

# **Developing the Scottish Learning and Improvement Framework for Adult Social Care Support and Community Health (SLIF) Digital Tool**

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# Summary

The SLIF digital tool has been developed to support the testing and implementation of the Draft Scottish Learning and Improvement Framework for Adult Social Care Support and Community Health (the SLIF).

The Tool aims to support community health and social care support organisations to provide services that actively improve outcomes for people. It also aims to address gaps in policy implementation through engaging in a structured and evidence-informed process of self-evaluation.

The Tool is designed to support the strategic vision for health and social care presented jointly in the Population Health Framework, the Health and Social Care Services Renewal Framework, and the NHS Operational Improvement Plan, alongside supporting effective implementation of key policies, legislation, good practice guidelines and quality improvement frameworks.

The work to develop the SLIF digital tool was led by Matter of Focus and a cross-sector Short Life Working Group. Developing the Tool involved engaging with people with lived and living experience of using services to understand what improvement would mean to them, as well as more than 100 people from diverse health and social care support organisations, in addition to representatives from relevant policy teams.

This work has led to the development of a Tool which will support the testing of the framework in Health and Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs) to improve their work using four core thematic pathways: Supporting People; Workforce Development; Ethical Commissioning and Procurement and Integrated Joint Board Governance and Outcomes. The Tool can be used on a standalone basis or across an HSCP to generate systematic evidence of progress towards strategic aims and the National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes.

There is scope to further develop the Tool, both through refinement of the existing pathways and through the development of new pathways targeted at specific aspects of health and social care practice, for example Adult Support and Protection.

The SLIF digital tool is currently at prototype stage. Once the Tool has been tested and any necessary amendments made, a live version will be published for a pilot period before planned widescale implementation.

To be effective, the SLIF digital tool will need to be continually updated in line with policy and good practice and some ongoing support for implementation will be required.

# About this report

The Draft Scottish Learning and Improvement Framework for Adult Social Care Support and Community Health (SLIF) has been co-produced to support improvement across health and social care services and improve experiences and outcomes for people who use and work in them. The SLIF is a high level framework that outlines a shared vision and priorities for improvement that have been agreed across the system. It highlights the agreed person centered outcomes that set a direction for how improvement will be tracked towards this common vision.

To support the SLIF moving from a strategic document to a tool that could be used in an operational setting, following a quick quote procurement exercise the Scottish Government commissioned Matter of Focus to work alongside them and members of a cross-sector short life working group to develop the SLIF digital tool.

This report describes the process undertaken to develop the SLIF digital tool and learning captured through this process. It details the proposed structure of the Tool, the principles underpinning its use, and considerations for the testing phase.

A prototype of the SLIF digital tool has been produced which will be revised and updated through testing and piloting phases. The Tool is broken down into four core thematic pathways with the full pathways provided in Annex A:

**Supporting people thematic pathway:** designed to be used by service managers seeking to self-evaluate and improve support for people.

**Workforce development thematic pathway:** designed to be used by service managers and workforce leads seeking to self-evaluate and improve staff support and workforce development.

**IJB governance, quality and outcomes thematic pathway:** designed to be used by IJB board members and HSCP officers to underpin regular board reporting and/or support the development of the Annual Performance Report.

**Commissioning and procurement thematic pathway:** designed to be used by commissioning and procurement managers seeking to self-evaluate and improve commissioning and procurement practice. This pathway is in draft, pending the publication of the ethical commissioning principles and will be updated once this work is completed.

# **About this work**

## **About the Operationalisation Short Life Working Group**

The development of the SLIF digital tool was supported by a cross-sector Short Life Working Group. The membership of the Short Life Working Group included professional representatives from organisations within adult health and social care support in Scotland, including local areas. The full membership is set out in Annex B.

The Short Life Working Group worked with Matter of Focus to ensure that the work to operationalise the SLIF was cognisant of the wider system and that the tool is meaningful within the services they represent.

## **About Matter of Focus**

Matter of Focus have developed an approach to support organisations to explore, map, analyse and assess the outcomes that matter to them, the people and populations they care about, and their funders.

They provided this commissioned work with tools and techniques that enable partnerships to make effective use of their data and information to learn, improve and tell the story of the difference they make.

## **With thanks to Midlothian Integration Joint Board**

The IJB Governance, Quality and Outcomes Pathway that is now being utilised within the SLIF digital tool has been developed by the Midlothian Integration Joint Board. We acknowledge the considerable time, expertise, and effort invested by the team in developing this pathway, which has resulted in a valuable resource to support improvement and quality for Integration Authorities and Health and Social Care Partnerships across Scotland, and we would like to express our gratitude to them for sharing it.

# Background to the Draft SLIF

The SLIF has been developed collaboratively with a multi-agency Steering Group, led by COSLA, SOLACE, NHS and the Scottish Government. The work was informed by people who use and work in services, sharing what matters most to them.

The aim of the SLIF is to support improvements in adult social care support, social work, and community health services. It seeks to support a new approach to improving outcomes, to address the implementation gap identified in the Independent Review of Adult Social Care, and to ultimately improve the experiences and outcomes for people who use and work in them.

The SLIF outlines a shared vision and agreed priorities for improvement. It sets out an approach that moves away from targets and measurement alone, to one that builds on learning and focuses improvement on the outcomes that matter to people.

The purpose of the SLIF is to:

- Improve experiences and outcomes for people who use and work in social care support and community health
- Build more learning into the system
- Support joint effort across the system towards the outcomes that matter to people

The SLIF has been developed around the:

- Scottish Government [National Performance Framework](#).
- [PANEL Principles](#) - which support a human rights-based approach to the development of the framework.  
PANEL stands for Participation, Accountability, Non-Discrimination, Empowerment and Legality. (Annex C gives an analysis of the SLIF digital tool's contribution to the PANEL Principles)
- [The Health and Social Care Standards](#).

The SLIF will be an iterative document that will be reviewed and developed to support local and national improvement activity and, align and support policy to bridge any implementation gap.

The SLIF will support the ambition of the Health and Social Care Service Renewal Framework (SRF) to ensure people of all ages can live well, with the right support, and lead healthier and more fulfilling lives. It will do this through coordinating improvement towards the outcomes that matter to people and expanding the focus from performance management to an approach that builds ongoing learning, improvement and quality management into the system.

It is a tool that will enable local areas to approach improvement interventions in a way that is informed by local needs and evidence. It will help gather information about the impact of these activities for learning and to inform future decisions. Finally, it will provide assurance by tracking how these activities contribute to outcomes that matter to people.

In the work to develop the SLIF digital tool there was a strong message about not creating further work for the sector so importantly, the SLIF is not an additional thing to do. The framework will interface with existing service-level improvement frameworks to aid integration and support a flexible approach to delivery at all levels of the system.

