



**BETTER BY
DESIGN**



LOTTERY FUNDED

Better by Design

Design thinking for the Scottish third sector

Better by Design

Better by Design is a programme of design-led support to 15 third sector organisations across Scotland. The participating organisations are:



Better by Design is delivered by **The Young Foundation** and **Taylor Haig** and evaluated by **Animate** and **Research for Real** on behalf of the **Big Lottery Fund Scotland**



Taylor Haig



Supporting the third sector in Scotland



by Jackie Killeen,
Director,
Big Lottery Fund Scotland

The landscape for third sector organisations is changing. Many are now facing increased demand for their services, a more competitive funding environment and heightened pressure to demonstrate their impact in terms of social outcomes rather than services. It is out of this complex need for change that Big Lottery Fund Scotland developed Better by Design, a process of design-led support over two years which aims to encourage sustainability in the widest sense.

Following extensive consultation with stakeholders, we realised that many third sector organisations – especially small and medium sized organisations – are struggling to find the capacity, strategic vision and adaptability to respond quickly to the changing environment. Through Better by Design, we are providing support to organisations in order to create meaningful and sustainable change.

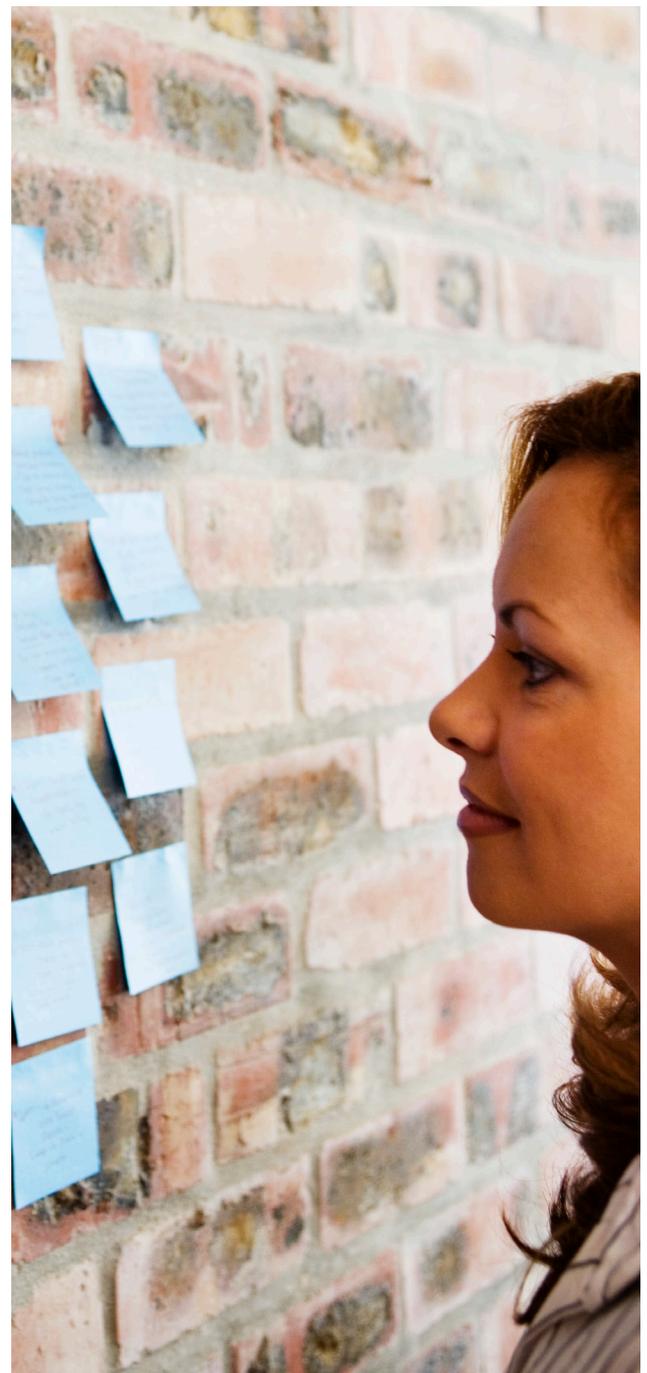
At the end of the process, we hope that the 15 participating organisations will have achieved two intended outcomes:

- They will be more sustainable in the longer term by being supported through a process of change
- They will meet the needs of their beneficiaries better now and in the future

We have been keen not to be too prescriptive to organisations about how they approach the process of change. We recognise that for long term sustainability to be achieved, change must be embedded within all layers of the organisation and cannot be imposed by an external agency.

