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Group concept mapping report

Conceptualisation of the Regional Integration Fund

Supporting Evidence Report 3 for the National Evaluation of the Regional Integration Fund

Mae'r ddogfen yma hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg.

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This is the Group Concept Mapping Report which is one of four documents providing supporting evidence for the Conceptualisation Report of the National Evaluation of the Regional Integration Fund. The Conceptualisation Report synthesises findings from this report, and three others providing supporting evidence – the Framework for Change (Verity and Llewellyn, 2023); the Rapid Realist Review of the literature (Tetlow et al., 2024); and the in-depth Scoping Interviews report (Bryer and Bebb, 2024).

National Evaluation of the Regional Integration Fund

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Executive Summary

Undertaken as part of the year one Conceptualisation Phase of the National evaluation of the Regional Integration Fund (RIF), this report is one of four providing supporting evidence for the Conceptualisation Report (Llewellyn and Verity, 2024). The Conceptualisation Report draws together and synthesises findings from this report and three others: the Framework for Change (Verity and Llewellyn, 2023); the Rapid Realist Review of the literature (Tetlow et al., 2024); and the in-depth Scoping Interviews report (Bryer and Bebb, 2024).

Using an online consensus method called Group Concept Mapping (GCM) this study explored participants' perspectives on the ideas and concepts behind the Regional Integration Fund (RIF). GCM was used online via Group Wisdom™ software for data collection, data integration, and analysis. A consensus method, GCM engages stakeholders in the research process via three activities: brainstorming, sorting, and rating. Its integration of qualitative processes with multivariate statistical analysis enables diverse groups of individuals to articulate their ideas and represent them visually through a series of related concept maps. The online use of GCM enabled a geographically dispersed national sample of participants who were able to engage with the study at a time and place convenient to them.

Following completion of three demographic questions (primary geographical area working in, organisation type, and professional role), participants commenced the brainstorming; generating statements to the focus prompt 'When I think about the underlying principles and concepts that I associate within the Regional Integration Fund, I think about...'. Next, participants sorted all statements into themed piles. The final activity (rating) asked participants to rate all statements using two 5-point Likert scales: Understanding and Significance.

We sought to recruit up to 100 participants (the maximum number for the Group Wisdom™ software) comprised of professionals developing / managing / implementing / delivering RIF funded projects/programmes in their region. Email invitations were circulated via gatekeepers (primarily RIF and Regional Partnership Board leads) to relevant organisations and professionals. Once consent was obtained, participants independently registered onto the Group Wisdom™ software via an online link.

The online software conducted four steps of data analysis; a) Descriptive statistics to analyse participant demographic responses, b) Similarity matrix is created from the

participant sorted statements demonstrating the number of participants who sorted the statements together, c) Multidimensional-scaling analysis of the similarity matrix produces a statement point map. Each participant statement is allocated a point on a two-dimension (XY) axis, d) Ward's algorithm was used in a hierarchical cluster analysis of statement clusters to produce a cluster map with cluster labels, cluster rating, Pattern Matching and Go-zone report.

Findings

Participants represented all regions across Wales, and a range of organisations. Most participants worked within Regional Partnerships and had senior leadership/management roles.

Participants sorted and rated 98 statements. Analysis of the sorted data produced a 7-cluster map of concepts and ideas associated to the RIF: Communication, relationships, and networking; Integration and collaboration; Impact, outcomes, and evaluation; Ambition to change; Funding and demand management; Complexity and constraints; and Governance.

The cluster map (Figure 3) shows the conceptual relationship between clusters; those closer together represent a strong relationship and clusters further apart a weak relationship. From the cluster map, aspirational higher-level concepts/principles of RIF e.g., clusters 'Communication, relationships and networking', 'Impact, outcomes and evaluation', and 'Ambition to change' are closer together and show they are recognised by participants. However, these are offset by the practicalities of developing/managing/delivering RIF – e.g., clusters 'Complexity and constraints', 'Funding and demand management', and 'Governance', which are also closer together.

When considering the underlying principles and concepts associated to the RIF, the cluster rating maps (Figure 4 and 5) and pattern match report (Figure 6), show that whilst some clusters had similar average rating scores for 'understanding' and 'significance', there were also discrepancies between the two ratings. For example, the 'Funding and demand management' cluster was rated as most significant, but less understood, whilst the 'Integration and collaboration' cluster was rated most understood but less significant. The least understood and significant clusters were 'Ambition to change' and 'Governance'.

A Go-Zone report (Figure 7) compared all 98 statements across the two rating scales and identified the top ten most understood and most significant statements (green zone, Table

12), the least understood but most significant statements (orange zone, Table 13), and the least understood and least significant statements (blue zone, Table 14).

Seven of the top ten statements in the green zone sit within the clusters associated to the practicalities of developing/managing/delivering RIF, 'Funding and demand management' and 'Complexity and constraints' and include those of financial pressures, propping up services, and system complexities and pressures.

Similarly, six of the top ten statements in the orange zone sit within the clusters associated to the practicalities of developing/managing/delivering RIF and include conflict and duplication with other Welsh Government initiatives, challenges of mainstreaming funding, and bureaucracy.

In the blue zone, there was a more even spread of cluster representation between the higher-level concepts/principles of RIF and the practicalities of developing / managing / delivering RIF. Statements least understood and least significant included the concepts/ideas that are central to the RIF e.g., values of models of care, erosion of organisational boundaries, and national consistency.

Four key messages can be taken from this GCM study:

- There was participation from a very good cross-section of stakeholders. Participants represented all the regions in Wales and national perspectives, and a range of different organisations;
- The cluster map shows two distinct groups of concepts emerging – the relatively positively-rated 'strategic' concepts underpinning RIF ('Ambition to change', 'Communication, relationships and networking', and 'Integration and collaboration') offset by the relatively negatively-rated 'operational' concepts underpinning RIF ('Complexity and constraints', 'Funding and demand management', and 'Governance');
- The ratings scales shown in the pattern match show that whilst some clusters have similar average rating scores on the two scales (understanding and significance), there are also discrepancies between the two ratings for some concepts. This is most marked for 'Funding and demand management' which is rated as the most significant cluster in delivering the aims of RIF but is less well understood. Similarly, 'Integration and collaboration' is most understood concept, but considered less significant in achieving the outcomes under RIF; and

- In the go-zone analysis, there are a series of statements rated in the green quadrant (i.e. above average rating from participants for significance and understanding within RIF) including ones on financial pressures, RIF being used to prop up services, and system pressures. Statements in the grey zone (i.e. rated by participants as being the least significant in delivering the aims of RIF and least understood) include concepts and ideas that are core to RIF itself like the models of care, the erosion of organisational boundaries, and autonomy in integrated care systems.

