

Evaluation of the National Suicide Prevention
Leadership Group (NSPLG)

Lived Experience Panel

SAMARITANS



National
Suicide Prevention
Leadership Group



The **Lines**
Between

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
1. Introduction	7
2. The impact of Covid-19 on the LEP	11
3. The Impact of the LEP	13
4. Experiences with the LEP and learning on roles and processes.....	15
5. Strengths and challenges	29
6. Future of the panel	32
7. Conclusions and future considerations	42
8. Appendix 1 – Meaningful Participation of People with Lived Experience in Suicide Prevention - The Scottish Experience (2018-2020)	47
9. Appendix 2 – LEP steering group terms of reference.....	49
10. Appendix 3 – Supplementary stakeholder quotes	52

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- i. Every Life Matters¹, the Scottish Government's (SG) Suicide Prevention Action Plan (2018), envisioned a "Scotland where suicide is preventable; where help and support are available to anyone contemplating suicide and to those who have lost a loved one to suicide". The plan, which aimed to achieve a 20% reduction in the rate of deaths by suicide in Scotland by 2022, set out a wide range of actions aligned to the vision.
- 1.1. Action 1 in the plan expressed a commitment by SG to establish a National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group (NSPLG). This group was to have overall responsibility for the implementation and delivery of the action plan. The NSPLG determined that its work should be informed in equal weight by lived experience and academic research and proposed to Scottish Government that a National Suicide Prevention Lived Experience Panel should be established, alongside an Academic Advisory Group.
- ii. SAMH, working with partners, was funded by SG to form, manage and host a National Suicide Prevention Lived Experience Panel (LEP) to inform and support delivery of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan.
- iii. The three-year funding period for the LEP is now ending, however on 29th September 2022 the Scottish Government launched Creating Hope Together², their new Suicide Prevention Strategy; to build on the work of the NSPLG, and to continue to deliver the existing Every Life Matters Action Plan. The new strategy also sets out and confirms the Scottish Government's ongoing commitment to supporting the continuation of the LEP.
- iv. This presents a timely opportunity for reflection, to assess impact and learn from the process of establishing and managing a lived experience panel. Therefore, SAMH commissioned The Lines Between, a social research agency, to conduct an independent evaluation. The evaluation was tasked with capturing the learning generated through the development and operation of the LEP, exploring the experiences of panel members, and understanding the influence and impact the panel had on delivery of the action plan.

The impact of Covid-19

- v. The Covid-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions, impacted on the plans, management and activity of the LEP. Restrictions meant that face-to-face meetings could not take place. Therefore, most LEP meetings and engagement work with LEP members took place over Zoom, which made facilitation of meetings more challenging and required different approaches to safeguarding and support.
- vi. However, this was also perceived to have made it easier for all panel members to be involved as they were located in different parts of the country. Furthermore, those who engaged and worked with LEP members to support delivery of the action plan and other suicide prevention activities felt that online meetings made it easier to do this.
- vii. The LEP's plans to run a series of local events, and carry out local engagement and involvement activity across Scotland, was also hampered by Covid-19 restrictions.

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-suicide-prevention-action-plan-life-matters/>

² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/creating-hope-together-scotlands-suicide-prevention-strategy-2022-2032/>

Impact generated by the LEP

- viii. The LEP was reported to have generated impact in the following areas:
- **Raising the profile of the lived experience voice** – the work of the LEP is perceived to have showcased the unique and valuable contribution that lived experience can make. It has ensured the voice of lived experience has been heard and taken seriously by decision makers and has informed and influenced policy and services. It has also stimulated interest among other policy areas, services and organisations
 - **Contribution to delivery of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan** – the LEP are seen to have played an integral role in informing and supporting the delivery of the action plan. Stakeholders provided several examples of the unique contribution that they made, and how their involvement helped to shape and influence delivery of each of the actions, and in doing so, engendered a confidence in the direction of the work.
 - **Benefits for individual LEP members** – Participation in the LEP also generated positive impact for individual members. This included therapeutic benefits through peer support and the knowledge that they were doing something practical to support suicide prevention. Increased confidence was also a feature for some members, while others reported feeling more comfortable talking about suicide and better equipped to support other people.

Experiences and learning

- ix. The process for recruiting panel members was reported to be robust, though very time and resource intensive. This included following up with all unsuccessful applicants to explore other ways of involving them in suicide prevention activity and their support needs. Some stakeholders felt the panel could have been more diverse in its membership. However, the core criteria was met and there was acknowledgement that there are limits to the extent of diversity that can be achieved when forming a panel of 12-14 people.
- x. The training provided for panel members was well received and helped them feel equipped for their role. Examples spanned how to talk to people about bereavement by suicide, ASIST Training, Mental Health First Aid and Trauma Training. Through their experience on the LEP, members also identified other areas for relevant development opportunities to further enhance their ability to effectively carry out their role.
- xi. Exploration of safeguarding and boundaries was initiated as part of the induction process and this led to the production of a volunteer handbook. The approach to safeguarding and boundaries continued to evolve and develop over time in response to the learning being generated. The LEP co-ordinator was described as well-liked, respected, responsive, and as providing support essential to the functioning of the panel. However, it was suggested that the co-ordination and safeguarding/support responsibilities be split across different roles in the future.
- xii. Panel members explained that they controlled the extent of their involvement, guided by their form of lived experience, interests and skillsets, availability, and their comfort levels.
- xiii. As well as taking part in regular panel meetings to offer a lived experience perspective on various Action Plan developments, members were involved in smaller sub-group

meetings to contribute to specific actions. There were also a small number of additional suicide prevention activities involving panel members. The breadth of opportunities for involvement was appreciated by panel members, as it gave them scope to shape their involvement in line with their interests and priorities.

- xiv. For stakeholders leading the delivery of actions and working with LEP members, there was a formal process to be followed to engage with the LEP. The co-ordinator was described as central to fielding engagement requests and facilitating this work. Reflective of the new way of working that engagement with the lived experience panel brought for stakeholders, involvement activity was not as effective or collaborative in the earlier stages as it could have been. However, this developed and improved over time and panel members felt listened to and their contributions valued within a model that reflected co-production.
- xv. Likewise, amongst delivery leads, positive experiences of working with the panel were noted. Stakeholders also described differences in their levels of confidence and experience of working with lived experience panels, and it was suggested that a process for safeguarding and supporting those accessing the panel was also put in place.

The future of the panel

- xvi. There is strong support for the continuation of the panel amongst stakeholders and panel members. Stakeholders reported that the panel had added a robustness to the delivery of the action plan, contributing input and ideas that positively influenced the design and direction of the work and, in some cases, helped things to progress faster than they otherwise would have.
- xvii. Drawing on the experience and learning generated through the development and operation of the LEP, the following should be given consideration:
- **Panel membership** – Recruit a new panel to introduce fresh perspectives and experiences. Consideration should be given to increasing the panel size slightly which would enable a better breadth of representation and diversity. Should existing panel members be interested, we suggest maintaining their involvement for a period of time to support recruitment, induction and the transfer of knowledge and experience.
 - **Recruitment of new members** – While the recruitment process was acknowledged as time and resource intensive a robust process is still required. Existing panel members could remain engaged to support the transition and contribute to the recruitment process.
 - **Induction and training** – Drawing on the experience and learning of panel members, take a co-production approach to further develop the current induction process and initial training for new LEP members. Furthermore, a process for identifying ongoing training needs of panel members should be introduced.
 - **Time on panel and managing exit** – To ensure that new experiences, ideas and perspectives are brought into the panel over time, a maximum term for participation should be set. Aligned to this, the existing exit process should be reviewed and developed to encompass any learnings from the process of supporting the exit of existing panel members.

- **Unsuccessful applicants** – Unsuccessful applicants to the panel can still play a valuable role in suicide prevention. The current approach of exploring the different involvement options and preferences of unsuccessful applicants should continue, while ensuring that appropriate safeguarding and support will be in place for them.
- **Embedding lived experience in every action** – The involvement of lived experience should be seen in every action and included at the earliest opportunity. This should be underpinned by clear involvement plans which are shared with and shaped by the panel. Consideration should be given to a role within the delivery structure that is focussed on lived experience and ensuring it is being considered throughout.
- **Action sub-groups** – Identifying those actions that will benefit from broader whole panel input and those where lived experience involvement would be more effective through smaller dedicated sub-groups. This should be informed by the involvement plans suggested above and be considerate of members' interests and preferences.
- **Paying panel members** – While it comes with challenges, financially compensating members for their involvement should be considered.
- **Co-ordinator role** – We recommend that the co-ordination role is separate from the role of overseeing and providing the necessary safeguarding and support for panel members.
- **Expanding the breadth of lived experience involvement** – Existing local groups, organisations and infrastructure that can support wider engagement with specific demographics or specific types of lived experience should be identified and engaged with. Ensuring the required support structures are in place will be essential to support any engagement activity.

1. Introduction

Background to the National Suicide Prevention Lived Experience Panel (LEP)

- 1.2. Suicide is a leading cause of death among young people, and men are three times more likely to take their own lives compared to women³. In 2021, 753 probable suicides were registered in Scotland⁴, compared with 805 in 2021 and 833 in 2019⁵.
- 1.3. Every Life Matters⁶, the Scottish Government's (SG) Suicide Prevention Action Plan (2018), envisioned a "Scotland where suicide is preventable; where help and support are available to anyone contemplating suicide and to those who have lost a loved one to suicide". It was developed in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders including people who had been directly affected by suicide.
- 1.4. The Plan, which had a target to reduce Scotland's rate of deaths by suicide by 20% by 2022, set out a wide range of Actions, including⁷:
 - Campaigns to reduce stigma and promote suicide awareness (with a focus on reaching groups with a higher risk of suicide),
 - Improving suicide prevention skills of the workforce;
 - Ensuring effective, compassionate support to anyone in crisis,
 - Supporting local suicide prevention planning and
 - Designing and testing new services for people in suicidal crisis and following a bereavement.
- 1.5. Action 1 expressed a commitment by SG to establish a National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group (NSPLG) by September 2018, reporting to Scottish Ministers. This group was to have responsibility for delivering on a programme of activity and driving the implementation of the Plan's actions. It was to include representation from services and stakeholders, including people with direct experience of suicide through bereavement or those who have experienced suicidal thoughts or attempted suicide.
- 1.6. The NSPLG determined that its work should be informed in equal weight by lived experience and academic research and proposed to Scottish Government that a National Suicide Prevention Lived Experience Panel should be established, alongside an Academic Advisory Group.
- 1.7. As a lead partner supporting the Scottish Government to achieve its aims, SAMH was funded by the SG to form, manage and host a National Suicide Prevention Lived Experience Panel (LEP), working with partners Support in Mind Scotland, Samaritans Scotland, and Penumbra. A core group of 12-14 lived experience representatives was envisaged for the NSPLG to call upon to inform their work to deliver the Suicide Prevention Action Plan.

³ <https://unitedtopreventsuicide.org.uk/>

⁴ <https://publichealthscotland.scot/publications/suicide-statistics-for-scotland/suicide-statistics-for-scotland-update-of-trends-for-the-year-2021/#:~:text=Main%20points,decrease%20from%20805%20in%202020.>

⁵ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/vital-events/deaths/suicides>

⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-suicide-prevention-action-plan-life-matters/>

⁷

- 1.8. The intention was that the Lived Experience Panel would include:
- Those who have previously attempted suicide or experienced suicidal thoughts/ideas.
 - Those who have lost a loved one to suicide.
 - Family/loved ones who support someone who experiences suicidal thoughts/ideas.
 - People from at risk groups.
 - People from a variety of geographical areas.
- 1.9. In response to learning gained during the early operation of the panel, the NSPLG created a LEP steering group which formed in April 2020. The steering group was established to provide additional support to the panel co-ordinator, and panel members, in areas such as prioritising requests from stakeholders who wanted to engage with, and involve the panel in their work.
- 1.10. The implementation and operation of the LEP began just as the Covid-19 pandemic was emerging, and delivery took place during the period Covid-19 restrictions. This had a significant influence and impact on the operation of the LEP.
- 1.11. The three-year funding period for the LEP is now ending, and on the 29th September 2022 the Scottish Government launched Creating Hope Together⁸, their new Suicide Prevention Strategy to build on the work of the NSPLG and to continue to deliver the existing Every Life Matters Action Plan. The new strategy also sets out and confirms the Scottish Government's ongoing commitment to supporting the continuation of the LEP.
- 1.12. Four key outcomes are outlined in the new strategy⁹: (1) Scotland's environments promote conditions protective against suicide risk; (2) Scotland's communities understand suicide, risk factors and prevention; (3) Quality, timely, and compassionate support is accessible to everyone affected by suicide; and (4) Scotland's suicide prevention approach is well planned and collaborative, working with local, national, and sectorial stakeholders - and drawing on lived experience insight.
- 1.13. As well as continuing the key actions outlined under Every Life Matters, the new supporting Action Plan will encompass some other areas.
- 1.14. This presents a timely opportunity for reflection, to assess impact and learn from the process of establishing and managing a lived experience panel.

