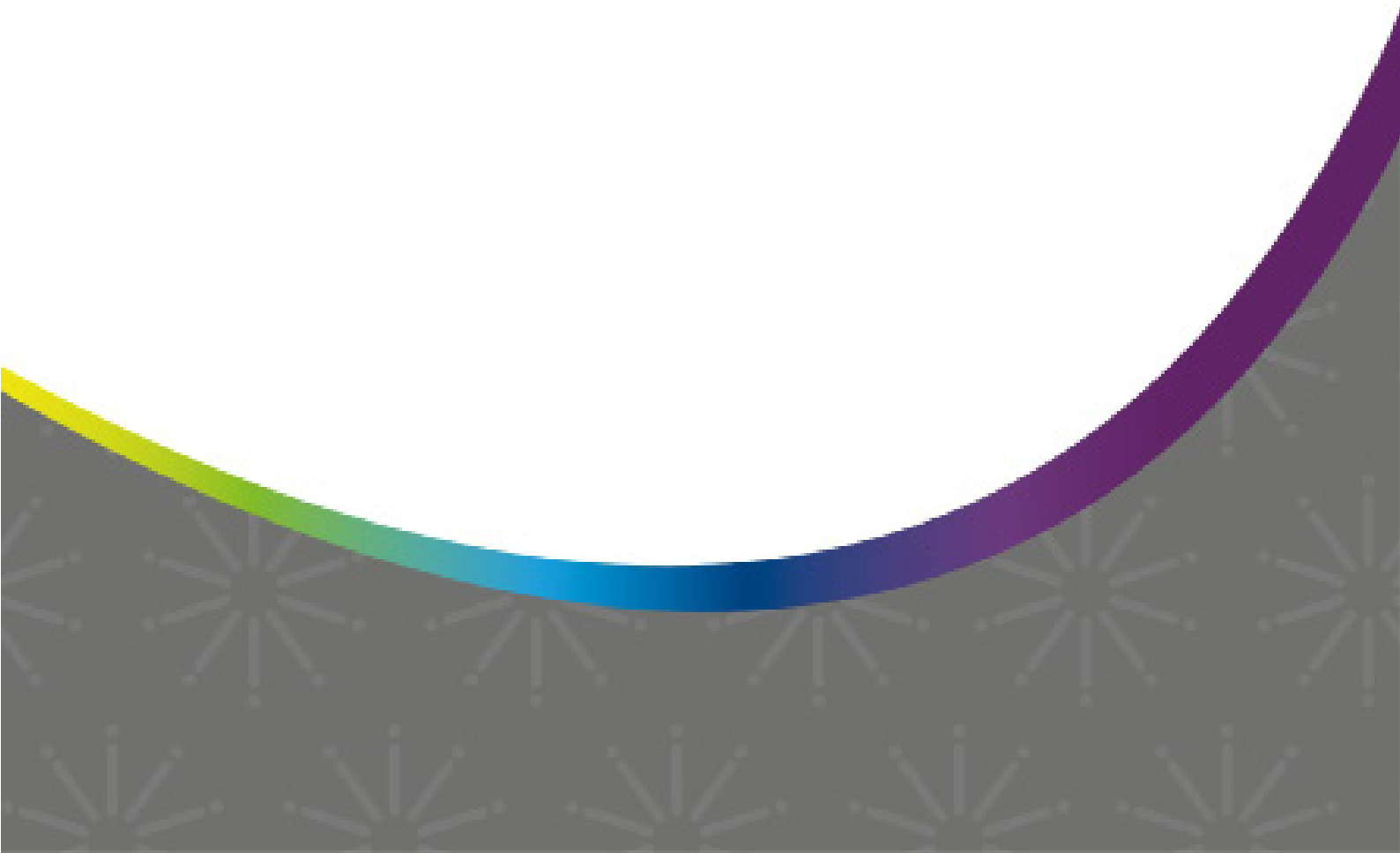


After Action Review Report

Rethinking Unscheduled Care Working Group

November 2022



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Foreword

This Rethinking Unscheduled Care Working Group first came together in Autumn of 2021, with the aim of bringing together systematic review, user research and service design principles to identify key opportunities and areas for redesign, improvement and/or system change in unscheduled health and care across Scotland. We successfully delivered our aim and you can read more about our findings [here](#).