1. Introduction

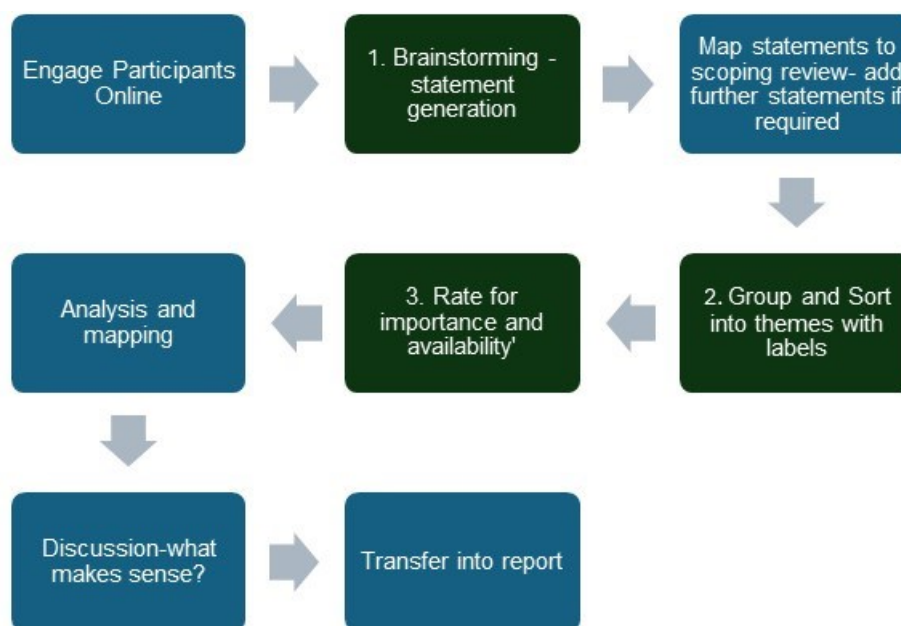
- 1.1 This report presents findings from the Group Concept Mapping (GCM) study, undertaken as part of the year one Conceptualisation Phase of the National evaluation of the Regional Integration Fund (RIF).
- 1.2 This is one of four reports providing supporting evidence for the Conceptualisation Report for the study (Llewellyn and Verity, 2024). The Conceptualisation Report draws together and synthesises findings from this report and three others: the Framework for Change (Verity and Llewellyn, 2023); the Rapid Realist Review of the literature (Tetlow et al., 2024); and the in-depth Scoping Interviews report (Bryer and Bebb, 2024).
- 1.3 The Conceptualisation Report (Llewellyn and Verity, 2024) addresses the first of the central questions in our study ('To what extent have meaningful and evaluable principles been articulated as part of RIF?') and in answering the question provides a synthesis of the findings from evaluation data collected over the course of Year 1 of the RIF evaluation. The Conceptualisation Report is therefore an 'overview' of the evidence gathered here and elsewhere and provides an account of the changing and shifting context that has affected RIF.

2. Method and Approach

Group Concept Mapping

- 2.1 This study used an online consensus method, Group Concept Mapping (GCM, Kane and Trochim, 2007) to explore the ideas and concepts behind the Regional Integration Fund (RIF) with study participants. See Yu et al (2023) and Elliott et al (2022) for examples of GCM used elsewhere.
- 2.2 GCM is a sophisticated, robust, participatory approach to engaging stakeholders in the research process. It integrates qualitative processes with multivariate statistical analysis to enable a diverse group of people to articulate their ideas and represent them visually through a series of related concept maps.
- 2.3 GCM has three sequential parts, which participants were asked to complete individually online: brainstorming, grouping/sorting, and rating (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The research process adapted from Kane and Trochim (2007).



- 2.4 The GCM method is facilitator-led and uses Group Wisdom™ software for data collection, data integration, and analysis. The Group Wisdom™ software enabled researchers to reach a geographically dispersed national sample of participants. Participants were able to engage with the study at a time and place convenient to them.
- 2.5 Brainstorming asks participants to generate statements in response to a focus prompt. In this study, the focus prompt was ‘When I think about the underlying

principles and concepts that I associate within the Regional Integration Fund, I think about...'. Once the statements are generated, participants group and sort all the statements that are generated into themed 'piles' that make sense to them and label each pile. Finally, participants are asked to rate each statement on a five-point Likert scale. In this study, the rating scales were:

- Understanding - How well understood is the principle / concept with the Regional Integration Fund?
1. Not understood at all, 2. Not well understood, 3. Understood, 4. Well understood, 5. Very well understood.
- Significance² - How significant is the principle / concept currently in delivering the aims of the Regional Integration Fund?
1. Not significant at all, 2. Limited significance, 3. Moderately significant, 4. Significant, 5. Very significant.

2.6 In addition to the three activities, participants enrolled onto the software were asked three demographic questions:

1. In which geographical area do you primarily work?
2. Which of the types of organisations below do you primarily work for?
3. Which of the following most closely describes your role?

2.7 The study was conducted bilingually in Welsh and English and took place between 21st November 2023 – 8th January 2024. Ethics approval was sought and secured by the University of South Wales [230213LR].

Data collection/recruitment

2.8 We sought to recruit up to 100 participants³. Email invitations with an accompanying information sheet, and link to an online consent form, were circulated via gatekeepers (primarily RIF and Regional Partnership Board leads) to relevant organisations and professionals developing / managing / implementing / delivering RIF funded projects/programmes in their region. Following consent agreement, participants were provided a link to independently register onto the Group WisdomTM software.

² We used the following definition of significance: 'the importance of something, especially when this has a noticeable effect or change'.

³ The Group WisdomTM software licence maximum recruitment capacity.

2.9 During the study, participants could take part in all three activities (brainstorming, sorting and rating), or only one or two of the activities. For example, a participant could join the study at the sorting stage (following the closure of brainstorming) and participate in sorting and/or rating. GCM is not prescriptive in requiring all participants enrolled onto the software are required to complete all three activities for their contribution to be included in analysis.

Data analysis

2.10 The online software was used to conduct four steps of data analysis (Kane and Trochim, 2007) following data review, cleaning, and acceptance processes:

- Step 1: The three participant demographic responses were analysed using descriptive statistics.
- Step 2: A similarity matrix is created from the participant sorted statements. This demonstrates the number of participants who sorted the statements together.
- Step 3: Multidimensional-scaling analysis of the similarity matrix produces a statement point map. Each participant statement is allocated a point on a two-dimension (XY) axis (Figure 2).
- Step 4: Ward's algorithm was used in a hierarchical cluster analysis of statement clusters to produce a cluster map with cluster labels (Figure 3), cluster rating (Figures 4 and 5), and Pattern Matching report (Figure 6, and Go-zone analysis, Figure 7). The Go-zone analysis enabled identification of the most understood and significant statements as rated by participants (Table 12), statements rated as least understood but most significant (Table 13), and statements rated least understood and least significant (Table 14). Pattern match reporting identified similarities and differences, based on the organisation (policy or non-policy) in which participants were primarily working (Figure 9).

3. Findings

3.1 In total, 37 participants consented and enrolled onto GCM study independently using GroupWisdom™ software. Table 1 shows the number of participants who completed each activity. Thirty-three participants answered the participant (demographic questions), 24 enrolled onto brainstorming activity, of which 21 completed. A further two participants enrolled for the sorting and rating activities after the brainstorming stage had closed. In total, 24 completed the sorting activity, 27 the rating 1 'Understanding' activity, and 25 the rating 2 'Significance' activity.

Table 1: Number of participants who completed each activity

Activity	Completed
Participant questions	33
Brainstorming	21
Sorting	24
Rating 1 – Understanding	27
Rating 2 – Significance	25

3.2 Participants represented all regions across Wales (Table 2), and a range of organisations (Table 3). Most respondents worked within Regional Partnerships (33.33%) and had senior leadership/management roles (Table 4, 90.63%). The five 'other' responses to the type of organisations participants primarily worked within included HEIW, Service user representative, and 'Collaborative organisation'. The two 'other' responses to participants role were Chief Executive, and co-production volunteer practitioner.

