effective model for systems change. Important elements of this are:
 - The provision of dedicated staff to support systems change has facilitated the work and proved an incentive for other organisations to become involved. This includes System Brokers who can facilitate dialogue and collaboration and provide a resource to take new ideas forward, and a dedicated Research and Evaluation Lead who can provide robust evidence about the effectiveness of systems change pilots.
 - Indications are that the project's approach of gradual, non-directed, collaborative change is working well. Stakeholders were on the whole enthusiastic about the project's role and the possibility of making change.
 - Stakeholders confirm that evidence is important to them, and, for many, is necessary to obtaining sign-off for change from senior decision-makers.
- The project has built strong, trusting relationships with many local stakeholders, built on dialogue and collaboration. Some local stakeholders have not been closely involved in the project's systems change work, and the project is seeking ways to increase their involvement, for example through the provision of stronger evidence of need and effectiveness.
- The project's systems change work has been grounded in the aspirations and experiences of Fulfilling Lives clients. All of the areas in which the project is seeking to influence change are believed to be important areas of change by local stakeholders. The selection of areas of system change on which the project has focused has been influenced to some extent by chance and opportunity, and by the passion and expertise of its System Brokers. Both of these have proved valuable and effective routes to influencing important change. As the project's systems change work develops, it might be useful to consider in more depth how areas for the systems change work are identified and prioritised, and to seek ways for the Experts by Experience group to be more closely involved in this process.

- The resilience and tenacity of System Brokers have been important in ensuring that work progresses in the face of obstacles. It is important that System Brokers are well-supported to deal with the challenges of their role.
- Systems change takes time; most of the systems change work conducted so far has involved building trusting relationships, engaging in dialogue and collaboration, and gathering evidence, all of which take time. The next phase of work for the local connection pilot will be scaling up and embedding the change, and it is expected that other future pilots will go through a similar process.
- Systemic changes and blockages at a national level have set back systems change work in a number of areas locally. The introduction of full service (ie fully implemented across all groups of benefit recipients), fully online Universal Credit in Newcastle has rendered work improving access to benefits through the current telephone system redundant. The changes to Right to Rent in the Immigration Act 2016, alongside other national policies affecting people with no recourse to public funds, has made it more difficult to support such people. The project is likely to benefit from working closely with the Big Lottery to identify ways in which the national Fulfilling Lives programme could influence national policy.
- Conversations with experts and other Fulfilling Lives projects helped the project to identify innovative practice elsewhere (for example local connection agreements between councils) which significantly informed its work. Sharing ideas, learning and (importantly) evidence across the Fulfilling Lives projects may become particularly valuable as each project progresses and increasingly influences change locally.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank all of those who took part in the research for sharing their knowledge and ideas. This includes: Action Foundation, Changing Lives, the Comfrey Project, Crisis Skylight Newcastle, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Experts by Experience group, Fulfilling Lives, Gateshead Council, Homeless Link, Mental Health Concern, Newcastle City Council, Newcastle Law Centre, North Tyneside Council, Oasis Aquila Housing, Shelter, and Sunderland Council.

2. Introduction

The Fulfilling Lives programme

Fulfilling Lives³ is an eight-year programme funded by the Big Lottery aimed at people with multiple needs - individuals who are likely to experience at least three of the following: homelessness, reoffending, problematic substance misuse and mental ill health. The programme aims to bring different organisations and services together to offer people one co-ordinated support service that meets all their needs. One of the intentions of the project is to change systems for people with multiple needs.

The Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling lives project (hereafter referred to as 'the project') is being delivered by Changing Lives in partnership with Mental Health Concern and Oasis Aquila Housing.

About systems change

Systems thinking is a way of understanding problems and how they can be solved. A system is made up of, for example, people, things and relationships, as well as perspectives, values and purposes.

The system someone with multiple needs interacts with is a complex web of services including housing, criminal justice, substance misuse and mental health services. Within this broader system are sub-systems that might include (for example) hostels, support workers, families and individuals. These operate within wider systems including local commissioning and national policy. Systems are made up of elements including working cultures, values and power relationships as well as physical elements, policies and procedures.

Systems thinking says that:

- The systems that people interact with can cause problems, even when they are designed to help people.
- We can solve problems by seeking to change these systems.

'A system is a configuration of interacting, interdependent parts that are connected through a web of relationships, forming a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts (Holland 1998).'⁴

Systems change requires radical change in our thinking, assumptions and ways of working. Systems change is not simply about implementing new projects; it is about doing things differently, and is a process rather than a project. It requires new facilitative forms of leadership and extensive collaboration. Systems change involves an ongoing process of innovation, reflection and learning.

The research presented in this report builds on a previous selective review of the literature conducted by the New Economics Foundation for Changing Lives and reported in *Changing Systems for people with multiple needs: Learning from the literature*. Another useful guide, *Systems change: a guide to what it is and how to do it*, has subsequently been published by New Philanthropy Capital and Lankelly Chase.⁵ This research draws on the knowledge presented in these reports.

³ Big Lottery Fund (n.d.) *Fulfilling Lives: Supporting people with multiple needs*. http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_complex_needs Accessed on 01.09.2014

⁴ Hargreaves, M. B. (2010) *Evaluating systems change: a planning guide*, Mathematica Policy Research Inc.

⁵ Abercrombie, R., Harries, H. and Wharton, R. (2015), *Systems change: a guide to what it is and how to do it*, New Philanthropy Capital and Lankelly Chase.

The literature suggests that systems change requires:

- **Extensive collaboration and dialogue between different people or groups involved in the system.** This is likely to include voluntary and statutory service providers, commissioners, policymakers and, importantly, the individuals who are trying to navigate the system.
- **Leadership that is very different to traditional ‘command and control’ approaches.** Systems change leadership should include a willingness to embrace uncertainty, and should be based on listening, building connections, and creating the conditions for change.
- **Innovation, learning and reflection.** Systems change projects should be able to innovate, take risks, and risk failing. Spaces for learning, reflection and more formal evaluation should be central to work aimed at changing systems.
- **A focus on purpose rather than targets,** with the acknowledgement that targets can sometimes detract from, rather than help achieve, the real purpose of a system.
- **Changing power relationships,** so that individuals who are trying to navigate systems have more equally shared control over decisions that affect them.
- **Shaping beliefs and behaviours.** Systems change is likely to require cultural change. Mechanisms for doing so can include modeling different kinds of practice; providing space to air their values and beliefs; and ensuring that people can hear direct feedback from individuals who are trying to navigate the system.⁶

Barriers to systems change can include:

- **Power and vested interests.** Those in positions of power can resist and block change.
- **Policy resistance.** This term refers to the characteristic of systems to reconfigure themselves in such a way that undermines any positive change.
- **The desire for simple solutions in a complex world.** For example replacing flawed standards and checklists with new standards and checklists can simply produce new problems, failing to account for real-world complexity.
- **Pressure, stress and anxiety about externally imposed change.** Change can evoke emotions such as grief, anger and fear, and people may need to be supported with such feelings. Collaboration in change can minimise these.
- **‘Second order change, first order mindset’.** Fundamental, transformative change to systems can be termed ‘second order change’, in contrast to ‘first order change’ that makes changes *within* rather than *to* the current system. Systems leaders who attempt to influence second order change using first order ‘perspectives, methods and approaches’⁷ may struggle to do so. It is important that those involved in systems change understand that it is not just

⁶ Schulman, S. (2013) ‘Good’ systems for whom?, in *Systemic Innovation: A discussion series*. Nesta. <http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/systemic-innovation-discussion-series>

⁷ Bevan, H. (n.d.) *Helen Bevan on the Challenge of System Reform*. NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement. http://www.institute.nhs.uk/quality_and_value/introduction/article_13.html. Accessed on 01.09.2014.

a new project, or improved set of joint working processes, but is a different new approach.

