Leading for Collective Impact (L4CI)

Place Based Leadership Development Programme (PBLD) for Darndale and Drogheda

SEPTEMBER 2023

Northside Partnership
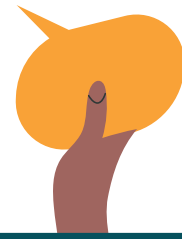
LOUTH LEADER PARTNERSHIP
Building Community & Enterprise

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 | EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Programme delivery

The programme was delivered as planned, providing 10 modules of leadership development delivered across six blocks, each around three months apart. Participants also received around six hours of coaching to support their professional development. The programme was delivered to 47 people across two places: 25 in Darndale and 22 in Drogheda.

A diverse group of participants were recruited onto the programme, representing statutory agencies, voluntary and community sector organisations and local residents. This enabled the programme to fulfil its main aim to develop intersectoral relationships and facilitate learning across agencies.

Overall, feedback from participants about their experience on the programme was positive. The course materials and facilitator knowledge were consistently rated highly throughout the programme. Levels of interest in each module achieved 'excellent' or 'good' in 99% of ratings, and the content of each module was rated 'excellent' or 'good' in 96% of ratings.

Almost all participants engaged in the coaching sessions provided. Overall, participants shared positive feedback about their experience of coaching and felt it contributed to their understanding of the P-BLD programme and to their leadership development. The 360 assessment and debrief session with a coach were very impactful experiences for some participants and provided useful insights about leadership and communication styles.

Programme outcomes

Only 22 of the 47 participants completed the final questionnaire, which means more than half of participants views were not captured through this process.

Most participants either strongly agreed or agreed that each of the main objectives were met. Six participants shared feedback that they did not learn new theories, approaches or skills related to collaborative working or leadership styles – and they explained that they felt confident in their leadership skills and working styles prior to the programme, or they had encountered the material covered before. These participants emphasised that the benefit of the programme they most valued was the development of relationships with people in other agencies and sectors, and learning about how those agencies work in practice.

Personal impact

1| Increased personal confidence: in the value, skills and experience they bring to collaborative working. Also, increased enthusiasm and hope for local development.

2| Increased knowledge about social issues and local agencies: learning about types of crime, exploitation and other issues affecting local communities, and how agencies are responding and seeking to prevent crime and social problems.

3| Reflection: slowing down responses to situations, taking time to think and to engage with others, and distributing leadership among collaborators.

4| Improved skills to communicate and challenge: ability to address conflict, to communicate clearly and effectively and to build confidence in questioning or disagreeing with others when needed.

5| Interagency relationships

6| Advocating for other agencies: increased understanding of other agencies led to changes in opinions and increased advocacy and support of the work and services delivered by local agencies.

7| Gaining specific connections: improved delivery of work, support to remove issues or blockers to progress, and increased referrals and connections made between services to meet the needs of communities.

8| Developing momentum: the relationships that have developed between P-BLD participants are helping to accelerate progress in the Northside Partnership in Darndale and the Drogheda Implementation Board.

Emerging impact

Many participants described that they were only just starting the process of putting their learning into practice, and the groups were at the beginning of their journey working together to deliver projects. Eight examples are provided in this report about change to ways of working, or new projects that are beginning to develop. These include small investments from funding agencies, new groups of people working together, community events, referrals between agencies, training provision, and engagement on local projects and campaigns.

Recommendations to consider in future programme design

1| **Balancing theory and practice:** Some participants felt that the programme was quite heavy on theory at times and experienced some challenges in understanding unfamiliar terminology or complex theories and models.

2| **Gaps between module delivery:** Several participants described the two- or three-month gap between modules as too long. Whilst it was understood that this time was provided to enable participants to practice using new skills or approaches, they felt that smaller gaps between the first six to eight modules might help to build relationships more quickly and to build momentum.

3| **Programme administration:** One overarching programme manager is recommended for future delivery, to provide consistent support for programme delivery across both sites. This would include encouragement and support to use Canvas and access materials online, to participate in reflective questionnaires, and to develop collaborative projects throughout the programme.

4| **Inclusion of residents, young people and local services:** Further development of this programme could ensure good representation of local residents on programmes, and could ensure either direct involvement of young people, or a meaningful and appropriate way of engaging with young people throughout the programme.

5| **Joining up groups and programmes:** Whilst it was understood that consistency in groups helped to develop teamwork, several participants wanted to mix up the group work, to provide more time to develop relationships with other participants. Similarly, there were several suggestions that joining up Darndale and Drogheda programmes could take place more than twice.

2 | INTRODUCTION
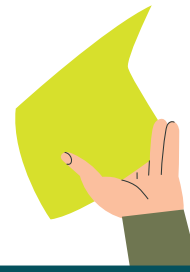
A collaboration between Northside Partnership (NSP), Louth LEADER Partnership (LLP), Dublin City Local and Community Development Committee (LDCD) and Louth County Council (LCC) came together in 2021 to address community problems in Darndale and Drogheda. Drawing on insights from two key reports: 'Darndale: A Long View of an Enduring Challenge' (Nolan, 2020) and 'Drogheda: Creating a Bridge to a Better Future' (Geiran, 2021), the partnership commissioned a place-based approach to address the issues and problems raised. The reports highlight poverty, deprivation, unemployment, antisocial behaviour, drug-related offending and violence as key concerns for both communities. Both reports recognise that much work is happening in these areas, particularly by the voluntary and community sector, to address some of these complex problems, but call for more meaningful, cohesive and joined-up interagency working to create long-term, sustainable change for local communities.

'Place-Based Leadership Development' (P-BLD) is the overall term for activities that aim to support the development of collective leadership within a given locality. The P-BLD framework helps local leaders to build their individual and collective leadership capability to work more effectively together.

The Place-Based Leadership Development Programme (P-BLD), 'Leading for Collective Impact', ran as two pilot programmes, one in Darndale and the second in Drogheda. The programme supported leadership development and promoted collaborative and interagency working over an 18-month period. Participants included people from statutory bodies, community and voluntary organisations and local residents. The programme provided ten modules, a 360° assessment of leadership and communication style, and six hours of coaching.

The evaluation of this programme aimed to identify and explore:

- The impact of P-BLD at the individual, collective and wider place levels including:
  - The extent to which participants have developed stronger self-awareness and appreciation of their own capabilities in relation to becoming an effective collaborative leader.
  - The extent to which increased trust and a sense of common purpose, across a diverse group of interests and perspectives can be evidenced.
- The extent to which more effective collaboration can be evidenced at intersectoral and wider place levels.
- The extent to which new and innovative initiatives/ways of working have been catalysed by the joint learning and collaboration on the P-BLD programme.

3 | THE PLACE-BASED LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (P-BLD) PROGRAMME

The programme includes 10 modules. Modules are delivered in two-day blocks approximately three months apart, e.g., Module 1 and 2 over two days, and three months later, Module 3 and 4. Modules 9 and 10 are delivered over a three-day block, to maximise the final impacts of the programme and put a sustainable plan of action in place.

Each module has core components and specific learning objectives. The sessions are focused on providing tools and mechanisms to promote reflective practice and self-development, which is an important way of reducing the gap between theory and the realities of professional practice.

Broadly, P-BLD is designed to:

- Explore levels of self-awareness, with participants undertaking self-assessments to develop their leadership skillsets, for example using emotional intelligence or conflict management approaches.

- Encourage participants to think about their mindset and their openness to learning, listening to other perspectives and considering issues from the standpoint of a participant from a different sector or organisation.

- Encourage participants to explore their own and others' assumptions by asking questions of each other.

- Enable and encourage participants to become adaptive and open to exploring new ways of seeing the world by trying out creative, dynamic, unfamiliar, experimental and uncomfortable activities that facilitate individual and collective learning.

- Facilitate teamwork in intersectoral collaboratives to address local complex problems, such as poverty, housing problems, drug-related offending or violence.

- Guide participants through a collaborative methodology from the evolving P-BLD toolset, for example appreciative inquiry and design thinking.

- Facilitate participants to design and propose action plans to be carried out at zero additional costs: in other words, through the redistribution of existing resources, enabling service redesign.

Between modules, participants take forward their actions and report back their learning and progress at the next module block. This process takes participants through a journey of development of their mindset, skillset and the application of a collaborative toolset. Pre- and post-module questionnaires facilitate reflection practice amongst participants and provide insights for ongoing evaluation of the delivery and outcomes of the programme.

4 | METHODOLOGY

4.1 PRE- AND POST-MODULE QUESTIONNAIRES

Programme participants were asked to complete questionnaires before and after each module, to provide time for reflection on the key issues and material shared in the programme, and to provide regular feedback on programme delivery. The questionnaires asked participants to share their reflections and feedback on:

- Learning objectives
- Module content
- Module administration, materials and delivery

As a part of the programme, questionnaires were designed to be completed on paper, as a reflective exercise before each module, and as a final exercise at the end of each module. Ideally, these were completed whilst still in the environment of the programme, and as part of the module session. However, the administrative burden of paper questionnaires quickly became apparent, particularly as the programmes were delivered with limited administrative support. This meant that several questionnaires were left blank or incomplete.

For Modules 3 through to 10, online questionnaires were introduced, and they were shared via email and on the online learning platform, Canvas. Participants initially shared positive feedback about completing the questionnaires online, either using their phone or laptop, and receiving email reminders. However, this changed the nature of the questionnaires slightly, as several participants did not complete them during the module and waited several days or weeks to reflect on the module learning and share their views.

In total, 18 questionnaires were shared with participants, one before and one after each of the 10 modules. Numbers of completed questionnaires fluctuated throughout the programme, with a maximum of 40 participants and a minimum of eight participants completing each one. On average between 30 and 35 people attended each module (split in two between Darndale and Drogheda, around 16 to 17 people at each session). Participation in the questionnaires varied throughout the programme, and the table below shows the fluctuations in completion over time:

Module	Total	Module	Total
Pre-Induction	39	Post-Module 5	20
Post-Induction	40	Post-Module 6	16
Pre-Modules 1&2	39	Pre-Modules 7&8	11
Post-Module 1	33	Post-Module 7	16
Post-Module 2	26	Post-Module 8	8
Pre-Modules 3&4	26	Pre-Modules 9&10	29
Post-Module 3	24	Post-Modules 9&10 Day 1	28
Post-Module 4	14	Post-Modules 9&10 Day 2	21
Pre-Modules 5&6	14	Post-Modules 9&10 Day 3	22
Total questionnaires completed - 426			

4.2 INTERVIEWS

For the final evaluation of this programme, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 participants, including 10 from the Darndale programme, and six from the Drogheda programme. In addition, five 'close collaborators' were interviewed, to share reflections on the impact of the programme from the perspectives of those working closely with participants on the programme. Three coaches were also interviewed, to share insights about the delivery of the coaching sessions provided to participants.

For the interim evaluation (see separate report) six interviews were conducted. These included one programme facilitator, three coaches, and two programme administrators.