## **Wider Improvement System**

The SLIF sits within the wider improvement system. It is a universal framework designed to support improvement initiatives at all levels across the system. It will be supported by an Improvement Collaborative which will focus on the SLIF priority themes and coordinate action to improve how social work, social care and community health services are delivered.

An approach to provide additional targeted support to help improve how services are delivered when evidence shows that is needed to meet expected standards is currently under development. This will be separate from the SLIF and the Improvement Collaborative but work in synergy with them.

The SLIF is not intended to be a performance management framework and moving from a predominant focus on data for performance management and scrutiny to an improvement approach, is a fundamental pillar of the framework.

It will not replace performance management or scrutiny but will provide an additional richness to the data to support learning and improvement in the system. It will allow services to understand the impact of activities, in order to target improvement activity where it is needed.

Performance management and improvement are both part of any well-functioning system, while the SLIF will support the use of data for improvement and learning, performance management will continue to be an important part of governance in the system.

## **Operationalisation of the SLIF**

During the development of the SLIF, representatives from Health and Social Care organisations identified a range of challenges that might get in the way of effective implementation. These included:

- Current pressures in the system.
- The existing predominant focus on scrutiny and performance management, which can create a data reporting burden and limit the capacity to move to data collection for continual learning.
- Multiple unaligned improvement frameworks, standards and outcomes which apply within service areas, creating duplication and reporting challenges.
- Limited sharing of practice and learning between areas and partners.
- Lack of appropriate tools to support effective data use for learning and improvement.

It was clear that work was required to operationalise the SLIF in a way that would address these issues and help bridge the implementation gap. To respond to these, two core elements of this work were identified:

1. Development of a digitally hosted SLIF digital tool (prototype version) accessible across partnerships that breaks down the high-level aspirations and outcomes of the SLIF into meaningful improvement actions and supports tracking the outcomes of this work.
2. An operating model for the SLIF digital tool that addresses the challenges outlined above.

# Approach to developing the SLIF digital tool and operating model

The work to develop the prototype of the SLIF digital tool and operating model was carried out between February and August 2025. Matter of Focus were commissioned to work in close collaboration with the Scottish Government and members of a cross-sector Short Life Working Group to undertake this work.

## Matter of Focus approach

Matter of Focus were commissioned to support the application of an evidence-informed and practical approach to embedding outcome focused self-evaluation within public services, to the testing and operationalisation of the SLIF.

The Matter of Focus approach draws on Contribution Analysis, participatory approaches, and evidence to action. It supports organisations to track their progress to improving outcomes using the following headings:

- What we do?
- Who with?
- How they feel?
- What they learn and gain?
- What they do differently?
- What difference does it make?

Matter of Focus also brought a cloud-based software platform called 'OutNav' that allows organisations to embed outcome focused self-evaluation more effectively and efficiently and to share learning across organisational boundaries and work at scale. This includes uploading and linking data and evidence, review and analysis of this data, and reporting on progress. These reports include a colour-coded heat map, providing a quick view of progress. This software was used to provide an user friendly digital platform on which to build the SLIF digital tool.

## Engagement

This development work was delivered through close engagement with people from HSCPs, provider organisations, public bodies, intermediaries and policy makers. The perspectives of people with lived and living experience of using services were included in this work through regular reference to the engagement data from the following reports that were collected previously for this purpose;

- [Adult Social Care Support and Community Health: What it means to me. Engagement report for the Scottish Learning and Improvement Framework for Adult Social Care Support and Community Health. The ALLIANCE](#), and
- [Scottish Learning and Improvement Framework for Adult Social Care Support and Community Health \(SLIF \) co-design report](#).

The Short Life Working Group were closely engaged throughout the process to ‘sense check’ emerging plans, ensure alignment with, and capture learning from other work, for example, the development of the SDS self-evaluation framework.

Short Life Working Group members also provided one-to-one support and guidance on aspects of the tool. In addition, helpful feedback was obtained from the SLIF Steering Group members at key junctures in the process.

In total, 108 people were engaged in the workshops from 47 organisations and teams.

Number of attendees	Organisation type	Organisations Included
3	Local Authority	Scottish Borders Council
14	NHS	NHS Ayrshire and Arran, NHS Borders, NHS Grampian, NHS Highland, NHS Lanarkshire, NHS Lothian, NHS Shetland
52	HSPC	Aberdeen City HSCP, Argyll and Bute HSCP, East Dumbartonshire HSPC, City of Edinburgh HSCP, Dumfries & Galloway HSCP, Dundee City HSCP, East Dunbartonshire HSCP, East Lothian HSCP, Edinburgh HSCP, Falkirk HSCP, Fife HSPC, Midlothian HSCP, Moray HSCP, Perth and Kinross HSPC, Renfrewshire HSPC, Scottish Borders HSCP, South Ayrshire HSCP, South Lanarkshire HSPC, West Lothian HSCP
25	Third and Independent Sector	Ark Housing Association, Bield Housing and Care, CCPS, East Ayrshire Leisure, Eildon Housing, ELCAP, Inclusion Glasgow, Neighbourhood Networks, Rowan Alba, Salvation Army, SAMH, Scottish Autism, Specialist Resource Solutions, The Action Group, The Alliance, Thistle Foundation, Voluntary Services Aberdeen
9	National Organisations	Social Work Scotland, Care Inspectorate, Scottish Government Policy Teams

## **Development process**

The work to develop the prototype of the SLIF digital tool and operating model included four key areas of focus:

1. Understanding the priorities for the SLIF digital tool and considerations for implementation.
2. Developing the prototype Tool and refining with engagement from diverse stakeholders.
3. Identifying and mapping the key frameworks, policy, guidance and legislation that needed to be reflected in the Tool.
4. Reviewing the Tool and seeking sign off from key policy teams.

The process undertaken to deliver each one is outlined below.

### **Understanding priorities and key challenges**

This part of the process was carried out through a series of online workshops with people from HSCPs and provider organisations, and a series of face-to-face workshops with relevant policy leads. In these workshops, participants reflected on what success looked like for the SLIF from their perspective, potential challenges, and what needed to be in place to be effective in their respective services. Participants reviewed example models for the SLIF digital tool and ranked which potential benefits were most important to them.

### **Developing the prototype SLIF digital tool**

Three pathways relating to the SLIF priority themes were drafted to translate the SLIF outcomes into tangible actions, these were: Supporting People, Workforce and Strategic Commissioning. These pathways were reviewed through a series of online workshops held with people working in HSCPs and provider organisations, as well as the Short Life Working Group.

The workshops took participants through the process of reviewing the draft pathways, identifying common sources of data and evidence, and reflecting on what success looked like in practice for each step of the pathways.

Through this process, it became clear that the third pathway needed to be broken down into two – one focused on IJB governance and assurance and a second focused on commissioning and procurement.