Evaluation Aims

- 1.15. In July 2022, SAMH commissioned The Lines Between, a social research agency, to conduct an evaluation that would help them to understand the experiences of panel members and to capture the impact of the LEP on the work of the NSPLG. The aims of the evaluation were to:

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/creating-hope-together-scotlands-suicide-prevention-strategy-2022-2032/>

⁹ Ibid

1. Capture the learning on how to develop, support and manage a panel, for SAMH as host organisation of the LEP, and partners to use or share with others who may wish to recruit or work with LEPs.
2. Evaluate the work of the NSPLG National Suicide Prevention Lived Experience Panel by exploring:
 - i. panel members' experiences
 - ii. experiences of those who have engaged with the panel - NSPLG members, delivery leads¹⁰ and others
 - iii. experiences of those who have played a role in coordinating and managing the arrangement
 - iv. review governance and assets created for the panel
 - v. impact of the work of the panel.

Methodology

- 1.16.** This section sets out the evaluation activity that has informed the findings presented in this report. The evaluation methodology comprised:
- A discovery session with members of the lived experience panel to inform the development of the evaluation approach and tools
 - Development of the key tools and information sheets
 - Working with the LEP co-ordinator to identify panel members and stakeholders to involve in the evaluation
 - 1:1 interviews with:
 - 8 lived experience panel members
 - 13 stakeholders. This includes delivery leads, senior SAMH staff leading the management and development of the panel, the programme manager, steering group members and members of the NSPLG.
- 1.17.** All interviews were recorded with the interviewee's consent and transcribed in full. Underpinned by a codification framework, the data was thematically analysed to inform the findings in this report. We have not attributed findings to any individuals or stakeholder groups to maintain confidentiality. Some quotes have been lightly edited for readability and to reduce any risk of the interviewee being identifiable.

Report structure

- 1.18.** The rest of this report is structured as follows:
- Chapter Two provides insight into the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had, and how it influenced the operation of the LEP
 - Chapter Three details the impact generated by the LEP

¹⁰ Each action in the Scottish Suicide Prevention Action Plan has a nominated lead who has overall responsibility for delivery of that action

- Chapter Four outlines experiences of setting up, sitting on, or working with the NSPLG lived experience panel.
- Chapter Five provides an analysis of LEP's key strengths and the main challenges experienced.
- Chapter Six covers views on the future of the panel, including whether or not it should continue and suggested future changes and improvements.
- Conclusions and future considerations are presented in Chapter Seven.
- Appendix 1 provides the 'Meaningful participation of People with Lived Experience in Suicide Prevention – The Scottish Experience (2018-2020)' paper
- Appendix 2 details the Terms of Reference for the LEP Steering Group
- Appendix 3 provides additional stakeholder quotes aligned to findings in the report

2. The impact of Covid-19 on the LEP

- 2.1. The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic and the introduction of the associated restrictions happened shortly after the initial panel member recruitment phase which took place during November and December 2019. This had a significant impact on the original plans and operation of the LEP, and stakeholders shared their reflections on this. The consensus was that, while there were disadvantages and challenges caused by Covid-19, the pandemic also had some benefits for the panel.

Disadvantages and challenges caused by Covid-19

- 2.2. Interviewees identified the following challenges as a result of the pandemic.
- 2.3. **Fewer in-person meetings:** The panel met once in person before the pandemic but meetings have been online since then. A few interviewees acknowledged that this meant it took longer for the group to build relationships and trust among each other than it might otherwise have done had they been able to meet in person more.
- 2.4. **Difficulties in facilitating and managing Zoom meetings,** including ensuring that everyone has a chance to have their say and dealing with any technical difficulties. There was also a feeling among some interviewees that it could be more difficult to support anyone who was distressed by any of the discussion on a Zoom call, but it was acknowledged that the co-ordinator addressed this by remaining on the call after the meeting to chat with panel members if necessary.

“It did take a wee bit longer for us to bond... It would have taken us a bit longer than if we were always meeting in person.” [Panel member]

“There's 14 or 15 people on the panel, when you're trying to have a Zoom call, with that many people with quite strong characters, quite strong opinions, trying to fit everything in a short space of time was quite difficult sometimes, I think you didn't always get enough, or you didn't always get to put enough into it.” [Panel member]

- 2.5. **Lack of opportunities to engage with other people with lived experience:** One of the intended activities for the LEP was to arrange a series of events across Scotland to engage with other people with experience of suicide. These did not take place because of Covid-19.

“It impacted practically on how the group was going to function... The idea was they would meet up regularly face to face, and they would be doing different events and different things and that didn't happen.” [Stakeholder]

- 2.6. **Delayed progress:** A few interviewees felt that the panel did not make as much progress as it might were it not for the pandemic because many people in the Scottish Government and NHS were re-deployed from their normal roles to deal with Covid-19, leading to delays with suicide prevention initiatives.

“This action has been stalled a little bit because a lot of the folk doing this work are working on Covid-19 now have literally been moved to a different area of work.” [Stakeholder]

Benefits stemming from the pandemic

- 2.7. Despite the challenges posed by Covid-19, the pandemic also had some benefits for the panel.
- 2.8. Interviewees acknowledged that online meetings made it easier to bring together a group of people widely dispersed in different areas across Scotland. One also noted that it made it easier for members who work full-time to fit the meetings into their schedules.



“Some of (the panel members) are way up in the Highlands and Islands, other end of the country. So being online, we were actually able to meet quite consistently and regularly and because it is in the evenings as well, it was really accessible for everybody who worked full time.” [Panel member]

- 2.9. Another advantage was it made it easier for Delivery Leads to access and engage with the panel.



“I think in many ways, it's probably been easier for people to turn up for an hour or half an hour so that they can come in and present it to the LEP rather than having to make an effort to travel halfway across Scotland to do it, and probably as a result of that, they've seen more of the LEP than they would have done if it had been a face to face model.” [Panel member]

3. The Impact of the LEP

- 3.1. The LEP aimed to ensure the voice of those with lived experience of suicide is heard and taken seriously by decision makers, as well as working with the NSPLG to support the delivery of the ten actions outlined in the Scottish Suicide Prevention Action Plan.
- 3.2. While some interviewees felt it was too early to identify the full impact of the LEP, in general, evaluation participants reported that the LEP has had a positive impact to date. Examples given fell into three categories:
- Raising the profile of the lived experience voice, and the unique and valuable contribution it makes
 - Supporting and contributing to the delivery of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan
 - Benefits for individual panel members

Raising the profile of the lived experience voice

- The voice of lived experience being heard and taken seriously by decision makers.
- Providing unique and valuable insights that inform and influence policy and services.
- Stimulated interest in other policy areas.
- Highlighted the value of involving people with lived experience, and a desire to learn about how this can be done successfully.

It's been a game changer. I think it's absolutely changed how people think about how they work to develop suicide prevention services, how we understand suicide. I think it's become a central feature, not just in development of policy, or even co design and services. But it's become a central feature of how we understand suicide, and how we change the culture around suicide and our panel members, sharing their stories, their experiences, their professional knowledge. I think it's helped to shift the whole landscape.

[Stakeholder]

It's given other people in other fields something to start with. It's given a template which other people can look at and say, well, first of all, this is possible. Secondly, it looks as if it adds a lot of value... And thirdly, could we maybe take this and adjust it to whatever field we're working in... So I think they should feel really proud that that influence is spreading not just in the world of suicide prevention, but beyond that.

[Stakeholder]

Supporting the delivery of the Scottish Suicide Prevention Action Plan

- Providing the voice of lived experience in mental health and suicide prevention training for organisations such as NHS Scotland and Police Scotland (action 2).
- Providing advice on the branding and key messages of the United to Prevent Suicide campaign (action 3). Some panel members also contributed to powerful online stories created for this campaign.
- Assessing bids received from organisations interested in delivering the pilot suicide bereavement support service (action 4).
- Providing advice for the design of services supporting people in crisis (action 5). The focus on 'time, space and compassion' was based on discussions with the LEP.
- Assisting with the creation of a Youth Advisory Group (action 8).

One of the biggest messages is that most of the actions would have been delivered completely differently (without the LEP). We've heard great feedback from delivery leads, great reflections and admissions we were away down the wrong road there.

[Stakeholder]

They have been absolutely integral in delivering the suicide prevention action plan, not just for the action three area work, but across all the ten actions, I think I can see that without a doubt.

[Stakeholder]

Positive impact on individual panel members

- Therapeutic benefit from peer support and knowing they are making a positive difference in suicide prevention.
- Become more comfortable discussing suicide.
- Feeling better able to support other people affected by suicide.
- Increased confidence.

There's something quite unique about being in a group who all have similar experiences. So there's a supportive aspect to that. But it's not just about support, obviously, it's about doing something.

[Panel Member]

I think there's some people that have really blossomed throughout the process that were probably struggling to talk about things and have really blossomed.

[Panel Member]

I think it was very various sessions we had, where given a little bit of training in terms of how to talk about these things. And I think over the last kind of 18 months, on more than one occasion, I've been able to talk to somebody fairly openly about their own suicidal feelings in a way that I probably wouldn't have been able to do before. As a result of this, I'm probably better trained to listen and to not be scared to talk about it, and people that may be feeling suicidal.

On the basis of being able to talk about these things, it's been a useful way of broaching the subject, with people at work, with people that may be struggling, as well as the fact that probably less so they knew that I was bereaved by suicide, but more so by the fact that I was doing this work, and I retweet various things.

- 3.3. Linked to raising the profile of lived experience involvement, LEP members working with the Academic Advisory Group produced a document titled 'Meaningful Participation of People with Lived Experience in Suicide Prevention - The Scottish Experience (2018-2020). This drew on the learning learning from the work done to establish the LEP, and from how its members have worked with Scotland's NSPLG to influence and co-produce suicide prevention action in Scotland. This document, included as appendix 1, sets out the success factors and underpinning principles for safe and effective involvement of people with lived experience.
- 3.4. This received recognition as a model of best practice from the World Health Organisation and was included in their 'Live Life - An implementation Guide for Suicide Prevention in Countries'¹¹ which sets out their approach to suicide prevention. This has been seen as a key achievement and acknowledgement of the LEP's success amongst stakeholders and panel members.



"The fact that it's been referenced by the WHO as a successful model, and how other people are looking to roll it out.....I think we all feel it's been a very positive thing. And hopefully, people have learned enough that whether it's in suicide prevention or whether it's in any other areas where lived experience would be beneficial." [Panel Member]

¹¹ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240026629>

4. Experiences with the LEP and learning on roles and processes.

- 4.1. This chapter outlines experiences of setting up, sitting on, or working with the LEP. Ideas about what worked well, as well as challenges and areas for improvement, are discussed throughout.

Aspirations

- 4.2. Panel members described a variety of motivations for applying to sit on the LEP. These included the wish to: prevent suicide; increase and improve support systems; bring their learning to bear; honour the memory of their loved one; “turn a bad situation good”; meet others with similar experiences; and to learn and develop.



“There was a sense of not letting his death be totally in vain, in that there was some good that could come out of it in terms of preventing others...almost like a mental health organ donor...you're not actually giving an organ, but there's something that can come out of this.” [Panel Member]

- 4.3. A common reason for stakeholders’ engagement with the panel was to enable the lived experience perspective to shape their suicide prevention work. Examples given fell into three categories: suicide prevention activity, activity that contributed to delivery of the SPAP, and reducing stigma and promoting positive messaging around recovery. One stakeholder highlighted that, in addition to influencing the Action Plans, there was an aspiration to draw on the Panel’s expertise to help reduce stigma.



“They have a very strong understanding of... things like stigma, self-blaming that people can often go through who have experienced folk who have taken their lives by suicide...yes, we want them to shape the Action Plan, and the services, but also we want them to have an impact on culture change..with a view to reduce the stigma, and encouraging folk to talk.” [Stakeholder]

- 4.4. A small number of LEP members noted examples of where their aspirations for the panel had been met. One example related to reducing stigma around suicide where the panel member received feedback from a member of the public that hearing the LEP bereavement stories had prompted conversations with family members about suicide prevention.