Systems change in the Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling Lives project

The Newcastle and Gateshead systems change project has identified a number of principles underpinning its programme development and approach to systems change:

- Meeting and understanding the needs of beneficiaries, based on service user involvement and the Experts by Experience group. The Experts by Experience group is a group of people with personal experience of multiple and complex needs, supported by the project but acting independently, who act as a reference group for the project, and seek to advise and influence others locally and nationally. This includes, for example, representation on local forums and at events, and providing a professional service to local services and commissioners to support and advise on training, practice and policy development.
- Using a combination of first order change (focused on improving current provision using existing models) and second order change (involving changes in practice and culture within or across organisations).
- The continuous practice of reflection by programme members (making space and time available for listening, thinking and learning together and being bold enough to challenge our beliefs and practices).
- An ongoing dialogue with partners around influencing and evidencing potential change as opposed to directing change, resulting in a process of evolution and gradual change.
- Working with others to build movements and act as a platform for change.
- Using learning to adapt what we do and share with the wider community, including through conducting and evaluating pilots.
- Organisations are made up of people, and in order to change behaviour we must influence organisation culture to enable the people to effect systems change.

The project employs Service Navigators to support individual clients to navigate systems, and System Brokers who identify where the current system may prevent individuals from transforming their lives, work with the Service Navigators to evidence the real issues facing the client group, and lead on individual areas of systems change.

The project has established Experts by Experience, Operational and Strategic reference groups. The purpose of these groups is to understand and change the way services respond, are commissioned and are delivered, based on evidence of the real issues.

The Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling Lives project is one of twelve projects across England funded as part of the Big Lottery-funded programme. The twelve projects meet regularly to share practice, learning and ideas, including around how programme-wide learning and evidence might influence national systems.

Aims and methodology of this research

This research has been conducted by the New Economics Foundation for Changing Lives. It aims to answer the question:

- How have systems changed through the Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling Lives Programme, and how can this learning inform the future of the programme?

It aims to identify:

- What are some of the changes that have taken place through this programme?
- What has influenced, facilitated, or limited changes to systems through the programme?
- How long has it taken / is it expected to take to change the systems within which the programme is operating?

This research aims to answer these questions through an in-depth exploration of three selected areas of the system that the project is attempting to influence. The areas of change the research focuses on were selected by the lead researcher in discussion with the project manager to represent a broad range of types of change.

They are:

- Local connection: the common requirement by councils for someone to have a local connection to the area (for example, having lived in the area for a certain period of time) in order to be helped with accommodation.
- Access to benefits.
- Supporting people with no recourse to public funds.

These are explained further in section 3.

The researcher will return in spring 2017, one year after the reported research was conducted, to assess overall progress in systems change through the project, to explore to what extent the change examined in this report has been sustained, scaled up, built on or otherwise developed, and to seek to identify the reasons for this.

Research was conducted in April and May 2016 and consisted of:

- Workshops and in-depth telephone interviews with selected stakeholders in each of the three areas of change selected for this research.
- In-depth telephone interviews with the Project Manager, the Research and Evaluation Lead, two System Brokers and the Chair of the Strategic Group for Fulfilling Lives.
- A group discussion with the Experts by Experience group that acts as a reference group for the project.
- A review of selected project documentation including meeting minutes, project plans and internal evaluation reports.

In order to protect the confidentiality of participants, some quotations are not attributed. Where there is a risk that perceived barriers to systems change might reflect negatively on local organisations or individuals, these have been excluded from the specific maps of the systems change process in section 3. Instead, these have informed the reporting of barriers to change in section 4.

3. Mapping systems change processes

This section explores three areas of systems change that the project is hoping to influence: local connection, access to benefits, and supporting people with no recourse to public funds. For each, it summarises the need for change in the area and key achievements through the project so far. For local connection and access to benefits (in which work is more developed), a map of the process of change is set out, including facilitators of change and barriers to change.

Local connection

The need for change

If an individual making a homelessness application to a council does not have a local connection to that area,⁸ the council does not have to provide help with housing, but can instead refer them to the council in an area to which they do have a local connection. National legislation does not require this, but it is common practice, particularly in a context of limited housing and local resources.

However, it is not always in the best interests of people who experience multiple and complex needs to return to a home area. For example, people may wish to start again away from exploitative relationships, or peer groups with whom they used drugs or alcohol. Fulfilling Lives has worked with clients who have chosen to continue sleeping rough rather than return to the area in which they have a local connection.

Achievements

The project's system change work has achieved the following:

- Gateshead Council has begun to trial assessing applications for longer-term housing from Fulfilling Lives clients with no local connection who wish to live in Gateshead. A draft referral form has been developed by the council.
- Referrals have been successfully made to Gateshead for three Fulfilling Lives clients with no local connection to Gateshead. Of these, one person was successfully housed and has maintained their tenancy for nine months at the time of writing this report; one tenancy broke down; and one is still being processed.
- A local connection working group has been established, involving most councils in the North East, led by Homeless Link, with the aim of developing reciprocal agreements across the region.

The project's approach to systems change, and barriers and enablers to this

Description of process	Barriers to (-) and facilitators of (+) change
<p>Origination: The first client the Fulfilling Lives project worked with was homeless in Gateshead but wished to live in Newcastle; however local connection policies prevented this. The project's System Broker realised that other clients who had a local connection to Newcastle wished to be housed in Gateshead. She</p>	<p>+ Learning directly from individuals' experiences.</p>

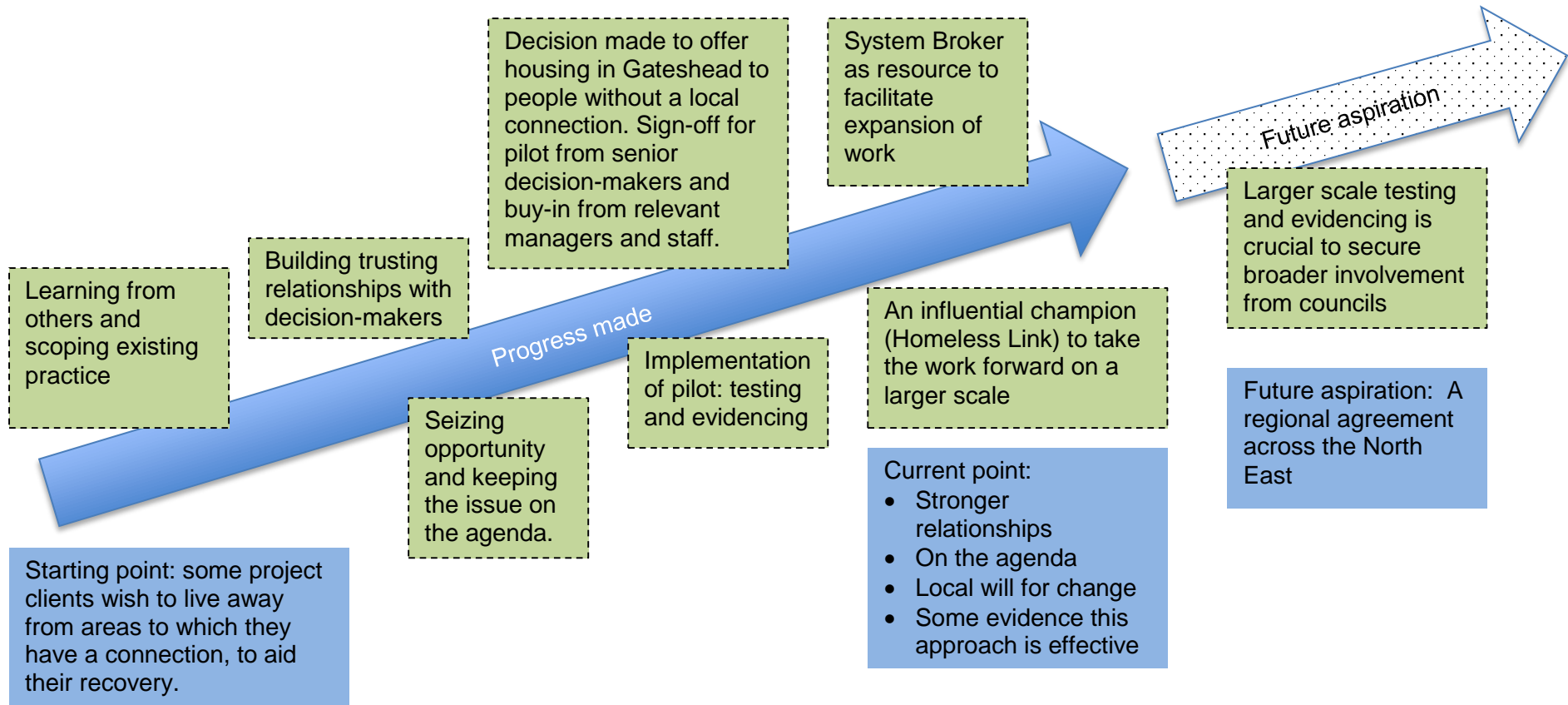
⁸ For example, having lived there for six months out of the last 12, or having close family who have lived in the area for at least five years.