The development of the IJB pathway built directly on the work carried out by Midlothian HSCP, who have been using OutNav to underpin IJB reporting for three years. The Midlothian pathway was used as a starting point and the success criteria was refined, based on feedback from the workshops and careful review with the Planning and Performance Manager at Midlothian and the Integration Policy team.

The Commissioning and Procurement pathway was drafted with the cross-sector representatives, informed by discussions at the workshops. To date, work to develop the Ethical Commissioning Principles is still in progress. The pathway shared as part of the prototype SLIF digital tool is still in draft form and will be updated once the work on the Principles is complete.

## **Mapping key frameworks, guidance, policy and legislation**

The process of mapping frameworks, guidance, policy and legislation built on the mapping work carried out by the SLWG. Working with key policy teams and colleagues from Care Inspectorate and Healthcare Improvement Scotland, core frameworks were identified that needed to be included and each one was worked through to see how they could best be mapped across the SLIF digital tool. A detailed list of frameworks, guidance, policy and legislation and how they have informed the Tool, is provided in Section 5 of this report.

Central to this process was working out how much detail from each framework to include, to ensure the tool was proportionate and usable at a local level. Some pathways include more detail from these frameworks than others. The benefits and limitations of taking a comprehensive approach to detailing success criteria will be explored in the testing phase.

This process also identified several additional frameworks that were either not core to the SLIF digital tool, or still in development. Information about these frameworks has been captured so that they can be included in later iterations as the tool develops.

## **Review and sign off from key policy teams**

The four thematic pathways were reviewed by the relevant policy teams and members of the SLWG to assure that they are appropriately aligned with relevant guidance, legislation, improvement frameworks and recognised good practice. This information was brought together to develop the prototype version of the SLIF digital tool.

## **Learning from the process**

Taking a co-production approach to the development of the draft SLIF generated rich insights into how such a framework could benefit health and social care support organisations in meeting the outcomes that matter to people.

It also raised questions and highlighted some challenges that could potentially impact effective implementation. The learning from this phase of work to operationalise the SLIF reinforced these messages. Key insights are summarised below:

### **The SLIF digital tool was welcomed by stakeholder groups**

People from stakeholder groups in the workshops welcomed the SLIF digital tool and voiced their support for its alignment with the aspirations within it.

Stakeholders valued the explicit focus on supporting learning and improvement. They highlighted the benefits of having one place to bring together the diverse data and information captured and reported by health and social care support organisations.

### **Capacity and readiness for the SLIF digital tool is limited**

Current capacity challenges and readiness amongst HSCPs and Providers to use new improvement tools and frameworks was consistently highlighted as an issue. Current practice in relation to data collection was voiced as being varied and diverse, with organisations all reporting current gaps in the kinds of data they would need to complete the SLIF digital tool to a high standard.

### **Supporting a joined-up approach to improvement**

Participants from health and social care support organisations highlighted the complexity of the current improvement and reporting landscape. Organisations raised the number of different and often un-coordinated frameworks they were required to report against.

There was general agreement that the SLIF digital tool had the potential to bring these different frameworks together creating the scaffolding for a joined-up approach to improvement. This would assist in identifying gaps in implementation or evidence, providing a robust foundation for improvement work focused on improving outcomes for people.

### **Streamlining reporting**

Participants at the workshops were clear that the SLIF digital tool needed to support the streamlining of reporting, to support them to use it. Through discussions, two mechanisms for this emerged. Firstly, the SLIF digital tool would provide one place where all information was held, so this could easily be accessed and used to report for multiple purposes. Secondly, there is the possibility that policy and scrutiny bodies could align their reporting requests with the information routinely captured and analysed through the SLIF digital tool. This would reduce duplication and generate substantial efficiencies over time.

### **Digital hosting**

The importance of a digital platform to host the tool was emphasised by all stakeholders. As one person put it, this is what made the tool feel different, and like it has a chance of succeeding with implementation. It was felt that there were opportunities provided by the digitally hosted Tool to support more effective sharing of learning across the system. Clarity on who had access to the data was highlighted, with local ownership felt to be an important factor in protecting the space for learning within partnerships.

The potential to use Artificial Intelligence to support learning at scale from previously hidden qualitative and informal data was seen as particularly interesting, and potentially worth further exploration.

### **Opportunities for local and national learning**

The implementation of a digitally-hosted SLIF digital Tool offers unique opportunities to capture learning across the system about what is working well, where there are gaps, and how services are contributing to improving outcomes for people. Policy makers were particularly interested by the opportunities to explore how key data gaps might be filled including data that cannot currently be captured in a nationally consistent way.

If implemented fully, there is the opportunity for the SLIF digital tool to generate rich reports that show how key aspects of work and local policy implementation contribute to improving outcomes for people. This kind of intelligence has the potential to evidence in detail the work required to implement policy and be shared to support wider learning. It was recognised that in time this could become an important source of information for the National Care Service Advisory Board.

### **Shifting from performance to improvement**

Across the workshops participants highlighted the importance of creating the conditions for improvement, a key pillar of the draft SLIF. This would increase the willingness to be open when things do not go well or significant improvement work is needed. Participants highlighted that people in health and social care support organisations need agreement and encouragement to share learning from failure as well as success, and that it is important that organisations own their own data and how it is used. An emphasis was placed on the the need for ongoing support around the SLIF digital tool to reinforce the messages around improvement and learning.

### **Ensuring the sustainability of the SLIF**

The SLIF digital tool will need to be continually updated to reflect the changing legislation, guidance and good practice frameworks. It will be important to have a plan for sustaining the SLIF and to ensure it is 'owned' by a team who can continually liaise with policy teams to ensure these updates are made. This team will also have an important role in supporting organisations to use the SLIF digital tool and to ensure that learning and insights generated through the process are fed into future developments.

### **Agreed benefits**

Based on these discussions, the following benefits were prioritised through the development process.

- Ensure that services and initiatives are focused on the outcomes that are important to people and capture evidence of their contribution to those outcomes. People across the system felt it was important that the tool would support the telling of rich and meaningful stories of change that support learning.

- Improve oversight and sharing of information at key junctures of the system, creating a thread from IJB strategy and progress to outcomes for people.
- Ensure services have access to a streamlined tool that integrates key policy, frameworks, legislation and guidance and can be used to report to multiple audiences.
- Report on progress and learning in ways that can be directly fed into IJB reporting and scrutiny, when that is deemed to be helpful and appropriate.

All stakeholders agreed that there is potential for the SLIF digital tool to be used to streamline reporting for providers to fulfil multiple asks. This is something that can be further explored during the planned testing phase of the prototype SLIF digital tool.