4.3 ETHICS

Participation in questionnaires or interviews for the purpose of this evaluation was voluntary. Programme participants completed a participant consent form as part of their enrolment onto the programme to participate in questionnaires pre- and post-modules. Interview participants received a participant information sheet and signed a participant consent form. The evaluation methodology is designed in line with a code of ethics, see Appendix I.

5 | EVALUATION OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY
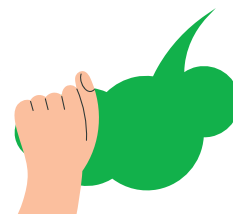
5.1 PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

5.1.1 Programme recruitment

The programme began with 50 participants enrolled, 25 in Darndale and 25 in Drogheda. Two participants left the Darndale programme, and three participants left the Drogheda programme after the first two modules. Feedback shared by programme staff and coaches suggests that the programme was not a good fit for the needs and interests of those people. It became apparent that the focus of the programme on academic theory and personal and professional development work may not have been anticipated by those participants that chose to leave the programme.

Replacement participants were recruited before Module 3, bringing Darndale back up to 25 participants. The facilitator arranged one-to-one calls with new participants to share the content and concise versions of the material shared in the induction and early modules. This preparation was arranged for new recruits in Darndale with the support of the programme administrator, but the same administrative support was not available for much of the programme in Drogheda. This means that later recruits to the Drogheda programme may have found it harder to catch up.

Some participants on the programme shared feedback that they would like to see more local residents in the programme. Residents were initially recruited to both Darndale and Drogheda programmes, but only three participants stayed on the Darndale programme, and no residents stayed on the Drogheda programme after the first modules. The feedback from programme staff suggests that the participants that dropped out of the programme could not see why they were involved, what the benefit would be for them or what benefit they could provide to the groups. For the residents that stayed for the full course of the programme, there was an evident shift in their perspectives from the early modules through the end of the programme – at the beginning they described feeling a little out of place, they were not sure how they could contribute or influence the complex systems, agencies or problems that the programme was seeking to address. However, by the end two residents in Darndale shared feedback that they felt valued on the programme, and they felt they contributed to the knowledge of other participants and their contributions to ideas and opportunities were important. The recruitment of residents to future P-BLD programmes was highlighted as important by all programme staff and most participants.

In a similar vein, several participants representing statutory agencies also felt they had limited agency or flexibility to make change happen through their roles. During the early modules this disrupted aspirations, energy, and motivation for a small number of participants. However, this changed for most participants that completed the full programme. They reflected in later modules and after receiving coaching, that they could see their role and contribution to the bigger picture.

A small number of participants also suggested that the programme could include more young people. They recognised that a lot of the community development work explored on the programme relates to services for young people, youth work, education, family services and environmental spaces that young people use. The involvement of young people sharing their views during Modules 3 and 4 was identified as hugely positive and impactful for participants. It was also recognised that this programme has not been designed for young people, and that it may not be the right type of programme to engage young people directly, and that instead further consultation and engagement with local young people could be facilitated.

5.1.2 Participant profile

Participants in both Darndale and Drogheda represented a range of public services, community organisations and local experiences. Their roles included a mix of working directly with children, young people, and families, and people in management and leadership roles overseeing projects and programmes related to local service provision.

- Education
- Youth work
- Family support services
- Employment services
- County council

- Health services
- Family addiction services
- Local residents
- Local construction
- An Garda Síochána

The majority of participants had been in their current for role for between two and four years. Five participants had been in their roles for between 15 and 20 years, providing a depth of knowledge of place, local services and histories.

Nearly half of participants, 24 out of 50, had participated in some management or leadership training, including courses run by their organisations, diplomas and post-graduate degrees.

Not all participants shared their age group. Of those that did, there were a range represented in both programmes. Three participants were on the programme as local residents. At least 12 participants were aged under 35, and one was 21 or younger. Some participants would like to see more young people and more local residents engaged.

Age group	Number of participants	% of participants
21 and under	1	3%
22 to 34	11	29%
35 to 44	9	24%
45 to 54	11	29%
55 to 64	6	16%
Total	38	
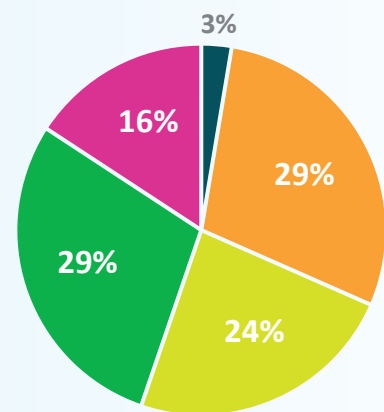
There are a wide range of organisations and roles involved in the programme. Three-quarters, 74%, of participants describe their 'level of place' as the local neighbourhood or town. One participant had a role that includes national reach. Nearly two-fifths, 38%, of participants were either living or working in one estate or neighbourhood, often connected to a specific school, college or local community support service. Over one-third, 36%, described their locality as the town of Darndale or Drogheda.

Level of place	Number of participants	% of participants
Estate / neighbourhood	18	38%
Town	17	36%
County	7	15%
Region	4	9%
National	1	2%
Total	47	
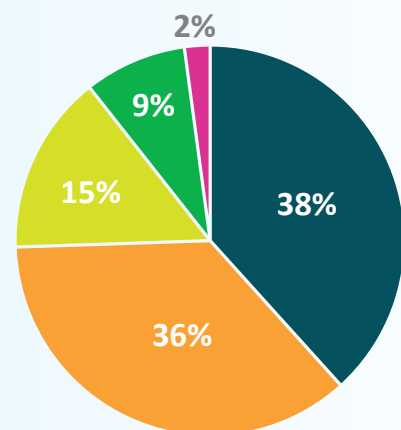
5.1.3 Programme delivery

Participants that completed post-module questionnaires shared feedback about the delivery of each module. The graph below collates 225 ratings across Modules 1 to 10 providing an overall rating of programme delivery.

The results show that 60% of ratings of the 'overall experience' across the ten modules were 'excellent', and 39% of ratings were 'good'. Similarly positive results can also be seen for the course materials, including the slides and handouts, and course administration, including communication with participants and the use of Canvas.

Levels of interest in each module achieved 'excellent' or 'good' in 99% of ratings, and the content of each module was rated 'excellent' or 'good' in 96% of ratings.

Minor dissatisfaction was identified with the venue, where 1% of ratings were 'poor' and 9% were 'average'. These results were mainly for Modules 1 and 2 in Darndale, where the venue was changed for Module 3 onwards, to a community centre situated in Darndale. The feedback suggests that this move to a community-based location facilitated more open engagement and connection to local context and needs. One person rated the venue for the last Modules 9 and 10 as poor, due to poor acoustics in the room, making it difficult to hear group presentations at time. Another participant suggested the room was uncomfortable and it made it hard to concentrate. This feedback reiterates the importance of a comfortable environment in which to deliver and listen to presentations and to undertake group activities.

Collated feedback across Modules 1 - 10

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
Venue	51%	39%	9%	1%
Content	55%	41%	4%	
Course materials	48%	43%	9%	0%
Interest	60%	39%	2%	
Administration	71%	25%	4%	
Overall experience	60%	39%	1%	
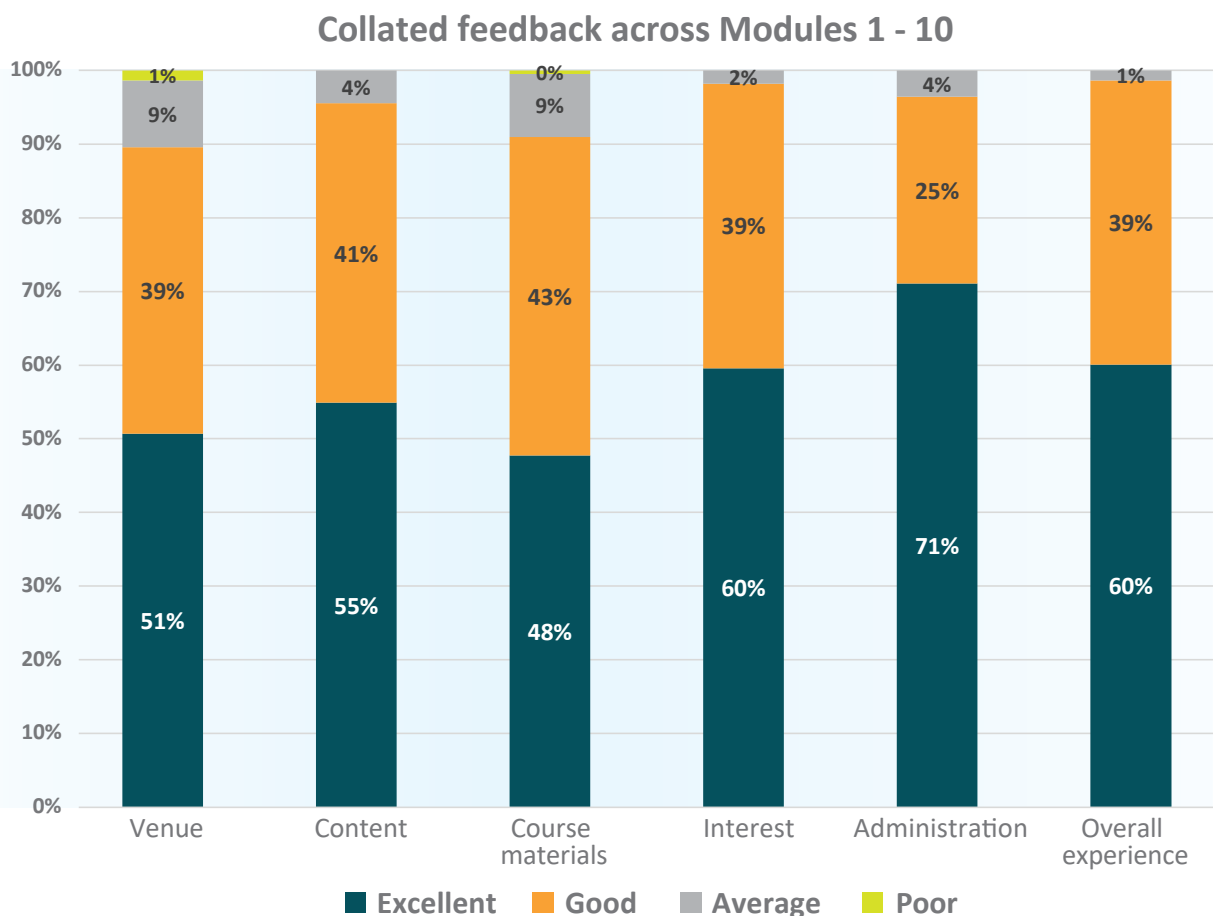
Programme administration and course materials

The Darndale and Drogheda programmes were run using the same course content and materials, and the same approach to using groups of intersectoral participants for group work and activities. Programme administration was managed using the Canvas platform. This provided an online space where participants, coaches and the facilitator could share information, venue details, course materials, reading, links to questionnaires and reminders about what was coming up next in the programme. Not all participants felt comfortable using Canvas, and some chose not to access it. This did not seem to impact on their experience of the programme, and they used handouts where relevant in the programme to reflect on the material.