<p>wondered if this issue could be resolved.</p>	
<p>Scoping: In early 2015, the System Broker raised the issue of local connection at an action learning set attended by projects from across the national Fulfilling Lives programme. Another project mentioned the existence of informal reciprocal agreements in some London boroughs. The System Broker did some detailed scoping around this, and concluded that a more formal agreement would work better locally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Peer learning and sharing practice across Fulfilling Lives projects nationally. + Tailoring solutions to local context.
<p>Devising potential solutions: In March/April 2015, she met with Homeless Link's Strategy and Partnership Manager for the North East and Cumbria, and Shelter's Housing Adviser. Together they developed a brief to explain the issue and potential solutions. Homeless Link was able to share knowledge about a pilot in this area being conducted in the North East by Durham and Darlington local authorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Dialogue, collaboration and non-directive change. + Learning from experts. + Evidence of innovative practice elsewhere.
<p>Securing commitment from key organisations: Initial discussions with Gateshead council took place. At a Fulfilling Lives annual event, stakeholders were asked to commit to making a change in their practice, and Gateshead Council's Senior Housing Options Officer pledged to devote some time to the issue of local connection. He subsequently secured the agreement of his manager to trial assessing applications for longer-term housing from Fulfilling Lives clients without a local connection. The council developed a referral form for Fulfilling Lives clients.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Bringing people together. + Seizing opportunity. + Asking for/making a commitment.
<p>Testing and evidencing: Three referrals have been made, with Service Navigators sending homelessness applications to the System Broker, and the System Broker sending them directly to the Senior Housing Options Officer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Testing the new approach. + Initial evidence of effectiveness. + Council's trust in Fulfilling Lives' decision-making.
<p>Extending the scale of change: The project now hopes that other councils in the North East will adopt this approach, and perhaps move towards reciprocal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A local champion in a position of influence/expertise who can take a lead on the work. + Larger scale evidencing is

<p>agreements. Fulfilling Lives is part of the North East Multiple Needs Forum chaired by Homeless Link. In autumn 2015 the issue was raised with this group and a local connection working group was formed out of this discussion involving most of the regions in the North East, with the aspiration of developing a regional agreement for people experiencing multiple and complex needs. Homeless Link took a lead on establishing and facilitating this group. This agreement is now being drafted.</p>	<p>necessary for securing involvement from all local councils.</p>
<p>Meanwhile, the contact at Homeless Link, who had been championing this work, left the role to take up the role of managing the Fulfilling Lives project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff changes resulting in champions leaving roles whilst work is still in development potentially puts continuity/momentum at risk.
<p>Setting intentions for the future: When the regional agreement has been finalised, the intention is that Fulfilling Lives will support and evaluate a pilot of this. Longer-term, the group would like to explore whether experiencing multiple and complex needs can be a recognised exception to local connection legislation (as risk of violence is currently).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Collective aspiration.
<p>Gateshead Housing Options is about to be transferred to Gateshead Housing Company, an ALMO. It is not known how this will affect the local connection agreement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A changing system can have unknown effects on systems change work.

Figure (ii): Local connection: the shape of change

The figure below illustrates the broad shape of change in this area, in simplified form. Overall, there is a gradual movement towards change, with key elements of the change process represented in green boxes (with dashed borders). In reality, this forwards movement was made up of periods of progress, interspersed with periods in which little change took place.



Access to benefits

The need for change

People wishing to make new claims for benefits must telephone the Department for Work and Pensions' Benefit Delivery Centre to do so. Those with multiple and complex needs can struggle with what they can experience as an inflexible call-centre style approach. This can make it difficult for them to claim the benefits they are entitled to. In local JobCentre Pluses, there have (until recently) been social justice teams that have provided a more tailored approach to people with multiple and complex needs; however, there is no equivalent in the Benefit Delivery Centre.

During the pilot period, the introduction of full service (ie fully implemented across all groups of benefit recipients) Universal Credit in Newcastle in May 2016 was announced by the DWP nationally. This was sooner than expected and was also found to be fully-online (without a Benefit Delivery Centre), meaning that partners are now reassessing this work.

Achievements

- Agreement from DWP locally and nationally to pilot a single point of contact model for accessing the Benefit Delivery Centre with residents of Elliott House (a hostel in Newcastle that accommodates many people with multiple and complex needs), with DWP social justice team staff acting as the single point of contact.
- Evaluation report completed. Case study evidence from two clients showed that the individual receiving single point of contact support was better able to access benefits than the individual who was not.
- Agreement to conduct a larger-scale pilot was obtained from all stakeholders.