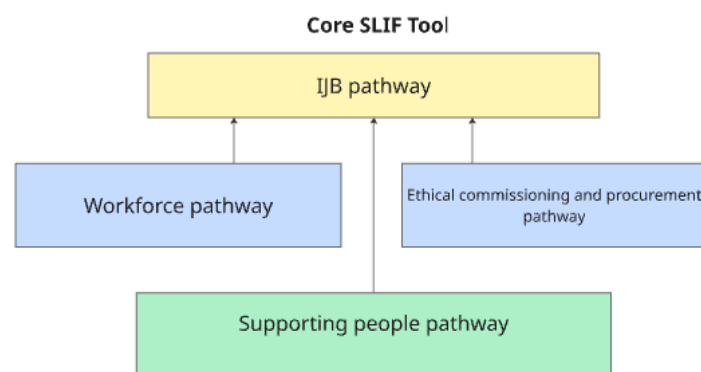
### Design of the SLIF digital tool and operating model

In designing the SLIF digital tool and operating model, it has been necessary to balance the overarching aspiration to develop a flexible tool that works at every level of the system, with the pragmatic need for a tool that is easy to use. Any model also needs to provide clear benefits and be practicable for local areas to pick up and deploy.

At the core of the SLIF digital tool are four thematic pathways. Each can be used independently by specific teams, but they can also be used together to generate organisational insights, supporting learning, improvement and assurance.

Each pathway relates to one or more thematic areas within the SLIF and addresses key improvement priorities which have been shaped by people with lived and living experience of using or working in services. The pathways and the relationships between them are shown in the diagram below.

Figure 1. Diagram showing the pathways of the SLIF digital tool



The pathways each take the users on a journey to set out their evidence-informed activities and engagement, which are required to improve this area of practice. This will result in them being able to demonstrate how this work has contributed to improving outcomes.

Each pathway is made up of a number of 'stepping stones' which are underpinned by success criteria aligned to wider policy to outline what good looks like. This will support self-evaluation planning and mapping evidence sources to each 'stepping stone'.

The success criteria were developed in discussion with policy makers and reflect core quality improvement frameworks, guidance, legislation, policy and recognised best practice principles. More information on the process of developing the success criteria and the alignment with core frameworks is presented in the next section.

A key feature of the approach is that it supports organisations to make use of diverse forms of data and information that are collected but often underutilised to support improvement. This includes:

- routinely collected local and national data
- qualitative data and feedback from people with lived and living experience of services and staff
- other forms of administrative data that are not routinely analysed
- reflective practice
- purposely collected data, for example from surveys, consultation data, and data from improvement projects

Each pathway aligns to a SLIF priority theme and has been designed for use by a clear target audience. These are listed below with links to each pathway within the SLIF digital tool. Full pathways are provided in Annex A.

**Supporting people thematic pathway:** this is designed to be used by service managers seeking to self-evaluate and improve direct support for people.

**Workforce development thematic pathway:** this has been designed to be used by service managers and workforce leads seeking to self-evaluate and improve staff support and workforce development.

**IJB governance, quality and outcomes thematic pathway:** the pathway was designed to be used by IJB board members and HSCP officers to underpin regular board reporting and/or support the development of the Annual Performance Report.

**Commissioning and procurement thematic pathway:** this pathway has been designed to be used by commissioning and procurement managers seeking to evaluate and improve commissioning and procurement practice. This pathway is in draft, pending the publication of the ethical commissioning principles and will be updated once this work is completed.

## **Expanding the SLIF digital tool to include additional service types**

The current pathways are designed to apply across community health and social care support services. The development of the pathways has focused on referencing the diversity of frameworks, legislation and guidance relevant to the pathway. This approach has been balanced in order to support the development and testing of a usable tool, as a result not every framework or piece of legislation or guidance has been aligned.

In discussions, it became clear that some areas of practice will benefit from having their own targeted pathways. The Tool has been designed so that new pathways targeted to specific service types can be added at any time. This would enable the use of current core pathways as a starting point to ensure alignment between any new pathways developed.

## **Digitally Hosted Tool**

The SLIF digital tool has been designed to be digitally hosted. To best support the use of the SLIF digital tool, having it being owned by a single team is advisable. This will enable consistent management of updates, version control and safe access management.

This team will coordinate pathway updates to all organisations ensuring that all users are working with the most up to date version of the SLIF digital tool.

Each organisation using the SLIF digital tool will have a secure space to work, with control over access to the data and content within each pathway. Within the digitally hosted tool, people from multiple partner organisations can work together, supporting effective information sharing across organisational boundaries, underpinned by data sharing agreements as appropriate.

## **Using the SLIF digital tool in practice**

### **Using a pathway**

Teams or services using the SLIF digital tool will need to select the relevant pathway for their work and identify a resource to lead on using the pathway to assess progress. The guidance for use is currently presented in draft form

and will be updated through the testing process, incorporating learning from practice.

Each of the four pathways are broken down into a series of ‘stepping stones’. Each stepping stone contains a list of success criteria that prompt the team to reflect on what good looks like for that part of the change process, and the extent to which they are realising this in practice.

Within the Tool, teams can select a stepping stone, review the success criteria related to it, link and upload relevant data and evidence and record a narrative summary of progress, highlights and areas for improvement.

For each stepping stone, teams can assess whether they think their work represents great progress, some progress or low progress, and how confident they are in the evidence underpinning this assessment. This information can be pulled out into a visual one-page heat map which provides an accessible overview of progress. An example of this from the Workforce pathway is shown below..

Figure 2 The workforce pathway with example progress and confidence ratings



## **Capturing organisational insights**

The SLIF digital tool pathways have been developed using one overarching framework. This means that insights generated from each of the Supporting People, Workforce and Commissioning pathways all feed directly into the IJB pathway. This allows for a clear line of sight from the contribution of individual services to improving outcomes for people to progress towards strategic aims and delivery of the National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes.

Where multiple teams are using the SLIF digital tool, the HSCP will be able to access insights from key elements of these pathways, prompt and share tasks and automatically aggregate key information across multiple teams using the same pathway.

## **Using the SLIF digital tool for reporting**

Teams using the SLIF digital tool to assess progress against one or more pathways can generate reports from within the Tool to support internal learning and governance and external reporting requirements. The content of reports will include:

- Synthesis of key qualitative and quantitative data, insights and reflections from the team on progress and areas for improvement
- Feedback from people with lived and living experience
- Case studies of good practice and the colour-coded heat maps summarizing progress

All the information sitting in the Tool can be collated in flexible ways to support both internal learning and more formal reporting. In some instances, teams may wish to run a report directly from the Tool. In others, the SLIF digital tool will act as a repository of well synthesized information that is readily available for external reporting.

# Alignment with policy and improvement frameworks

The SLIF supports the strategic vision for health and social care, presented jointly in the [Population Health Framework](#), the [Health and Social Care Services Renewal Framework](#), and the [NHS Operational Improvement Plan](#).

The SLIF digital tools stepping stones are underpinned by success criteria which are defined as key considerations for good practice which will contribute to the each outcome on the stepping stones.