“I enjoyed most..where it did feel like we're making a difference..I was particularly pleased with the work that we've been able to do on suicide support, because.. I knew that was so lacking. And, obviously, there's a huge risk of further suicide as a result of having been exposed to suicide. So both in terms of support, but also suicide prevention, it's very important action...that was good, the ability to talk more openly about the subject.” [Panel Member]

Application and recruitment process

- 4.5. Panel members held mixed views about the application and recruitment process. The length of, and detail required in, the application form was noted; a few felt this was important to signify the level of commitment that membership required. The interview

itself was described by some as quite quick, robust, and relaxed - with the interviewers being empathic and providing prompt feedback.

- 4.6. Some stakeholders highlighted the diversity of the panel members recruited, in terms of both lived and professional experience, as a strength of the panel.



“It was just really nice and human. And not intimidating at all.” [Panel Member]

- 4.7. However, some challenges were identified, including: notification of the outcome for applicants had to wait until two separate rounds of recruitment interviews had been completed; interviewees did not know what to expect at interview; and a lack of robustness and transparency. For example, one stakeholder raised capacity and resourcing constraints as a barrier to advertising panel positions widely enough during a later round of recruitment. While this approach seemed to contrast with the first round of recruitment, which involved national advertising and awareness raising, it was a deliberate change in approach. The rationale for this was to take a more targeted approach to achieve a better gender balance amongst panel members, though the questioning and scoring matrix used was the same as in the initial round of recruitment.



“I think I hadn't realised till that point, quite what I was turning up to, I thought I was just going along for a casual chat... And then realised it would be this sort of selection process.” [Panel Member]

- 4.8. Panel members requested more information in advance of the interview, external HR involvement in this, and formal training for the interviewers - to increase robustness. One stakeholder suggested including a group session as part of the interview process and including current LEP members in future recruitment, which was felt to have been ‘indispensable’ to the second wave of recruitment.

- 4.9. The need to consider an applicant’s point in their recovery journey, if they felt strong enough to participate in the panel, and ensuring involvement would not negatively impact their wellbeing, was emphasised by a few panel members and stakeholders. Some felt the recruitment process had been rigorous enough in their consideration of this; however others suggested that not enough account had been taken of this or questioned the readiness of some panel members.



“It's really important that you get.. people who are ready to do this.. the right stage of either their bereavement or their own experiences.. I think that's not just a time thing...(the recruitment panel) don't want you to get involved until at least two years has passed..for some people, two years might not be enough...I think that process was good and was robust. ”
[Panel Member]

- 4.10. However, it was pointed out that the impact on people’s wellbeing brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic could not be predicted. It was also highlighted that there was a degree of inevitability that safeguarding issues would arise when you bring together a group of people sharing their lived experience of suicide regardless of the time that has

passed. The priority is to remain vigilant to individual and group needs and ensure the required support is in place and available to members.

- 4.11. A small number of stakeholders and panel members highlighted the importance of considering the potential for unsuccessful applicants to feel rejected or wondered whether asking for details about applicant's lived experience may imply that certain kinds of experience were more valued than others. However, it is important to note that these stakeholders may have been unsighted on the full recruitment process, which involved understanding and addressing the support needs of unsuccessful applicants. As part of this process all unsuccessful applicants received a phone call from the LEP Co-ordinator for feedback and to discuss the options for involvement in wider activities, which were also outlined in the application paperwork.



“Everybody that applies...needs to actually get that phone call. And that requires some resourcing, and being able to manage those emotions and those kind of disclosures..some of the challenges are folk, no matter what you say to them, sometimes feel abandoned..feel rejected. We need to be really careful with that in the recruitment process.. I would make sure that we had more than one person doing all those calls..which comes back to wider resourcing of the panel.” [Stakeholder]

- 4.12. Involving unsuccessful applicants in suicide prevention work in other ways - such as inviting them to events and featuring their stories in campaigns - was felt to be good practice. Examples of successful initiatives that took place and involved unsuccessful applicants included providing voice-over recordings that were included in the launch of the national launch of the Every Life matters TV campaign and other activity relating to the United to Prevent Suicide social movement. Others were also involved in completing surveys to inform the delivery of Action 6 in the SPAP which was focussed on digital technology and suicide prevention.

Information and understanding of role

- 4.13. There appeared to be a consensus among most panel members that the broader purpose of the Panel was to use their lived experience to shape policy and support suicide prevention work in Scotland. Different panel members had different priorities within this. Some felt they received enough information about their role and the link between the panel and the Suicide Prevention Action Plan when they first joined the panel. Others, though, said they did not have a clear understanding, or receive enough literature about this. However, there was recognition that the Panel was a new initiative, that everyone was learning together, that COVID had an impact, and that the role evolved with time. In future, panel members stressed that there would be a need for more formal clarification of the panel's role, to avoid differences in understanding among panel members.



“We probably didn't know enough. But I don't think that was anybody's fault..this was new, never been done before..the group has evolved, the scope of it has increased and people have learned along the way.” [Panel Member]

- 4.14. Some panel members reflected that that the panel’s purpose grew with time. They appreciated being able to influence the panel’s evolution, or get more involved with implementation activity as their perspective became increasingly valued.

“(The) purpose was galvanised throughout the processes, they could actually see they were being listened to. I think there was a fair amount of scepticism at the beginning as to whether this was tokenism, and whether we would actually have any influence whatsoever. But..as we developed..we became more and more involved in the implementation effort.” [Panel Member]

Induction

- 4.15. From a stakeholder perspective, the induction process was described as using a relational/dialogic approach to: build panel member relationships and capacity; establish an outcomes framework to define success; and run sessions on suicide awareness and self-care. Although not all panel members could remember details about the induction, the experience of meeting together face-to-face seemed to have an impact and was highlighted as significant for group bonding. There was a call for literature explaining expectations, roles, and backgrounds of panel and NSPLG members, for those in the later wave of recruitment who did not attend the induction.

“The biggest thing for me was not so much that training and doing safe talk, it was actually just being in a room together and meeting each part of the evolution of the panel, and learning was applied there and briefly sharing what your lived experience was, which was quite a powerful thing. A really important thing to set up what this panel was, what it was about and where it was going.” [Panel Member]

- 4.16. Exploration of safeguarding and boundaries was initiated as part of the induction and this led to the production of a handbook, which evolved with time. Some panel members and stakeholders described rapid learning about the need for robustness, and clarity around safeguarding and boundaries from the outset, particularly in relation to peer-to-peer crisis support. It was felt that having the handbook at the point of joining the LEP would have been useful and that this helped “tighten up” some of the processes around boundaries. The evolution of the approach to safeguarding demonstrated a responsiveness to the experiences and emerging needs of members, and an agile response in quickly adapting to and applying learning.

“We’re not a support network for each other. And so there did come a point where that became a minor issue. ... there has to be another place to go (for crisis support)..That safeguarding aspect, maybe wasn’t quite as clear as it could have been right at the beginning, but.. it was put in place really quickly, once we sort of realised that we needed to have that.” [Panel Member]

- 4.17. Inadequate resourcing for setting up the panel was also flagged by one stakeholder. They felt that the steering group should have been in place prior to the panel’s recruitment and that more capacity had been needed.

“We were setting up new handbooks, we were setting up new processes, we were establishing..expectations between delivery leads, and panel members..

So there was a setting up and a foundational exercise to be done as well as a delivery exercise. And (co-ordinator's) only role wasn't to just be the coordinator of that panel... I always flagged it was unsustainable....It really needed somebody to give it that complete attention." [Stakeholder]

Training

- 4.18. Examples were given of ongoing training members were offered including ASIST Training, Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Training, and training on how to talk to people about bereavement by suicide. LEP members felt these sessions brought different benefits including better equipping them to fulfil their role, increasing their confidence to talk to others about suicidal feelings, and providing formal evidence of their learning and development.

“I've been able to talk to somebody fairly openly about their own suicidal feelings in a way that I probably wouldn't have been able to.. I'm probably better trained to listen and to not be scared to talk about it.” [Panel Member]

- 4.19. Not everybody completed all the training offered. Some explained that family or work commitments were a barrier to accessing this. Others had already completed the training elsewhere or felt this was going beyond their role.

“(The idea) that the LEP needs more training in terms of understanding how mental health authorities and how trauma based stuff works...I don't know whether I want to come away with the ability to talk about all of the jargon that academics and people use, or whether I actually want to feel like I was just able to make a difference by using plain language.” [Panel Member]

- 4.20. LEP members identified additional training they felt would have been useful including: greater context setting in relation to tendering mental health services; communications training and Samaritans courses. One wished they had been able to access the ASIST First Aid training earlier to influence their feedback on certain Actions, though the delay in this was another influence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Another called for a move to more in-house learning and development activities.

“I think there's lots of nice innovative ways we could create learning and development opportunities that would allow us all to bond and work together like a proper team and learn skills in the process.” [Panel Member]

Panel Activities

- 4.21. As well as taking part in regular panel meetings to offer a lived experience perspective on various Action Plan developments, members were involved in additional ad hoc activity. This sometimes involved reading documents or taking part in smaller sub-group meetings to focus on specific actions/areas. Examples include media and press work, evaluation activity, hosting events, advising around the new SG Suicide Prevention Strategy, and contributing to NHS 24 and Police Scotland education programmes. There was a sense that the panel were responsive to new developments or requests and that their tasks evolved as they learned more about the process, which also helped to inform and identify learning and development needs for panel members.



“I thought we would just be involved in the (actions) that meant something to us. But as the process went forward, we realised that we would actually be involved in every bit of the process, which I think was better - because there were things we didn't realise that we had skills (for) or.. only..came about when we looked at the action a bit more in depth.” [Panel Member]

- 4.22. Panel members explained that they controlled the extent of their involvement, guided by their form of lived experience, interests and skills sets, availability, and their comfort levels. There was a request to normalise and set expectations around this at an early stage.



“There (are) going to be time(s) some people can participate more than others. And there's going to be some media that aren't always appropriate for absolutely everybody.. just make sure that everybody is comfortable with the fact that you can contribute as much as you feel comfortable with. And it's fine if there are some things which you don't want to.” [Panel Member]

- 4.23. While some LEP members said their expectations around activities had largely been met, a small number of stakeholders advocated for the panel to have a greater input into the actual delivery of actions.



“Yeah, (it did meet expectations)..we were advisory, we were.. being involved early on, we were.. involved in setting the actual direction of some of these things, and being seen as valued members of an overall team.” [Panel Member]



“Towards the end, we were really seeing, we're missing a trick here in terms of involving the panel..in the delivery of some of the actions..whether that was training, or creating videos or creating content or sitting on different groups”. [Stakeholder]

Accessing the panel

- 4.24. Mixed views were evident among stakeholders about the timeliness of access to the LEP. A small number reported that, in the main, they had been able to do this smoothly. However, a couple mentioned difficulty with the speed of access, with one referring to the period of transition to the new panel, and another reflecting that access issues were understandable given panel members are not paid. The development of a reliance on the panel among stakeholders was commented by one stakeholder, who felt the lack of payment was causing some friction around this.



“We're under a time pressure to do stuff, but the Lived Experience Panel aren't meeting for another four weeks....That's difficult, however....we're all doing this in our work time...and they are giving up their time, free, gratis..There is something for me then about how we how we maintain the momentum....I think we have to have to accept that there's a balance to be had...there might be some delays in the work that we're doing.” [Stakeholder]

- 4.25. The importance of forward planning and debrief work, to ensure the panel was accessed safely, timeously, and effectively was highlighted by a few stakeholders. A formal process for engagement was in place and the co-ordinator was described as central to fielding engagement requests and facilitating this work, although one stakeholder explained they found it helpful to make direct contact with individual members. While one appreciated the co-ordinators 'can-do' attitude in relation to their requests for LEP involvement, another highlighted the need for balance between being flexible for delivery leads and protecting panel members from being overwhelmed.

“I would always be very thoughtful how and when to reach into the panel... I would definitely go to the co-ordinator rather than directly to panel members..I would always be clear what I'm looking for. I would always check if it was helpful and appropriate... not going.. in there gung ho”. [Stakeholder]

- 4.26. There were criteria for lead-in times for engagement with the panel, such as providing papers a week before feedback is due. Evaluation participants acknowledged however that there were sometimes pressures on the panel to respond sooner, on a small number of occasions where there had been last minute delivery lead requests with a quick turn-around needed. Related to this, while some panel members felt they received enough information ahead of panel meetings, many commented on the lack of advance literature or felt they had not received documents with enough time to prepare or give considered feedback. This was felt to be a barrier to meaningful participation.