In addition to the online platform, the programme was designed to include administrative support to provide a 'point of contact' for communication with participants about the practicalities of the course. This included reminders about venue, timings and questionnaire completion, and providing printed handouts and ensuring the venue, equipment, lunch and refreshments were arranged. This also enabled participants to go to someone with questions, informal feedback or to share any additional needs they have.

In practice, this administrative support worked well in Darndale. In Drogheda, the programme was supported during programme set up and initial implementation, and towards the end of the programme, but there was a gap in provision for several modules. This difference in administration resource was felt by the programme, where participants received fewer reminders, handouts and questionnaires were not always available at the beginning of modules, and there was no specific role to communicate with the venue and session delivery. This placed extra pressure on the facilitator to work with participants to ensure modules ran smoothly. In future, this administrative role should be in place for the full programme period.

Programme staff shared views that whilst the same programme is delivered in Darndale and Drogheda, there was limited cohesion or integration between the two programmes. Without an overarching programme manager, there wasn't a structure or process in place to bring together the two programmes.

5.1.4 Coaching delivery

The coaching aspect of the programme provided:

- a 360° assessment and diagnostic during the early stages of the programme, to collate feedback about participants strengths and weaknesses from colleagues that know them well.

- 6 hours of coaching over the 18-month programme, to support participants in their development and to help to build their capability to implement effective solutions in their community and wider locality.

360 assessment process and feedback

At the beginning of the programme many participants were hesitant about the 360° assessment, and it appeared that for a small number of participants, their colleagues completing the assessment were also unsure of the process and some of the language used. This hesitancy caused delays in getting the assessment forms completed. For some participants working in small organisations or on the programme as local residents, there were too few responses for the results to provide a balanced reflection of participants leadership and communication styles.

Number of sessions

Coaches and participants shared feedback that the provision of six hours, typically split into six one-hour sessions, worked well for most participants on the programme. There were a few exceptions, including one participant that was receiving intensive coaching as part of a separate programme. Three participants felt that they did not need coaching and struggled to find issues or challenges to use the sessions for. On the other hand, a small number of participants really valued the coaching experience and felt they could have benefitted from two or three further sessions.

The coaches suggested a future programme might provide greater flexibility about the delivery of coaching, to enable some participants to opt out, and some participants to receive additional sessions where required.

Timeframe

The coaches shared that the coaching sessions were delivered too far apart, as they were typically spread over nine to twelve months. They noticed that having six weeks or more between sessions impacted upon their ability to build rapport and trust, which are fundamental to maximising the success of coaching.

Coaches suggested that coaching sessions would ideally be delivered over a six-month period, which could overlap with the last six months of the programme. This would provide enough time for participants to develop their knowledge and understanding about the place-based approach, and to identify specific issues to bring to coaching sessions.

The long intervals between modules also meant that coaching was sometimes being used as a reminder about the programme and its purpose and acted as a 'touchpoint' for the programme. This may distract sessions from their main goals and reduce the potential impact for coaching where time is spent rehearsing programme material.

> **" One thing that seems to be coming out…the programme feels great when they're on it, but when they're back at base it's trying to maintain some momentum and maintain some connection between the participants. There doesn't seem to be designated days or ways in which they can come together very easily unless it's through their own very strong motivation."**
>
> (Coach Interview B)

Coach preparation

The coaches interviewed felt that there was some distance between the main programme and the coaching programme, and that improving linkages could further support participants in their leadership development. They suggested that a summary of the content of each module could be shared with the coaches, including the module delivery dates, to make sure that coaches are aware of the content covered. Whilst coaches had access to Canvas for this programme and could access this information, it was a blocker needing a log in to the Canvas site, and the materials for each module were lengthy and coaches felt they did not have time within the budget allocated to undertake this level of preparatory work.

> **Coaching needs to be supporting the goals of the programme, therefore integrated much more into the design of the programme. The coaches need to have a much bigger visibility of what the programme is trying to achieve and know the participants a bit better. The coaching needs to support the modules, the modules need to inform the coaching, etc.**
>
> (Coach Interview D)

Ongoing feedback from coaches was collated through the team leader regular meetings. Greater coordination of any issues or feedback could be better supported through overarching programme support and engagement with the coaches' team leader. However, this is a challenge where programme administrative support is limited.

> **We have what we call a 'coaches huddle' and we've a couple of them which is great and that has been invaluable really and you do see patterns there and it's helpful to know that it's not just us experiencing it but other groups of people who have similar sorts of experiences.**
>
> (Coach Interview B)

Online or face-to-face

Two coaches also suggested that the programme should clarify whether coaching sessions will be delivered online, in-person or a mixture. In line with this, the necessary time and travel expenses should be allocated to in-person delivery. In practice, this meant that some coaches spent more than six hours per participant, due to travel times.

5.2 PROGRAMME FOCUS

The Place-Based Leadership Development (P-BLD) programme is designed to facilitate the identification of local issues or challenges and specific personal and collective leadership challenges, for participants to address during and after completion of the programme. As part of the induction process, participants shared their views about the challenges that should be addressed in Darndale and Drogheda. This section shares these results, identifying place-based issues, challenges for collaboration and challenges for leaders and leadership development.

5.2.1 Challenges to be addressed in the programme

During the induction, participants identified the main challenges that they felt should be addressed in their local areas of either Darndale or Drogheda. These are shared in the table on the next page.

MAIN CHALLENGES	
Darndale	**Drogheda**
• Tackling negative stigma • Poor community involvement • Poor community trust in agencies • Lack of resources • Limited trust between agencies • Agreeing a shared purpose and approach • Consistency of action to make an impact • Poverty • Low sense of agency and self-worth • Fixed mindsets amongst many communities • Intergenerational trauma • Limited support for physical and mental health • Lack of interest in change amongst communities • Poor local environment, including litter and illegal dumping • Antisocial behaviour and drug dealing • Poor roads and road structure • Limited housing available • Fear of community engagement	• Feelings of safety • Appearance of the town • Attracting industry • Cultural change • Economic challenges, including low incomes • Commuter town, means transient population • Limited job opportunities • Lack of investment from the authorities, slow to develop areas • Low knowledge of available services for communities • Low access of available services for communities • Lack of community in some areas • Limited community involvement in decision-making • Limited political representation

There are similarities and differences in the challenges raised for Darndale and Drogheda, and during the course of the programme the participants identified that whilst there were differences in their areas, there were more similarities in ways of working and blockers to collaboration, that could be addressed together.

5.2.2 Collaborative working

Two-thirds (34) of participants stated that they had been involved in collaborative working, and the majority of those had been collaborating with other agencies for the last few years (and considerably longer for some). For those participants that had been involved in collaborations, the following main challenges emerged as key themes in their experiences:

1| Communication can be a barrier, particularly sharing information, and ensuring shared understanding of each other's work, priorities and the aims of collaborating.

2| Slow decision-making, where many different processes and people are involved across the collaborating organisations.

3| Agreeing delivery and implementation responsibilities and timeframes, including trusting others to complete tasks, deliver work or services.

4| Getting consensus on key issues to address, and building genuinely shared ownership of problems and how they should be addressed.

5| Building trust between people and organisations, building knowledge about what each organisation does and tackling preconceptions and myths about different organisations.

6| Cultural differences and attitudes to work, including for example level of priority given to the voices of children and young people.

7| Finding the right people in organisations to connect with.

8| Finding the time to work in collaboration, including the meetings, communication channels and delivering everything the collaboration wants.

Identifying these shared perceptions, beliefs and experiences of challenges in collaborative working, helped to build understanding across participants working in different agencies and services, and helped to bring to life the purpose of place-based leadership development.

5.2.3 Leadership

Participants shared varied views and experiences about the areas of leadership that they found most challenging. In order of most common themes, the following challenges were identified:

1| Dealing with conflict, including managing difficult or sensitive conversations, managing behaviours of others, dealing with conflict between others, challenging co-workers, influencing people to think differently, or gaining their cooperation.

2| Giving presentations or public speaking, particularly in relation to presenting on less familiar topics or work.

3| Delegating tasks or responsibilities to others.

4| Time management, including meeting various administrative and reporting demands, having limited time for personal development and allocating a lot of time to managing people.

5| Managing expectations, including service users, internal colleagues and partners.

6| Strategy development and thinking long-term, taking good decisions, rather than taking decisions quickly and moving straight to implementation.

7| Developing relationships with people, including getting to know people and building trust.

8| Building capacity and leadership skills in the community.

Only four participants shared the areas of leadership that they feel most at ease with. Those participants said they enjoyed working with people, managing a team, getting people to engage and feel enthusiastic about work, and designing new programmes.

5.2.4 Participants expectations

Participants shared their hopes for the programme during the induction module. These hopes provided clarity of the needs of participants, for several participants this process helped to build their enthusiasm and focus for their participation in the programme:

- Clearer mindset of good leadership practices
- Greater knowledge of myself
- Knowledge of the area
- Tools to make change happen
- Networking
- Coaching skills
- Challenge my perspectives
- Work more collaboratively
- Improved leadership skills
- Improve my planning and delivery
- Space for personal development
- Understand community views of leadership
- Improved knowledge of management
- Expand relationships with the community
- Become a more confident leader
- Improve my communication skills
- A plan to improve the area for families

The variety in responses reflects varied perspectives on what leadership is, what 'good' leadership looks like, and key areas that participants would like to improve. Several participants commented that they were not 'qualified' to be on the programme, seemingly due to preconceptions about what leadership is. For a few participants, the programme invoked some nervousness, particularly around public speaking, involvement in group activities and working with people they don't know. The vast majority were looking forward to the programme, had already found the induction to be insightful, and some described feeling excited about the adventure.

> **" I feel like Bilbo Baggins about to set off on an adventure with Gandalf. "**
> (Drogheda Participant Questionnaire L)

> **" I felt very out of my comfort zone when I started this questionnaire, but the icebreaker has changed that: Rob's definition of "Leader" was spot on. "**
> (Drogheda Participant Questionnaire A)

Most participants said 'yes', they do see themselves as a leader, often due to their level of management of people and teams, or due to their commitment to their work and what they believe in. A few participants said they 'sometimes' see themselves as a leader, or 'nearly', demonstrating that there are times when they take a leadership role, and others where they are a follower, or part of a team. Participants shared their main strengths and main areas of development, shown in the table below.

Many participants identified strengths related to communication and emotional intelligence. There were more varied responses related to areas of development, highlighting confidence – typically for those in less senior roles – decision-making, managing conflict and clarity of thinking.