The identification of the success criteria was achieved though bringing together elements from a range of different frameworks, policies, statutory guidance and quality improvement tools that are in use across community health and social care support. Details of this are laid out below.

Additional success criteria have been included that build on input gathered throughout the operationalisation process from members of the Steering Group, the Short Life Working Group and workshop participants.

By using the Tool, Community Health, HSCPs and Social Care Support Organisations will be able to collate evidence to assure and demonstrate they are meeting the statutory requirements within these frameworks. At the same time, they will be able to focus on elements of good practice that contribute to improving outcomes for people.

## Principles and standards of good practice

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<a href="#">Getting it Right for Everyone (GIRFE)</a>	Supporting people; Workforce Development	Each of the GIRFE principles are captured as success criteria within the supporting people pathway, and support for staff to embed GIRFE into their practice is included in workforce development.
<a href="#">Health and Social Care Standards</a>	Supporting people; Workforce Development	Success criteria in the supporting people pathway link to the Health and Social Care values by headline outcome and the principles of dignity and respect, compassion, being included, responsive care and support, and wellbeing. Staff confidence in providing support that aligns with the Standards is linked in the workforce development pathway.

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<a href="#">Self-directed Support Framework of Standards</a>	Supporting people; Workforce Development	Success criteria across the pathways link the stepping stones of the SLIF to the relevant standards (1-22) in the SDS Standards Framework.
<a href="#">SSSC Codes of Practice</a>	Workforce Development	The SSSC Codes of practice for both employers and social service workforce are included as success criteria in the workforce development pathway.
<a href="#">Core Mental Health Standards in Scotland</a>	Supporting people; Workforce Development	Core mental health standards are captured as success criteria within the supporting people pathway, and support for staff's mental health and to embed standards into their practice is included in workforce development.

### Care Inspectorate/HIS Strategic Quality Improvement Frameworks

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<a href="#">Quality Improvement Framework: Adult Support and Protection</a>	Supporting people; Workforce Development	The sections of the Quality Improvement Framework are listed as success criteria across the pathways, prompting people to complete their Adult Support and Protection self-evaluation and consider improvement using the quality indicators and illustrations.
<a href="#">Quality Improvement Framework: Joint Inspection of Adult Services Integration and Outcomes (JIAS)</a>	Supporting people	The key areas of the Quality Improvement Framework are listed as success criteria across the supporting people pathway, prompting people to complete their integration self-evaluation and consider improvement using the quality indicators and illustrations.

## Care Inspectorate Regulatory Quality Improvement Frameworks

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<p><a href="#">Regulatory Quality Improvement Frameworks by service type:</a></p> <p>Care homes for adults and older people</p> <p>Support services (care at home and supported living)</p> <p>Support services (not care at home)</p> <p>Housing support</p> <p>Nurse agencies</p>	Supporting people; Workforce Development	The Care Inspectorate's regulatory Quality Improvement Frameworks are included as success criteria by Key Question (and in some cases, by quality indicator), prompting people to complete their self-evaluation and consider improvement using the quality indicators and illustrations. These key questions are consistent across the regulatory frameworks, so the references can be used to find the specific quality illustrations for the relevant service type.

## Improvement and Quality Management

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<p><a href="#">Scottish Approach to Change Framework</a></p>	Supporting people; Workforce Development	The Scottish Approach to change supports the health and care system to do change well. It brings together different change methods into a single approach, which can be used to support improvement projects identified and prioritised through the SLIF. Its use is linked within the improvement-focused stepping stones of each pathway.

## Carers' (Scotland Act) 2016

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<a href="#">Carers (Scotland Act) 2016 Statutory Guidance</a>	Supporting people	Key statutory requirements of the Carers Act are listed as success criteria within the supporting people pathway.

## Best practice for care homes

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<a href="#">My Health, My Care, My Home - healthcare framework for adults living in care homes</a>	Supporting people; Workforce Development	The elements of the My Health, My Care framework are linked as success criteria, prompting people to evidence good practice in response to the recommendations for each.

## Fair Work

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<a href="#">Fair Work Framework</a>	Workforce Development	Success criteria in the workforce development pathway prompt reflection on how roles at all levels meet the dimensions of Fair Work: opportunity, security, fulfilment, respect and effective voice.

## National Trauma Transformation Programme

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<a href="#">National Trauma Transformation Programme</a>	Workforce Development	The workforce development pathway links to the National Trauma Transformation programme, prompting SLIF users to assess their staff's need for trauma training.

## Ask and Act Homelessness Duties

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<a href="#">National Trauma Transformation Programme</a>	Supporting People	The supporting people pathway links to the Ask and Act Homelessness Duties, prompting SLIF users to assess their process for routinely screening people for housing insecurity or risk of homelessness.

## Workforce standards

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<a href="#">Standards in social work education and ethical principles</a>	Workforce Development	The workforce development pathway prompts SLIF users to gather data and self-evaluate the extent to which social workers feel confident practicing in line with the social work standards and principles.
<a href="#">Safer Recruitment Guidance</a>	Workforce Development	The workforce pathway prompts users to reflect on and evidence how their recruitment policies and processes reflect the Safer Recruitment guidance.

Frameworks mapped to the pathways of the SLIF digital tool	Thematic pathway(s)	Approach to mapping and integration
<a href="#">Health and Care (Staffing)(Scotland) Act 2019 Statutory Guidance</a>	Workforce Development	The workforce pathway prompts users to reflect on and evidence how the staffing of their care and support meets the requirements of the Act.
<a href="#">National Induction Standards</a>	Workforce Development	The workforce pathway prompts users to reflect on and evidence how their induction process meets the induction standards, including through the use of the induction resources available on TURAS.

## Primary Care and Community Health Route Map

At the time of development of the Tool work to draft the Primary Care and Community Health (PCCH) Route Map was underway. Once published this will be included within the SLIF digital tool.

The Route Map will serve as the delivery plan for improvement actions across primary care and community health services. The plan will be informed by the revised outcomes relating to access, system rebalance, quality, and coordinated service delivery. It will also outline the sector's approach to improvement and assurance.

Following publication of the Route Map work will commence to explore testing the SLIF within primary care and community health services, ensuring alignment with the outcomes and wider HSC vision.

# Considerations for testing, implementation and further development

Now the preliminary operationalisation work is complete and the prototype Tool has been built, the next stage will be a programme of testing of the SLIF digital tool. Further development in some key areas will be required, following initial testing, to move from the prototype to a live version that can be piloted more widely.

## Testing

There are three main elements of the SLIF digital tool to test.

- How does the SLIF digital tool work in practice: what works well and what can be improved?
- What needs to be in place to ensure the effective implementation and sustainability of the SLIF digital tool at scale?
- How could insights generated using the SLIF digital tool be used nationally, including to inform the work of the National Care Service Advisory Board?