We chose service design as the method of delivery because it places the needs and experiences of beneficiaries at its core and is responsive to the needs of each organisation. Rather than dictating which services will change or what improvements must be made, it instead provides the space, skills and tools needed to fundamentally evaluate how services are delivered. This then enables organisations to respond to change and meet new challenges.

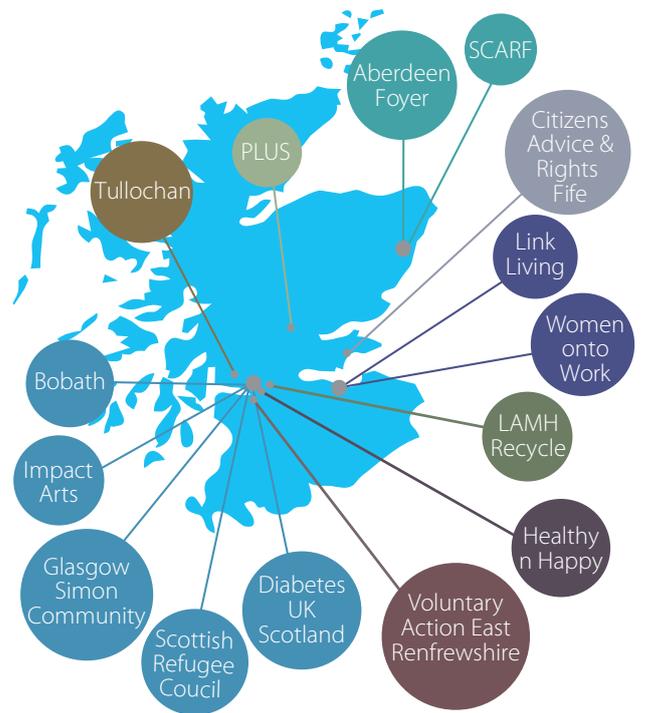
It is important that the learning which stems from Better by Design is widely shared. The Learning Partner for the programme is pulling out key messages and learning for



the sector and funders. We are holding a series of learning events in which the participating organisations and the wider sector come together to share their ideas and experiences. Forming partnerships and developing new ways of working are essential to meet the needs of beneficiaries as effectively as possible. We are encouraging this through the programme, and the blog – www.gettingbetterbydesign.com – contains all the learning and tools being used in the process.

This pilot project is also providing important learning for the Big Lottery Fund. Our mission is helping communities and people most in need and we must constantly evaluate our services and programmes to ensure that we are achieving this. Better by Design marks a new direction for the Big Lottery Fund and highlights our intention and ability to think innovatively about how we operate as a funder. This is particularly important as we engage in discussions with the sector in order to shape our strategic priorities for 2015 to 2021.

At the heart of Better by Design is the desire to increase the sustainability and resilience of third sector organisations so that they can support their beneficiaries in a more effective way. We hope that it is a process the participating organisations feel a sense of ownership over, and through ongoing evaluation we will look at ways in which we might be able to use this learning to better support communities and organisations in the future.



Through Better by Design we are providing support to 15 organisations in order to create meaningful and sustainable change

The programme



by Claire Hardy,
Director of Applied Innovation,
The Young Foundation

In setting up Better by Design, the Big Lottery Fund Scotland was clear that this wasn't "just another funding stream". The set of circumstances faced by the sector is unique and called for a different approach with innovation at its core. That meant having a way of working that enables the exploring of new models, scaling up what already works and innovating across and between organisations, partnerships and systems.