SELF AS LEADER	
Main strengths	**Main areas of development**
• Listening	• Confidence
• Communication	• Decision-making
• Encouragement	• Self-reflection
• Support	• Understanding conflict
• Empathy	• Understanding other organisations
• Compassion	• Self-organisation
• Hear all points of view	• Clarity of thinking
• Trust people	• Standing ground, being stronger
• Recognise strengths in others	
• Connecting with people	

5.3 OVERALL PROGRAMME FEEDBACK

Participants completed a questionnaire upon the completion of the programme. Only 22 of the 47 participants completed the questionnaire, which means more than half of participants views were not captured through this process. Most participants either strongly agreed or agreed that each of the main objectives were met. Developing relationships with people in other agencies and collaborating with people were the objectives that almost all participants agreed were met.

A small number of participants neither agreed nor disagreed with the remaining three objectives. Comments shared in the questionnaires and interviews expanded on the reasons for this. Some participants felt that they already had skills for collaborating, and that they did not learn new skills on the programme, but instead found the benefit in the development of relationships with others in different agencies. Similarly, some participants felt comfortable with their leadership style, and so did not feel that this programme helped them to develop in this area. They also provided positive feedback about networking and relationship development.

Some participants felt that they learned about relevant theories and approaches but were not provided with enough examples about how these could be applied in practice, to deal with complex problems.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have developed relationships with people working in different sectors	16	6			
Over the last year I have collaborated with people in different organisations to improve my local area	13	7	2		
I have learned skills that I can use to collaborate more effectively	7	9	5	1	
I have learned about useful theories and approaches related to collaborative working to address complex problems	7	9	4	2	
This programme helped me to develop my leadership style	6	10	5	1	

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

Programme highlights

In each of the module questionnaires, and at completion of the programme, participants shared the aspects of the programme that they felt were most valuable to their role and most impactful. Bringing together this data and ranking those listed, the table below shared the module components that were most commonly mentioned:

Most valuable to my role	Most impactful experience
1. Design thinking process	1. Straw castle exercise
2. ZOUD – Zone of Uncomfortable Debate	2. Vision for the future
3. Stakeholder analysis / engagement	3. Listening to other people on the programme
4. Hearing stories from other agencies, residents and young people	4. 'Anyshire' roleplay
5. Collaborative teamwork	5. Darndale and Drogheda two-day event
6. Importance of dreaming and creating a new vision	6. Stakeholder power / influence
7. Ideation – brainstorming to come up with solutions to problems	7. Listening to young people

Some comments from participants expand on the value of these module components:

Design thinking:

> *So there's things that stick with you, I think, that you connect with and there's a whole lot of other stuff that you have to really remind yourself when you go back. And I think the design thinking, I think is a strategy that a lot of people are using right now…we would even when the team meet outside of Rob's modules, we automatically went to self-designing a process we were thinking about, okay, you have that small part of funding, what can we do locally, what is the impact? So I suppose it's nice to see that maybe that's a practise that's getting embedded and a kind of go to. It's making sure everyone's kind of ideas and voices are heard and again, it's about kind of not prioritising or being precious, isn't it?*
>
> (Drogheda Participant Interview G)

Zone of Uncomfortable Debate (ZOUD):

> *Quite impactful to me would have been conflict resolution and being in your zone of uncomfortable debate. And there was someone in the group who we both kind of we avoided conflict, but not necessarily like all conflicts… But then the session we did on that explained the different types of it. And then we realised that other circumstances, you actually do tackle conflict in a different way, but we might not have viewed it as conflict. So it kind of showed where you were strong with conflict resolution and where you had room to improve. And then that session kind of made us do some pieces around it. And I really feel like that helped me going forward into all types of work. Because when you bring two people together anyway, two different ideas, whatever, there's a level of conflict. And conflict can sound like a really – they said it in the course – a really big bad word. And now I see the importance of addressing conflict, whereas before I was like, I could avoid that and there's no harm. But if you avoid the conflict… that could be holding back the project, it could be holding back your own way of working, it could be holding back a number of things.*
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview I)

Residents' perspectives:

> *Some people don't work or don't live in the area they work in. So, yeah, it was so crucial. Like, I had points of view that people in the services wouldn't have seen. [Another resident] was able to give a very amazing in-depth idea of what it was like to live with certain people in the area. And it was just on the button… everybody was just amazed. It was just like, these were people's lives that we were talking about, and this is all they see all the time, when actually it's not all [negative]. And I think that kind of opened up a lot of eyes as well that day that it was like, you're going on about our lives as if we're rubbish. There was a lot there and I think there was a lot of eyes opened, a few people in particular that were very set in their ways, very stuck, but also came from a similar background, so they kind of were reminded that it wasn't that way. It was nice to see.*
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview L)

5.4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

Feedback about opportunities to improve was captured in post-module questionnaires and in the end of programme interviews with participants and coaches. Key themes in the feedback relate to the overall programme design, some specific aspects of module delivery, and how the group-based working approach is implemented.

Overall programme design

1 | Balancing theory and practice

Some participants felt that the programme was quite heavy on theory at times and experienced some challenges in understanding unfamiliar terminology or complex theories and models. Several participants described that the programme provides a lot of information, and it could be intense at times. Most participants found that the practical activities and exercises helped to make sense of the academic theory and models. However, some participants suggested that the academic input could be reduced in favour of more practical examples of application.

2 | Gaps between module delivery

Several participants described the two- or three-month gap between modules as too long. Whilst it was understood that this time was provided to enable participants to practice using new skills or approaches, or to develop understanding of issues, or to implement collaborative working – most participants explained that this communication between participants between modules did not really take off until the last few modules. Smaller gaps between the first six to eight modules might help to build relationships more quickly and to build momentum. Gaps at the later stage of delivery could then provide space for implementing new ways of working. Some participants suggested that if the gaps do remain at two to three months, then programme check-ins could be implemented, with the facilitator, to provide more accountability for development between modules. For some participants it was difficult to focus for two full days on the programme, and they suggested that modules could be delivered one at a time, as a single day event. However, other participants felt that the two-days provided enough time and space for both formal and informal discussions to take place, and this accelerated relationship and trust building between participants. It was also suggested that provision of written instructions on handouts for activities could also help with maintaining focus and clarity on the tasks. Handouts were used for many tasks, but not all.

3 | Programme administration

Programme administrators were in place for the full programme in Darndale, and for around half of the programme in Drogheda. Greater resource might be allocated to programme administration in future, ensuring one programme manager across the two sites. This would provide consistency and clarity to support participants throughout the programme. For example, Canvas was used by several participants, but not all found it useful or intuitive to use. Similar feedback was provided by coaches. An introduction to Canvas was provided during the Induction Module, however greater support or encouragement for its use could be facilitated by programme managers in future. For those less able or willing to use online resources, a programme pack could be provided, outlining the module content, activities and expectations. Also, several participants said that their

understanding of the purpose of P-BLD properly set in during the final modules of the programme, and this is the time at which collaborative working across participants started. Some felt that the expectations for P-BLD groups to develop and deliver projects to demonstrate impact of place-based working was not clear during the early modules of the programme. Programme administrators could provide regular reminders between modules about the purpose of P-BLD and could support participants to focus on collaborative working and project development.

4 | Inclusion of residents, young people and local services

Consistently positive feedback was received about the involvement of residents, young people and hearing from local services and people with expertise in specific issues. Further development of this programme could ensure good representation of local residents on programmes, and could ensure either direct involvement of young people, or a meaningful and appropriate way of engaging with young people throughout the programme. In addition, some participants may represent local agencies and community and voluntary sector services, but for those not represented, these could be involved in input sessions, to ensure local knowledge and insights are shared. The feedback from residents on the programme also highlighted that the language and examples used throughout the programme material, including the 360 assessment at the beginning, was directed towards those in paid roles. The programme could be adapted to better reflect the involvement of participants as residents in the area and as volunteers. It was also suggested that a short, preliminary course could be offered to residents, to introduce the structures, agencies, ways of working, common language and so on. This could provide a good basis for residents, before they join the full programme and sit alongside members of agencies and services.

Specific exercises

1 | Time allocation to activities

For some, they felt that some activities were given more time than they needed, meaning at times groups had completed tasks and had time to spare. This was good for allowing time for discussion and getting to know each other, but it also made it hard to keep focus at times, and generated a feeling that the modules could be more concise. The Zone of Uncomfortable Debate (ZOUD) was one of the most useful and impactful sessions, and several participants suggested that more time could have been allocated to this session and the exercises it involved.

2 | Time allocation for reflection

Some participants felt that too much time was allocated to reflection, and too much time was spent on reflective questionnaires. Whilst others felt that the reflection time was helpful, particularly following intense or theory-heavy sections. Suggestions were made to create more time inside the sessions for completion of the questionnaires at the end of each module.

Group work

1 | Mixing up the groups

Several participants wanted to mix up the group work during the programme, to provide more time to develop relationships with other participants. There was an understanding that staying in the same groups meant that they could develop their own group rules for working together and could develop their own way of working. However overall, the feedback from participants suggests that greater mixing up of groups would be more beneficial.

2 | Join up the two programmes

There was overwhelmingly positive feedback about the events that brought Darndale and Drogheda participants together. There were several suggestions that this join up could take place at the beginning, middle and end of the programme, to better facilitate relationship development and learning between groups.

> **"** *His facilitator style is really good because the content itself is quite heavy. Although I do like learning, I'm not very academic or I probably learn differently to people. So I think a good facilitator is what made me want to go back and not miss a session, because I know I made it kind of a thing, feeling like I can't miss one of these because I really felt like if you missed one, you would be lost. And I do know that when people missed one, when they came next one, you were playing catch up, even though you might not retain a lot of the information, but you are there and you go through a lot of it.* **"**
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview I)

> **"** *There was a lot of getting used to the wording and stuff like that, but all the stuff that was covered made sense when we were doing the activities and the group work and stuff, so everything made sense. It was just wording of it was a little bit trickier at the start.* **"**
>
> (Darndale participant Interview L)

5.5 MODULE OBJECTIVES

Participants completed post-module questionnaires to share their feedback about the sessions and the extent to which the learning objectives were met. This section briefly explains each module results, highlighting those areas where participants demonstrated agreement that objectives were met, and those where there was room for improvement. The results for Darndale and Drogheda have been combined for ease of examining the modules. No differences were identified when the two programme results were compared, although the numbers of completed questionnaires are small, due to the small number of participants on the programme.

POST-INDUCTION FEEDBACK

The induction learning objectives were largely met for the 40 participants that completed the questionnaire. The graph below presents post-induction questionnaire results for both Darndale and Drogheda. The results were very similar across both programmes, showing that around half of participants 'strongly agreed', and the other half 'agreed' that the induction facilitated their understanding of the main learning objectives. One participant strongly disagreed that they understood the methods of learning for the programme and the expectations of learning and development associated with participation. Unfortunately, this participant did not share any further comments, but their feedback on later modules was consistently positive.