## Further development

Some additional areas have been identified that it would be useful to develop pathways for. Further consideration can be given to these during the testing process and in planning for piloting and wider implementation.

## Development of new targeted pathways

Through the development phase, several areas of practice were identified that are encapsulated at a high level within the supporting people pathway, but could be captured in more detail in their own dedicated pathway. These include:

- Unpaid carers.
- Justice social work.
- Adult support and protection.
- Self-Directed Support.
- Transitions between children and adult services.

In addition early conversations have been undertaken to explore a Primary Care and Community Health Pathway pending the publication of the Primary Care and Community Health Route Map.

Each of these areas of work is underpinned by detailed legislation, guidance and quality improvement frameworks. Incorporating them through targeted pathways within the SLIF digital tool will ensure these areas of improvement work are connected and can be reported seamlessly across the partnership. This would be done in close collaboration with specific policy teams and stakeholders to develop these targeted pathways.

## **Streamlining**

Key stakeholders have engaged extensively throughout the development of the draft SLIF and in creating the Tool.

Organisations have identified opportunities to use the SLIF digital tool to improve their services and their reporting, both to the regulatory authorities and local commissioners. This presents an opportunity for streamlining, for example, by reducing the ways some providers report to commissioners in different areas and partnerships. This will also bring benefits to HSCPs, who will get better data and evidence about how the services they commission and procure improve outcomes for people, which is currently an identified gap in the data system.

In order to fully realise these opportunities, the next stage of testing will work with commissioners and regulatory authorities to explore whether their reporting requirements align with the information captured through the SLIF digital tool. This is a key question to explore further during the first phase of testing of the SLIF digital tool.

## **Implementing and sustaining the SLIF**

From evidence gathered to date, it seems reasonable to conclude that the SLIF has the potential to support the development of a more consistent approach to improvement work across the system.

Following the testing of the SLIF digital tool, supporting its wider roll out and sustainability will require:

- Supporting organisations to use the Tool and capturing learning from this process in order to develop further guidance and support.
- Co-ordinating with policy teams and scrutiny bodies to ensure the Tool is continually updated and to develop new pathways as required.
- Supporting the effective use of insights from the SLIF digital tool to drive improvement at local and national levels.

## Conclusions

A key driver for the development of the SLIF was the need to support a new approach to improving outcomes and addressing the implementation gap identified in the Independent Review of Adult Social Care.

The development of the SLIF digital tool represents an important step towards this aim, taking a collaborative and iterative process, the Tool has been co-designed to provide a structured yet flexible approach to self-evaluation and improvement, enabling services to focus on what matters to people and to track their contribution to outcomes in a meaningful way.

The SLIF digital tool offers opportunities to support improvement and learning through enabling the use of diverse forms of data and evidence using a digital platform. This will support the sharing of learning across organisational boundaries. It will aim to reduce duplication and streamline reporting through aligning with existing frameworks and guidance and support services to focus their efforts on agreed areas for improvement.

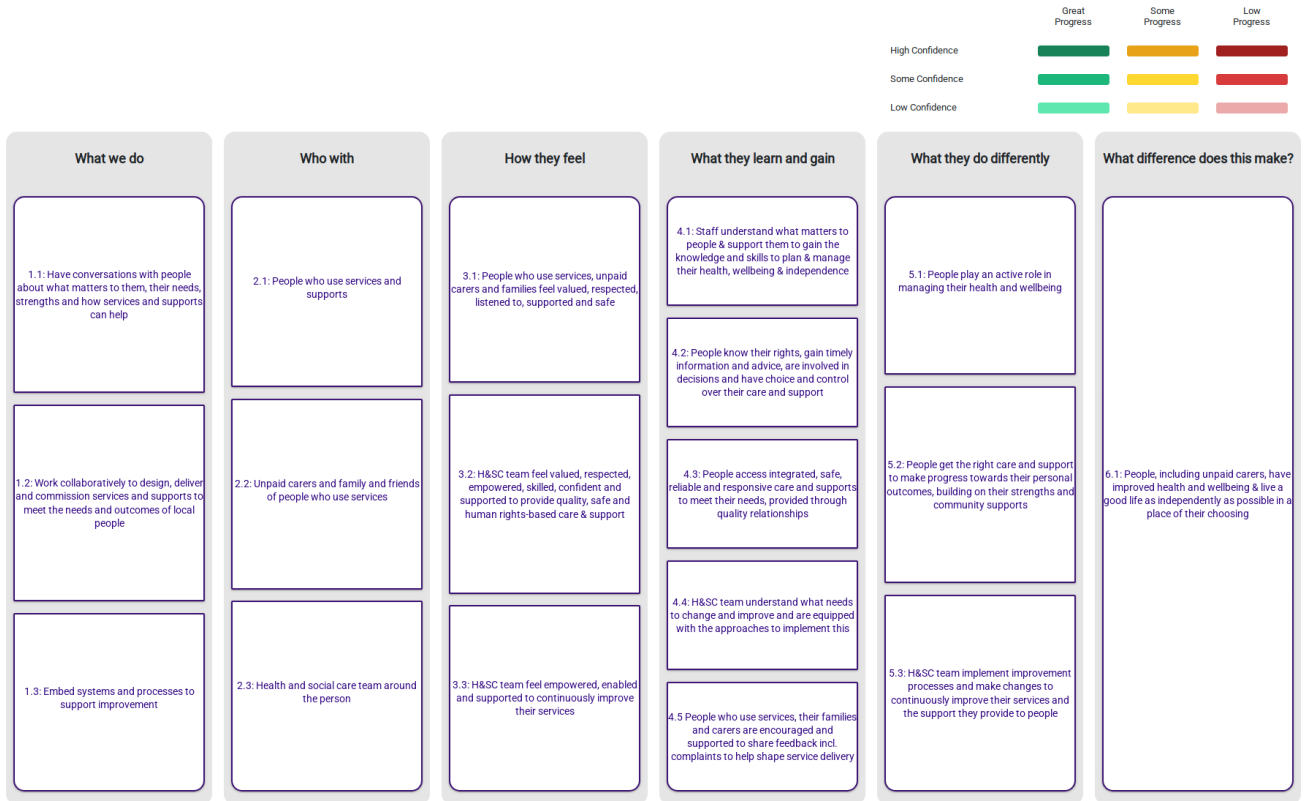
The next stage of development will be the testing phase, the focus of this will be on understanding how the SLIF digital tool works in practice, what benefits it brings, and how it can be refined to support wider implementation. Continued engagement with HSCPs, providers, policy teams and scrutiny bodies will be essential to ensure the Tool is usable, impactful and sustainable.

Due to the challenges of testing the SLIF across such a complex system, in the context of existing system pressures, it is proposed that initial testing is kept to a small scale to allow learning to be embedded before further extension.