The project's approach to systems change, and barriers and enablers to this

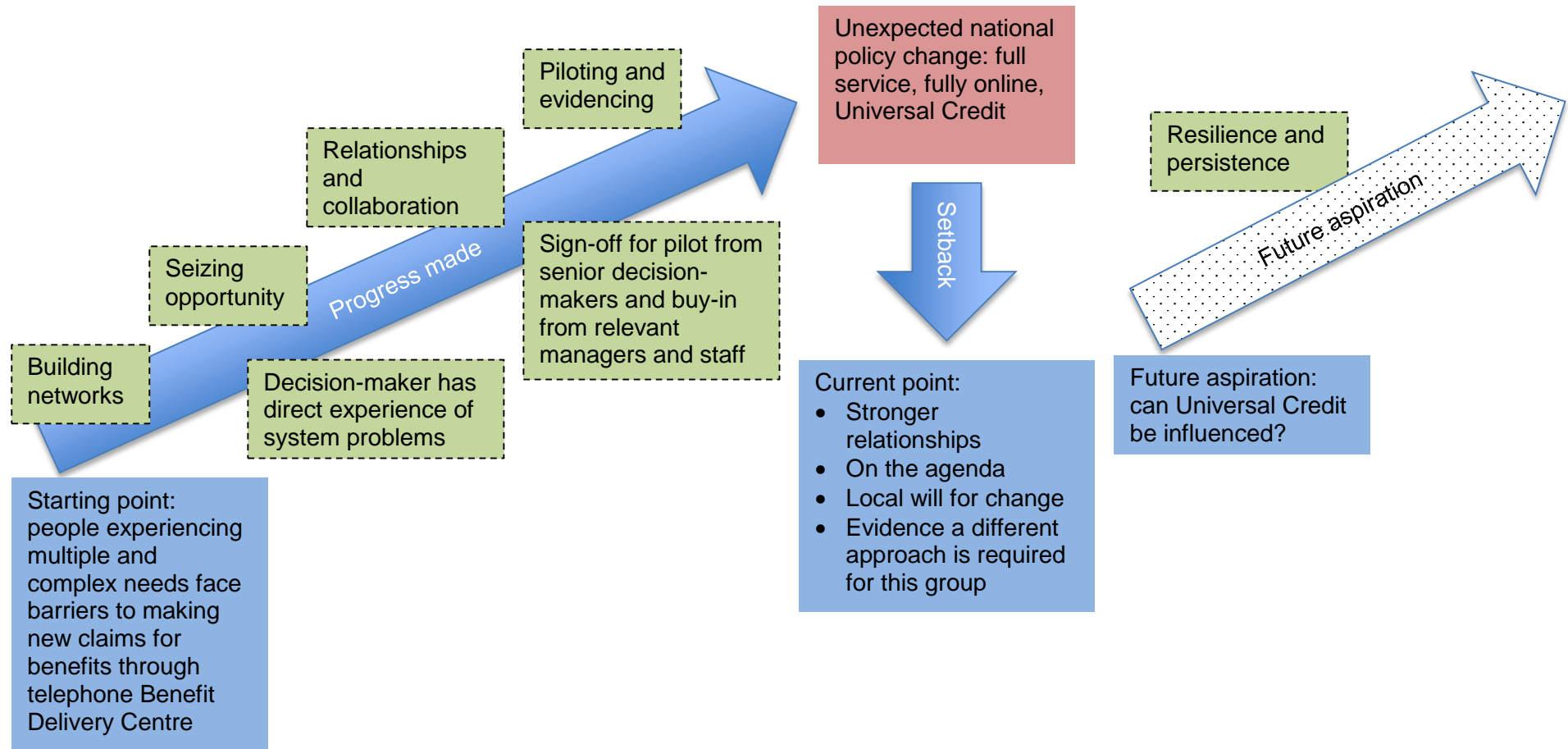
Description of process	Barriers to (-) and facilitators of (+) change
<p>Origination: In Autumn 2014 (shortly after the commencement of the Fulfilling Lives project), a Fulfilling Lives System Broker took part in a government shadowing scheme. The person she was paired with was a senior manager at the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) central office.</p> <p>During his visit to Newcastle as part of this, the DWP senior manager visited a hostel run by Changing Lives. While he was there, there was some disturbance as a resident was on the telephone to the DWP's benefit delivery centre, trying to set up a claim for benefits, and becoming distressed as the call failed to help her. The DWP senior manager and System Broker discussed the issue and agreed that a more flexible approach from DWP was needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Seizing opportunities to extend professional networks, even when these do not have an immediate systems change purpose, brought unique access to an influential individual. + The opportunity for decision-makers/those in positions of power to come into personal contact with individuals experiencing problems with the system – instigated a desire for change at a senior level.

<p>Devising potential solutions and securing commitment from key organisations: The System Broker approached the local North of Tyne Partnership Manager and they agreed to pilot a different approach, using a single point of contact model.</p> <p>In February 2015, the pilot secured national sign-off from the DWP, helped by the senior manager initially involved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A dedicated post can ensure that discussion moves into action. + Collaboratively devising a new approach to try. + Partners being open to trying new approaches. + National sign-off facilitated by initial senior involvement.
<p>Testing and evidencing: The Fulfilling Lives Research and Evaluation Lead helped to design the pilot so that a robust evaluation could be delivered.</p> <p>The pilot ran for three months, from the end of May to the end of August 2015, at Elliott House hostel. One group of five hostel residents was provided with support through a single point of contact model, by which the client or their support worker would approach the social justice team based at JobCentre Plus who would contact the Benefit Delivery Centre on their behalf. A second group of five residents acted as a control group.</p> <p>Of the ten people who took part in the pilot, eight moved out during the pilot period. However, one person from each group remained, and case studies detailing their experiences provided some indication that the single point of contact model had been effective.</p> <p>The evaluation report of the pilot was completed in January 2016. The project had hoped to secure data relating to individuals' claims from the DWP for this, but had not been able to do so. However, findings positive enough to suggest worth pursuing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A dedicated research and evaluation lead helped to provide robust evidence. + Designing the evaluation at the same time as the pilot helped ensure useful evidence can be gathered. + The hostel was a member of the Fulfilling Lives partnership, and was willing to host the pilot. - The transient nature of the client group can make evidencing change difficult. - Lack of access to data minimises scope of evaluation. + Evaluation report offers some indication of effectiveness, provides a concrete record of work, increases credibility and opens doors to further conversation.
<p>Dealing with setbacks: Meanwhile, the North of Tyne Partnership Manager took redundancy, and the project started working with her counterpart, the South of Tyne Partnership Manager.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ± Staff changes caused a brief disruption, but a relationship was built with another supportive Partnership Manager.

<p>Extending the scale of change: The System Broker and South of Tyne Partnership Manager undertook to seek agreement to conduct an extended pilot, in order to gather more robust evidence about the effectiveness of the approach. This pilot would link with the work of the Benefits Employment Action Team (BEAT).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + The System Broker had a realistic, specific ask to take to Partners in order to continue the work.
<p>Dealing with setbacks: In around spring 2016, it was announced that full service Universal Credit would be going live in Newcastle in May 2016 as a test area (much more rapidly than had been initially planned). It is expected that over 99% of claims will be made online. This means that the Benefit Delivery Centre will not be used for any new claims.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - External changes to the system (in this case national changes), imposed by those outside the systems change collaboration, can render local systems change work redundant. - The new system is predicted to be problematic in new ways for people with multiple and complex needs; for example the requirement to make claims online, and to have an email address. - This setback risks demotivating those who have been involved in making change so far.
<p>Setting intentions for the future: The collaborators are now exploring what should be done.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Passion, persistence and resilience can help staff take work forward. + Previous work conducted means that this area of work is on the agenda, and strong relationships have been built with the DWP that can be taken forward into future work.

Figure (iii): Access to benefits: the shape of change

The figure below illustrates the broad shape of change in this area. There is a gradual movement towards change, with key elements of the change process represented in green boxes (with dashed borders). The introduction of full service Universal Credit before expected, and without an element of telephone delivery, meant that this area of systems change work was no longer necessary. However, the Fulfilling Lives project may now be in a stronger position to influence change in relation to Universal Credit.



Supporting people with no recourse to public funds

The need for change

The Fulfilling Lives project is supporting five people experiencing multiple and complex needs who do not have recourse to public funds but wish to remain in the UK. These people fall into two groups:

- Destitute asylum seekers, who have been refused refugee status but do not wish/are not safe to return to their home country.
- People from EU countries who do not have access to benefits.

Service navigators have encountered several difficulties in supporting these individuals, and local stakeholders report that the system for those without recourse to public funds does not work as well as it should for people experiencing multiple and complex needs. Information about entitlements can be hard to understand, and national legislation means there is a lack of options for housing or other support. Meanwhile, several of these individuals are reported to have had high levels of contact with criminal justice and health services.