POST-INDUCTION LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I understand how to connect with and navigate the online learning hub canvas	23	15	1		
I understand how the 360 assessment and coaching support will support my development	21	19			
I understand the methods of learning, development and support that will be used in the programme	21	17			1
I understand what is expected of participants in terms of behaviours (practices), levels of engagement and methods of learning and development	21	16	1		1
I have an increased awareness of the rational and context for the leading for collective impact	19	18	1		
I have a deeper understanding of the programme philosophy and content	16	22	2		

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

POST-MODULE 1 FEEDBACK

The majority of the 33 questionnaire participants strongly agreed or agreed that the learning objectives of Module 1 were met, see the chart below.

A small number of participants did not agree or disagree, and one disagreed, suggesting some aspects of the module did not work for everybody (5 people in Darndale and 4 in Drogheda, and no programme differences were identified in the feedback).

POST-MODULE 1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
I appreciate how to build a collective identity and common purpose	9	20	4	
I have developed a shared appreciation of the significance of how values, beliefs and behaviours influence development as an individual and a leader	17	15	1	
I have a better understanding about how to develop a deeper sense of self through reflective practice	9	23	1	
We as a group have further developed our collective identity as leaders across place	11	18	3	1
I have further developed my individual identity as a leader across place	5	23	4	1

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

POST-MODULE 2 FEEDBACK

The chart below shows that almost all of the 26 questionnaire participants strongly agreed or agreed that the learning objectives of Module 2 were met.

POST-MODULE 2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I appreciate the importance of understanding other perspectives as a foundation for building collective action	15	11	
I have a deeper understanding about how to develop self as a values-based leader	14	11	1
I have a greater appreciation about how to be more effective at relationship management	11	14	1
I feel more able to lead through influence and reciprocity	8	16	2

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree
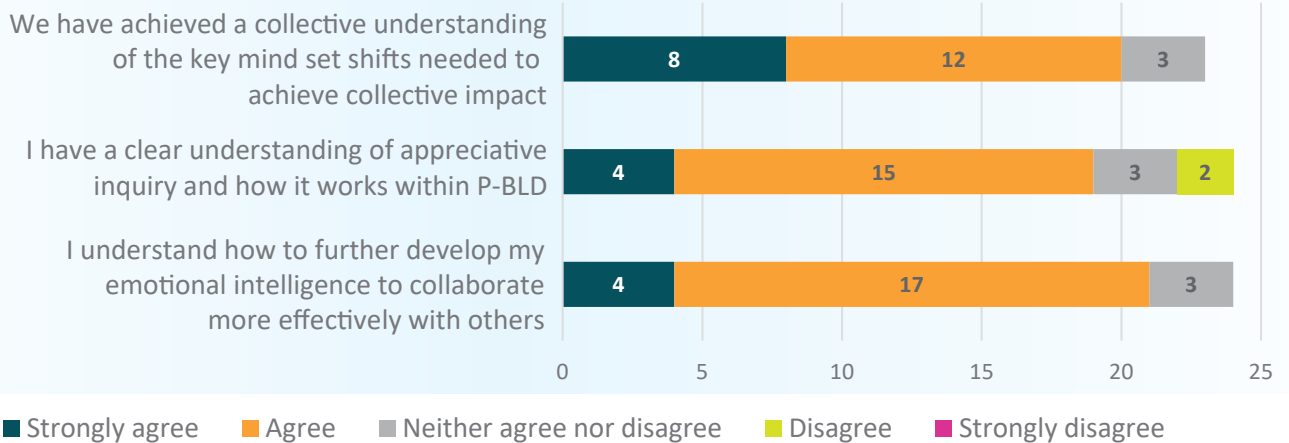
POST-MODULE 3 FEEDBACK

The majority of the 24 questionnaire participants strongly agreed or agreed that the learning objectives of Module 3 were met, see the chart below.

Two participants 'disagreed' that they have a clear understanding of appreciative inquiry and how it works within place-based leadership. Their comments suggested that this was a new topic for them, and a lot was covered in the session. Both participants rated their overall experience of the module as 'excellent'.

POST-MODULE 3 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
We have achieved a collective understanding of the key mind set shifts needed to achieve collective impact	8	12	3	
I have a clear understanding of appreciative inquiry and how it works within P-BLD	4	15	3	2
I understand how to further develop my emotional intelligence to collaborate more effectively with others	4	17	3	

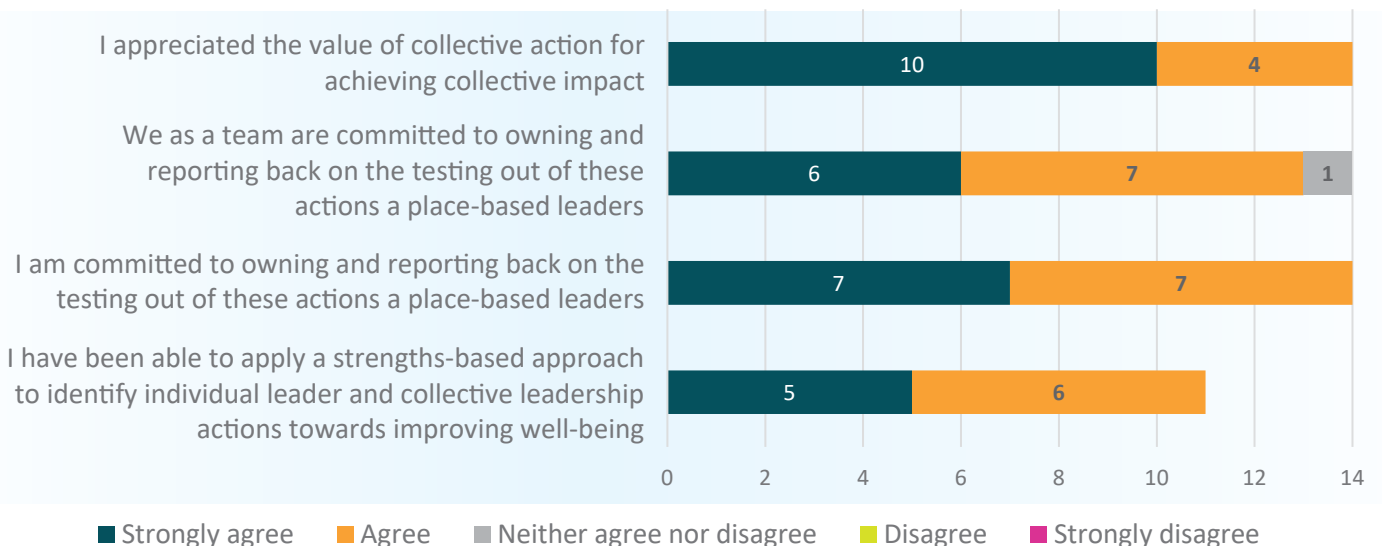■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

POST-MODULE 4 FEEDBACK

Only 14 participants completed the questionnaire post-Module 4, which means less feedback was shared about the learning from this module compared to others.

The last learning objective - ability to apply a strengths-based approach - was only answered by 11 participants, which suggests that three skipped this question. This may be due to a lack of clarity of what the objective was, or they may have felt unable to fairly assess their own ability on this straight after the module.

POST-MODULE 4 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I appreciated the value of collective action for achieving collective impact	10	4	
We as a team are committed to owning and reporting back on the testing out of these actions a place-based leaders	6	7	1
I am committed to owning and reporting back on the testing out of these actions a place-based leaders	7	7	
I have been able to apply a strengths-based approach to identify individual leader and collective leadership actions towards improving well-being	5	6	

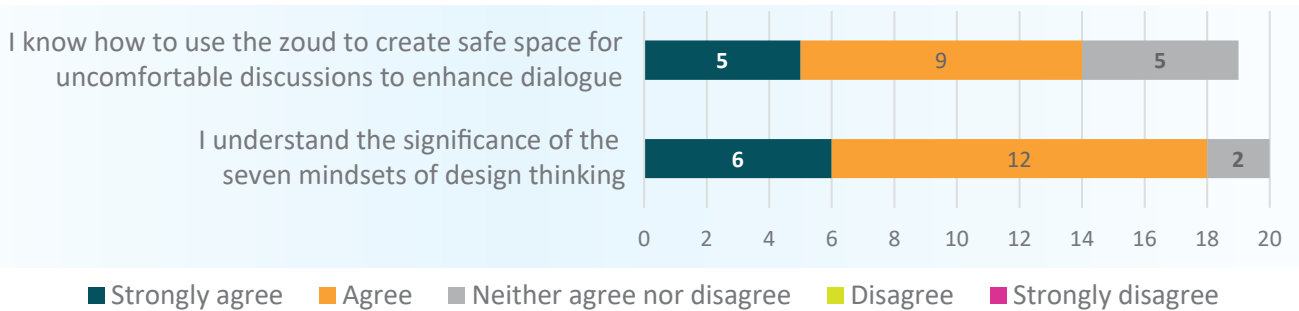■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

POST-MODULE 5 FEEDBACK

Almost all the questionnaire participants 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they understood the significance of the seven mindsets of design thinking following Module 5.

However, five participants were neutral about knowing how to the use the ZOUD (Zone of Uncomfortable Debate). Comments from participants suggested that they learned a lot from the session, but some felt they weren't fully ready or confident to use the ZOUD in practice, or they weren't sure when to apply it. Further insights from the interviews showed that the ZOUD session was very well received by most participants, and many practiced using the tools and approaches shared in the session. The ZOUD was shared again in a later module, and this may have helped participants to know how to use it in practice.
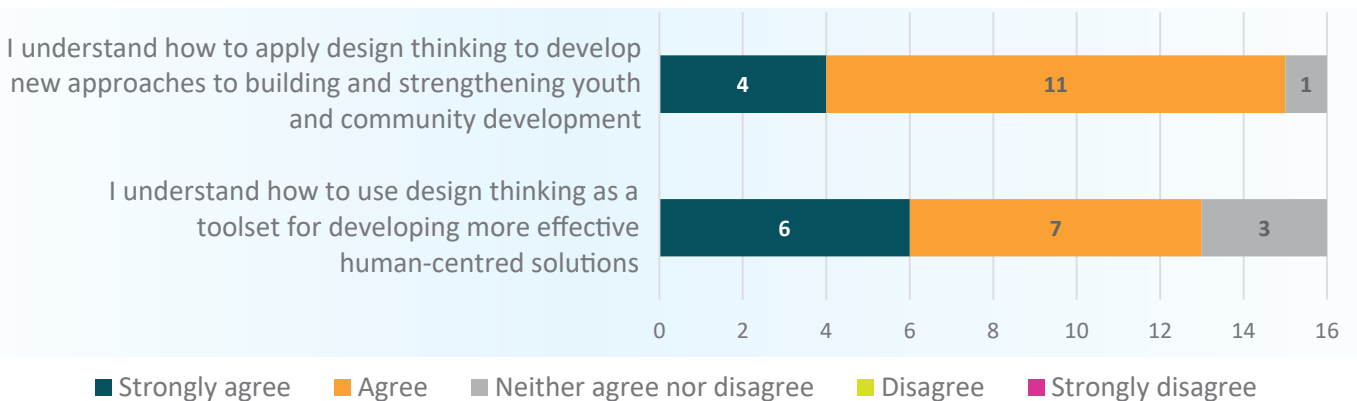
POST-MODULE 5 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I know how to use the zoud to create safe space for uncomfortable discussions to enhance dialogue	5	9	5
I understand the significance of the seven mindsets of design thinking	6	12	2

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

POST-MODULE 6 FEEDBACK

Most of the questionnaire participants 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the learning objectives of Module 6 were met. 16 participants completed the questionnaire post-Module 6, which means less feedback was shared about the learning from this module. This raises the concern for the evaluation that participants that may have struggled with the content of the modules, or felt the content was not relevant to their development, may not have completed the questionnaire.

