Introduction
The Dundee Drugs Commission asked the Improvement Hub to develop a Pathfinder programme to support the development of an integrated approach to delivering mental health and substance use services.

Phase one of the Pathfinder sought to:
• develop understanding of how the current system works
• build an understanding of challenges within the system

Method
A multi-disciplinary team enabled an understanding of the system at different levels:
Individual – exploration of how people navigate complex systems and their experiences, uncovering challenges and pain points
  Community conversations | Interviews | Surveys
Service – mapping out the range of services within the system and how they relate to each other
  System mapping | Visioning
Strategic – working with a broad range of information to develop insights about the strategic context and underlying conditions for the Individual and Service level challenges.
  Leadership development | Sense making | Triangulation

Results
We developed an overview of the whole system context to support ongoing conversations about where and how to make changes.

A good system...
- Meets complex needs
- Adapts and responds to changing need
- Is collaborative
- Has a well supported workforce

This will help experiences with...
- Access | Waiting times | Consistency of staff | Support when in crisis | Joined up supports | Longer-term supports | Stigma and discrimination | Environment | Communication/sign-posting

So we need to...
- Support people across the pathways
- Create supportive systems and conditions
  • Join up working between statutory mental health and substance use services
  • Closer working between statutory and non-statutory services
  • Better access to the right services at the right time, including crisis support
  • Flexible and responsive services
  • Develop leadership for change
  • Build staff knowledge and understanding
  • Support staff capacity/retention
  • Link with parallel pieces of work
  • Commission differently

Conclusions
Complexity is about intersecting challenges operating at different levels. If we are to understand complex systems our approaches need to be equally multi-level and multi-faceted.
Our approach utilised a multi-disciplinary team to explore a wide range of experiences across different services, and bring these together to establish an interconnected understanding of whole system dynamics.