“Sometimes there's quite a lot of reading...it's sometimes been quite tight to read it and give feedback, or have something ready for the meeting... So there'll be something from a delivery lead that's not come in time, or..or they've not had the chance to get it to us before it's went out public.” [Panel Member]

“To be asked really important stuff... (with) sometimes very short notice...they were under a deadline - then they remember, oh we need to go speak to the panel about this...And that's when you know, you're still in a bit of a tokenism, add on, space culture.” [Panel Member]

- 4.27. The LEP steering group was seen by a couple of stakeholders as key to supporting the management of workload and timeframe boundaries. One however, urged for its membership to have greater authority and influence, to lend weight to their recommendations around engagement processes. There were also calls from panel members for the co-ordinator to provide a summary of relevant literature ahead of panel meetings and to improve information sharing processes around this.

“It becomes quite difficult sometimes with a number of meetings to remember..what was said or what document was it...They did try to do this and it never really got off the ground - but some kind of way to share that information. So it's easily accessible for everyone in one place.” [Panel Member]

- 4.28. While there were attempts at establishing a Dropbox system to aide information sharing, computer system failures were flagged by one stakeholder as a barrier to this. The logistical workload around panel meetings was also highlighted, as well as capacity issues and a lack of administration support. Going forward, SAMH have agreement to use the Knowledge Hub, a public service collaboration platform, to provide a more effective and efficient way of managing the administration requirements of the LEP and to help create a sense of community and participation for LEP members.

Experiences with panel meetings

- 4.29. Some panel members and stakeholders commented on the co-ordinator's strong facilitation skills or felt that space was created for everyone to contribute during meetings. A few stakeholders, however, felt that the views of strong personalities within the group sometimes dominated, or that some perspectives went unheard. Challenges linked with the same person occupying co-ordinator and support roles were raised.

“They're able to share their individual unique perspectives... everyone gets their say...you can see that the chairs make active efforts to make sure that those are a little bit quieter are still getting heard.” [Stakeholder]

“I think having that role as a co-ordinator and supporter to the group makes it then difficult for (co-ordinator) to be the one who's jumping in and saying, 'thanks for your input - time to hear from somebody else'. Or, 'you've got very strong opinions, there must be a counterbalance to that'.” [Stakeholder]

- 4.30. Levels of confidence to contribute differed among LEP members. This varied depending on who else was at the meeting, and with time. While one spoke of valuing the encouragement from the facilitator when they expressed a view, another suggested the facilitator needed to constructively challenge more - to seek a rationale for viewpoints and ensure the most vocal people didn't dominate. Another said they had been learning to step back and encourage others to contribute more.

- 4.31. The relevance of meeting topics was described by a few panel members as variable and they sometimes were “not sure what the point of that was”, or felt their participation was limited. One also talked about the alienating nature of mental health jargon. Not being able to meet face-to-face due to COVID restrictions was identified as the least enjoyable part of panel membership by another.

“There have been a few meetings where there's been a lot of listening and a lot of feedback and not much input..possibly that is just because it's the stage of where things are...maybe they are just feeding back a bit.” [Panel Member]

- 4.32. Stakeholders also described differences in their levels of confidence and experience of working with lived experience panels. One explained that while they appreciated being constructively challenged by LEP members, who offered a diversity of strong views, there was a sense that this could feel intimidating at times. Recognition that there might not be an immediate consensus or resolution by the end of a panel meeting, the importance of going at the panel's pace, collaborative working, and continuing conversations with panel members over time, were raised by a couple as helpful.



“If we don't get through it..we just have to come back. We have to sometimes go at their pace, not ours...[there was one] conversation that that felt like..we're never going to a conclusion...I think many of us are..long enough in the tooth not to worry about that..I think a lot of how I felt about engaging with this group has probably come back to my experience.” [Stakeholder]

- 4.33. Some panel members and stakeholders felt the shift to smaller break-out group meetings, in addition to the larger panel meetings, was helpful. This came as a result of early learning from LEP meetings where it was felt that an approach that included larger and smaller meetings would better accommodate the different types of engagements and member preferences. This was said to improve participation, give a more balanced view, and prevent rushed discussions or meetings running over. While one stakeholder wondered whether reducing the group size further might help further boost participation and members' confidence to contribute, a panel member emphasised the need for big enough numbers to generate useful discussion.



“Big meetings..there's too many to have a kind of real interactive dialogue..so [these became] more..information out type meetings.. [the] smaller group meetings.. that would be the dialogue session associated with the information we've just been presented.. those worked out really well.” [Panel Member]

Communication between meetings

- 4.34. Mixed views about communication outside of panel meetings were shared. Some LEP members felt this was smooth or appreciated the regular email contact with the co-ordinator, who was described as fielding much of the communication from delivery leads. Others felt there was confusion at times about meeting arrangements or raised issues with receiving meetings invites in time.
- 4.35. A Whatsapp group for panel members was established, and used to ask questions, clarify meeting arrangements, connect socially, and access informal peer support. The purpose of the Whatsapp group, its role and guidance around boundaries were included in the Volunteer Handbook. However, some were more engaged with this, or felt this was more helpful, than others and the intended function of this was not clear to everyone.



“So it was (co-ordinator) sending out emails and (it) generally worked... we were communicating on [the Whatsapp group] about..what's coming up? When's the meeting? ...there was always some people thinking that they had been missed off an email..there was.. confusion at some points about when meetings are taking place and what the pre read was, etc.” [Panel Member]

Time commitment/workload

- 4.36. Most members felt comfortable with the time commitment, “didn't think the workload was too onerous”, or said that the individual could choose how much time they gave to the LEP. However, some shared that their family or work commitments, and the timing of meetings, could make participation challenging or meant that they couldn't engage as

much as others. One identified this as one of their least favourite aspects of LEP membership.



“I work shifts as well, so it's not always easy to get away.. sometimes at night [Panel Member]



“Everyone on (my) groups, it's part of their job. So meetings are through the day..I have to..figure out can I swap a day at work.. it's..a really tricky issue, if you're going to have lived experience people involved. How do you do that.. And be mindful of people's own commitments?” [Panel Member]

Support and Safeguarding

- 4.37. While the approach to support and safeguarding evolved through experience and learning, the approach adopted from the outset was underpinned by an understanding and appreciation that panel members would be sharing intense, life changing and emotional experiences around suicide, which invariably involved trauma.
- 4.38. One stakeholder explained that it would be unreasonable to expect the support needs of people with lived experience to be smooth, linear and without any risks and challenges. This was also seen to provide strong justification for having an approach to safeguarding that can evolve and strengthen through practical experience and learning.
- 4.39. A relationship-based, trauma informed approach to the support offered to LEP members was described by one stakeholder, who felt that although labour intensive, this worked well in terms of supporting members' self-care and confidence to participate. Most panel members said they highly valued the support they received. In particular, the LEP co-ordinator was described as well-liked, respected, responsive, and as providing support “essential” to the functioning of the panel.



“(The co-ordinator did) loads in terms of interaction with the NSPLG, being able to provide advice in terms of how mental health and suicide prevention gets implemented across COSLA and all these other organisations..and the overall functioning of the of the panel in terms of meetings, facilitation topics to be discussed... All of that was invaluable.” [Panel Member]



“He makes it very apparent...if you need him, all you need to do is text or phone, it doesn't really matter when..having quite a strong leader..has been the glue that's held everyone together..having someone who's compassionate and .. contactable and..who is as fully involved in-is living and breathing it -is really important.” [Panel Member]

- 4.40. Brief check-ins with panel members before and after panel meetings were described as helpful. The following participant explained that they appreciated being able to both access support or advice for themselves and knowing other panel members would be well supported.



“I always felt really reassured that (co-ordinator) was there for those individuals and knew when to check in on them... And he was there for me a

couple of times as well, because sometimes meetings can be quite triggering... I would message him and say..have you checked in on such and such.” [Panel Member]

- 4.41. Approaches to managing safeguarding and boundaries were raised by small number of panel members and stakeholders. For instance, although peer support was felt to be important, the panel was seen, at times, to have gone beyond its remit and to be functioning as a support group for members. Worry was also expressed by a small number about whether more vulnerable panel members developed a dependency on the co-ordinator and, and where members would access support once they left the panel.
- 4.42. However, it is important to consider that not all stakeholders will be fully aware of the safeguarding processes in place and the support that was being provided to panel members. This included exploring and responding to instances where continued involvement is not in the panel members’ best interest. Examples of this included the LEP Co-ordinator carefully negotiating some time away from panel activities for some members or even withdrawal from the Panel, as a result of changing personal circumstances. There have been instances where two members completely withdrew from the panel and a few who took time out temporarily.
- 4.43. During the first 18 months of the LEP, the co-ordinator worked with a SAMH colleague who played a key role in offering ongoing safeguarding support to LEP members. He also had a structured role in supporting the LEP Co-ordinator during LEP engagements and in offering advice, support and guidance during regular debriefing sessions.
- 4.44. Thereafter, SAMH as host organisation, ensured new mechanisms were in place to provide the supervision support that the co-ordinator required. Furthermore, the chair of the LEP Steering Group also acted as a sounding board and a source of guidance and additional support for the co-ordinator during that period.
- 4.45. However, a few stakeholders still reflected on the co-ordinator’s huge workload and held a perception that they alone were carrying all the safeguarding responsibility. The potential impact on the co-ordinator’s well-being and the lack of sustainability of this was raised.



“It was very important..to be able to reflect and take core issues to that steering group..to look at some of these sort of safeguarding arrangements...so [there was a place] to highlight..some of the core issues... to develop..some of these clear processes that helped to keep people safe” [Stakeholder]

- 4.46. Some evaluation participants suggested that future lived experience panels should feature separate co-ordinator and supporter roles, to create more capacity and establish clear boundaries; not having this was raised by a panel member as a barrier to them accessing support. However, one stakeholder felt there were benefits to having the same person in co-ordinator and support roles. Another explained that panel members could now access SAMH’s employee assistance programme.

- 4.47. Finally, one stakeholder raised the emotionally demanding nature of suicide prevention work for *everyone* and called for stakeholders to also be supported with check-ins after panel meetings, for example. They also reminded that the distinction between those with lived experience and those without is not always clear cut and spoke of the challenges associated with navigating this.

“It’s difficult work.. it’s raw...being in the room with so many people who’ve lost someone.. I think you’re slightly on edge waiting for it to pop up...We sometimes create structures to engage with lived experience.. it’s like, okay, those are the people with lived experience and we’re the others. And it’s never as black and white as that.” [Stakeholder]

- 4.48. One stakeholder suggested that the NSPLG could hold responsibility for ensuring there are mechanisms in place that ensure stakeholders engaging with the panel can access any support they may require.

Interactions with delivery leads

- 4.49. Positive interactions with the delivery leads or a feeling that their “opinion was valued, listened to, acknowledged and understood” were reported by panel members. A few identified having their contribution valued and collaborating with others as what they enjoyed most about the panel. Likewise, amongst delivery leads, positive experiences of working with the panel were noted.

“The delivery leads, (I) met quite a few of them...excellent, absolutely brilliant, actually. And their kind of openness to input is fantastic.” [Panel Member]

“I was encouraged to make contact with the lived experience panel ..and was blown away just by the interest, the passion and the support that came straightaway.” [Stakeholder]

“I would say they were instrumental in helping us really build the foundations for what it was we were trying to do. They gave us so many takeaway messages that we have built into the work we’re doing.” [Stakeholder]

- 4.50. Challenges such as changes in delivery lead personnel or scepticism about the quality of their participation were noted by few panel members when describing their initial engagements with the delivery leads. However, improvements were noted with time, and as everyone learned more about the process of engaging with the panel. Increased familiarity within relationships and the introduction of more formal processes to increase consistency were felt to have been helpful here.

“There was a real risk that unless people brought us in early, there was going to be some tokenism there.. but (as time went on) we were generally brought in early stage and consulting more genuinely.....I think there were learning processes about how the delivery leads were going to use the LEP. And maybe some of them.. thought it was more about just informing people what was

going on, rather than actually using (the LEP) to sort of develop ideas or question what was already being done.” [Panel Member]

“

“(It’s) developed over time..into a much more co-production model, rather than a asking for approval model...ways of working.. have become much more inclusive and engaged... some of that is about familiarity..I (also) think there’s been more effectiveness in managing.. the whole project of the action plan.” [Stakeholder]

- 4.51. Panel members and stakeholders emphasised the importance of involving the LEP early in the planning and delivery of actions to achieve meaningful participation and to avoid the disruption associated with having to make late changes based on the panel’s views. Positive examples of actively embedding lived experience involvement in Actions were highlighted.