POST-MODULE 6 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I understand how to apply design thinking to develop new approaches to building and strengthening youth and community development	4	11	1
I understand how to use design thinking as a toolset for developing more effective human-centred solutions	6	7	3

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

POST-MODULE 7 FEEDBACK

As above, most of the questionnaire participants 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that the learning objectives of Module 7 were met, however only 18 participants completed the questionnaire.
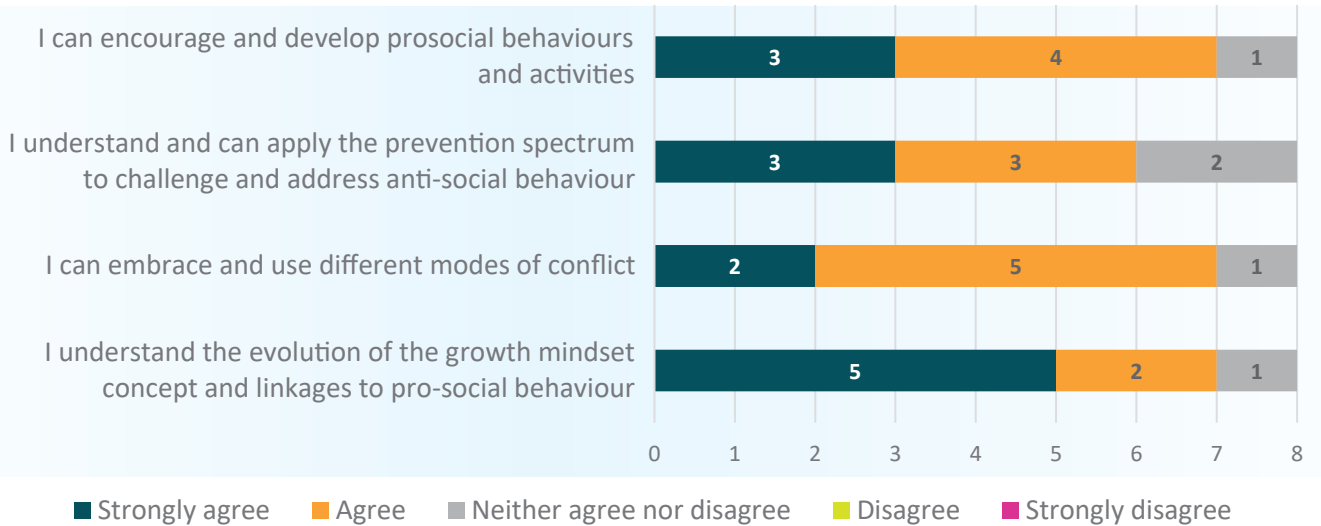
POST-MODULE 7 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I can embrace and use different modes of conflict	7	9	2
I understand the evolution of the growth mindset concept and linkages to pro-social behaviour	9	7	1

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

POST-MODULE 8 FEEDBACK

Unfortunately, Module 8 only received feedback from eight participants. Following feedback in interviews, many participants were experiencing a very busy time in both professional and personal lives. The feedback on the module was positive from those participants that completed it.

POST-MODULE 8 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning Objective	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I can encourage and develop prosocial behaviours and activities	3	4	1
I understand and can apply the prevention spectrum to challenge and address anti-social behaviour	3	3	2
I can embrace and use different modes of conflict	2	5	1
I understand the evolution of the growth mindset concept and linkages to pro-social behaviour	5	2	1

Legend: ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

POST-MODULE 9 FEEDBACK

The feedback from 28 participants that completed the post-Module 9 questionnaire demonstrated the learning objectives were met for all participants except one. The comments suggested that this Module was very well received because it brought together participants from Darndale and Drogheda, and this stimulated additional learning, discussion and reflection.
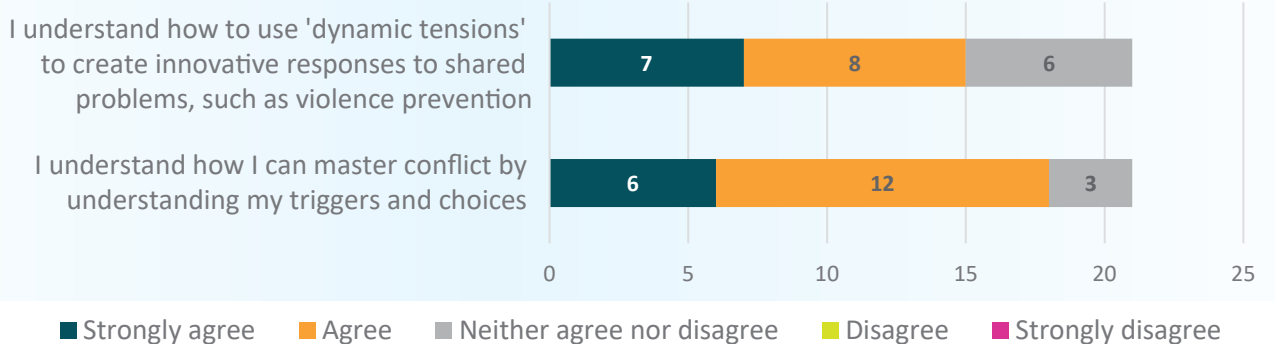
POST-MODULE 9 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I understand what intellectual humility means	8	19	1
I actively work on keeping an open mindset	12	16	

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree
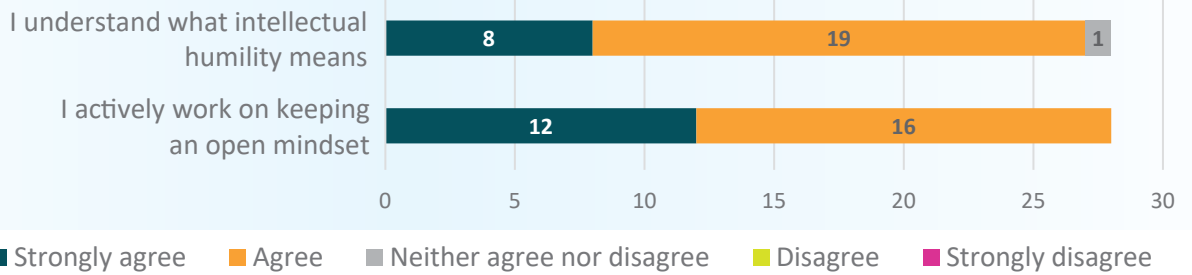
POST-MODULE 10 FEEDBACK

Of the 21 participants that completed the questionnaire, all except three participants agreed that they understood hot to master conflict. The second learning objective for Module 10 related to understanding how to use dynamic tensions to create innovative problems. For this objective, six participants neither agreed nor disagreed that they understood how to use this tool. This presents an opportunity to review this module component.

POST-MODULE 10 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree
I understand how to use 'dynamic tensions' to create innovative responses to shared problems, such as violence prevention	7	8	6
I understand how I can master conflict by understanding my triggers and choices	6	12	3

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

5.6 COACHING

Overall feedback

Most participants reported positively on their experience of coaching, explaining that they developed a good rapport with their coach, identified specific issues to address, and felt the benefit for their professional development. Participants described increased self-confidence, improved knowledge about how to use the tools and approaches shared in the programme, and greater understanding of the importance of self-reflection and self-development. The 360 assessment was found to be useful by most participants, and several reflected that the debrief session with the coach in which they explored the results was hugely impactful for them, providing insights about their communication styles and preferences and opportunities to reflect and develop their approach.

> **❝** *The coaching element of the programme was very helpful in terms of 'mandated' reflection which I found a lot more useful than expected and I will absolutely take that into my working practice… [Coach] really just got me. And I don't think she even realised that the point that I met her at and the point that I'm at now were very different people, but had the same values, I suppose. So I… didn't think there was much opportunity and now where I'm at, I'm just willing to take on the world and do all of that! … and even just the advice that she was giving me, or how to reword things, or how to come across like.* **❞**
>
> (Drogheda Participant Questionnaire, L)

> **❝** *I used the coaching if something was going on at work, that I could use the coaching session to help me tease out if it was going well. If it wasn't going well, how I was coping with things. And I feel like I learned a lot about myself and how I deal with things, probably areas of my strengths as well, that might be just portrayed back to the coaches saying, like, well, I hear you're quite strong in this and you don't feel you're as strong as this. There was a lot of confidence building, and about don't be afraid to be yourself.* **❞**
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview I)

> **❝** *I didn't realise that coaching was part of the programme until the programme started. I'm not sure anybody else did, actually. And then I was kind of going, oh, well, I've done that before, kind of thing. I wasn't in coaching at the time. Hugely beneficial!…I think I was struggling a little bit with the constraints, although I have huge autonomy and all of that, but the constraints of the role and so, really good to have that sounding board. [Coach] was a phenomenal coach. I mean, I have loads of notes that I will reflect on…I do know of some other people who, same as myself, were like, wow, the coaching was way better than I expected. I do think this is something that probably needs to be considered generally, particularly in the community sector, but generally that was a very valuable tool. To the point where I have now I am now signed up to be a mentor myself.* **❞**
>
> (Drogheda Participant Interview Q)

Some participants felt they did not need coaching as a part of this programme, due to receiving coaching elsewhere or due to the development they had received in recent years. Around half of the participants had not experienced coaching before and were apprehensive or nervous about what to expect.

Number and regularity of sessions

Overall, the participants that participated in coaching received between four and six sessions, and they felt this was a good number of sessions to support their development on the programme. Two participants explained that they would have benefited from receiving additional sessions, having had such a positive experience and they felt that they still had work to do. These participants have continued coaching beyond the provision of this programme.

A small number of participants suggested that the sessions were too far apart, which impacted upon their ability to build a good rapport with the coach and to build trust and confidence that would facilitate useful discussions. This was also reflected in the feedback from the coaches in the implementation section above. It was suggested that a future programme might focus the coaching sessions towards the end of the programme and provide greater flexibility on the number of sessions offered to each participant. This would allow it to be optional, and for those with the greatest need or those that could make the most of the offer, to have a higher number of sessions.