The project's approach to systems change, and barriers and enablers to this

Description of process	Barriers to (-) and facilitators of (+) change
<p>Origination: In Autumn 2015, the project held two meetings with local stakeholders, including charities working with refugees and asylum seekers, to explore how current Fulfilling Lives clients with no recourse to public funds could be helped.</p> <p>As a result of these meetings it was agreed that the project would support a small number of individuals temporarily whilst (i) if their claim for refugee status had been refused, they appealed their decision, or (ii) if they were eligible to work, they came closer to moving into work. However, the project recognized that this is a short-term solution dependent on its own existence, and wished to explore the possibility of influencing systems change in this area.</p>	<p>+ Collaboration, dialogue and sharing expertise.</p>
<p>Devising potential solutions: Other solutions were discussed, in particular the provision of short-term housing for destitute asylum seekers in empty flats. However, the Immigration Act 2016 has introduced criminal rather than just civil penalties for failing to carry out Right to Rent checks, and has made this impossible, so this idea was not followed through.</p>	<p>- Changing national legislation makes local change more difficult.</p>

<p>A group was reconvened for this research and undertook an exercise mapping barriers in the system, aspirations for a better system, and discussing ways in which the project might try to influence systems change. The next phase of this research will revisit progress in this area.</p>	

Issues identified during project discussions with local organisations working with people with no recourse to public funds included:

- National policy can make it difficult to make change on a local level – many systemic barriers are at a national level. Examples include:
 - Blanket policies around migrants, asylum seekers and people with no recourse to public funds do not recognise the unique experiences and needs of people experiencing multiple and complex needs. Existing policies and services can therefore be inappropriate for this group.
 - There are gaps in services and inconsistencies in provision.
 - Stigma towards this group can affect the attitudes and behaviours of those providing services.
- There is a need to raise awareness about multiple and complex needs with policymakers and frontline staff working with people with no recourse to public funds.
- There is a need for local organisations to work together.
- There is scope to encourage dialogue among policymakers about these issues.

4. An emerging theory of systems change for the project

This section presents an emerging theory of systems change for the project. It:

- summarises outcomes achieved in the selected areas of systems change that are the focus of this research;
- identifies the process by which the project hopes to achieve systems change and illustrates how this has worked so far;
- identifies barriers and facilitators to systems change.

As the project's systems change work progresses, it may be that different processes are employed, and it should be expected that this theory will change or be refined over time to reflect this.

Systems change outcomes

Key outcomes of the systems change work focused on in this research include the following. This is not an exhaustive list of the project's systems change outcomes.

Systems change outcomes

- Gateshead Council is piloting new procedures around local connection which mean that people experiencing multiple and complex needs can be housed without a local connection.
- A single point of contact model of support for residents of one hostel wishing to make new claims for benefits has been piloted in partnership with DWP.

Intermediate outcomes

- Trusting relationships have been established/strengthened with a range of decision makers and providers, including DWP, local councils, and local services, as a result of dialogue and collaboration.
- The selected areas of systems change are on key stakeholders' agendas and there is a will for change. For example, a local connection working group has been formed with representation from many local councils, with the aspiration of developing a regional local connection agreement.
- The evaluations of the pilots conducted have provided some indication of the need for different approaches for people experiencing multiple and complex needs, and of the effectiveness of the approaches tried.

Outcomes for individuals

- One woman who was formerly street homeless has been housed in an area with which she does not have a local connection through Gateshead Council's pilot of new local connection procedures. She has remained in her tenancy for nine months at the time of writing this report. She is engaging with the local Independent Domestic Violence Advisory Project and is considering accessing support with her alcohol use.
- The man supported to claim benefits through the single point of contact pilot had his claim 'resolved quickly and efficiently'.⁹

Systems change outcomes – additional streams of work

The project is conducting a number of streams of systems change work in addition to the three areas of change this research focuses on. Some key outcomes from these include:

⁹ As reported in the evaluation of the pilot. His experience contrasts with the man in the control group who accumulated arrears as a result of difficulties making his claim and was ultimately evicted.

- The implementation of a psychologically informed environment (PIE) approach has been piloted in three settings (a forthcoming internal evaluation report will detail the outcomes of this).
- A joint-funded navigator post with the probation service has been agreed, with the intention of embedding new ways of working in the probation service.
- The Experts by Experience group has contributed to discussions with the Clinical Commissioning Group about designing a new urgent care hub.

Timescales in systems change

The project has been running for two years. Those involved have stressed that systems change can take time: building relationships, conducting genuine collaboration, and gathering robust evidence of the effectiveness of change all take time. As such, those involved expect to see primarily intermediate outcomes and smaller examples of systems change at this stage in the project, and aspire to achieve increasingly larger-scale, more fully embedded systems change as the project progresses.

The process of systems change

Figure (iv) presents an emerging model of the process of systems change for the project. This is based on the descriptions of project staff and external stakeholders of how they have achieved systems change so far, and how they hope to do so in the future. This includes:

- Collaborating, understanding the system, and aspiring to a better system.
- Testing and evidencing the need for and effectiveness of change.
- Scaling and embedding change.

The curved arrows show that this is not a straightforward linear process. For example, testing might not provide conclusive evidence of the need for change (for example as in the pilot around access to benefits), in which case further dialogue and collaboration will be needed.

The work is supported by:

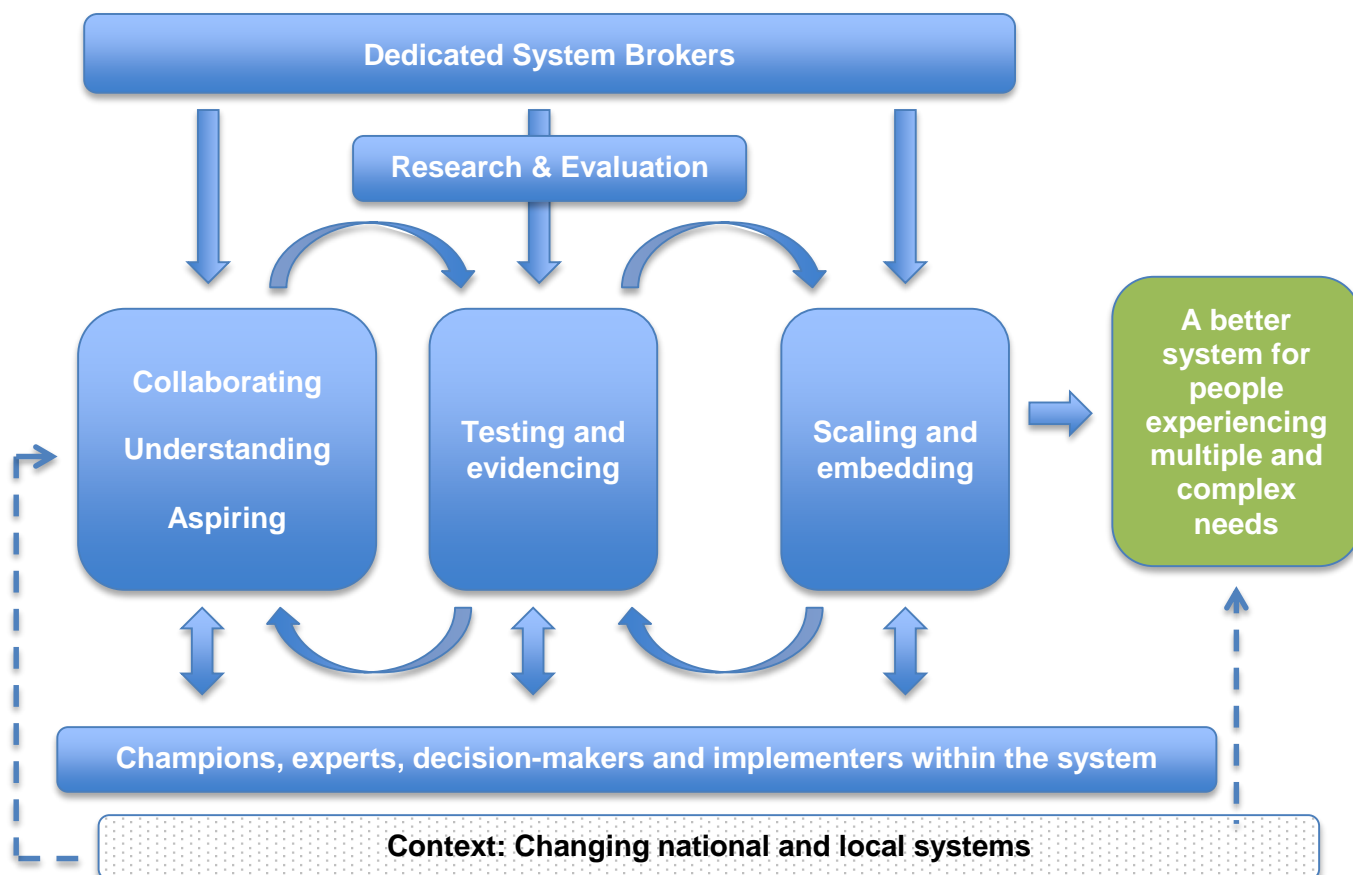
- The dedicated System Broker and Research and Evaluation roles.
- Others within the system, including:
 - Experts (by experience and professionally, including Fulfilling Lives clients, Service Navigators, and the project's three reference groups).
 - Decision-makers (such as senior managers, who are in a position to sign-off change).
 - Implementers of the change (such as frontline staff and managers, who may need to change ways of working).
 - Champions (to help scale and embed the work and potentially take ownership of it).