“

“Action fives an example of this-where ..what I can see is ongoing collaboration with the lived experience panel. So it's almost like it's become within that action is not just a dip in and out. It's become part of how they're operating.” [Stakeholder]

“

“Most of the actions, from the outset, involved the lived experience panel, so it wasn't the case that they were halfway down the road, with three or four of the actions, the lived experience panel were brought in, right from the start.” [Stakeholder]

- 4.52. However, stakeholders reported differing levels of engagement with the panel among delivery leads. Reasons included: the process being new; having no model to follow; certain Actions, or Action stages, lending themselves better to panel involvement; project management issues and a lack of route-map for delivering actions; time and political pressures: and inconsistencies in ways of working.

“

“Theres ones that clearly kind of stand out as something you could say, right, the lived experienced panel could definitely..... help us with..probably action five, action seven, and the campaign action, which I think is action three, were ..where the lived experience kind of lived and thrived mainly. [Stakeholder]

“

“Often there (are)..political pressures, delivery pressures... And then [to be told]..we need a good brief, we need to prepare people..we need certain information [as a] condition for people to engage effectively in this..So I think some of the kind of time pressures definitely prevented engagement. Sometimes we got engagement, but I would argue it probably wasn't the most effective engagement because we had to do it quickly.” [Stakeholder]

- 4.53. Attempts to increase meaningful engagement included introducing a funding requirement to demonstrate quality engagement and recommending more formal processes around engagement - to reduce variation linked to individual’s experience and confidence working with lived experience panels. The importance of re-engaging with

the panel to 'close the feedback loop' and share the outcomes of their involvement, was also flagged by a couple of stakeholders.

Interactions with non-delivery lead stakeholders

- 4.54. Some panel members talked positively of working with a member of the NSPLG, however most said they had little contact with them or others from the Academic Advisory Group. Some wanted more contact, called for greater interaction between the different stakeholder groups, or highlighted progress towards more collaborative working.



[The AAG] didn't interact with the panel, the NSPLG hardly ever... for me, there wasn't enough group interaction between us all. I don't know why we couldn't have all sat on the same panel... I think various people in the lived experience panel could have been sitting around the table with the leaders.”
[Panel Member]



“[There was] a little bit of a disconnect [between the LEP and the LEP steering group]... I guess the best example of how we joined some of that up was during the celebration event... the lived experience panel worked really closely together with the NSPLG to deliver that.. I think having the LEP much more involved in the steering group itself..it would need thought out what the role of the panel members would be..but I think that could definitely be achieved.”
[Stakeholder]

- 4.55. While some examples of the AAG's engagement with the LEP were shared to inform use of language within research questions, they were described mostly in terms of working in the background to provide research advice and support. One stakeholder, who greatly valued the AAG's research skills and evaluation support, expressed confusion around their role in the LEP steering group. The LEP steering group terms of reference are included at Appendix 1 for information.

5. Strengths and challenges

- 5.1. The previous chapter outlines interviewees' experiences of sitting on and engaging with the panel. This chapter summarises the LEP's key strengths and the main challenges encountered.

Key strengths

- 5.2. Stakeholders and panel members identified several key strengths of the Lived Experience Panel. These are summarised below.
- 5.3. **Diversity of experience among panel members:** The panel was praised for its members' diverse range of experience.

“In terms of strengths, I guess, diversity of experience and background geography. I think there's a reasonably diverse geography across Scotland, and certainly a lot of very different experiences amongst us.” [Panel member]

- 5.4. **The skills, knowledge and dedication of panel members:** Interviewees praised the panel members for their dedication to the role, and the skills and knowledge that enable them to communicate their views to professionals in a confident and insightful way.

“They're not afraid to challenge and also to put you right as well... hugely, hugely insightful and intelligent, particularly about the subject matter.” [Stakeholder]

- 5.5. **A supportive co-ordinator:** A key theme that emerged from interviews was the importance of the co-ordinator role and the effectiveness of the current post-holder.

“Somebody who is entirely dedicated to the role and very hard working but also very approachable, collegiate. And does work really hard to integrate the lived experience into all the work of suicide prevention in Scotland without getting in anybody's face... to have somebody in that role, who's performed it so well and so positively and productively, I think, has been really fortunate.” [Stakeholder]

- 5.6. **Support of NSPLG and AAG:** Some interviewees commented on the importance of the wider structure within which the LEP sits. This includes the support of the AAG in developing the panel, and the NSPLG, which offers professional and policy knowledge.

“For them to be really clear of what their role is and what the role of the NSPLG is... It is just recognising, acknowledging, you have a lived experience. You are the experts in that. And then the NSPLG, they have the policy knowledge, they have the therapeutic knowledge, and that's their role.” [Stakeholder]

“You had this rich blend of practitioner experience, academic experience and lived experience. And to me that was the secret formula that helped to bake this high-quality cake. Warts and all.” [Stakeholder]

- 5.7. **Senior buy-in:** Support from senior management and at Minister level in the Scottish Government was identified by a few interviewees as giving the panel more visibility and greater clout.

“It's had more visibility than previous bits of lived experience work, partly because it's had senior management buy in, right up from the Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing through to the Chair of the NSPLG.”
[Stakeholder]

Challenges

5.8. Panel members and stakeholders described challenges that the panel has experienced and, in some cases, overcome. These are outlined below.

5.9. **Safeguarding panel members:** Some interviewees commented on the emotional stress that discussing difficult topics and experiences can place on panel members. Remaining vigilant of, and responsive to the needs of the group and individual panel members is essential, as if responding to experience and learning to evolve and develop safeguarding approaches.

“Those meetings could be challenging... There can be triggering. You know, it's such a difficult topic and... even myself, I can be overcome with emotion one minute and then the next minute I'm not.” [Stakeholder]

5.10. **Safeguarding processes for professionals:** A few stakeholders commented on the emotional impact that engaging with the LEP had on them, and the importance of ensuring that there are adequate support and supervision processes to deal with this. One suggested that the NSPLG could hold responsibility for ensuring that the necessary support was in place for professionals and other stakeholders that were accessing the panel.

“I think that was something that when I first started in this work and met the LEP, and the introduction was them disclosing of all that experience as a professional, I wasn't prepared for that. That wasn't something that I knew was coming. And I, I found that difficult.” [Stakeholder]

5.11. **Lack of awareness among some delivery leads:** A small number of delivery leads felt that, initially, they were not aware of the LEP's role and the opportunity to engage with the panel. While this was overcome through contact by the co-ordinator, these leads felt they could have been introduced to the panel earlier.

6.1. **A need for greater diversity:** While some interviewees praised the panel for its diversity, others felt the panel could be enhanced in this respect with greater representation from minority ethnic communities and people from areas of high deprivation being commonly mentioned. However, it was highlighted that the areas of diversity prioritised during recruitment of the panel was diversity in lived experience, geographical location and gender, while also trying to ensure a spread across age ranges. However, this does highlight the challenge in satisfying all stakeholders aspirations for diversity, and meeting the various different aspects of diversity, across a panel of only 12-14 individuals.

“(The panel was not able to) go out physically to anybody so that definitely had an impact on how many different experiences we were able to draw on through the panel, because we were only able to really talk to the people that we had on the panel. We weren't able to kind of support them to reach many

other voices to come into the mix... and I think Covid had an impact on that.”
[Stakeholder]

- 5.12. **The capacity of the LEP:** Some panel members and stakeholders alluded to the time-consuming nature of the role. This illustrates the importance of carefully managing the capacity and workload of the panel, and ensuring appropriate lead in times for panel members to prepare for meetings and activities.

“I think sometimes there's been quite a lot of reading. And it's something's been quite tight to read it and give sort of feedback, or have something ready for going into the meeting with.” [Panel member]

- 5.13. Interviewees acknowledged the demands on the co-ordinator's time too, and the importance of ensuring the role has sufficient capacity and resource for the post-holder to deal with all its demands.

“I know that role is very busy... and I know there's been a lot of asks of the Lived Experience Panel. So everything has to go to the coordinator to be disseminated. And sometimes it's like, Oh, why hasn't that gone out yet?... I do acknowledge, it's a lot at times, probably for the coordinator to be managing all those requests.” [Stakeholder]

- 5.14. **Slow progress and feedback:** Some panel members expressed disappointment that the pace of change and progress was slower than they would have hoped. This should be considered in terms of managing expectations in terms of what can be achieved over a given time period. Linked to this, while processes were in place to ensure that feedback was provided to panel members following their involvement, and evidence of the impact they have had a few panel members suggested that processes for receiving feedback on the outcomes of their work needed improved.

“I think that's one of the difficult things to manage is that... we probably all joined this expecting some quick change or some radical change, and actually, you realise that it moves very, very slowly... that can be frustrating. It's not just us that are frustrated by that. But yeah, it does feel that things are moving forward, but it still feels like there's a lot to do. And a long way to go.” [Panel member]

“I'm not aware that any of us have had any feedback so far on how it's (Action 4 – Suicide Bereavement Support Service) going so far, or how likely it is to be continued, or whether there's going to be any further resourcing for it, which is quite frustrating.” [Panel member]

6. Future of the panel

- 6.2. This chapter presents views on the future of the panel. It covers whether or not it should continue, and suggested future changes and improvements.

Should it continue?

- 6.3. All panel members and stakeholder believe the panel should continue. While much has been achieved, they argued there is still much to do; and those with lived experience have demonstrated their value and ongoing contribution to progress.
- 6.4. Beyond strong agreement that the panel should continue, many stakeholders and panel members reported that now was the right time to refresh its membership. Aside from the new perspectives and experiences this would bring, stakeholders highlighted what has already been contributed; they do not wish to overburden people.

“I think the panel should definitely continue. And I think it's the right time for a refresh of the panel. If it's not a problem that's gonna go away, it's not a problem that's going to be solved. And I think you constantly need fresh energy and fresh perspectives on it.” [Panel member]

“But we need that as well so it doesn't place so much of a burden on others and gives others the opportunity, I suppose a slightly different perspective is, we seem to ask of the lived experience panel. So they give an awful lot and we take an awful lot.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.5. Panel members reflected that their experiences, passion and commitment to seeing positive change put them in a unique position to provide constructive challenge.

“And I think those with lived experience are likely to be the most vociferous, the most opinionated, the least respectful of authority, and of jargon. And I think it's really important that a lot of that stuff gets challenged, because we're the people that have seen what happens when people get ignored, and when jargon and process and under resourcing leads to the death of people. And I think we're the best people best placed to do that. [Panel member]

- 6.6. The final justification from stakeholders related to the value added by the panel. They noted the panel had added a robustness to the delivery of the action plan, contributing input and ideas that positively influenced the design and direction of the work and in some cases, helped things to progress faster than they otherwise would have.

“So, we recognise that they were, you know, they're just as valued as the national suicide prevention leadership group, you know, of the same level, but bringing a different thing. They're just as valuable. And I think that the, the actions as you, as you asked me, couldn't have been delivered in the same way without that expertise.” [Panel member]

“Yes, I think it should continue, I think it has been instrumental to the work that has been done.” [Panel member]

Future changes and improvements

- 6.7. In this section we discuss the potential future changes and improvements suggested by panel members and stakeholders, based on their experiences and learning.

Greater diversity in membership

- 6.8. We have already discussed the main components of diversity characteristics that were focussed on during recruitment of the panel, namely diversity in lived experience, geographical location and gender. Aligned to this, stakeholders reflected that the recruitment process was thorough and robust, and resulted in the recruitment of a strong panel. It was also acknowledged that achieving diversity across ethnicity, socio-economic background, cultures, regions and types of experience in a panel of 12-14 people is extremely difficult and recognised the challenges in reaching and enabling those from different backgrounds and communities to become involved.

“And there's always a challenge in that, you know, when you're asking people to volunteer, their life circumstances have to allow them the space and time to do that, it's often very difficult to get people at particular periods in their lives, to volunteer because they just haven't got the space in their lives to do that. So there's something about thinking about how we can remove some of those kind of barriers, really.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.9. However, the need to ensure that the work is informed and influenced through a diverse range of people with lived experience was still commonly highlighted (e.g. involving people that have been affected by suicide while in prison). Stakeholders and panel members suggested that beyond the main panel, consideration should be given to how this could extend to other networks, groups and structures.

“I'd like to see a bit more diversity in terms of in terms of, you know, probably ethnic groups and how they deal with suicides and things like that.” [Stakeholder]

“And, you know, we know there's lots of lived experience at a local level and the new action plan and strategy is saying we need to join together more. And you know, I'm talking about, I don't think we can get the full lived experience perspective from just 12 People.” [Stakeholder]

“So, you know, I would love to see something that we can have more flexible structures and connect with not just national but local as well.” [Stakeholder]

Greater embedding in each element of the Action Plan

- 6.10. In the future, stakeholders and panel members believe a greater level of embedment of lived experience panel members for each of the actions is needed. The evidence presented in this report suggests that there was some inconsistency in the early stages of development and delivery of each action in terms of when the lived experience panel were involved.