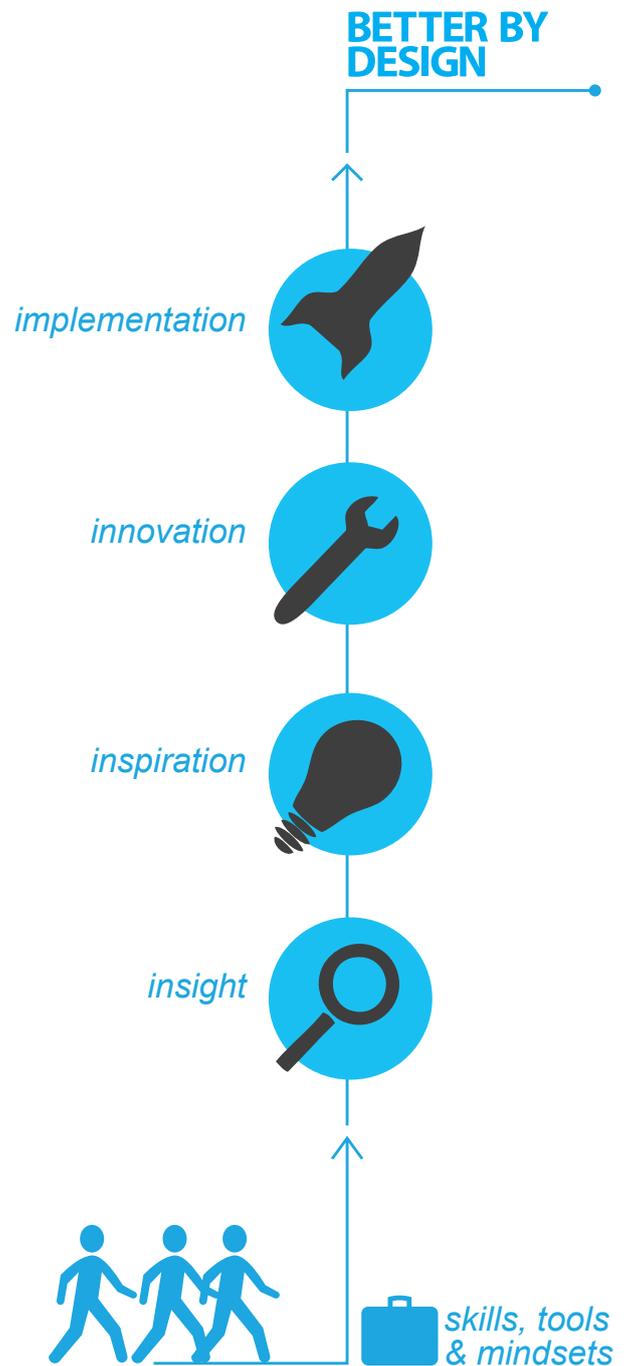
Through Better by Design, organisations would not be applying for funding but instead applying for a two year package of support. In doing so, they would have to demonstrate that they were ready, willing and able to take it on and that they had the commitment to see it through, from Board across all levels of the organisation.

We are delighted with the range of organisations that successfully applied. Their work encompasses fields as diverse as disability, homelessness, the arts, health, community development, mental health, employment, poverty, advice, refugees, housing and young people. All have turnovers below £5 million, with most below £1 million. Some have been working in Scotland for decades, others a much shorter time. What they did, and do, all have in common is a willingness to be absorbed in experimenting with how innovation and design have the potential to transform what they do.

Better by Design provides bespoke support for each organisation. It guides them through a design-led change process that draws on insight from a wide range of stakeholders and uses innovation and practical design tools and techniques to put people at the centre of the services they want and need. It also provides specialist input on research, engagement and participation, impact and evaluation and social enterprise.

The support is being delivered by a partnership between The Young Foundation – the leading international centre for social innovation – and Taylor Haig – specialists in design and change.

As with all design-led processes, there is constant reflection, adaptation and iteration. These are based on four key phases, developed from the Design Council's Double Diamond approach.



The *insight* phase is one of exploration and discovery, using tools such as research, customer journey mapping, stakeholder mapping and the organisational health scorecard. It is expansive, discovering the experiences and views of staff, communities, people who use services, trustees, volunteers, funders and others.