> **" It was really interesting, actually getting 360. I found the coaching process very useful but I found they were too spread out. I would have liked it closer together, literally just fortnightly for the four sessions, I would have preferred a tighter deadline where you had more intensity. "**
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview H)

Links to the programme

Some participants used the coaching sessions to unpack the theory and concepts shared in the programme. They found that the coaches were good at explaining some of the material used in the programme, and providing practical examples of application. This provided a helpful reconnect to the programme for some participants. However, this also meant that those participants did not typically bring specific issues or blockers to address in the coaching sessions.

6 | PROGRAMME OUTCOMES
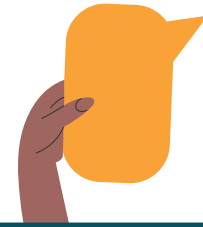
The following sections explore the insights shared by programme participants and collaborators of participants in relation to the theory of change for the programme.

6.1 PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

6.1.1 Personal confidence

Several participants described an increase in confidence following their involvement in the P-BLD programme. They described this in relation to confidence in their own opinions being valid and valuable, in their willingness to speak up in meetings or events, and in their ability to challenge others. For some participants, their feedback during early modules reflected concerns that they were not senior enough or did not have a role that could influence the complex systems or structures that influence the social issues the programme sought to address. Later in the programme, these same participants described significant changes in their perceptions of themselves as leaders in their community and in their sectors. They identified the relevant experiences and knowledge that they could bring to the table, and they recognised that they did not need to have all of the answers or access to big funds to be able to help change take place.

> **" I can just see the confidence. It's just really different. I would always go to meetings and just sit and write, but now I volunteer to go to meetings and I always have something prepared, no matter how small it is. "**
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview P)

> **" They're feeling more sure of themselves, there's a directness about them "**
>
> (Collaborator Interview M)

> **" I find I am becoming a bit more brave having conversations. So whether it's in the environment, or with different agencies, I didn't have that confidence… but I find from doing place-based leadership, sitting in a room at a table with the guards, Dublin City Council, drug services… I've so much more information now, I wouldn't have got it anywhere else "**
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview H)

Some participants suggested that being part of a group on P-BLD helped to reduce some feelings of isolation in their role or in their community, it provided them with people to talk to about the issues they could see and it helped to stimulate hope and enthusiasm that things could be improved.

6.1.2 Knowledge about local social issues and agencies

Not all participants talked about personal confidence in relation to the impact of the programme, others highlighted increased knowledge and relationships with others in the local areas as the main outcomes from their participation.

Agencies and services

All participants that were interviewed described increased knowledge about the local agencies and services in their area, the typical issues or challenges faced by various agencies, and greater understanding about how each agency works. This increased knowledge surprised several participants, highlighting how much activity was taking place in the area to address a range of issues. This led to increased enthusiasm, hope and energy for some participants.

> **We're a statutory service here. We're very much shaped by legislation and policy. And also because I'm a human being I'm very much shaped by my biases. Working on the programme has helped me to open that up a little bit and it's kind of grounded me a little bit again. So the programme really stretched me and pulled me in those different directions. It opened me up a little bit more to trying to not just look at something in isolation but look at it as a big part of a whole. And one of the things that I got from it as well was to value the other pieces and the other roles that other people do and to value the input that they have on children and families**
>
> (Darndale Participant interview A)

> **I think it was very empowering to hear two of them, particularly, and the Superintendent… They go from trauma to trauma and they have never received trauma informed training. They never received counselling. Northside Partnership after we had a trauma session, they put up a message so that anybody from the group that felt affected or needed to talk could access free counselling… And then one of the guards was organising like a trauma informed practice workshop, and the guard superintendent said, can I take five spaces? And he sent five of his guards in it… All of the guards really enjoyed and took a lot from the workshop. So, yeah, it was them feeling much more kind of accepted, heard, open.**
>
> (Darndale Collaborator Interview M)

Social issues, crime and agency responses

The programme involved inputs on the specific issues identified by participants as priorities, and information was shared by many participants about the issues their agencies are addressing. Several participants described increased knowledge about exploitation, drug-related crime and drugs intimidation, addiction, homelessness, food poverty, crime, victimisation, trauma and suicide. This increased knowledge led to greater understanding about the challenges other agencies face and helped some participants to understand why some agencies and services work and communicate in the ways they do.

Positive stories

In addition to the focus on understanding social issues, a small number of participants suggested that the programme helped them to shift their narrative about Darndale or Drogheda. They described learning about positive local stories, including local arts and culture projects, activities run in schools and local community venues, volunteering amongst the community and by parents in schools. These positive stories helped participants to identify with the strengths-based approach, and to recognise community assets to build on.

6.1.3 Reflection

Checking in with values and time to think

Despite high levels of scepticism and some complaints about the time spent on reflection during the programme, many participants talked about using reflection regularly to improve their attitude and their approach to communicating and problem-solving. Some participants described taking time to think about information, problems, opportunities, decision-making and actively taking time to consider different perspectives. Three participants said as part of their approach to work they check in with how they feel about what is happening, how they are dealing with things and how their approach or work fits with their values. The values-based leadership session was highlighted a few times as impactful on self-reflection, and identifying moments when frustration or demotivation arise.

> ❝ *Since becoming a guard, I've changed a lot in how I approach things and how I adapt to situations. It's definitely made me more aware of maybe checking in more often with how I am dealing with things* ❞
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview F)

Slowing down problem-solving

Many participants recognised the challenge of working in frontline services and the default approach is fast-paced working and reactive problem-solving. This was particularly the case for those working in addiction, homelessness, child and family support and policing. Taking time to think before decisions and actions was described as challenging in practice. For some participants the slow nature of the programme, and the time allocated to group activities and reflection, highlighted their need to work quickly and to move rapidly from problem to solution.

> ❝ *I suppose at first, probably in a negative way, I was thinking, oh, my God, this is so huge, this is so massive. But then I think, start celebrating small wins, because there's so many little things along the way that we can break rather than trying to wait until it's all done.* ❞
>
> (Drogheda Participant Interview V)

> 66 *So we were all in groups and working together as a group, and so when we were asked to do activities, everybody was listened to, there was no one overpowering voice, everybody's ideas was taken on. So I found that really helpful and just that thing know, Rob speaking about what a leader is. A leader is not a knower, a leader is somebody who listens and takes on board what other people are saying. Absolutely, yeah, that was good for me. That was really good. From the perspective of the programme and its impact on me, as an individual personally, it has helped me work better in a group setting and to be more aware and listen more to other people.* 99
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview O)

Distributing leadership and trusting others

There were many comments shared through the questionnaires and interviews that the programme was effective at challenging perceptions of leaders and leadership. Many participants recognised the various skills, communication approaches and emotional intelligence that leadership requires, but still held an underlying belief that leaders need to know the answers to problems. Many participants described feeling liberated by the programme, in the recognition that leaders do not hold the full responsibility for understanding everything, identifying solutions and putting actions in place. Some participants felt challenged by this, as they found comfort in undertaking a leadership role in which they could ensure specific actions took place.

Some participants shared the challenge of letting go, listening to other opinions, and letting others take responsibility or lead. This freed up thinking time for those participants, and provided a shared sense of responsibility, that was experienced as energising and motivating.

> 66 *It was back module two or three about what Darndale means, and what we think are solutions. And I found myself and the guards nearly think alike, and some of the residents and the community services less so, which is fair enough, but I struggle to let my ideas go, right? I find that really difficult because my ideas are good ideas and I don't like letting them go. And it was in that I noticed, how difficult that was. But it's only when you're willing to let go, give them up, and let them go that you really open yourself up to other people's ideas and pieces. And I found that really challenging but helpful as well at the same time.* 99
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview A)

> 66 *I'm kind of one of those people. If I don't do it, it won't be done right. And I've loosened up on that a bit and I've realised that you don't have to do everything yourself and I've even created parent leaders from it. So when I run classes here in the school, I always felt like I had to be the person that was there or I had to be the person organising it, but I'm only one person, I can't be in all of those places. So a parent comes along now and they just show great potential. So I just say to them, well, look, it's a simple mindfulness colouring class. So now…she's leading that class…So to kind of just, I suppose, distribute leadership, just to try and let other people and stop trying to be in control, the one at the top, and to realise that we can't fix everything.* 99
>
> (Drogheda Participant Interview V)

6.1.4 Skills to communicate and challenge

One of the main areas for development in leadership identified by many participants was the ability to address conflict, to communicate clearly and effectively and to build confidence in questioning or disagreeing with others when needed. Most participants recalled the Zone of Uncomfortable Debate (ZOUD) as one of the most impactful and useful components of the programme, because it directly addressed this need and provided practical tools and approaches.

> **❝** *A weak spot for me would have been addressing uncomfortable things, with perhaps a team. So I found the ZOUD or zone of uncomfortable debate, the piece around that was good, because I tested it when I was on the programme. Some things before I'd shy away from, I'd handle things, but now I'm addressing things, I've tested myself a couple of times since and I feel the confidence has grown in there.* **❞**
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview H)

> **❝** *I suppose I like the ZOUD, the zone of uncomfortable discussion. I think that actually links quite nicely to the trauma informed practise, not shying away from a problem and having uncomfortable discussions in a really supportive way and challenging things that don't sit right* **❞**
>
> (Drogheda Participant Interview G)

6.2 INTERAGENCY RELATIONSHIPS

6.2.1 Advocating for other agencies

All of the participants that were interviewed, and many that participated in questionnaires, described the significant increase in their understanding of the agencies and services working in their areas, following this programme. This helped them in their own roles, to inform their work, to improve referrals between agencies, to change existing opinions about agencies, and to change the way that people on the programme describe the other agencies. This led to some participants noticing that they were advocating for other agencies, where prior to the programme they may have participated in criticism or held negative assumptions. One specific example of this was shared in relation to understanding the work of police raids related to drugs:

> **❝** *Certainly around the way we would have always had clients come in and badmouth the guards when they do raids on the estate. And I think what we've done now is we stop those conversations. We don't have an opinion. Where I used to go, that must be terrible that they come into your house first thing in the morning. They don't come into the conversations. That's not what we do. We actually just deal with your addiction, you need to talk to somebody else about that - so we do have contacts with the liaison officers in Garda, so we're able to set up meetings with them if need be. And they allow us to go and just be another person with them because sometimes they might need somebody just to nudge them and say, calm down for a second.* **❞**
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview P)

> **❝** *I know even recently, a couple of visits from the policing authority and from hearing schools experiences, I'm like, have you thought of talking to school completion? Because they're actually really in the know, those people are talking to parents and families every day. So I suppose advocating on behalf of one another and having a clear understanding of what everyone does. And the same for probation… these are really approachable. These are really passionate about integration and inclusion. They know their stuff. So you see more than just the title or the role. You get to know people's kind of passion, their expertise. Even though I mightn't have thought they would have been a good guideline, they're actually really good.* **❞**
>
> (Drogheda Participant Interview G)

6.2.2 Specific connections

Several participants described specific connections on the programme that had helped them to improve delivery of their work, removing issues, or increasing community knowledge or access to services. For example, participants described projects or ideas that existed before their involvement in P-BLD, but support from other P-BLD connections helped them to progress:

- Improving referrals between programmes

- Set up a women's group

- Run classes for elderly individuals in residential care

- Involve children in the development of a health and wellbeing campaign about healthy foods

- Identifying and securing venues for community events or rented space for services

> **❝** *So I link a lot in now with Archways, with the youth diversion programmes and with the guards and particularly with the school. So there was a few teachers on the programme as well, school teachers and they're sending through a lot more referrals now, after we got to know each other on the programme and know each other services.* **❞**
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview A)

> **❝** *We've set up a couple of subcommittees and we meet once a month. We bring client issues with us such as them being behind on rent or antisocial behaviour then link the support together. We're looking for new premises because we don't have enough space to run all our courses. The contact we made from the Northside Partnership, is helping us with the new tenancy.* **❞**
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview P)

There were several comments following the early modules, as participants began to get to know each other, about the recognition that 'people are more than their roles'. Many participants explained that the programme placed everybody on an equal footing in the room, and so it removed people's identities from being entirely tied to the role they play in their work. The residents identified that over time they were able to see the people in the room as people rather than representatives of the agencies they had interacted with.