As this was the first time we were coming together across organisations to work in this way, we had a secondary aim to capture key learning about “how” we did this work to inform discovery phases of future national improvement programmes. This report is a summary of our key insights and reflections on “how” we worked, generated through an after-action review.

Some of the key insights in this report include:

- The benefits and challenges of combining multiple approaches to discovery work and how our shared desire to produce high quality work and the flexibility of the team meant that the challenges were detected and redirected quickly.
- The need to invest more time up front on defining roles and responsibilities.
- The benefits and challenges of working in an agile manner and the need to better prepare and support individuals who are used to project activities and timelines being defined up front.
- The need for stronger planning at the start around practically how to ensure any insights from discovery work inform the focus of the actual redesign work.
- The importance of protecting the space to work in an agile way and embracing uncertainty across the team as the work developed

We would also like to highlight the strength of relationships that have developed across organisational boundaries throughout the course of this work. By bringing together change practitioners from multiple organisations, and by working in an agile way, we were able to produce a critical piece of work that included insights from people with experience of using unscheduled care services.

Finally, we would like to thank everyone who took part in the Rethinking Unscheduled Care Working Group, and especially to those who added their reflections as part of this after-action review. We look forward to coming together again in the future on new pieces of work.

Ruth Glassborow

Director of Improvement
Healthcare Improvement Scotland

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After action review process

Introduction

The Rethinking Unscheduled Care project aimed to understand what was needed to design a system for unscheduled care which would meet people's needs, align optimally with other services for each person, and be frictionless to access. The group consisted of representatives from Scottish Government, Healthcare Improvement Scotland, NHS24, Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Survey.

This multi-organisational and innovative approach to understanding and approaching a healthcare challenge is novel. As such, members of the team requested an after action review to consider learning from this programme, in order to inform similar future projects.

Method

An after action review is a facilitated discussion of an event that enables participants to reflect on what happened, why it happened and how to sustain strengths and improve weaknesses. An after action review process is completed in two phases:

1) Personal reflection - all participants are asked to complete a questionnaire to provide their personal reflections anonymously. The comments are compiled and categorised by themes and serve as a basis for the group discussion.

2) Group reflection - the group meets to discuss the comments collectively and agree a list of recommendations and any action plan required.

The [survey](#) was issued to the project team consisting of 20 members, who were advised that their responses were anonymous and that they would have two weeks to contribute their reflections.

The survey was divided into three key parts and group members were asked for feedback on: i) data and evidence, ii) report writing and iii) multidisciplinary working.

We received a total of ten responses which were collated together with information from a [Miro board](#) containing general feedback gathered during the project. The results of the survey were presented to the group during a virtual meeting on the 17th November 2022. See accompanying pdf to this report which contains a copy of the main results presentation.

The after action review meeting was attended by:

- Diana Hekerem
- Dayna Askew
- Joanne McPeake
- Dhruv Sharma
- Anna Milsom
- Iain Stewart
- Ruth Glassborow
- Sarah Harley
- Carol McCambley
- Cat Macaulay
- Eleanor Raymond
- Adna Dumitrescu

Adna Dumitrescu facilitated the session and presented the results of the after action review as summarised below.



After action review summary and actions

Working in an agile manner can be challenging. It can temporarily decrease clarity of roles, scope and aim, which may require further and iterative discussion.

This type of working is new especially for people who are used to working in very systematic ways.

We need to better prepare people to work in an uncertain space, and embrace change on the go.

There was a consensus that it was beneficial to bring people together and unlock their collective creative abilities.

There have been significant positive knock-on effects from this type of work. We need to strengthen these and become even more comfortable with this type of working in the future.

The work did produce critical insights which should be shared. The project group did not have time to set up a communications plan and to do more work around public dissemination.



A follow up direct action was agreed to create a version of the report in the public domain - this has now been actioned and can be viewed on the ihub website.

After action review discussion

Part 1: Reflections on evidence and data collection



What went well?

- Rigorous and solid research.
- Collaborative work across researchers based in different organisations.
- Triangulation of multiple data sources led to better insights.
- Culture of open conversations.
- Helped to surface the 'known knowns' and the 'unknown knowns' and allowed future conversations to be built on facts. Provided a solid and robust base.



What didn't go so well?