Through *inspiration* we look at different possibilities and ideas for change arising from insight. We explore the impact and outcomes the whole organisation wants to achieve, who its communities of benefit are and how it wants to engage them, and begins to sketch new ideas for change and services.

While *innovating*, organisations will prototype, test and develop changes and services. A key part of this is co-production – developing, changing and improving ways of working with the full engagement of communities of benefit. We also explore the business models and structures needed to underpin the effective working of the organisation.

Finally, during *implementation* changes and services are consolidated and launched, business models pinned down and evaluation and engagement firmed up.

Throughout all the phases, we work to embed the skills, tools and mindsets within organisations to enable them to do things themselves in the future. The tools we use, and the team's experiences, are shared on www.gettingbetterbydesign.com. Better by Design also includes a series of open learning events on design and innovation.

The Learning Partner has a crucial role, drawing out the learning from the programme for the wider sector and funders, and assessing whether it is meeting Big Lottery Fund Scotland's aspirations.

As a charity itself, The Young Foundation is delighted to be involved in Better by Design and working with Big Lottery Fund Scotland to develop such a promising approach to supporting the voluntary sector.

We work to embed the skills, tools and mindsets within organisations to enable them to do things themselves in the future

Why design?



by Lynne Wardle,
Director of Design,
Taylor Haig

At a time when the Scottish third sector is facing unprecedented challenges, what can the world of design bring?

Design is often talked about in terms of the latest fashions or gadgets. However, over the last 20 years or so people from other fields, starting with business and growing to include the healthcare, education and voluntary sectors, have begun to look at how designers' thinking and methods can effectively change systems.

Better by Design is leading the way in applying the mindset and methods of design to support Scottish third sector organisations to design new ways of working with and for people in the context of the communities they live in.

The design process aligns well with other asset-based approaches. It builds on what is good and draws upon the knowledge, skills and experiences of the people who use and deliver services to create new ways of working, because they are the experts.

The way designers think has been described as "constructive discontent"¹: designers have a relentless curiosity to understand any given situation from many perspectives, coupled with a restless belief in the potential to make life better by working with the people involved. It is a mindset that we often find amongst people delivering services, but they often lack the time or tools to develop their ideas into new ways of working.

A design approach offers simple frameworks to help people find problems and map them out in ways that are sharable and reveal patterns, connections and opportunities for change. These tools and methods help stakeholders to gain fresh insights and develop new perspectives on unmet needs and the services they currently offer. New perspectives are vital if we are to change behaviours, develop new relationships and support change across the system of service delivery.

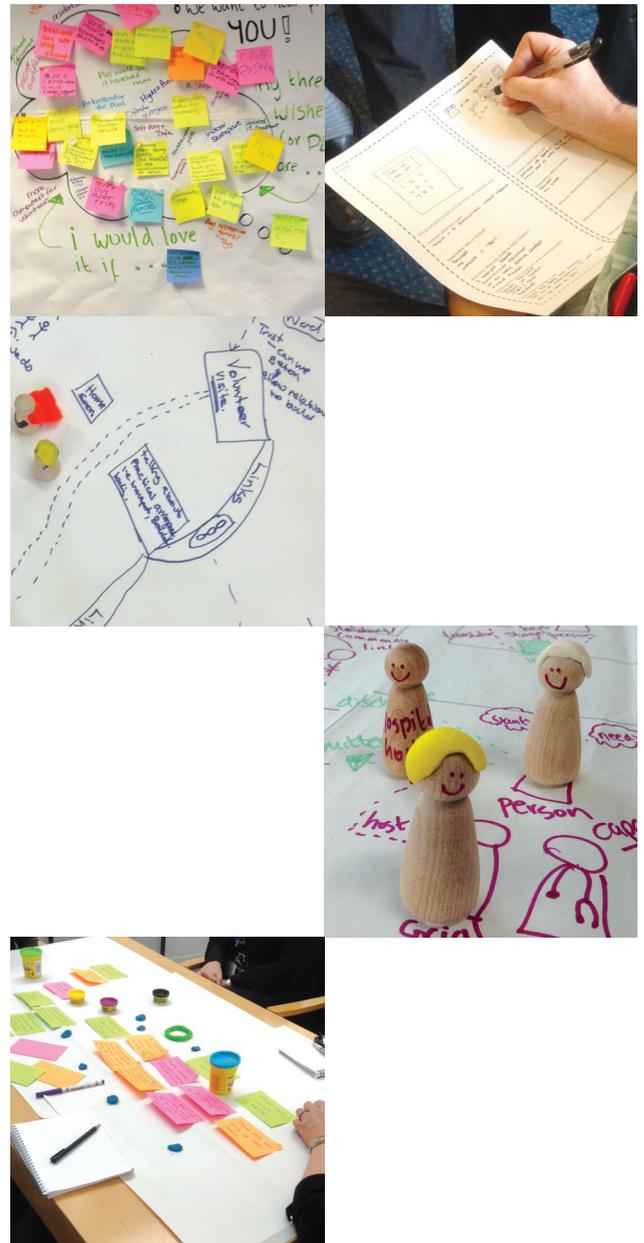
Experience has taught us that, to embed new services and create sustainable organisations, new ways of working are often necessary. Design has much to offer culture change.