Table 2: Geographical area primarily working within

Option	Number	%
North Wales	7	22.1
Powys	1	30.3
West Wales	4	12.1
West Glamorgan	2	6.1
Cwm Taf Morgannwg	1	3.0
Cardiff and the Vale	8	24.2
Gwent	1	3.03
National	9	27.3
Total	33	100

Table 3: Organisation type

Option	Number	%
Local authority	6	18.2
Third sector	4	12.1
NHS	4	12.1
Welsh Government	3	9.1
Regional Partnership	11	33.3
Other	5	15.2
Total	33	100

Table 4: Professional role

Option	Number	%
Senior leader/manager, Operational/Middle manager	29	90.6
Supervisor/Practitioner	1	3.1
Other	2	6.3
Total	32	100

Activity 1: Brainstorming

- 3.3 During the brainstorming activity, 21 participants generated an initial pool of 60 statements in response to the focus prompt, 'When I think about the underlying principles and concepts that I associate within the Regional Integration Fund, I think about...'.
- 3.4 Statements were cleaned using the process outlined by Kane and Trochim (2007) - reviewing the raw list, removing redundant/irrelevant statements or duplicates, and splitting compound statements. Statements were minimally edited to ensure grammatical accuracy and to ensure clarity, particularly in relation to acronyms and jargon. Statements were mapped against the Rapid Realist Review (Tetlow et al., 2024) to ensure both consistency with the evidence-base and that key aspects of the literature were included. The mapping led to 16 statements being added.
- 3.5 The final list of 98 statements was uploaded to the software for stages 2 and 3. The full list of statements is provided in Appendix 1 and statement examples (the first five statements as presented on the Group Wisdom™ Software, in no particular order) can be seen in Table 5.

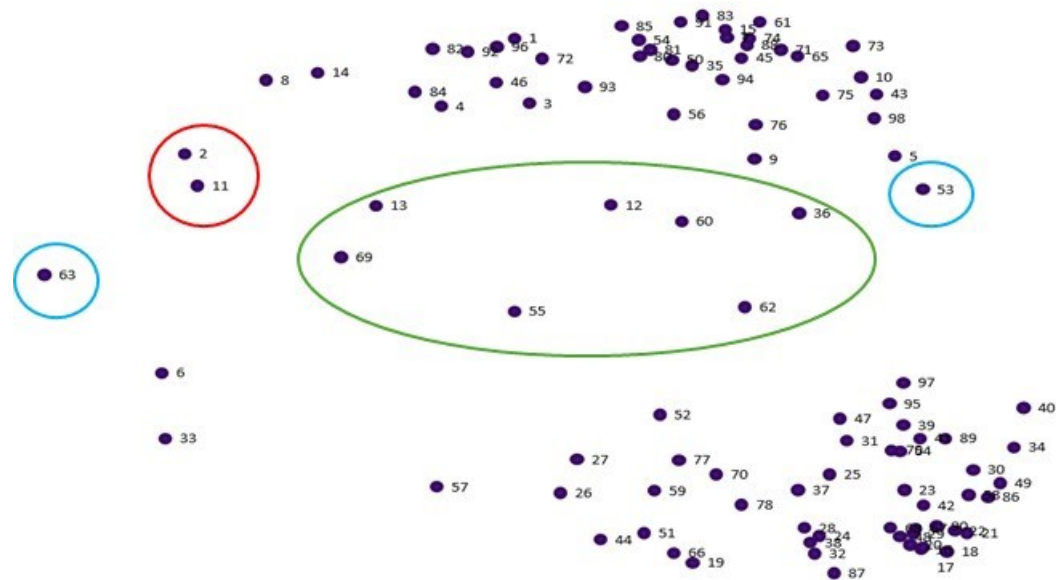
Table 5: The first five statements

Statement no	Statement
1	The importance of foregrounding person-centred approaches in integrated care
2	The importance of face to face professional and patient interactions
3	The importance of co-location for integrated care
4	Erosion of organisational boundaries
5	How to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of integrated care

Activity 2: Sorting

- 3.6 In this activity, 24 participants sorted and grouped all statements individually into piles and assigned each pile with an individual label. Participants could choose to create as many piles as the thought appropriate, although the Group Wisdom™ software instructions advised participants that based on the number of statements to sort (n=98), 5-20 piles were usual.
- 3.7 From the sorting activity, the software generated a point map showing all 98 statements (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Computer generated point map of 98 statements



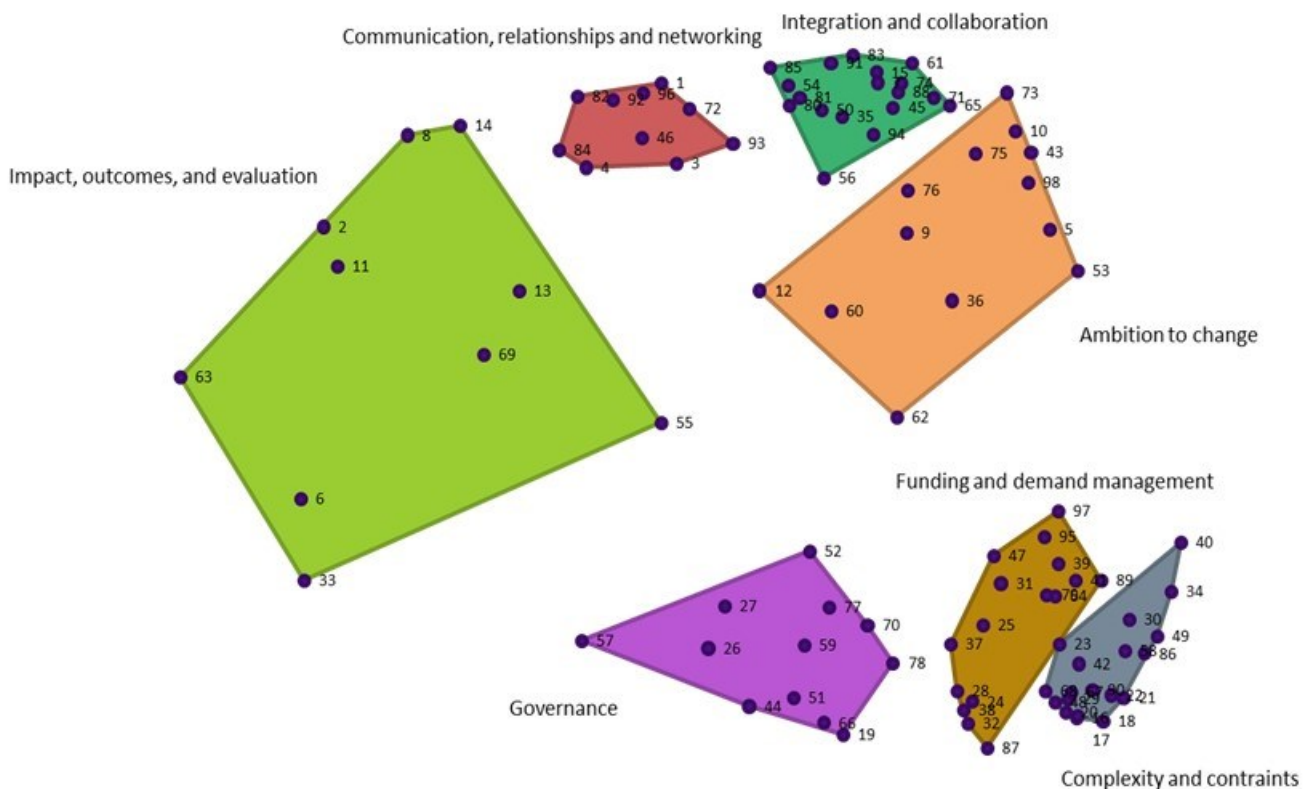
- 3.8 A point represents each statement. The closer the points are to one another indicates how frequently the statements were sorted together by participants. For example, statements 2 and 11 (circled in red) are close together and so have been sorted together most frequently. Conversely, statements 53 and 63 (circled in blue) are on opposite ends of the map and were either not sorted together often or not at