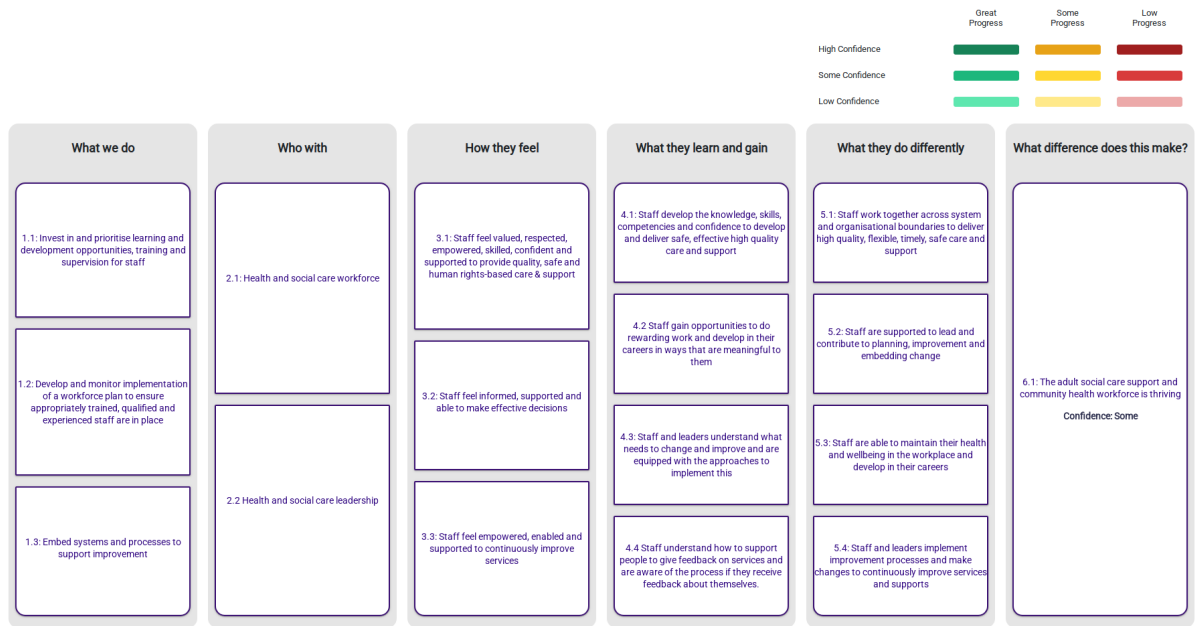
It is proposed that the findings from this initial testing would be used to inform plans for the next phase, which will pilot the SLIF with a wider range of areas.

# Annex A: SLIF digital tool Core Pathways

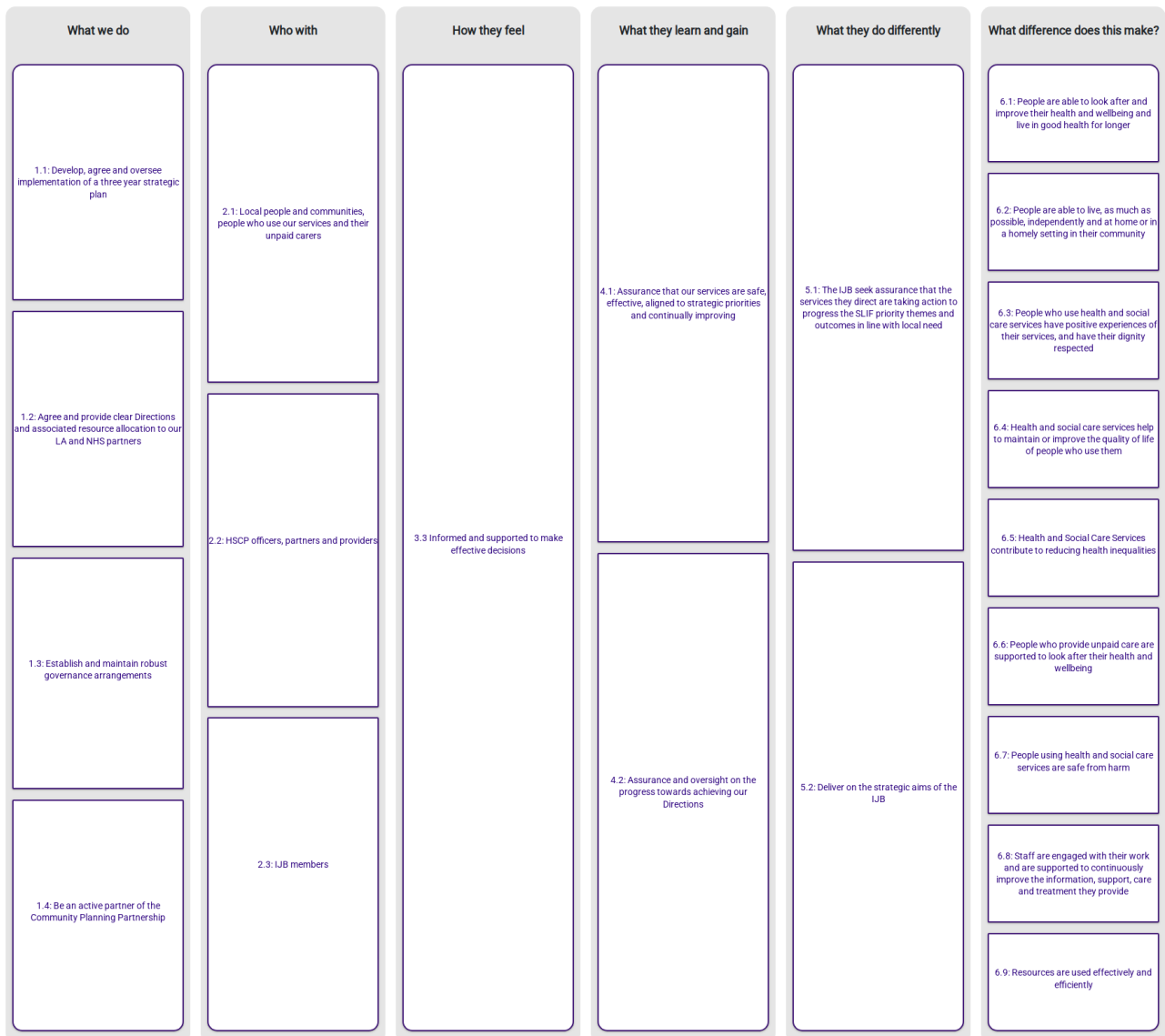
## Supporting people thematic pathway:



# Workforce development thematic pathway:



# IJB governance, quality and outcomes thematic pathway:



# Commissioning and procurement thematic pathway



What we do	Who with	How they feel	What they learn and gain	What they do differently	What difference does this make?
Review data and evidence, and engage with diverse stakeholders to design services and supports and develop a commissioning and procurement plan	Health and social care workforce and leadership	Stakeholders feel listened to, valued and that they can trust that the commissioning and procurement process is ethical	Robust commissioning and procurement plans that reflect local need, the strategic objectives of the integration authority and any implementation plans	There is a healthy social care market that is shaped by the needs, outcomes and choices of people and society	People, including unpaid carers, have improved health and wellbeing & live a good life as independently as possible in a place of their choosing
Implement and review commissioning and procurement plans to effectively address gaps and deliver improvements in services and support	Relevant local authority and health board corporate teams		Information about how contracts are progressing and opportunities to work together to maintain quality, improve outcomes and manage risks		
Ensure quality of services and support, outcomes for individuals and risks are managed effectively through robust contract management and monitoring	Statutory, third / voluntary / community sector and independent sector partners	Providers and their staff feel treated fairly, including being able to contribute to strategy and problem-solving	Understand how current practice fits with ethical commissioning principles and good practice standards and what they need to do to embed them	Provider organisations are sustainable, and treat the workforce well	The adult social care support and community health workforce is thriving
Review commissioning and procurement processes to ensure they are consistent with ethical principles and reflect statutory and good practice guidance	National policy teams, regulators and improvement agencies		Complaints about commissioning and procurement decisions are addressed transparently and fairly.	Planners, commissioners and procurement work together in ways that advance equalities and human rights and use the full flexibility of legislation	Resources are used as effectively and efficiently as possible towards the outcomes that matter to people
	Local people and communities, people who use our services and their unpaid carers				
	IJB and Strategic Planning Group				

# **Annex B: Membership of the Short Life Working Group (SLWG)**

SLIF Improvement, Scottish Government

Primary Care, Scottish Government

NCS Children and Young People, Scottish Government

ASC Advice and Guidance, Scottish Government

NCS Future Workforce, Scottish Government

Leading Improvement, Scottish Government

Children's Services Reform, Scottish Government

Social Work Scotland

NHS Lothian

University of Strathclyde

University of Dundee

CCPS

NES

Healthcare Improvement Scotland

Care Inspectorate

SSSC

Improvement Service

IRISS

East Ayrshire Council

ALLIANCE

# Annex C: PANEL analysis

The following section shows an analysis of the SLIF digital tool against the PANEL principles which underpin a Human Rights Based Approach. This includes:

- evidence to show how the process of developing and implementing the SLIF digital tool has applied PANEL.
- suggestions for ways in which the SLIF can continue to be developed to further support a rights-based approach.
- examples of SLIF stepping stone that support the PANEL principles.

## Principle: Participation

Everyone has the right to participate in decisions which affect their human rights.

Participation must be active, free, meaningful and give attention to issues of accessibility, including access to information in a form and a language which can be understood.

## Development of SLIF and Tool

The SLIF demonstrates strong engagement with stakeholders, including people with lived experience and seldom-heard groups.

Stepping stones and underpinning success criteria support mechanisms for ongoing participatory governance during implementation to ensure continued involvement of rights-holders.

## SLIF digital tool Stepping Stones

- People get the right care and support to make progress towards their personal outcomes, building on their strengths and community support.
- People play an active role in maintaining their health and wellbeing.
- People know what matters to them and gain the knowledge and skills and a plan to manage their health and wellbeing.
- People know their rights, gain timely information and advice, and are involved in decisions and have choice and control over their care and support.

People who use services, unpaid carers and families feel valued, respected, listened to, supported and safe.

People gain opportunities to participate in their community.

### **Principle: Accountability**

Accountability requires effective monitoring of human rights standards. For accountability to be effective there must be appropriate laws, policies, administrative procedures and mechanisms of redress in order to secure human rights.

### **Development of SLIF and Tool**

The framework proposes a shift from performance management to meaningful measurement, focusing on outcomes that matter to people.

We will seek to improve accountability through improvements in data collection and through testing and implementation of the framework.

Stepping stones and underpinning success criteria support reflection on local accountability structures and how service users can hold systems to account, including through feedback, advocacy, and transparent reporting.

### **SLIF digital tool Stepping Stones**

- People who use services, their families and carers are encouraged and supported to share feedback – including complaints – to help shape service delivery.
- Health and Social Care workforce are informed about how to support people giving feedback and how to support themselves if feedback is about them.

### **Principle Non-discrimination and Equality**

A human rights-based approach means that all forms of discrimination must be prohibited, prevented and eliminated. It also requires the prioritisation of those in the most vulnerable situations who face the biggest barriers to realising their rights.

### **Development of SLIF and Tool**

- SLIF is informed by multiple impact assessments and commits to equity-focused indicators.
- Stepping stones and underpinning success criteria support reflection on strategies to address structural inequalities and monitor progress, particularly for groups experiencing the poorest outcomes.
- Consider further how to ensure that people who face the most barriers to realising their rights are included in the SLIF.

## **SLIF digital tool Stepping Stones**

- People know their rights, gain timely information and advice, and are involved in decisions and have choice and control over their care and support.
- H&SC team feel valued, respected, empowered, skilled, confident and supported to provide quality, safe and human rights-based care & support.
- Planners, commissioners and procurement work together in ways that advance equalities and human rights and use the full flexibility of legislation.

## **Principle: Empowerment**

People should understand their rights and be fully supported to participate in the development of policy and practices which affect their lives. People should be able to claim their rights where necessary.

## **Development of SLIF and Tool**

The framework promotes autonomy, choice, and person-led practice, with outcomes supporting independent living and decision-making.

Stepping stones and underpinning success criteria support reflection on provisions for rights education and advocacy to further support empowerment.

## **SLIF digital tool Stepping Stones**

- People are enabled to live a good life as independently as possible in a place of their choosing.
- People are actively involved in their care decisions, or the care decisions of the people they care for.
- People know their rights, gain timely information and advice, and are involved in decisions and have choice and control over their care and support.
- People who use services, unpaid carers and families feel valued, respected, listened to, supported and safe.
- H&SC team feel valued, respected, empowered, skilled, confident and supported to provide quality, safe and human rights-based care & support.
- People get the right care and support to make progress towards their personal outcomes, building on their strengths and community support.
- People play an active role in managing their health and wellbeing.

## **Principle: Legality**

The full range of legally protected human rights must be respected, protected and fulfilled. A human rights-based approach requires the recognition of rights as legally enforceable entitlements, and is linked in to national and international human rights laws.

## **Development of SLIF and Tool**

SLIF is underpinned by current human rights legislation and references international treaties such as ICESCR, CEDAW, CERD, and CRPD. The SLIF will support the future Human Rights Bill, which is currently being developed.

The SLIF and its tool will continue to be reviewed and updated, to ensure that the framework's indicators align with key human rights indicators, so that improvement towards meeting human rights standards can be evidenced more clearly and easily.

## **SLIF digital tool Stepping Stones**

All SLIF outcomes support human rights standards.



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