- Research objectives could have been more clear from the outset
- Research teams could have benefited from more dedicated meeting time.
- IT barriers made the sharing of documents and asynchronous working difficult.
- Competing pressures meant that people did not always have capacity to prepare well for meetings.
- More support was needed for content design to achieve a truly accessible piece of work.
- It would have been useful to have a longer time-frame so that we could involve more people with lived experience.



What would you do differently?

- Spend more time on clarifying roles and work responsibilities at the beginning.
- Bring in all users into the planning stages of the project. This might extend the timeline, but will result in less project time slippage overall.
- Ensure research teams collaborate from the very beginning and improve communication between these experts.
- Consider doing this type of intensive work only when you also have mechanisms in place to move actionable insights into tests of change.



Discussion round insights and actions:

- The problems that surfaced for this part of the work were not in fact major barriers, considering the expansive collaborative work that happened across this group.
- This project was in fact a prototype of collaborative working, and less about leading a programme with clear deliverables. Its aim was to create a space for action by leaning in, as the team were trying to move away from the usual project structure.
- In the future we need to ensure that all people have clear expectations related to this style of working and the scope of the project. This is especially important when trialling new project design formats, such as this one, which had an evolving and emergent nature. In this case it was difficult to be prescriptive about roles and scope from the beginning. In this instance, it could have been useful for people to be more vocal and consistent in terms of asking people to embrace uncertainty.

Part 2: Reflections on the report write-up



What went well?

- Good use of visuals, the report has a professional standard.
- Restricting editorial control to only a few people.
- High level of engagement and commitment across the group to get this done as a high quality product.



What didn't go so well?

- Did not achieve real time collaboration on the document.
- IT systems were not suitable for this type of cross-organisational report writing.
- Feedback: steep deadlines meant not everyone got to input their opinion.
- Not possible to commit extra time outside weekly huddles for the report, which meant that deadlines got extended.



What would you do differently?

- Use appropriate software for collaborative document editing.
- Have one person taking the lead on writing the report.
- Establish how the final outputs of the project should look like at the beginning.
- Be thoughtful of who your audience is and where the report will land.



Discussion round insights and actions:

- The difficulties of this part of the project were mostly due to being engaged in highly explorative work. It was not possible to be more prescriptive about the format of the report at an earlier stage. Likewise the target audience, shifted throughout, as the project scope and aim shifted.
- In the future, it would be great to embrace uncertainty, but also to document the processes and all the iterative stages of the project. This would allow the full team to embrace and celebrate the changes in the project as they happen.
- Key to realise that for the research side it is important to consider all types of learning and knowledge that has been accumulated, especially if these findings will not necessarily make their way into an official report.
- Since this project was more about testing capacity for working together across different national organisations, as a second step some of those logistical barriers such as data-sharing agreements and technology issues can be ironed out during a second project much more easily.

Part 3: Reflections on working across multiple sectors



What went well?

- Ambitious group, dedicated to enacting positive change. Motivational!
- There was a lot of will to share resources across organisations.
- People were able to have honest strategic discussions, and valued the opportunity to have conversations that were not being held elsewhere.
- Valuable to get direct input from different perspectives, got insights that were not available elsewhere.
- Looking at the same topic from different lenses fostered a respectful approach to discussion.
- It was key to have senior representation from each organisation as this allowed faster progress.



What didn't go so well?

- Lack of capacity to work on the project between meetings.
- Coordination and logistical issues in terms of technology use and finding time for people to come together.
- Needed more time in the planning phase to reach clarity about how everyone would input into the project.
- It was difficult for everyone to contribute equally to discussions, some voices were more vocal than others.



What would you do differently?

- Multi-organisational working leads to a multi-complex environment, so better planning is needed.
- Clarify everyone's role and scope for contributions early on in the process.
- Establish a back-up process that will advance work when some participants need to scale down their contributions due to competing organisational priorities.
- Have sufficient resources to establish a dedicated project team which can support the work.



Discussion round insights and actions:

- Important to stress that anticipatory planning for this type of project is difficult. Instead, future work should have more planning in motion, and switch meetings when needed towards planning discussions
- The project pivoted towards different approaches several times, as there were different operational groups. When things did not work well, it was not for extended periods of time. The team had the flexibility to reflect and change because there was a shared desire to deliver a piece of high quality work.
- Expect people to need time to become comfortable with different vocabularies. For example, in terms of research and methodology, the meaning of 'person-centred' can be slightly different in qualitative research compared with user-research. It is important to build in time to tease out meaning and definitions.