all. From the point map, we can see the ‘clustering’ of statements, and where ‘clustering’ is less evident, for example, statements in the middle (circled orange). However, all points are part of the cluster map (Figure 3).

Cluster map

- 3.9 Hierarchical cluster analysis was carried out to find the optimal number of clusters. Seven cluster maps (4-10) were generated by the software to show the distribution of how sorted statements were grouped within clusters. The software also generated a list of possible cluster labels, as determined by labels that were given by participants in the sorting stage.
- 3.10 The evaluation team reviewed each cluster map based on how statements were grouped and related to each other within each cluster map and the possible cluster labels. Following discussion and sense-checking of the maps and labels, a 7-cluster map was agreed. The labels for each of the 7-cluster are: Communication, relationships, and networking, Integration and collaboration, Impact, outcomes, and evaluation, Ambition to change, Funding and demand management, Governance, and Complexity and constraints.

Figure 3: Cluster map with labels from the participant sorting exercise



- 3.11 The placement of each statement within a cluster is based on participant's grouping of each statement. For example, statement 36 'How RIF should be a means to an end as part of much wider systems change', sits with the 'Ambition to change' cluster because this is where it was most placed by participants.
- 3.12 The conceptual relationship between clusters is shown by the distance between them - short distance = strong relationship; large distance = weak relationship. Therefore, the 'Funding demand and management cluster' is closer to the 'Complexity and constraints' and 'Governance' clusters, than the other clusters. 'Complexity and constraints' had the most statements (n=19), followed by the 'Integration and collaboration' cluster (n=18). The 'Communication, relationships, and networking' cluster, and the 'Impact, outcomes, and evaluation' cluster had the least statements (n=10). Table 6 provides three example statements per cluster.

Table 6: Example statements in each of the seven clusters

No.	Wording
Communication, relationships, and networking (n=10)	
4	The importance of communication across professional networks
82	Collaboration across partners to address mutual headaches
92	Co-production
Integration and collaboration (n=18)	
35	A principle of RIF was to enable an integrated cultural shift
56	National consistency (the same offer wherever we live)
83	Encouraging new ways of working
Impact, outcomes, and evaluation (n=10)	
6	How to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of integrated care
14	Outcome focused
55	Squaring top-down approaches with bottom-up co-production with individuals and communities
Ambition to change (n=13)	
9	Reconciliation of system and individual responsibilities
43	The ambition of RIF, which was correct
75	Introducing, developing, and trailing the opportunity to develop relationships not just transactional activities
Funding and demand management (n=16)	
31	The funding which has not enabled a shift left as the demand at the front door has grown
64	The constraints of the priorities and pressures on core service budgets

87	The complexity in delivering against all the various components of RIF, which makes it very challenging to buy into
Complexity and constraints (n=19)	
18	Constraining and limiting
48	How at times it does seem that there is an extra layer of bureaucracy
86	How sometimes the systems, processes, and complexity/ competition (especially under financial pressures) get in the way
Governance (n=12)	
44	A lack of monitoring taking place or guidelines to work in - which has meant really chaotic execution
52	The RIF not being systematically connected through governance and accountability
77	The historical governance which makes it challenging for partners to shift some of their ways of working to enable full compliance

3.13 Bridging values indicate how closely a statement is related to the other items within its cluster. Bridging values range between 0 and 1. High bridging values indicate that a statement has been sorted with ideas in several other clusters. Low bridging values indicate that the statement was sorted more consistently within that cluster, these statements represent the 'anchor statements' within a cluster. Table 7 shows the number of statements per cluster, the cluster bridging value, and the two statements with the lowest bridging values within the cluster (i.e., the anchor statements).

Table 7: Anchor statements for each cluster, number of statements per cluster and bridging value clusters and anchor statements (lower bridging values represent a closer fit to the cluster)

Cluster	Bridging value
Communication, relationships, and networking	0.23
93. Population needs being addressed	0.151
72. Preventative services	0.166
Integration and collaboration	0.09
15. Seamless Care	0.036
83. Encouraging new ways of working	0.043
Impact, outcomes, and evaluation	0.69
55. Squaring top-down approach with bottom-up co-production with individuals and communities	0.426
14. Outcome focused	0.454
Ambition to change	0.26
76. How to positively challenge current cultural working practices and assumptions within organisations	0.175

75. Introducing, developing, and trailing the opportunity to develop relationships not just transactional activities	0.2
Funding and demand management	0.11
32. Too much of the funding was used for additional regional management teams who are not in touch with the front line	0.045
87. The complexity in delivering against all the various components of RIF, which makes it very challenging to buy into	0.048
Complexity and constraints	0.07
29. The funding being very welcome, but the strings attached make it (almost) not worth it	0
16. Over-engineered	0.003
Governance	0.28
44. A lack of monitoring taking place or guidelines to work in - which has meant really chaotic execution	0.139
19. Limited value	0.173

3.14 Anchor statements provide a useful focus for the cluster as they are the statement(s) which were most consistently sorted together in their cluster, meaning that they, more than the other statements, reflect the content of that cluster i.e., a closer ‘fit’ to the cluster. The lowest average bridging value was for the Complexity and constraints cluster (0.07), followed by the Integration and Collaboration cluster (0.09), indicating that these clusters are the most cohesive of all clusters, and a good representation of the data (Table 7).

Activity 3: Rating for ‘Understanding’ and ‘Significance’

3.15 In this activity participants were asked to rate all 98 statements against ‘understanding’ and ‘significance’. Table 8 shows the number of statements per cluster, the cluster average for understanding and the cluster average for significance.