“It needs to be planned and organised from the beginning so that people know what they've got coming and they can, you know, opt in opt out over that kind of stuff” [Stakeholder]

- 6.11. It was also reported that rather than a structured forward plan, the panel often responded to requests at short notice and were not sighted on their involvement in each action as they moved through the design, development and implementation stages.

“So at the moment, it feels reactive. Because it's not programmed across the piece, it's just individual bits of work being dripped in. If we do go to a full programme of work, that's going to look a hell of a daunting. So maybe we need to chunk it up a bit. [Stakeholder]

- 6.12. A few stakeholders reflected that delivery leads and others all had ‘asks’ of the panel members and questioned whether more control could be given to the panel; so they could have more influence on the direction of the work.

“I wonder if there's a way that in the new strategy and action plan going forward, the panel could ask things of us? If you know what I mean. Is there a way that they could hold some of the cards a bit and make demands of the group a little? You know, could they be sort of setting the direction of some of the work a bit more. [Stakeholder]

- 6.13. Some stakeholders suggested that smaller sub-groups that were more closely attached to each of the actions could enable a more cohesive and structured lived experience involvement and influence. However, this also needs to be balanced with panel member preferences and interests. The approach taken to this involved panel members completing a survey which explored the different aspects of the SPAP

“And you know, maybe there's different ways of working, maybe having the panel, each member of the panel, looking at every bit of business isn't the way to do it, you know, maybe there's some, the whole panel, and then there's maybe kind of subgroups of the panel who could help support a kind of focused piece of work. So I think there's maybe different ways to cut that in the future.” [Stakeholder]

“And I think we kind of made the decision that going forward, it would be more the actions that you want to be involved in that you would continue instead of it being all 10. So the time would be used a bit more wisely. [Panel member]

- 6.14. However, this also needs to be balanced with panel member preferences and interests. The approach taken to this involved panel members completing a survey which explored the different aspects of the action plan and identified the areas that each member was interested in being involved with.

- 6.15. One stakeholder shared their experiences of having a dedicated lived experience panel member as part of their action group, and acknowledged the challenges in replicating it across the action plan.

“And we have now got a member of the lived experience panel sitting on that action group. Now that seems to me that we are really embedding it, it just feels really good. I think there's challenges with that, because there's some members of the panel who are more in that space, more confident... just get the policy world and system change. So that's not going to be for everyone.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.16. However, a small number of stakeholders urged caution, noting that the type, level and frequency of involvement required across each action would differ. Therefore, how the lived experience panel members engage with each action needs to be given consideration. One stakeholder also suggested the introduction of a role in the delivery infrastructure, to focus on the role of lived experience for each action.

“So and I guess, because my work is so public and social media driven, that it's tangible, whereas a lot of the other actions are, are like very process driven, like reviewing a suicide deaths or creating local action plans, whereas our work, you know, they can really get their teeth into, and they can really be involved if they choose to be involved. So, so that's probably why I have had more engagement than maybe some of the other actions.” [Stakeholder]

“So why not have an aim and intention to try to integrate that more into aspects of the work. So in the delivery infrastructure, you know, it's not, maybe you could talk about having people in the delivery infrastructure who are more directly connected with the lived experience, or, you know, to think about it where and when it fits in.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.17. Another stakeholder pointed out that the new strategy and plan is yet to be finalised and launched, and initial work to develop a workplan is yet to get started. They felt that once the foundation work was completed and there was visibility on the whole package of work, then ways of working and a new delivery model could then be considered in line with that.

Reimbursement, reward and recognition

- 6.18. The issue of recognition and reward was raised by the majority of stakeholders and panel members. Most felt financial remuneration should be explored with stakeholders and panel members, acknowledging the significant time and effort invested by some members.

“I think people should be remunerated in this space as well. If I was to tally up how much time I had spent. My project lead would [not be pleased] at how many days and the amount of time, but again, because it was evenings, it was kind of easy to get around work and not take time off or anything and a lot of

stuff was on Saturdays as well, physical meet ups. So yeah, I would like to see remuneration be considered. And I think it's really important." [Panel member]

“I think it's increasingly recognised that anyone that gives up their time has to be in some way compensated for that.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.19. Two stakeholders highlighted that they were acutely aware of instances where panel members were attending action groups or other meetings and that they were the only one at the table that was giving their time for free. A few stakeholders also shared experiences of working with other lived experience panels where some form of financial reimbursement was commonplace.

“And it's something that struck me when [panel member] is attending our meeting, is that she's the only person there who's not being paid to be there. And, you know, and I think that if we want to recognise lived experience, we need to think about how we reward that lived experience.” [Panel member]

- 6.20. In discussing remuneration, participants identified a number of challenges to consider when providing financial reimbursement for panel members, including:

- The potential impact if someone is in receipt of benefits.
- Not everyone will want to be financially reimbursed – there are those that want to do it because they are passionate about the subject matter and want to make a difference.
- Accounting for differing levels and types of involvement across panel members?
- Internal policies and systems creating barriers to flexible payments.
- Does it change expectations of panel members, and could it change the expectations they place on themselves.

- 6.21. While highlighting these challenges stakeholders also expressed the view that if involving lived experience really was being valued, and making a positive contribution, then ways to overcome these challenges could be found.

“There's a fantastic resource created by the Human Rights Commission called paying people on benefits for co-production and participation.” [Panel member]

Recruitment and training

- 6.22. Few stakeholders were familiar with, or involved in, the recruitment process. It was described as a robust and rigorous process that led to a high-quality panel, however, there was a recognition that the time and effort involved was significant. Repeating this process for each new panel member might not be practical, but stakeholders also expressed a desire to ensure that the process remains robust. However, no suggestions of how this could be achieved were made.
- 6.23. Panel members' recollections of the recruitment process suggest it was perceived as thorough and provided enough information to make an informed decisions about

applying. However, a few expressed the view that expectations needed to be managed, particularly in relation to the extent of change that will be realised during their time on the panel.

“Managing the expectations of the panel as well, you know, I said at the start, we all come in expecting that there's going to be massive change. And that can be such a slow process. So there's a bit in there about definitely managing expectations. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't be ambitious, as well, you know. Yeah, just knowing that the panel being clear about what is expected of them.” [Panel member]

- 6.24. A few stakeholders' experiences of engaging with the panel left them feeling there were some members that were still quite vulnerable and maybe not ready to participate in the way that was needed. One stakeholder suggested the need to revisit the recruitment criteria in relation to the length of time that has passed since anyone applying has experienced a bereavement by suicide or had attempted suicide/had suicidal ideations or demonstrated harmful behaviours. For recruitment to the current panel a guideline of two years was used, though it was recognised that time was not always a reliable indicator of someone's readiness and that the more critical element was in ensuring suitable support and safeguarding was in place to meet the emerging needs of members.

“Probably in hindsight it should have been a longer, a longer kind of time between what had happened than two years, I would say at least four or five.” [stakeholder]

- 6.25. While not directly linked, a couple of stakeholders raised the topic of training when discussing recruitment. They acknowledged that some training was provided in the induction process and that panel members were offered ASIST training, and they felt a more structured and holistic approach could be taken in the future. This related to equipping panel members to confidently carry out the different aspects of their roles, as well as equipping those that may want to do further work after in their localities after their involvement in the panel has come to an end.

“I maybe haven't mentioned about the training and development, so making sure that when panel members are involved in, they've got a chance to develop and we give them, you know, we give them appropriate conditions to develop to have the training or whatever.” [Stakeholder]

“That was one of the things that we really did a lot of work on [with another lived experience panel] was almost providing a training programme for people with lived experience that wasn't, you know, that was specific to their role as lived experience panel members. So, you know, how do we, how do you speak in a clinical board meeting, when your consultant psychiatrist is probably sitting across the table from you, you know, and making sure that that was done in an effective and safe way for them as well. So I think there's some stuff around that, that could probably be a bit stronger.” [Stakeholder]

Connections with unsuccessful applicants

- 6.26. The level of interest in the opportunity to become a panel member far exceeded the number of roles available. Stakeholders suggested it would be worth exploring whether unsuccessful candidates could fill future positions as they become available.

“I think there was about 100 plus people in that weren't successful. I think if you've got, you know, when the next recruitment phase, if you do have all these interested people, then there's an opportunity for them to be in that sort of pipeline that I talked about earlier on.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.27. Stakeholders reflected on the time and effort that individuals committed to the application process. A couple also acknowledged that applying is a brave thing to do, and it is driven by a genuine desire to make a difference. One questioned the potential impact of a person putting themselves forward, wanting to be involved and make a difference, only to be told that they had been unsuccessful. There was recognition of a wealth of untapped experience among those who are unsuccessful and a need to keep them engaged or maintain their interest for future opportunities.

“So I think there's merit in, keeping those people engaged, those people could be encouraged, you know, when they go out and do the next sort of recruitment, the people that aren't successful could be encouraged, if they're not already involved with the movement to sort of become part of the movement, you know.” [Stakeholder]

“I think you could have a bank of people for a period of time. You know, I think that would have been the easiest way, you wouldn't want to keep going through that application process every time. And you wouldn't want people to feel as if they have to keep going through an application process. But if the panel was secure for a five-year period, I would suggest that you would maybe change people every year. You know, so if you got to the end of you know, and people would say you would be expected to serve on the panel for one year, and then the next year that would move to some other people.” [Stakeholder]

The roles of co-ordination and support

- 6.28. Several stakeholders and a small number of panel members spoke of the need to separate the roles carried out by the lived experience panel co-ordinator. A key reason for this was recognition of the volume of work that it entailed, including the co-ordination of the panel, facilitation of meetings, supporting panel members and liaison with the programme.

“So I know there are a lot of asks of the lived experience panel, and just all the logistics that go in to running a panel and stuff like that, it seems under resourced, from my point of view.” [Stakeholder]

“So just making sure that that the resources are in place to support the co-ordinator or whatever the role is moving forward, it just feels like a lot to sit on the one shoulder.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.29. The other factor in separating the co-ordinator’s roles was to ensure that high-quality support could continue to be provided to panel members. It was also suggested that this would help to establish clearer and more effective boundaries, and reduce the responsibility placed on a single person.

“And also, making sure that the formality of the support that we give people, so we do have a way of checking, or whoever kind of manages the process, we do have a way of checking and asking ourselves, are the things that should be in place in place. Are we making sure that these boring but important formal processes are there, and just because we all know each other, and we're all working really well together, making sure we don't lapse into something which isn't quite providing people the support they need to. So I would say those are the things to think about.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.30. Linked to this, one stakeholder suggested that whoever holds the co-ordination role, or is providing support to panel members, should be trained in trauma-informed practice and also suggested bereavement support training as well. The current LEP co-ordinator is qualified to deliver ASIST training, Scottish Mental Health First Aid and Post-Bereavement by Suicide (PABBS) training. Provision of this training is also a commitment going forward.

“I think the co-ordinator, and whoever is providing the support, has to be trauma informed, you know, has to have gone through, you know, quite serious ASIST training and bereavement support training and things like that, because we need to ensure it is a safe space we are creating”. [Stakeholder]

Tenure and exit

- 6.31. The length of time that any person should remain a member of the panel was raised. A small number of stakeholders acknowledged that members who joined at the outset would be approaching three years of involvement. They were conscious of the need to ensure the panel remained energised with fresh perspectives and experiences, and therefore a maximum tenure should be defined. However, it was also highlighted that this needed to be balanced to ensure a level of continuity and a managed transition during periods of changing membership.

“No, I think the only reservations I've had is that I don't think it should always be the same people. So if you've got a group of 12 to 15 people over a two year period, I think you should constantly change the personnel because I think people potentially a) will burn out, b) get too comfortable, and maybe not be given anything new.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.32. While there is a structured exit and transition planning process that explores members' aspirations for continued involvement in suicide prevention activities and their support needs, feedback suggests that not all stakeholders were aware of this.

“That is primarily because they don't have an exit strategy. They need to, that's where I was kind of going, well actually, we'll work on an exit strategy from six months to right within three months, of that six you'll be trained in ASIST, we'll give you the United Friends Suicide pack that we were going to do with workplaces at the time.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.33. Some stakeholders also suggested that there was a potential role for departing members to be involved in supporting the transition and introduction of new members (e.g. involvement in the recruitment and induction process). However, it was also recognised that this would not be of interest to all departing members.