The design process can help to develop a culture that engages people collaboratively to make a difference

It encourages a sense of inquiry and an open mind, focuses attention on the needs of those who use services and brings an optimism and enthusiasm for continuous improvement.

The design process itself is described in different ways by different organisations. But for Better by Design we talk of moving through phases of insight, inspiration, innovation and implementation.

While we're not suggesting that everyone becomes a designer, through Better by Design we are learning that anyone can use the tools and methods that design offers and that the design process can help to develop a culture that engages people who use services and people who deliver them, collaboratively, to make a difference.



1 Interview with Nigel Cross, Professor of Design Studies, Open University, by Neeraj Sonalkar 2008, online at <http://ambidextrousmag.org/issues/09/cross.html>, accessed 10 June 2014

The learning so far – Insight and inspiration



by Joanna Kennedy,
Lead Partner,
Animate



Cathy Sharp,
Director,
Research for Real

Desired outcomes

Almost all of the Better by Design organisations are looking for a stronger business model to enhance their financial sustainability. Some want to find a way of “getting off the treadmill” of applying for funds every year and constantly adapting their purpose to meet different funders’ requirements. Others want to develop new services and empower people who use their services and staff.

Many are also seeking to become learning organisations to ensure the knowledge and experience of their communities of benefit and staff constantly drive and inform what they do.

What has been valued so far?

From the organisations’ perspectives, the application process felt different. They were able to be open about their weaknesses as well as strengths, and engagement with the delivery team started before they had even applied.

Being accepted onto the programme created a momentum for change in the organisations and some have already made fundamental changes, including at Board level.

Better by Design was kicked off with a design workshop where staff, communities of benefit, trustees and others came together. Those involved enjoyed the creativity and felt challenged to look at issues from different perspectives:

“[One of the things that has been good about Better by Design has been] learning about how to be design-led and using alternative tools and techniques to source information, leading to a more questioning culture and being able to involve people at all levels.”²

“We had a good start... we emphasised there are no rights and wrongs. The driver didn’t think he had a right to be there. He said ‘I’m just the driver’, but he contributed well.”



**One of the key parts
of the programme
has been intensive
challenge and support,
which leadership
teams have particularly
appreciated**

Once change teams in the organisations were established, they had the opportunity to reflect on how they were doing on leadership, social impact, sustainability and delivery using the Organisational Health Scorecard. Teams valued the time out to reflect, both when it confirmed what they already knew and when it provided new insights.

The insight phase of the programme has seen organisations supported to do their own insight gathering and research, supplemented by professional research support.

“We have benefited hugely from the research. Yes, we’ve been going to those who have benefitted from our service, and therefore to an extent the research has told us what we already know. However, we couldn’t really prove it before; it was all too anecdotal. And in order to be ambitious and raise our game, we need to fully understand what our impact is on different groups and to evidence this. Hopefully our next bit of research will embrace those who haven’t found their way to us.”