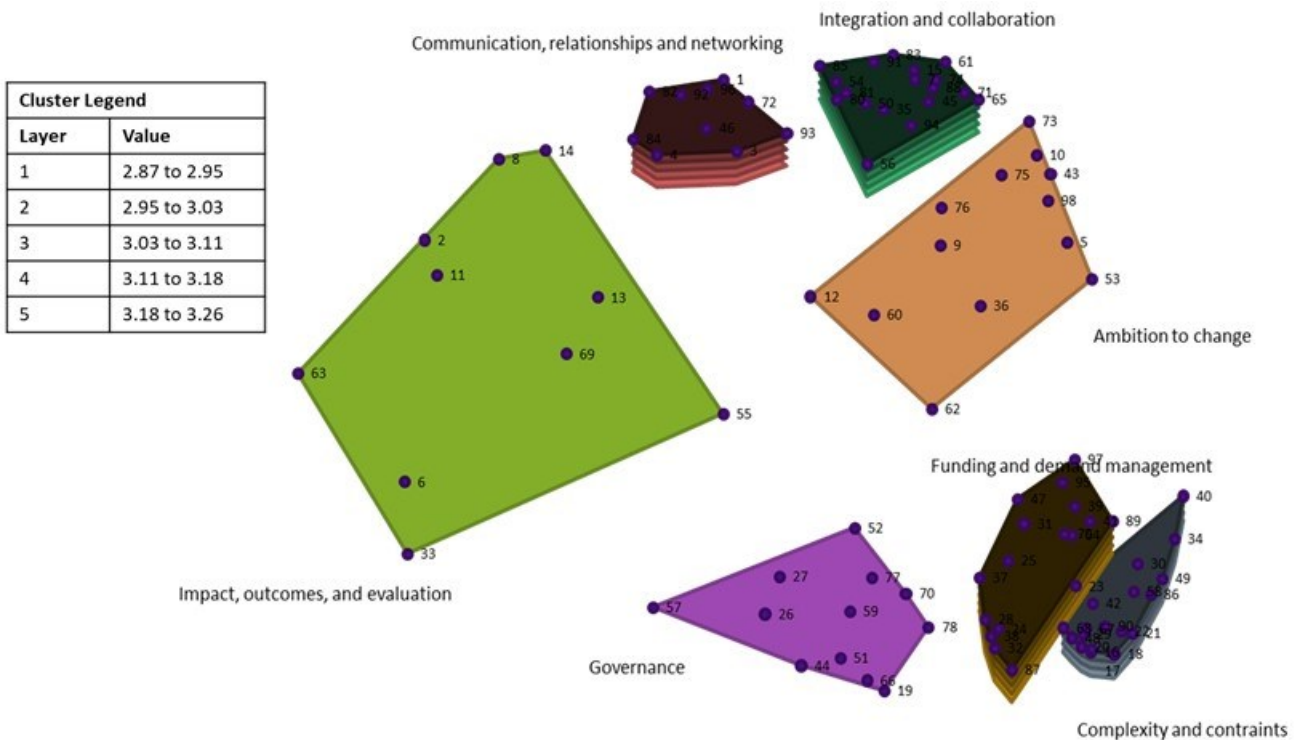
Table 8: Cluster characteristics

Construct	Communication, relationships, and networking	Integration and collaboration	Impact outcomes and evaluation	Ambition to change	Funding demand management	Complexity and constraints	Governance
No. of statements	10	18	10	13	16	19	12

Average understanding rating	3.2	3.26	2.94	2.87	3.18	3.12	2.87
Average significance rating	3.91	3.83	3.83	3.59	3.93	3.74	3.61

3.16 The cluster-characteristics (Table 8) and cluster-rating understanding map (Figure 4) demonstrates that the ‘Integration and collaboration’ cluster (3.26) was on average rated the most understood cluster when considering the underlying principles and concepts associated to the RIF. The ‘Communication, relationships, and networking’ cluster (3.2) was the second most understood. Clusters ‘Ambition to change’ (2.87) and ‘Governance’ (2.87) were considered the least understood.

Figure 4: Cluster rating map – Understanding



3.17 Table 9 presents the top ten statements by average rating for understanding.

Table 9: Top ten statements and average rating – Understanding

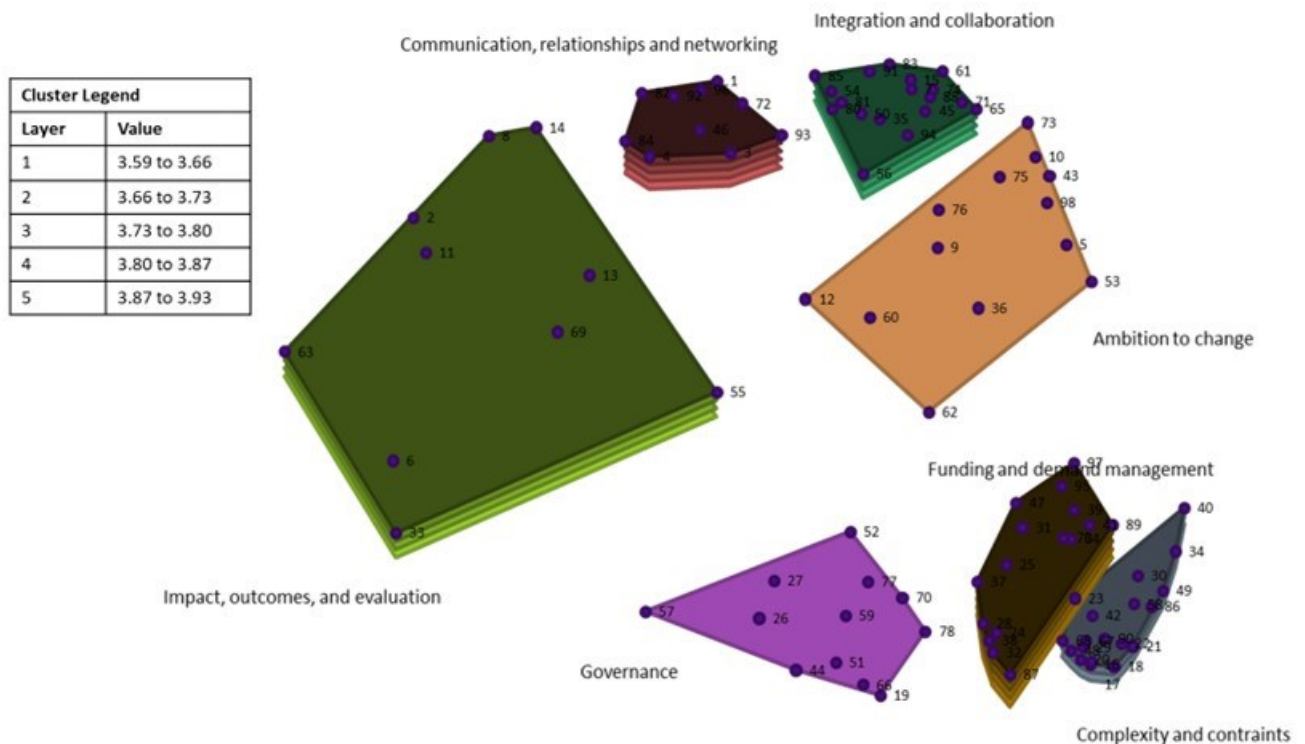
No	Cluster	Statement	Rating
64	Funding and demand management	The constraints of the priorities and pressures on core service budgets	3.83
97	Funding and demand management	How RIF is a tiny part of the whole Health and Social Care System	3.78
54	Integration and collaboration	The Principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act - multi-agency and integration, co-production and voice, prevention, well-being	3.73
49	Complexity and constraints	It's appearing to prop up core statutory services	3.65
95	Funding and demand management	The challenge of moving projects from RIF to mainstreaming	3.61
33	Impact, outcomes, and evaluation	Preventative benefits are not seen in the same financial year	3.59
23	Complexity and constraints	Propping up core services	3.59
31	Funding and demand management	The funding which has not enabled a shift left as the demand at the front door has grown	3.58
4	Communication, relationships, and networking	The importance of communication across professional networks	3.54
96	Communication, relationships, and networking	The importance of citizen and carer voices in the design of RIF funded activities	3.52

3.18 Table 9 shows the most understood statement in response to the focus prompt 'When I think about the underlying principles and concepts that I associate within the Regional Integration Fund, I think about...', was statement 64 'The constraints of the priorities and pressures on core service budgets' (3.83), followed by statement 97, 'How RIF is a tiny part of the whole Health and Social Care System' (3.78). The cluster 'Funding and demand management' was most represented with four statements in the top ten.