These individuals shape the project's work, but are also shaped by it; for example, as collaboration develops and evidence is built, people may be more likely to support and champion the work.

The work is taking place within a context of complex and ever-changing national and local systems.

Ultimately, the aim is to create a better system for people experiencing multiple and complex needs.

Figure (iv): The process of systems change in the Newcastle and Gateshead Fulfilling Lives project: an emerging theory



The process of systems change in detail

The table below breaks down the key elements and outcomes of each stage identified in the above model. The following text explains each of these further, including examples of how they have been effective in the project so far, and barriers to change at each stage.

Figure (v): the elements and outcomes of each stage of change

Collaborating	
<p>The elements of collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-directive change. • Flexible, non-prescriptive approach to the change process. • Dialogue with experts, influencers and decision-makers, and potential implementers of change within the system. • Seeking to meet different needs of different people within the system. • Determining potential solutions collectively. 	<p>The outcomes of collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stronger relationships and trust with decision-makers and implementers. • Understanding of different perspectives within the system. • Buy-in from decision-makers and implementers. • Different approaches for different circumstances/ organisations. • Workable solutions. • Flexibility to seize opportunities as they arise.

Understanding	
<p>The elements of understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with personal experience of multiple and complex needs are at the heart of the process. • Mapping strengths and problems in the current system and the consequences of these. • Understanding different perspectives within the system. • Scoping good/innovative practice. • Learning from experts and peers. 	<p>The outcomes of understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems problems and their causes are understood. • Understanding informs ideas for change. • Those involved in the system are convinced of the need for change. • Stronger relationships and trust with decision-makers and implementers.
Aspiring	
<p>The elements of aspiration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determining what a better system would look like. • Founded on the aspirations of individuals experiencing multiple and complex needs. • Taking into account the perspectives of those involved across the system. 	<p>The outcomes of aspiration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective aspirations for change are identified.
Testing and evidencing	
<p>The elements of testing and evidencing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust evaluation including qualitative, quantitative and financial data. 	<p>The outcomes of testing and evidencing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of need and effectiveness. • Buy-in from influencers and decision-makers to make change. • Understanding about how best to make change.
Scaling and embedding	
<p>The elements of scaling and embedding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes are scaled up across the system. • Changes are embedded within the system, for example in formal agreements, policies and procedures. • Champions independent of Fulfilling Lives take ownership of the area of change. 	<p>The outcomes of scaling and embedding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes are system-wide. • Changes in the system are sustained independently of the project.

Collaborating

Collaboration in this project has included:

- Meeting and discussing issues with experts and potential influencers (such as Homeless Link, Shelter, and voluntary organisations working with those with no recourse to public funds).

- Meeting and discussing issues with decision-makers (such as Housing Options team managers and DWP Partnership managers).
- Meeting and discussing issues with others in the system (such as refugee charities).
- Determining potential solutions collectively through dialogue.

An important element of the project's collaborative approach is that it is open and non-directive. System Brokers facilitate but do not direct change. They have a broad and flexible remit and can approach the work in the way they think is most appropriate. The consequences of this approach are that:

- It helps to build relationships and trust with decision-makers and implementers.
- It helps obtain buy-in from decision-makers and implementers.
- It helps identify workable solutions.
- It helps System Brokers to understand different perspectives within the system and potential barriers to change, and therefore provides information that might help overcome these barriers.
- It means that different, tailored approaches can be taken for different circumstances, with different organisations and with different personalities.
- It gives System Brokers the flexibility to seize opportunities as they arise.

'I spent about three and a half hours in a meeting with her [external decision-maker], fleshing out the issue and what could we possibly do, and eventually she thought it's worth giving a pilot a go.' – System Broker

Understanding

This includes gaining understanding of the current system (including its problems and strengths), and scoping of different practice.

The experiences of current Fulfilling Lives clients or others with personal experiences of multiple and complex needs have been the starting points for all of the strands of systems change work. The project has drawn its understanding of systems barriers directly from people currently trying to navigate the system. Detailed additional understanding has been derived from dialogue and collaboration with others in the system (as described in more detail below).

Scoping different practice has also been important in several areas of the project's systems change work. An example of this is learning about different practices in local connection both from peers at national Fulfilling Lives events (who gave examples of informal reciprocal agreements in some London boroughs), and from Homeless Link (who shared knowledge about a local connection pilot being conducted by Durham and Darlington local authorities). This is helped by having (or cultivating) broad networks that can be drawn on.

Aspiring

Aspirations for a better system have been grounded in the desires reported by Fulfilling Lives clients; this includes the reported desire of the first client housed through the local connection policy to live in Gateshead rather than Newcastle, or the desires of clients with no recourse to public funds to remain in the UK (for example to be near family). Collective aspirations for change have emerged from dialogue and collaboration with people from across the system. For example a single point of contact model to facilitate access to the Benefit Delivery Centre, or a regional local connection agreement were both ideas that emerged from discussion.

Testing and evidencing

Testing and evidencing is a fundamental element of the project's approach to systems change. Testing has involved the development of draft protocols, obtaining sign-off from senior managers, and obtaining buy-in from those implementing the changes on the ground.

Evidence is seen to be essential in order to guide and influence busy decision-makers. In a context of substantial funding reductions for many local statutory and voluntary services, this includes information about costs and savings:

'[We need] evidence of need, of the positive outcomes of a new approach, and, critically, cost information. The environment in which [almost] all commissioning bodies operate is one of rapidly reducing resources [... We expect] our real influence on big scale fundamental systems change would gradually grow as evaluation reports emerged [... If] changes can work effectively and produce improved outcomes it increases the confidence of the partners to take bigger steps and work more jointly.' – Chair of Strategic Group

The project has a Research and Evaluation Lead, meaning that it is able to produce robust evaluations of systems change pilots, using a range of methodologies (including quantitative, qualitative and financial analysis).

It has been agreed that the Fulfilling Lives Strategic Reference Group will only meet when there is evidence to consider; this was thought to be the best use of the time of committed but busy people.

A number of external stakeholders interviewed for this research agreed that evidence was essential for their longer-term involvement in the work, and some said that the early evidence produced by the project had been helpful, for example as a means for them to try to influence senior managers within their organisations.

System Brokers found the promise of evidence to be an important means of securing involvement:

'A way to get them on board was by saying "we're producing evidence-based research for a policy intervention. We're doing that work, taking that responsibility on, and the only cost for you is resource, everything else is us"' – System Broker

There have been some barriers to obtaining robust evidence. For example, when assessing the effectiveness of the single point of contact model for access to benefits, the transient nature of the client group meant that only two case studies could be presented rather than the more in-depth analysis planned. Likewise, the project was not able to obtain data from the partner in the project the DWP, which limited the analysis it could conduct. The project hopes that such issues can be overcome by larger-scale testing, and agreements around sharing data for evaluation purposes.