“I think it needs to evolve. And, you know, having a kinda set tenure for people on it, and then the kinda resource in place for those who are up for it to kinda support in the recruitment and the induction of the new members, with maybe a few kinda lingering on, but they'll maybe be in a life span, you know a time span on it.” [Panel member]

Links to local delivery of action plans

- 6.34. A small number of stakeholders spoke about the need to link more strongly with action plan activity, groups and networks at a local level, though it was also recognised that the Covid-19 pandemic had influenced the extent to which this could be done.
- 6.35. Discussion of links with local activity, groups and networks covered two different aspects. The first related to ensuring diversity in representation of lived experience, and the role of panel members in supporting this.

“We need sort of some way of tapping into communities in a different way to get a greater breadth of lived experience, I can kinda see that lived experience panel almost becoming...the expert lived experience panel who are now very familiar at working with government, Cosla, academics....but there's something for me about what can they then do to support others and what can we do to tap into that those wider communities.” [Stakeholder]

“But it would go back to what I said before, about recognising that it's not just those people around the table that we need to be hearing from, we need to be hearing from our much more, could we empower those people to support us to reach that community, whoever they are. [Stakeholder]

- 6.36. The second point of discussion on this theme was to equip and support panel members to carry out activity to reach wider communities and/or to continue their involvement in suicide prevention work beyond their participation in the lived experience panel.

“The plan was for them to be fully trained in suicide prevention, and take that into their communities. And kind of whether they want to start groups or do

their own kind of continuation of lived experience, and they can share experience in the kind of the stuff they've learned from who they've been working with over the last however many months, years, and use that, use that in a way that they want, whether its a lady's group or using it in rural communities like for Orkney and Shetland.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.37. One panel member also queried what was being done about ensuring lived experience informed local suicide prevention action plans, and the whether the learning from the establishment of the NSPLG lived experience panel was being shared. This has been an area of focus for the co-ordinator, who has used meetings and events to share learning and showcase the work of the LEP with partners across health and social care, third sector and other interested parties.

A commitment to lived experience that spans the lifetime of the strategy

- 6.38. Some stakeholders and panel members felt that commitment to a 10-year suicide prevention strategy should also see the same commitment to the ongoing involvement of lived experience. There were two arguments for this; firstly, that it would send a strong message about the value and worth that lived experience brings. The second stemmed from recognition that a longer-term commitment was needed to enable aspects of the suggested developments, such ongoing re-refresh of panel membership and contributing and/or linking with local activity, groups and structures.

““And you would have thought that this time round that they're able to shorten the recruitment process, and so as the panel kind of like changes over, there wouldn't be a gap. But it looks like, they're not really, even now, I don't think they're recruiting for the next panel in any kind of like, totally organised way. And so are they going to be in the same situation if there isn't a longer term plan?” [Panel member]

““What kind of message would it send if there wasn't a similar commitment to having a lived experience panel? If we are saying that the panel's input has been valued, then we need to demonstrate that through our own commitment to it.” [Stakeholder]

- 6.39. However, it was reported that the process of agreeing a new funding allocation, governance arrangements, structure and recruitment processes for the next iteration of the LEP with the Scottish Government is underway.

7. Conclusions and future considerations

Recruitment of the panel

- 7.1. The initial recruitment process was robust, but this made it time and resource intensive. It was successful in securing the appointment of panel members from different areas of Scotland and who brought different lived experiences of suicide as well as other skills and expertise.
- 7.2. The number of applicants far exceeded the roles available. However, to further strengthen the diversity of the panel we would suggest that approaches to widening the reach and appeal of the opportunities and overcoming barriers to participation for communities that were not represented on the panel are explored. This could include, for example, drawing on the support of other stakeholders and partners that are already working in and with these communities.
- 7.3. Questions were raised about the application criteria; specifically, the length of time since the individual had experienced a bereavement by suicide, attempted suicide or experienced suicidal ideation, and whether it should be longer than the two-year timeframe set. This could further mitigate the risks associated with involving people who have experienced trauma and loss. However, the critical factor in managing this is ensuring robust ongoing support, supervision and safeguarding that is tailored to individual and group needs is in place.
- 7.4. Most panel members felt at the time they received enough information to make an informed decision about applying, but on reflection feel that more detail could have been helpful. However, this likely reflects the evolving nature of defining how the panel would interact with and influence the delivery of the action plan. Panel members are likely to have a valuable contribution to developing the information that is provided to potential future applicants.
- 7.5. Processing the applications and the follow-up required with unsuccessful applicants was resource intensive. However, it is also recognised as an essential step to manage any potential feelings of rejection, disappointment and/or an individual feeling their experience is not as valued or valuable.

Induction and training of panel members

- 7.6. Panel members had little recollection of what the induction period involved and therefore it is not possible to draw any conclusions relating to its effectiveness in helping to prepare panel members for their roles. Early face-to-face gatherings however were appreciated and cited as supporting the forming of relationships.
- 7.7. The training provided for panel members was well received by most members, and helped them feel equipped for their role as well as bringing other benefits. Other areas of development and training opportunities that could further enhance their ability to effectively carry out their role have been identified. Furthermore, a more proactive, structured, and holistic approach to training and development was suggested.

Support, Boundaries and safeguarding

- 7.8. The lack of defined and established approaches to safeguarding and setting boundaries caused some uncertainty about this in the early days of the panel. However, feedback suggests that this was quickly resolved and clearly set out in a member handbook.
- 7.9. Support from the co-ordinator was described positively by the majority of panel members and stakeholders. However, a few concerns were raised regarding boundaries, the risk of dependencies developing among more vulnerable group members, and the weight of responsibility of the role being carried by a single person.
- 7.10. Peer-to-peer support emerged as the panel developed, which some were less comfortable with. This suggests clarity is needed about the role, purpose and boundaries of involvement with the LEP from the outset so that people are not put in positions that put them or others at risk.
- 7.11. On the breadth of responsibility of the co-ordinator role there were suggestions that the role should be split. From a workload, safety and boundaries perspective the findings suggest that this would be a good approach to take in the future. Extending the support role could also be explored, in terms of ensuring the co-ordinator receives the emotional support they need, as well as delivery leads and others that access and work with the panel.

Panel meetings and communication

- 7.12. Overall, panel meetings were effectively facilitated, providing a safe space for contributions to be made and healthy discussion and challenge to take place. While challenges with some members being more dominant than others were observed during the earlier stages, this became better managed with time. A contributing factor was panel members growing in confidence and becoming more comfortable with making contributions.
- 7.13. In a few instances panel members left a meeting wondering what the point of it was, and this highlights the need to ensure each meeting has a clear purpose. Panel members are giving their time to be there and it should not feel like it has been wasted. On a related point, there is room for improvement in communication with panel members outside of meetings to ensure that everyone gets the same information and receives meeting invitations.
- 7.14. A mix of full group discussions with smaller break-out group meetings has been largely effective in ensuring the input and involvement of the wider panel when needed. Working with sub-groups also allowed for more focussed and in-depth discussions and involvement when this is more appropriate.

Involvement and interactions

- 7.15. While some of those that engaged with the panel observed that some members were much more involved than others, we do not consider this to be a negative finding. There was no obligation on panel members to give a certain amount time and they appreciated being able to choose the time they gave and the activities they got involved in. This meant that their time commitment and workload remained in their control and manageable. Accommodating the preferences and availability of panel members has likely contributed to sustained involvement.

- 7.16. The breadth of opportunities for involvement in different activity was appreciated by panel members and aligned to their areas of interest and where they wanted to be part of the change. A small number of activities delivered by the panel, while making a positive contribution to the suicide prevention agenda, did not directly contribute to the implementation of the action plan. However, as noted previously in this report, these activities had been discussed and ratified by the Steering Group. This process should remain in place to consider and provide justification for involvement activity that is not directly contributing to the implementation of the action plan.
- 7.17. Reflective of the new way of working that engagement with the lived experience panel brought for stakeholders, involvement activity in the earlier stages was not as effective or collaborative as it could have been. However, this developed and improved over time and panel members felt listened to, their contributions valued and involvement that reflected a model of co-production. This mirrors the experiences of stakeholders who acknowledged the unique contribution and added value brought by panel members and their own positive experiences of engaging and working with them.
- 7.18. There was some variation in how and what stage in the development of actions that delivery leads engaged with and involved the panel members. While an aspect of this is influenced by the extent to which lived experience needs to be involved and when, there is also a sense that some opportunities were missed. A need for greater consistency and of more fully embedding lived experience input and involvement is needed going forward.

Impact

- 7.19. Impacts generated through the panel go beyond their contribution to delivery of the action plan. Feedback suggests that their work has brought about an increased understanding of suicide and also changed the way that people think about developing suicide prevention activities. It has generated insights for others about the role and contribution of lived experience in responding to societal issues and challenges.
- 7.20. The work of the panel is also perceived to have increased the profile of lived experience involvement and been a catalyst for stimulating interest in, and discussion about how it is done effectively and the value it adds.
- 7.21. Positive personal impacts reported from individual panel members include the satisfaction of knowing they have made a positive contribution to suicide prevention and helped to drive positive change. For some panel members, their involvement has resulted in them feeling more comfortable discussing suicide, and better equipped to support others. Increased confidence has also been a benefit realised by a few members.
- 7.22. The lived experience panel are seen as an integral and essential contributor in delivering the Suicide Prevention Action Plan, having contributed to most actions. Stakeholders reflected that while involvement of the lived experience panel introduces new steps in development, it ultimately helps to ensure that things are developed in the right way and moving in the right direction. The time invested is seen to be worth it, with acknowledgement that some of the actions would have looked very different without their input and involvement. It creates a confidence that what is being done is responsive to the needs and experiences of those affected by suicide. Several specific examples of the panels influence were provided to evidence this.

Future consideration

- 7.23. Given the findings detailed in this report, we have no hesitation in recommending that the NSPLG lived experience panel continues. Given the launch of a new 10-year suicide prevention strategy we would also recommend that a long-term commitment is made to the continuation, funding and operation of the panel.
- 7.24. While we do not recommend a specific model, suggested changes and areas for consideration for the next phase will build on the successes that have been identified in this report. These areas of development are detailed below:
- **Panel membership** – Recruit a new panel to introduce fresh perspectives and experiences. Consideration should be given to increasing the panel size slightly (e.g. up to 15 members) which would enable a better breadth of representation and diversity. Should existing panel members be interested we would suggest maintaining their involvement for a period of time to support recruitment, induction and support the transfer of knowledge and experience.
 - **Recruitment of new members** – While the recruitment process was acknowledged as time and resource intensive a robust process is still required. As mentioned above, panel members could support the process and contribute to aspects such as the development of information and materials for advertising the opportunity, and if equipped, the interview process. Greater consideration should be given to reaching and appealing to under-represented communities, and understanding the barriers they face to participation and what can be done to remove those barriers.
 - **Induction and training** – Given the experience gained by panel members through their involvement, we would recommend a co-production approach with those willing to give their time to developing the induction for new panel members. Identification of training needs and areas that panel members would like to develop should be underpinned by a structured process that ensures comprehensiveness. This should be aligned to the knowledge, skills and competencies required of panel members in their role, but also to support their exit from the panel and any future suicide prevention work they would like to undertake thereafter.
 - **Time on panel and managing exit** – Define a maximum term for panel members so that new experiences, ideas and perspectives are brought in over time. Further develop the existing exit process, based on any learning generated from managing the exit of the current panel members.
 - **Unsuccessful applicants** – Beyond maintaining the offer of a discussion following an unsuccessful application we would suggest continuing and further developing the current approach to explore the different ways and preferences that they can be involved in different ways. Ensuring appropriate support structures to ensure safe and effective participation will be essential.
 - **Embedding lived experience in each and every action** – The involvement of lived experience should be seen in every action, and brought in at the earliest opportunity. Ensuring that consideration of what, why and how lived experience panel members will be involved at every step of design and delivery should be a priority. As plans for involvement are developed and defined, these should be shared with the lived experience panel to enable their planning and move away from being reactionary to immediate requests for their input. Consideration should be

given to a role within the delivery structure that is focussed on lived experience involvement and ensuring it is being considered throughout.