3.19 The cluster-characteristics (Table 8) and cluster-rating significance map (Figure 5) demonstrates that the 'Funding and demand management cluster' (3.93) was on average rated the most significant cluster when considering the underlying principles and concepts associated to the RIF. The 'Communication, relationships and networking' cluster was rated the second most significant cluster (3.91).

'Governance' (3.6) and 'Ambition to change' were on average, rated the least significant clusters.

Figure 5: Cluster rating map – Significance



3.20 Table 10 presents the top ten statements by average rating for significance.

Table 10: Top ten statements and average rating – Significance

Statement no	Cluster	Statement	Rating
49	Complexity and constraints	It's appearing to prop up core statutory services	4.71
64	Funding and demand management	The constraints of the priorities and pressures on core service budgets	4.54
95	Funding and demand management	The challenge of moving projects from RIF to mainstreaming	4.48
96	Communication, relationships, and networking	The importance of citizen and carer voices in the design of RIF funded activities	4.41

23	Complexity and constraints	Propping up core services	4.39
79	Funding and demand management	Financial pressures, which create challenges for partners to shift some of their ways of working to enable full compliance	4.39
54	Integration and collaboration	The Principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act - multi-agency and integration, co-production and voice, prevention, well-being	4.35
86	Complexity and constraints	How sometimes the systems, processes, and complexity/ competition (especially under financial pressures) get in the way	4.30
24	Funding and demand management	Conflicts and duplicates other Welsh Government initiatives creating complexity and conflict	4.30
63	Impact, outcomes, and evaluation	Measuring outcomes	4.27

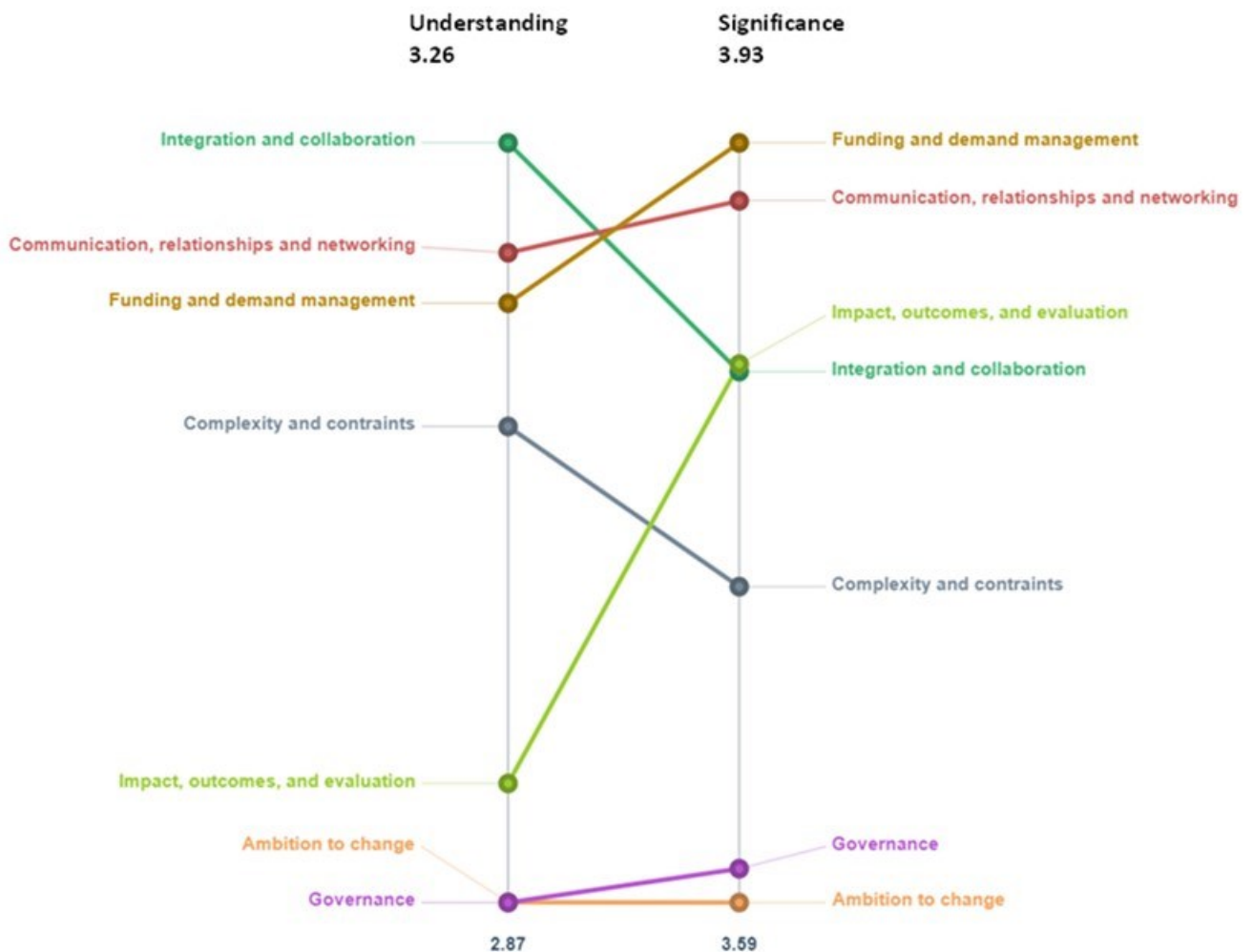
3.21 The most significant statement in response to the focus prompt ‘When I think about the underlying principles and concepts that I associate within the Regional Integration Fund, I think about...’, was statement 49 ‘It’s appearing to prop up core statutory services’ (4.71), followed by ‘The constraints of the priorities and pressures on core service budgets’ (4.54). The cluster ‘Funding and demand management’ was most represented with four statements in the top ten, followed by the ‘Complexity and constraints’ cluster with three statements.

Pattern Matching

3.22 These cluster ratings can be further understood with Pattern Match reports. Figure 6 shows the average rating per cluster on the two scales. This is a relative pattern match, and as such presents the cluster averages within the range of ratings for each scale, rather than on a fixed, absolute scale. The relative pattern match enables the researcher to compare multiple measurements to establish a trend (Kamat, 2019).

3.23 As the rating scales measure different concepts (i.e., understanding and significance), it is more useful to compare the ranking of clusters on the different scales, as opposed to the absolute numbers, which may not be comparable. The pattern match indicates a strong correlation between the understanding and significance rating scales ($r=0.77$).

Figure 6: Relative pattern match report comparing cluster ratings for understanding and significance



3.24 Figure 6 shows similarities and differences between the clusters. For example, the ‘Communication, relationship and networking’ cluster (rated second most understood and most significant respectively) and the clusters ‘Governance’ and ‘Ambition to change’ (both rated as least understood. Differences include the ‘Integration and collaboration’ cluster (most understood), whereas the ‘Funding and demand management’ cluster was most significant, and the ‘Impact, outcomes and evaluation’ cluster (rated lower on understanding and higher on significance third).