One key stakeholder said that they would like the project to provide more evidence before they become involved in partnership work around systems change: for example around the extent of systems issues identified (how many people they effect and what the consequences of these are), and the effectiveness of proposed

solutions. They would also like the project to undertake a more systematic assessment of issues, explicitly identifying whether system barriers relate to national or to local systems, before initiating work around change. They said that this would make it easier for them, as a local stakeholder, to be clear about the need for local change.

'I was thinking and hoping that there would be really quite hard evidence about the systemic change that could be achieved locally and then aggregating evidence about what needed to change with national legislation or funding type arrangements, and it doesn't feel like it's quite happened like that.' – local stakeholder

Scaling and embedding

Once change has been piloted on a small scale, where the change has been found to be effective, the intention is that change is adopted (where appropriate) on a larger scale. The evidence of effectiveness (and cost effectiveness) gained from the pilot is thought to be essential to this stage. None of the areas of change explored for this research is at this stage yet.

For the change to be fully embedded in the system (and not dependent on the Fulfilling Lives project or its workers), it needs to be integrated in the system, for example in the form of policies and procedures, and may require individuals outside of the project to take a lead on the area of work.

Champions, expert, decision-makers and implementers within the system

A number of different roles can be identified in relation to systems change:

- Experts (by experience and professionally): those who can advise and shape the work, enhance understanding, provide connections to others, and are potentially in a position to influence others (through their networks or positions on decision-making). For example: the Experts by Experience group, Shelter, Homeless Link, neighbouring local authorities that have trialed local connection agreements, and voluntary organisations working with those with no recourse to public funds.
- Champions: those who champion the work of the project, for example within their own organisation or networks, and who may potentially take responsibility for taking work forward as part of the system. For example, Homeless Link is chairing the new working group on local connection.
- Decision-makers: those whose sign-off is required for change (such as senior managers).
- Implementers: those who will need to implement the change (such as frontline staff and managers).

There are a number of structures by which the project involves people from all of these groups:

- Service Navigators support individuals experiencing multiple and complex needs to navigate systems and work closely with the System Brokers to evidence the real issues facing the client group.
- The project's three reference groups – the Experts by Experience Group, Strategic Group and Operational Group – involve experts and senior decision-makers.
- The project holds annual events to which stakeholders are invited.
- The project's partnership delivery model means that:

- System Brokers are employed by organisations in the core partnership: Changing Lives (Lead partner), Mental Health Concern and Oasis Aquila Housing.
- Navigators are employed by host organisations supported by the Blue Stone Consortium: Advocacy Centre North, Age UK Newcastle, Mental Health Concern, Oasis Aquila Housing, Tyneside and Northumberland Mind, Tyneside Women's Health, in the partnership (and an additional part time Navigator role is being piloted with Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company).
- Project staff and reference group members attend local forms and meetings.
- Project staff and Experts by Experience have regular opportunities for networking and sharing practice with other Fulfilling Lives projects.

Several interviewees said that the characteristics of the individuals involved were essential to change:

'The players around the table ... It's all [about the] people – the personalities.'
– staff member

The project has already seen several staff changes among external stakeholders with whom it has worked, and this staff change is potentially a barrier to change, requiring (at the least) new relationships to be built.

Experts within the system

The experiences of individual Fulfilling Lives clients – experts in their own aspirations and experiences of the system – have been the starting points for each strand of systems change work explored by this research. Service Navigators share their experiences of navigating the system with System Brokers, and they work together to evidence the issues facing the client group.

The Experts by Experience group is involved with all of the project's systems change work through representation on the project's Strategic Group. Recent changes mean that potential systems changes are discussed by them separately before being raised at the Strategic Group. The group itself is growing in influence, and members are represented on a number of local forums and strands of work.

The Strategic and Operational Groups include representation from the NHS Foundation Trust, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Newcastle and Gateshead Councils, the Probation CRC, and local services, among others.

Champions within the system

Champions are people who believe that areas of systems change work are important, and are willing to become actively involved in either advocating for or playing a role in the work. They include those in positions of power or influence within the system. For example, the regional manager in Homeless Link has championed the project's local connection work, and has taken a lead on establishing a working group to broaden the discussion and increase the scale of potential change.

The System Brokers have limited time and influence (and their roles are funded for only the limited duration of the project); for systems change to be fully scaled up and embedded the project assumes that champions external to the project may be required to take leadership of the change.

'I hope the working group will carry on meeting. My role is to start these things off and take a step back for others to take a lead.' – System Broker

In relation to the DWP work, the champions included both the national senior manager involved at the start of the work and signing it off, and workers in the frontline Social Justice Team, who had good relationships with staff in Changing Lives:

'Any changes [within DWP] need to go to high-level central decision making, so having that double [championing] – coming from the ground and the top – I think made a massive difference'. – Fulfilling Lives staff member

Champions within the system can:

- Lend credibility to the work and influence others to become involved.
- Help the change attain broader reach (including to influencers, decision-makers and implementers) and larger scale.
- Be an additional resource to support the change as it progresses.
- Help ensure that the new way of working becomes embedded in the system, as part of the system themselves.

'[One individual] had to do a lot of convincing [of more senior managers in her organisation] to agree to this – she had to go quite high – because it's [this pilot] out of the ordinary.' – external stakeholder

The Systems Brokers have engaged potential champions in the system through dialogue and collaboration, drawing on existing networks and building these networks. As the work progresses, and evidence supporting new ways of working becomes stronger, it might be that more people come forward to champion the work.

Decision-makers

Decision-makers are those people in positions of power who can sign-off change. Those involved in the project said that many decision-makers were strongly supportive of and involved in the project; the changes involving DWP and Gateshead Council are examples of this.

In the case of work with the DWP, the opportunity for a senior decision-maker to come into personal contact with an individual attempting (and struggling) to navigate the system helped initiate the work.

Interviewees involved in the project said that there were a number of decision-makers who were not as closely involved in the project as they would have liked. They believed that the following acted as barriers to involvement:

- Time pressures – budget cuts to both statutory and voluntary sector services mean that people's time is very pressured.
- Perceived threats to own organisation/role – if systems are effectively assessed and changed, roles might need to be cut or changed.
- Lack of will to become involved in difficult/controversial issues.

Some solutions the project has adopted to overcome these barriers included:

- In order to lessen the time commitment needed from senior stakeholders on the project's Strategic Group, the project devised new ways of working for the Strategic Group; this includes meeting only when there is evidence to discuss, and implementing a two-tier system by which a sub-group discusses data in detail and puts together recommendations, and the first tier meet only to discuss draft recommendations.

- System Brokers described seeking to identify what partners needed in order to become involved, and to provide this. This included building trusting relationships, gathering evidence, and providing resource to test changes.
- The project was taking different approaches for different people/organisations. For example, some stakeholders were keen to be closely involved in discussions from the outset, while others preferred to be presented with evidence about what they should do and what outcomes this will achieve.

Implementers within the system

Most systems changes need to be implemented by frontline staff. Interviewees said that this requires changes, not just in ways of working, but in cultures and practice. They said that some frontline workers had embraced change, whilst others were made nervous by the idea of change and had found change difficult. Several people stressed that frontline staff are already working in stressful and (in some cases) constantly changing environments, so introducing change has to be done thoughtfully:

'[Workers are in] a stressful, high pressure job, [any change] has to be easy for them to do, there's already enough stress in the job [...] If it puts added pressure on staff you need to take that seriously.' – external stakeholder

Even where frontline staff are amenable to change, other pressures can make sustaining change difficult, and commitment from managers is then important:

'The challenge is [change in practice] often gets pushed out by business as usual, so you need support from above.' – System Broker

Dedicated System Brokers

Dedicated System Brokers provide:

- Time and space to explore and understand the issues
- Resource to co-ordinate and test
- Leadership
- Relative independence from the system

The System Brokers described being passionate about their work, and brought expertise from past experience working within this system to the role. A number of external stakeholders said that a trusting relationship with the System Brokers as individuals had been integral to their involvement. The System Brokers also, importantly, had autonomy to shape their own work, which enabled them to respond flexibly, seize opportunity, and genuinely collaborate with others.