This was the basis on which most participants said they started to build trust in people, and by extension this improved their perceptions of the agencies and services those individuals worked for. By humanising everybody on the programme, relationships and trust were able to form over time.

> " I think they have a lot more respect for projects like ours because they now see what we do. I mean, when we got the call to say the guards wanted to do an agency visit, like I'm talking all the years here, never, ever. And they come in and they sat and they talked and then they talked to clients who were here and I just thought, that is huge. Yeah, absolutely huge. "
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview P)

> " As the sessions went on and the more rapport you build up with people and because of the kind of little projects or tasks that we were doing on the course, you got to see people's strengths for those who, like, presenting, those who could explain things really well, those who had really good ideas in the groups. And you were starting to see these people that you know are in all of these services and what way they work, and they might be able to help, even though it's not specifically within their context "
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview I)

> " I have had some bad experiences with the council over the years and the HSE and stuff like that… and we'd done communications in place-based too, and about listening skills and active listening, things like that. So I now actually like those people in those services. That's a bonus. "
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview L)

> " So during this course, we actually got to meet people and over a long period of time, got to know each other really well and got to be a little bit vulnerable ourselves in vulnerable spaces, because the course does that. But in becoming vulnerable in certain spaces, we connected with each other on a bit of a deeper level, and got to know each other's roles and the work and got to know the stresses and the strains that they're under. So it has helped me to develop relationships and that was key, where I can go to any of them for help. "
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview A)

6.2.3 Developing momentum

Alongside the delivery of P-BLD, there have been many other developments and changes in services to address the wide-ranging social issues raised by participants. It was recognised by all participants that they are not able to point to the P-BLD programme as the sole contributor to the shifts in the ways people work, the relationships that have developed and the projects that are emerging. In particular, the Drogheda Implementation Board and the work of the four sub-groups beneath it, and in Darndale the Northside Partnership and the work of several departments and agencies was recognised. Instead, many participants talked about the programme developing momentum amongst the 47 participants, and that momentum may be accelerating and building on the work in progress.

> *The huge thing for me and for the area I police will be intergenerational trauma, whereas before you might be like, that's just the way those people are. Now you're like, but why is that there? Why is this image of the guards there? Why is the breakdown in communication there? Why are there barriers there? And when you actually read more into the likes of the intergenerational trauma, you do realise that it is their norm, but that it can be challenged and possibly changed*
>
> (Darndale Participant Interview F)

> *I didn't know people very long before I came on the course, but I can see changes in people like who I work with, and I can see more of an openness and I do think that comes from the trust they've built. I can see more of an openness like those barriers maybe that weren't there. Aren't there because sometimes, especially being like a local authority, people can a lot of anger towards a local authority. And then people in a local authority come but nearly meet the anger because it's a fear or something where I think that's kind of maybe broken down a little bit. I also see more people who some of the residents who are working live in the community, have their voices have grown, if that's the right way from the programme. As the week went on, I feel like you could hear them a lot more and less, maybe of the professionals, which is good as well. So, yeah, I can definitely see change in people when I look around the table.*
>
> (Drogheda Participant interview C)

6.3 EMERGING IMPACT

This evaluation collected feedback from participants throughout the programme, and up to three months after completion of the programme. Many participants described that they were only just starting the process of putting their learning into practice, and the groups were at the beginning of their journey working together to deliver projects. This means that this evaluation can point to some emerging impacts arising from collaborative place-based working. These brief descriptions of projects or activities will hopefully be revisited by programme staff, to identify longer term change and impact related to social issues in Darndale and Drogheda.

1| Ongoing P-BLD sub-groups

a. Regular meetings have been arranged to keep P-BLD meetings going in both Darndale and Drogheda. These meetings are coordinated by the group, with shared responsibility for administration, agenda planning and capturing notes and actions, and provision of venue space.

b. WhatsApp groups have been created for P-BLD participants in Darndale and Drogheda. These groups are now regularly used for sharing information and opportunities for collaboration. This has also facilitated the sharing of contact details, which has allowed participants to get in touch with each other separately about specific issues.

c. A sub-group of Drogheda participants are setting up a book club / podcast club, to come together to discuss and share relevant professional development learning materials, books and podcasts.

d. Drogheda P-BLD participants have also set up a shared drive for sharing relevant documents, templates and information.

2| Community volunteer appreciation event

a. In Darndale P-BLD participants arranged a community event to show appreciation for local volunteers and community and voluntary sector organisations. Participants all invited one person they knew to the event, highlighting the wide network they collectively hold, and how many people can be reached with a small input by the whole group. It also demonstrated that the group could get together and do something in the community, without there being a coordination or budget set by a specific organisation. A free raffle and prizes were also arranged.

3| Advocacy and referrals

a. Due to connections between programme participants, direct calls have been made to inform referrals between a couple of schools and family and child support services and youth diversion programmes.

4| Trauma-informed practice – training provision and building awareness

a. The existing Resilience Development Project in Darndale was highlighted in the P-BLD group and trauma was identified as a key theme to explore within the group. A guest speaker was organised to deliver a module on the topic and a sub-group was formed of members of the P-BLD group. Following on from this, members of the P-BLD group from Dublin City Council and Northside Partnership provided funding for training for an additional 30 individuals, either working or living in the community. A total of 11

different organisations (mainly from those represented in the P-BLD group) took part in the training in June. The P-BLD group also attended a post-trauma workshop with Dr Maria Quinlan, counselling services were offered to all participants and Advantaged Thinking training is scheduled in October 2023.

b. A few participants identified their own scepticism about the relevance of trauma-informed practice in their roles or agencies, but through discussions during P-BLD and attendance at this workshop, they changed their positions on this. This shift has energised those working on trauma-informed practices, built trust and support across agencies, and was mentioned by several participants as an example about how the programme is having an impact locally – influencing local priorities, provision of training, development of a sub-group of P-BLD participants focused on this, and interagency discussions to expand trauma-informed practice across agencies and service provision.

5 | Suicide awareness training

a. In Darndale, suicide awareness training was extended to people on the P-BLD programme. The training was provided by Dublin County Council, and through a member on the programme, spaces were created for P-BLD participants, extending the learning to other partners and to members of the community.

6 | Green space renovation

a. In Darndale, a neglected space was identified that could be renovated to provide a space for children to engage with local services, such as play therapists. P-BLD participants have started work to remove the weeds and to clean up the space. Phase two of the renovation will be to paint the outside of the buildings and to add greenery.

7 | Engaging children in a health and wellbeing campaign

a. HSE engagement with a school class on launching a health and wellbeing programme, engaging children in sharing views on healthy food.

8 | Local investment in ideas from P-BLD groups

a. In Drogheda, the Department of Rural Community Development may put a small sum of money up to try and advance projects using the skills developed through P-BLD.

b. In Darndale, there are efforts underway to allocate some Empowering Communities budget to support some activities born out of this programme.

7 | CONCLUSION
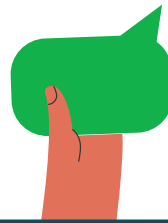
This evaluation of the Leading for Collective Impact programme in Darndale and Drogheda provides insights into the set-up, implementation and delivery of Place-Based Leadership Development (P-BLD). Overall the programme recruited the right people to participate in both locations, which involved a few changes at the beginning of the programme. Unfortunately the residents dropped out of the Drogheda programme, but the learning gained from Darndale and the need for consistent programme administration means this could be managed differently in a future programme.

Good relationships developed between participants, and some are beginning to work together outside of the programme, demonstrating the beginnings of new collaborative working. Post-module questionnaire data showed that overall participants experience of the programme is either good or excellent. For some, the content was challenging and complex, and was a steep learning curve. For most participants, the use of both academic theory and practical exercises provided space to practice using new skills and approaches and increased the confidence of participants in new ways of collaborative working.

Participants described several impactful and valuable sessions in the programme, most notably engaging with young people, dreaming up new visions for Darndale and Drogheda, and exploring the zone of uncomfortable debate (ZOUD). For some participants, the time allocated to exercises felt too long, and for others, the time spent on theory and concepts was too short, reflecting the complexity of designing a programme to meet a diverse group's needs. Modules were generally delivered about three months apart, and several participants described a loss of momentum because of this. Similar feedback was shared about the coaching sessions, these were found to be useful and a good contribution to leadership development, but the time between sessions slowed down progress. Timing of delivery, balancing academic and practical inputs, and increased programme administrative support, are the main recommendations for programme development going forward.

APPENDIX I
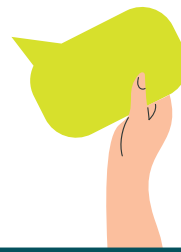
Research ethics

The project is being undertaken under the Code of Ethics provided by The Psychological Society of Ireland. The approach is underpinned by the following:

- Participants will take part in the project of their own free will after being fully informed of where and how the information will be used

- Confidentiality will be assured at all times during the collection of data

- All analysis undertaken will use anonymised data and participants will not be recognisable in resultant reports

- Participants will be fully informed of the ways in which the data collected will be used by the commissioners of the project and their partners

- All team members are trained to follow strict codes of practice

- All data collected as part of the project shall be stored and transferred securely. Storage of data will follow the guidelines set by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2018), Data Protection Act (2018) and the Freedom of Information Act 2014

- The commissioner will be responsible for obtaining governance approval (where applicable) for the study.