3.25 Participants based in non-policy organisations and policy, rated the cluster ‘Integration and collaboration’ as most understood (3.24 and 3.69 respectively). The ‘Communication, relationship and networking’ cluster also received similar ratings across the two groups (3.20 non-policy and 3.50 policy). However, the

clusters 'Funding and demand management' (3.22) and 'Complexity and constraints' (3.18) were rated as being more understood amongst non-policy organisations than those in policy, who rated both cluster as some of the least understood (2.82 and 2.67). Ratings also differed for the 'Impact, outcomes, and evaluation' and the 'Ambition to change' clusters, with participants from policy rating these as more understood (3.20 and 3.13) compared to non-policy organisations, where these cluster were the least understood overall (2.92 and 2.86).

Go-Zone

- 3.26 Using the cluster map and rating scales, the software produced a Go-Zone report (Figure 7).

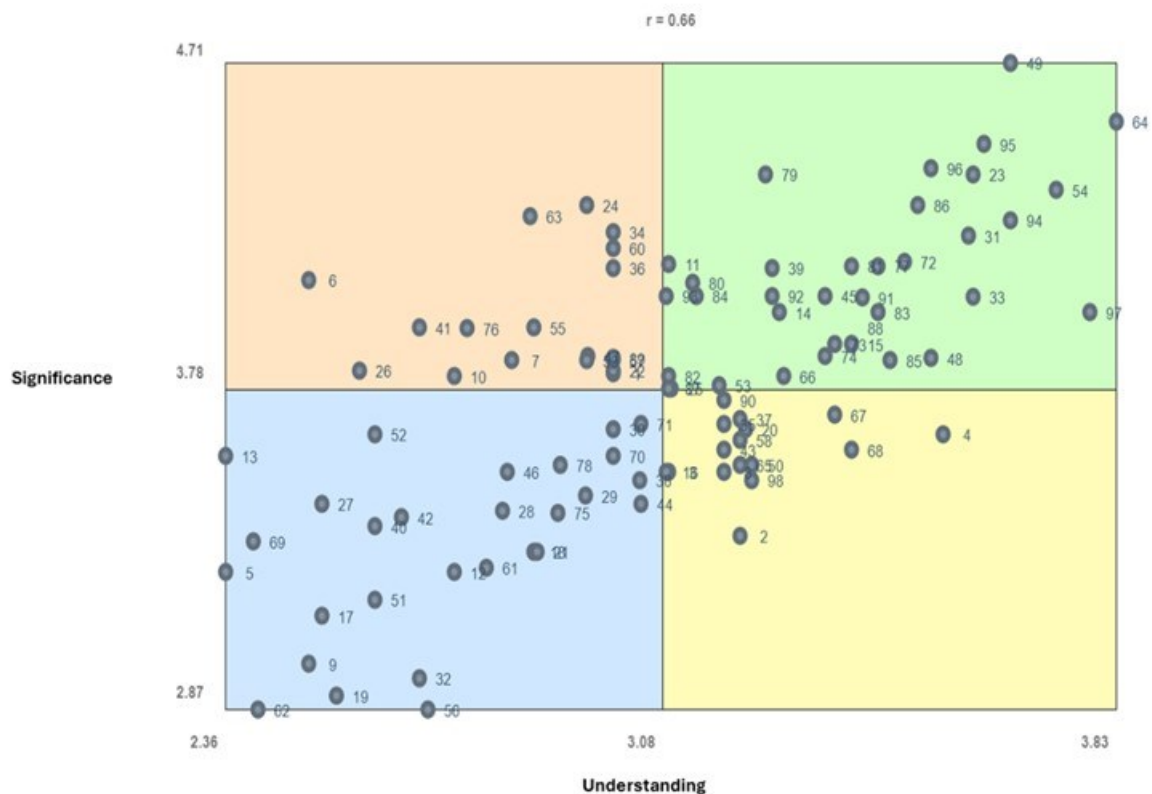


Figure 7: Go-Zone report displaying how each statement is rated in relation to understanding and significance

- 3.27 The Go-zone compares all statements across the two rating criteria. Statements were placed on a graph of four quadrants (each quadrant has its own colour), based on the mean rating of each statement on the two scales rated by participants. There is a moderate positive correlation ($r=0.66$) between the two ratings, indicating that an increase in one rating is related to an increase in the other rating. This means

that if a statement was rated to be more understood, it was more likely to be rated more significant.

- 3.28 The Go-Zone shows which statements were above or below the mean (average) across the two chosen rating criteria of ‘understanding’ and ‘significance’. Statements above the significance mean (3.78) were most significant and are in the orange and green zones. Statements above the ‘understanding mean’ (3.08) are the statements which participants rated as most understood and are in the green and yellow zones. Statements in the green zone are most significant and most understood, those in the orange zone are most significant, but least understood. Statements in the yellow zone are least significant but most understood, and those in the blue zone are statements of least significance and least understood. Example statements from each quadrant can be seen in Table 11.

Table 11: Example and total number of statements from each quadrant

No.	Wording
Green quadrant (n=36) - High level of significance, High level of understanding	
15	Seamless Care
53	How RIF is part of the wider system of Healthier Wales
95	The challenge of moving projects from RIF to mainstreaming
Orange quadrant (n=18) - High level of significance, Low level of understanding	
6	How to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of integrated care
36	How RIF should be a means to an end as part of a much wider systems change
76	How to positively challenge current cultural working practices and assumptions within organisations
Blue quadrant (n=28) - Low level of significance, Low level of understanding	
9	Reconciliation of system and individual responsibilities
46	A chance to consolidate learning
62	The value of models of care
Yellow quadrant (n=16) - Low level of significance, High level of understanding	
3	The importance of co-location for integrated care
35	A principle of RIF was to enable an integrated cultural shift

3.29 By examining the 36 statements from the green quadrant (the most understood and significant), we can identify the top ten statements and their respective clusters (Table 12).

Table 12: The top ten most understood and significant statements of the underlying principles and concepts associated to the RIF by cluster

Cluster	Statement	Understanding	Significance	Mean
Funding and demand management	The constraints of the priorities and pressures on core service budgets	3.81	4.54	4.18
Complexity and constraints	It's appearing to prop up core statutory services	3.65	4.71	4.18
Funding and demand management	The challenge of moving projects from RIF to mainstreaming	3.61	4.48	4.04
Integration and collaboration	The Principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act - multi-agency and integration, co-production and voice, prevention, well-being	3.73	4.35	4.01
Complexity and constraints	Propping up core services	3.59	4.39	3.99
Communication, relationships, and networking	The importance of citizen and carer voices in the design of RIF funded activities	3.52	4.41	3.97
Integration and collaboration	Joined up approaches to health and well-being that includes the third sector	3.65	4.26	3.96
Complexity and constraints	How sometimes the systems, processes, and complexity/competition (especially under financial pressures) get in the way	3.5	4.30	3.90
Funding and demand management	The funding which has not enabled a shift left as the demand at the front door has grown	3.58	4.22	3.90
Funding and demand management	How RIF is a tiny part of the whole Health and Social Care System	3.78	4	3.89

3.30 By examining the 18 statements from the orange quadrant (most significant but least understood), we can place these in order of average rating and their respective clusters (Table 13).