One of the key parts of the programme has been intensive challenge and support, which leadership teams have particularly appreciated:

“Strategic clarity has been good. The CEO and senior managers need constant challenging and ideas need to be interrogated.”

What has been challenging?

The programme took a while to get going, and the pace could definitely have been quicker in its initial phases. Organisations have also taken time to get their heads around what design is and how they want to use Better by Design. The design language has at times been off-putting, and the distinctiveness of a design-led approach and its phases was at first not clear.

Better by Design is intensive and some organisations are understandably struggling to find the time and capacity of staff at all levels to invest in the programme and get the most from it.

Overcoming challenges

Chief Executives were at first tentative about directing and challenging the programme. They are now adopting a more directive role, setting the pace and providing challenge. The pace has picked up and change teams are becoming more familiar with the ideas and language of design:

“It’s interesting... looking at how far we have come just in the last few months. Our change team is up and running, we are already applying techniques against other services and the research kicks off next week.”

You can read the organisations’ experiences first hand on the Better by Design blog: www.gettingbetterbydesign.com

2 All quotes in this section are from Senior Managers in change teams throughout the programme.

Case studies

Engaging through research

Healthy n Happy Community Development Trust has a vision and a determination that Cambuslang and Rutherglen will be the healthiest and happiest places to live in Scotland.

Being a local community-led organisation, it provides opportunities for the people and communities of Cambuslang and Rutherglen to take an active part in improving their lives and ensuring their own, their families' and their communities' current and future health and wellbeing.

Healthy n Happy wants to ensure that it is successfully engaging a broader section of the community, including those who are not already using or aware of its work. It also wants to find more ways for local people to be involved in the design and review of services to ensure community needs drive its work.

To support these goals, the Better by Design team undertook a community-based research and asset mapping exercise in Cambuslang and Rutherglen.

The team visited a range of Healthy n Happy's local services and activities and spoke to volunteers, participants and staff about their experiences of Healthy n Happy and the local area, using different techniques to engage people in discussions. The team also explored the wider community, speaking to people on the street and in shops, libraries, the health centre, cafés and parks.

The findings were familiar to Healthy n Happy and it was reassuring to know that it was in touch with the community. The work highlighted the importance and potential of continuous intelligence gathering and insight to drive the work of the organisation – to be the horse, not the cart.

Healthy n Happy is now thinking about how it can make better use of what it already knows – a great question for an organisation interested in learning – and how it can evaluate and capture the long term impact of its work.



Healthy n Happy wants to find more ways for local people to be involved in the design and review of services, to ensure community needs drive its work

Generating insights

SCARF is a vibrant social enterprise headquartered in Aberdeen. Its original aim was to make a practical difference to people living in fuel poverty. While this aim remains at the core of SCARF, it is increasingly aware of wider issues that affect its customers and it now wants, and has indeed begun, to see a need to expand its work around food poverty.

SCARF wanted to develop a deeper understanding of food poverty, what it is, the scale of the problem in Scotland and how it impacts people's lives.

First, desk-based research was carried out on what is known about the problem in Scotland. This was complemented by three days of ethnographic research with individuals and families in Aberdeen and Dundee to develop an understanding of their experiences and the choices they face. This explored the impact of food poverty on social aspects of people's lives and how their expectations around food have changed.

The findings were interesting. They showed that food isn't really a social or spontaneous thing (in the way that it is for more affluent people), but that people shop carefully and are highly price and offer-conscious. The research also showed just how little it takes to knock people who exist on the breadline, below it.

SCARF has complemented this work with its own research to test the findings, using design tools such as POEMS and Knowledge Swatches. SCARF has also carried out online research and staff surveys and been out and about within communities in Aberdeen. This, which SCARF describes simply as "standing about and talking to folk", has been both insightful and reassuring.

SCARF feels this second part has been of greatest value as staff did it for themselves and feel that they own the findings. Importantly, SCARF also now feels able to do it again and sees it as a useful way to get the knowledge from the communities it works with and the needs of its customers into the heart of its business.



SCARF wanted to develop a deeper understanding of food poverty, what it is, the scale of the problem in Scotland and how it impacts people's lives