- **Action subgroups** –Panel members will have different interests and areas they do or do not want to be involved in. Consideration should be given to identifying those actions that will benefit from broader input from the whole panel and those where lived experience involvement would be more effective through smaller dedicated sub-groups.
- **Paying panel members** – While it comes with challenges, we would recommend that panel members are financially compensated for their involvement.
- **Co-ordinator role** – The workload and responsibility of the role as it stands is too much to expect of one person. We would recommend that a separate role is created to provide support and safeguarding for panel members, the co-ordinator and those accessing the panel. This would also provide scope to develop support structures for wider engagement with those with lived experience outside of the panel.
- **Expanding the breadth of lived experience involvement** – Even with a slight increase in panel size and greater efforts to reach and attract underrepresented groups a single panel cannot provide all aspects of lived experience that will be required to inform the new action plan. We would recommend identifying existing local groups, organisations and infrastructure that can support wider engagement with specific demographics or experiences as and when it is needed. Again, ensuring the required support structures are in place will be essential to support any engagement activity. Recognising the time and resource this will require, this should be developed over time, though supported by a clear plan to ensure continuous progress and momentum.

8. Appendix 1 – Meaningful Participation of People with Lived Experience in Suicide Prevention - The Scottish Experience (2018-2020)

Meaningful Participation of People with Lived Experience in Suicide Prevention The Scottish Experience (2018 – 2020)

In August 2018 the Scottish Government published its three year Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2018-2021. Included in that plan was a commitment to establish a National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group to advise on and support delivery of the Action Plan.

Scotland's National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group committed to ensuring that its work was underpinned equally by evidence by experience and by academic evidence. In order to meet that commitment, it established both a Lived Experience Panel and an Academic Advisory Group. The Lived Experience Panel is made up of people who volunteer their personal experience of suicidal ideation or behaviour, or of caring for someone with that experience, or who have been bereaved by suicide.

Taking the learning from the work done to establish that Lived Experience Panel, and from how its members have worked with Scotland's NSPLG to influence and co-produce suicide prevention action in Scotland, below is a summary of the key ingredients that have proved essential to successfully achieving meaningful and authentic participation of those with lived experience of suicide in the delivery of Scotland's Suicide Prevention Action Plan.

- Recruitment of volunteers – Set criteria for volunteering (suggested gap of 2 years since prior suicide attempt or bereavement by suicide). This enables safer participation and reduces potential distress.
- Recruitment of a designated Lived Experience Co-ordinator – To manage volunteers, liaise with stakeholders and implement safeguarding protocols.
- Steering Group - The importance of having a Steering Group to support the co-ordinator role and to use learning to update policy and processes
- Agree outcomes and set expectations – Ensure that volunteers are aware of programme outcomes and that activities are aligned to these; manage volunteer expectations.
- Methods of engagement and deliberation – Promoting respectful and honest conversations helps to nurture openness between volunteers and build trusting relationships. Non-polemical methods of sharing lived experiences helps volunteers to prioritise key issues and identify areas for improvement.
- Engagement planning and preparation – Professionals and volunteer co-ordinators should agree session plans and share information with volunteers in advance of each session.

- Gathering feedback – Deploy a range of ways to gather feedback (written, audio, focus groups, digital) to maximise opportunities for participation. Smaller groups have proved to be the most effective, safest way for volunteers sharing personal stories.
- Virtuous feedback cycle – Agreeing feedback mechanisms with volunteers avoids tokenistic participation and ensures that those taking action forward produce evidence of knowledge use while ensuring volunteers that their views are being taken seriously.
 - Follow up meetings with volunteers about progress
 - Agree timescales for feedback
 - Incorporate views into reports
 - Ensure volunteers attend programme meetings.
- Seeking permission at every turn - Volunteers must be consulted at every turn on sharing personal information. They have the final say on information sharing; checking for consent should be ongoing.
- Emotional support and safeguarding – Welfare check-ins with volunteers must routinely take place before, during and after engagement sessions.
- Volunteer agreement and handbook – There should be clearly recorded responsibilities and boundaries for volunteers, including a list of crisis support services.
- Debriefing after sharing lived experiences – Open channels are essential: the impact of sharing can be cathartic but also trigger painful memories and difficult emotions.
- Self-care - This is not an optional extra. Wellbeing sessions are vital.

Scotland's National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group
November 2020

9. Appendix 2 – LEP steering group terms of reference

1. Vision

The vision of the Lived Experience Panel is to ensure that the voice of those with lived experience of suicide is heard and taken seriously by decision makers. The Lived Experience Panel will work alongside the National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group to consider specific matters of relevance throughout its work on the 10 actions outlined in the Suicide Prevention Action Plan.

2. Purpose

The role of the Steering Group is to provide ongoing support, guidance and oversight on the progress of the Lived Experience Panel.

3. Membership

Chair Person, Toni Groundwater See Me Scotland Social Movement Manager
Lynsey Brown, Scottish Government Policy Team
Andy Grierson, Scottish Government/NSPLG
Fiona Benton, SAMH
Keir McKechnie, SAMH
Fiona Drouet, Member of the NSPLG
Tiago/Heather, Academic Advisory Group Member

The Chair person will be responsible for chairing Steering Group meetings.

4. Remit

The Steering Group's role is to provide advice, ensure delivery of the project outputs and the achievement of project outcomes.

This may include such tasks as:

- Providing input to the development of the lived experience work, including the lessons learned and evaluation of the Lived Experience work against Scottish Government grant guidelines
- Identifying potential risks
- Monitoring risks
- Monitoring timelines
- Ensuring timely and effective reporting feedback mechanisms are established and working well between the Lived Experience Panel, the Delivery Leads Group and the NSPLG.
- Providing advice (and sometimes making decisions) about the Lived Experience Panel and work requests
- Review requests for engagement with the Lived Experience Panel
- Assisting with wider engagement events and the wider lived experience network
- Consideration of wellbeing of the Lived Experience Panel and the Co-ordinator throughout the life of the project

The group will work collaboratively with the panel partners to ensure that governance arrangements are met in accordance with the submitted specification.

The group will work closely with NSPLG, the Delivery Leads, Scottish Government and action sponsors and adhere to agreed reporting mechanisms on progress being made.

5. The Chair

The Chairperson will be responsible for chairing Steering Group meetings.

The Chair will be supported by the Lived Experience Co-ordinator.

- Conduct the meeting according to the agenda, ensuring that all members are encouraged to provide relevant input throughout the meeting and that any recommendations are adequately resolved and agreed to by the members.
- Check through the list of action items from the previous meeting.
- Confirm actions taken and issues resolved and agree on how to progress any actions that are not completed.
- Ensure that all meetings are kept to time and that group members adhere to the agenda to ensure effective coverage of all items.

6. Lifetime of the Group

The group will run for the lifetime of the panel – 2 years initially.

7. Frequency of Meetings and Locations

The group will meet quarterly alternating meeting locations between Edinburgh and Glasgow. Relevant matters for the group will be tabled as agenda items and any other matters arising out with the scheduled meetings will be considered and discussed via email/telephone and other social media correspondence.

8. Accountability and Reporting

The Steering Group are responsible to the NSPLG. The Programme Manager will act as the initial point of contact should any matters arise that requires immediate escalation to NSPLG and its Chair.

The NSPLG Programme Manager will report back any relevant advice, guidance or recommendations for immediate consideration and resolution of any issues of concern.

The Lived Experience Co-ordinator will liaise with key stakeholders to address any relevant actions and/or significant issues that the Steering Group need to consider or has raised for immediate consideration by the relevant group or individual stakeholder. (ANNEX A)

Decision making will be as far as possible by consensus or by majority.

The group can make recommendations and/or raise any issues of concern via the monthly reports written by the Lived Experience Panel Coordinator and submitted to the Delivery Leads and the NSPLG by the Lived Experience Panel Co-ordinator.

9. Code of Conduct

Members are expected to make every effort to attend all meetings. Deputies will be accepted to represent members of the group in the event that they are unable to attend.

All members will be expected to:

- work collaboratively to progress the aims of the panel
- observe good time keeping
- undertake the necessary preparation in advance of meetings
- take individual responsibility for engaging and completing tasks
- treat fellow members and invited participants with courtesy and respect
- make timely decisions and take action to ensure that agreed outcomes are achieved.

10. Transparency

Minutes of each meeting will be produced and circulated to members and any other relevant parties.

ANNEX A



10. Appendix 3 – Supplementary stakeholder quotes

Accessing the panel – reimbursement of panel members

“It was a kind of reliance of, we'll just get the lived experience and they'll do it. And then.. there's a bit of friction, about their time and being paid for their time..but nothing, I would say, delayed work.” [Stakeholder]

Accessing the panel - the need for balance between being flexible for delivery leads and protecting panel members from being overwhelmed

“That's helpful..having one or two members.. that I can just pick up the phone and see, what do you think about that?” [Stakeholder]

Experience with panel meetings – use of jargon amongst those accessing the panel and some panel members being more actively involved in discussions

“Those people that are leading actions that are working in mental health all of the time. And one or two of the panel that are also much more actively involved in mental health on a day to day basis, probably dominated some of the discussions with an awful lot of jargon. Which, personally, I felt slightly alienated by.” [Panel Member]

Support and safeguarding – establishing of boundaries and support for the co-ordinator

“Boundaries weren't set early on. So those relationships developed in a way that meant the (co-ordinator) was taking calls on his annual leave and..doing over and above. And is that sustainable?we tried to bring that back because .. there was unrealistic expectations set up from the offset with the coordinator and the panel members.” [Stakeholder]

Interactions with delivery leads - differing levels of engagement with the panel among delivery leads.

“I'm not convinced that actually we've engaged properly with the lived experience panel... I think it's been a mixed bag, to be honest. And it.. probably says something about the nature of having very discreet delivery leads who are delivering on a very specific thing, often hosted in different organisations...the difficulty in creating a coherent culture, and set of approaches when you've got actually a very fragmented way of doing things across many, many organisations.” [Stakeholder]

Challenges – achieving diversity across a panel of only 12-14 people.

“One of the things we talked about... was a reference to poverty... And I came away not just thinking that this isn't a representative group... I don't think it's diverse.” [Stakeholder]

Impact of the LEP – raising the profile and value of the lived experience voice.

“It's given other people in other fields something to start with. It's given a template which other people can look at and say, well, first of all, this is possible. Secondly, it looks as if it adds a lot of value... And thirdly, could we maybe take this and adjust it to whatever field we're working in... So I think they should feel really proud that that influence is spreading not just in the world of suicide prevention, but beyond that.” [Stakeholder]

Impact of the LEP – contributing to the delivery of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan



“They have been absolutely integral in delivering the suicide prevention action plan, not just for the action three area work, but across all the ten actions, I think I can see that without a doubt.” [Stakeholder]

Future of the panel – importance of the panel being continued



“Definitely in one shape or another, absolutely. There has to be continued to be lived experience, involvement all the way through, you know, for the next 10 year strategy, there needs to be lived experience involved all the way through that without a shadow of a doubt. You know, it may not be us but you know, it needs to be a big involvement.” [Panel member]

Future of the panel – achieving diversity through local connections and structures



“So I think there's something about it being, about it being a network of organisations who have direct lines into different parts of the community. But with a coordinating piece, so that you can go out, everybody could theoretically go and speak to the whole panel, which would be like, everybody in the network who's up for working with us, and then we would have specialist leads and groups that we could work with on topical issues, diversity and requirements. And I think if we could have a clear articulation of when and how you would use each part.” [Stakeholder]

Future of the panel – the use of smaller sub-groups to achieve closer involvement of the panel, and efficient access for those working with the panel.



“Sometimes they'd say, actually, no, I want to take this back to the forum and get a broader perspective. So I think there's a bit of that, like, can we have subject specialists or something that, you know, that then I could have made contact with without having to say Keir can you get in touch with, I'm really keen to speak to people who've got this kind of experience, you know, for me to be able to say who's leading on action ten work from a lived experience panel. And for me to have my own little subgroups that I can just go and bounce ideas off that would have cut down some of the time, I think.” [Stakeholder]

Future of the panel – financial reimbursement for panel members



“If you are going to expect people to give up a lot of their time, then does there need to be a little bit more in the way of compensation for it? It's not an issue for me, but it would be for quite a number of the panel members. So that would be something to think about probably at the outset. Can you really resource it or are you really trying to milk people to help out people that are getting paid, but they're not getting anything for it? [Panel member]

Future of the panel – tenure and exit from the panel and recruiting new members

“

“And when you think back to the start of this conversation, when I talked about the level of the applications that came in, we're missing out and all that experience, because I'm not necessarily sure that we did enough to make sure the people that didn't get through in that first tranche had an opportunity to be involved. So absolutely the panel or something like it with that rigorous infrastructure is a great idea. But I think the people on it needs to change regularly.” [Stakeholder]

Future of the panel – supporting members to continue suicide prevention activity following their membership on the panel, and linking with local delivery.

“

“But if we can think about community-based action research or peer research, or different, you know, different Community Development, those type of approaches allow us to hear from the voices that we don't hear from much and how that feeds back in.” [Stakeholder]