'[It helped that I was] freed up and the idea that [Fulfilling Lives manager] gave me permission to innovate and experiment and the [pilot sites] said "yeah, go for that". They were up for trying something innovative. And freedom of resource to say "I'll do this" and go for it. Normally you wouldn't have that in a job.' – System Broker

The independence of the role (and the project) was also thought to be important:

'We facilitated and were external to what was happening – we weren't saying these were our clients. That made a difference in that it wasn't that we were trying to benefit ourselves. We're making a connection between you and can step back and be outside, and that we can say we can evidence, evaluate

this, we've got someone who can do cost analysis. It gave us credibility.' – Fulfilling Lives staff member

Several interviewees talked about the importance of perseverance, and for that the System Brokers needed both tenacity and resilience. The System Brokers could encounter periods when they felt 'stuck' and when work was not moving forward, and they needed to actively chase others and keep issues on the agenda. The introduction of full-service, fully online Universal Credit was a significant setback to work around access to benefits, but the resilience of project staff means that this work is likely to continue:

'Now it would be so easy to say "we can't do anything, we won't make a difference, it's too hard, there are too many national barriers" – but instead [System Broker] is saying "let's have a meeting" [...] Even though the pilot isn't happening now, there's still momentum in terms of what can we do. It's not goodbye, instead it's "what do you want to do about that?" We're looking at proposing a longitudinal study on the impact of Universal Credit on people [experiencing multiple and complex needs] and feeding this in to [DWP].' – Fulfilling Lives staff member

Dedicated Research and Evaluation lead

The project has employed a dedicated Research and Evaluation lead. This role means that it is able to provide robust evidence, which enhances the project's credibility.

Context: changing national and local systems

The project is not trying to change a static system; the systems it is trying to change are complex and ever-changing, sometimes in ways that those involved cannot predict.

'The ever-changing policy environment, the constant national change, has a massive knock-on effect.' – Fulfilling Lives staff member

Issues include:

The changing system can disrupt systems change work that is being conducted. The clearest example of this so far is the introduction of Universal Credit rendering work to improve access to benefits redundant. Another example is the changes to Right to Rent in the Immigration Act 2016, which meant that ideas around the provision of accommodation for destitute asylum seekers could not be followed through.

National policy can restrict the project's ability to make changes at a local level. For example, in particular in relation to supporting people with no recourse to public funds, people described the challenge of working against national policy that is seen to be ineffective for people experiencing multiple and complex needs but that limits options for local responses.

A context of budget cuts and financial pressures can both facilitate and hinder change. Substantial budget cuts to many services mean that services are looking for new ways of doing things; this can make services more open to change. However, this may also mean that changes can only be achieved where there is evidence that they will save money. This may make it difficult to do things that will lead to a

temporary increase in costs, longer-term preventative work, or work that involves a higher level of risk.

Facilitators of and barriers to change

The project has encountered the following facilitators of and barriers to systems change across its systems change work.

Facilitators of systems change

- **The project's open, non-directive approach** to change facilitates genuine collaboration, enables a flexible approach to change, and enables the project to seize opportunity as it arises.
- **Building and connecting with networks** enhances the expertise the project can draw on, and gives access to decision-makers and potential champions.
- **Dialogue and collaboration** with a wide range of people within the system enhances understanding of the issues and buy-in from those who may need to change.
- **Trusting relationships** between Fulfilling Lives staff and others have encouraged other organisations to get involved in the systems change work.
- **The dedicated resource of System Brokers and the Research and Evaluation Lead** have enabled busy partners to take part in initial testing of new ways of working with reduced resource implications.
- **The tenacity and resilience** of System Brokers has helped them move work forwards and keep issues on the agenda, despite some delays and obstacles.

Barriers to systems change

- **Difficulties securing the desired level of involvement by some decision-makers**, which may stem from lack of time, lack of sufficient evidence to secure their involvement, anxiety about the consequences of change for their own organisation, or a disinclination to tackle complex or controversial issues.
- **Resistance to change by some frontline workers**, which may stem from anxiety or a context of other pressures.
- **Challenges in securing evidence**, both from partners and from a transient client group.
- **Unpredicted changes within the national and local system** can disrupt systems change work that is being conducted.
- **National policy**, in some cases, has restricted the project's ability to make changes at a local level.
- **A context of budget cuts and financial pressures** can make services more open to change, but may also mean that changes can only be achieved where there is evidence that they will save money.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

- Fulfilling Lives Newcastle and Gateshead has begun to influence change in local systems. It has brokered the piloting of a new local connection policy in Gateshead, and its work has initiated conversations among many Local Authorities in the North East region around developing a regional local connection agreement. It has built strong working relationships with the Department for Work and Pensions locally, and conducted a pilot project that has provided some indication of the need for a supported approach to accessing benefits for people experiencing multiple and complex needs.
- Early indications are that the project has adopted an effective model for systems change. Important elements of this are:
 - The provision of dedicated staff to support systems change has facilitated the work and proved an incentive for other organisations to become involved. This includes System Brokers who can facilitate dialogue and collaboration and provide a resource to take new ideas forward, and a dedicated Research and Evaluation Lead who can provide robust evidence about the effectiveness of systems change pilots.
 - Indications are that the project's approach of gradual, non-directed, collaborative change is working well. Stakeholders were on the whole enthusiastic about the project's role and the possibility of making change.
 - Stakeholders confirm that evidence is important to them, and, for many, is necessary to obtaining sign-off for change from senior decision-makers.
- The project has built strong, trusting relationships with many local stakeholders, built on dialogue and collaboration. Some local stakeholders have not been closely involved in the project's systems change work, and the project is seeking ways to increase their involvement, for example through the provision of stronger evidence of need and effectiveness.
- The project's systems change work has been grounded in the aspirations and experiences of Fulfilling Lives clients. All of the areas in which the project is seeking to influence change are believed to be important areas of change by local stakeholders. The selection of areas of system change on which the project has focused has been influenced to some extent by chance and opportunity, and by the passion and expertise of its System Brokers. Both of these have proved valuable and effective routes to influencing important change. As the project's systems change work develops, it might be useful to consider in more depth how areas for the systems change work are identified and prioritised, and to seek ways for the Experts by Experience group to be more closely involved in this process.
- The resilience and tenacity of System Brokers have been important in ensuring that work progresses in the face of obstacles. It is important that System Brokers are well-supported to deal with the challenges of their role.
- Systems change takes time; most of the systems change work conducted so far has involved building trusting relationships, engaging in dialogue and collaboration, and gathering evidence, all of which take time. The next phase of work for the local connection pilot will be scaling up and embedding the

change, and it is expected that other future pilots will go through a similar process.

- Systemic changes and blockages at a national level have set back systems change work in a number of areas locally. The introduction of full service (ie fully implemented across all groups of benefit recipients), fully online Universal Credit in Newcastle has rendered work improving access to benefits through the current telephone system redundant. The changes to Right to Rent in the Immigration Act 2016, alongside other national policies affecting people with no recourse to public funds, has made it more difficult to support such people. The project is likely to benefit from working closely with the Big Lottery to identify ways in which the national Fulfilling Lives programme could influence national policy.
- Conversations with experts and other Fulfilling Lives projects helped the project to identify innovative practice elsewhere (for example local connection agreements between councils) which significantly informed its work. Sharing ideas, learning and (importantly) evidence across the Fulfilling Lives projects may become particularly valuable as each project progresses and increasingly influences change locally.