Table 13: The top ten most significant but least understood statements of the underlying principles and concepts associated to the RIF by cluster

Cluster	Statement	Understanding	Significance	Mean
Funding and demand management	Conflicts and duplicates other Welsh Government initiatives creating complexity and conflict	2.96	4.30	3.63
Complexity and constraints	Mainstreaming the funding, which remains a challenge as the benefactors in the system are often not the same as the area undertaking the work, i.e., third or independent sector	3	4.21	3.61
Ambition to change	The importance of RIF being linked into other policies and programmes to be effective	3	4.18	3.59
Impact, outcomes, and evaluation	Measuring outcomes	2.86	4.27	3.57
Ambition to change	How RIF should be a means to an end as part of a much wider systems change	3	4.13	3.56
Funding and demand management	How RIF doesn't align to the existing thinking that currently sits within the system across our range of partners	3	3.87	3.43
Governance	The little time to implement learning from the evaluation (RIF ending March 2027, and the evaluation ending December 2025)	3	3.86	3.43
Complexity and constraints	Bureaucratic	3	3.83	3.42
Funding and demand management	RIF as not having impacted the siloed approach of services	2.96	3.88	3.42
Communication, relationships, and networking	The importance of foregrounding person-centred approaches in integrated care	3	3.83	3.41

3.31 Analysis of the 28 statements in the blue quadrant (least understood and least significant), provides the top ten statements and their respective clusters (Table 14).

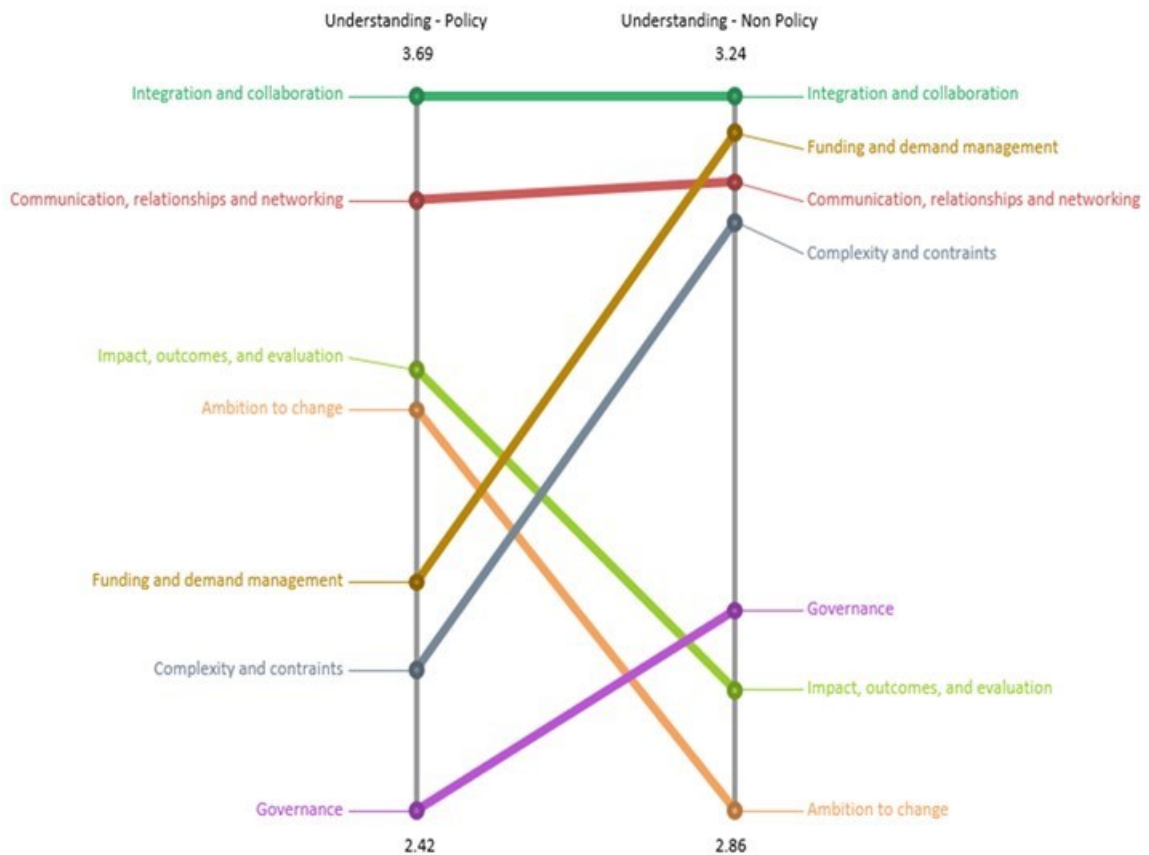
Table 14: The top ten least understood and least significant statements of the underlying principles and concepts associated to the RIF by cluster

Cluster	Statement	Understanding	Significance	Mean
Ambition to change	The value of models of care	2.42	2.87	2.64
Governance	Limited value	2.55	2.91	2.73
Ambition to change	Reconciliation of system and individual responsibilities	2.5	3	2.75
Integration and collaboration	National consistency (the same offer wherever we live)	2.70	2.87	2.78
Ambition to change	Erosion of organisational boundaries	2.36	3.26	2.81
Funding and demand management	Too much of the funding was used for additional regional management teams who are not in touch with the front line	2.68	2.94	2.82
Complexity and constraints	Controlling	2.52	3.14	2.81
Impact, outcomes, and evaluation	Financial stability, which is a relief	2.41	3.35	2.88
Governance	A lack of governance and accountability	2.61	3.18	2.90
Impact, outcomes, and evaluation	Sustainable	2.36	3.59	2.98

Rating analysis by participant organisation

3.32 Rating responses to the two scales ‘Understanding’ and ‘Significance’ were grouped by the organisation within which they were employed; those within policy (Welsh Government), and all other organisations (non-policy) for analysis to compare responses across the two groups (Figure 8 and 9). Figure 8 overleaf shows the relative pattern match report – use of a relative pattern match provides the cluster rating means within the range of each scale, rather than on a fixed, absolute scale, allowing a comparison of multiple measurements to establish a trend (Kamat, 2019; Yu et al, 2022). The pattern match shows both similarities and differences in the understanding rating ($r=0.27$) for the two groups.

Figure 8: Relative pattern match report match reports comparing participants from policy and all other sectors for understanding rating scale



3.33 Participants based in non-policy organisations and policy, rated the cluster ‘Integration and collaboration’ as most understood (3.24 and 3.69 respectively). The ‘Communication, relationship and networking’ cluster also received similar ratings across the two groups (3.20 non-policy and 3.50 policy). However, the clusters ‘Funding and demand management’ (3.22) and ‘Complexity and constraints’ (3.18) were rated as being more understood amongst non-policy organisations than those in policy, who rated both cluster as some of the least understood (2.82 and 2.67). Ratings also differed for the ‘Impact, outcomes, and evaluation’ and the ‘Ambition to change’ clusters, with participants from policy rating these as more understood (3.20 and 3.13) compared to non-policy organisations, where these cluster were the least understood overall (2.92 and 2.86).

3.34 Figure 9 (overleaf) also demonstrates similarities and differences in the understanding rating ($r=0.28$) amongst policy and non-policy organisations.

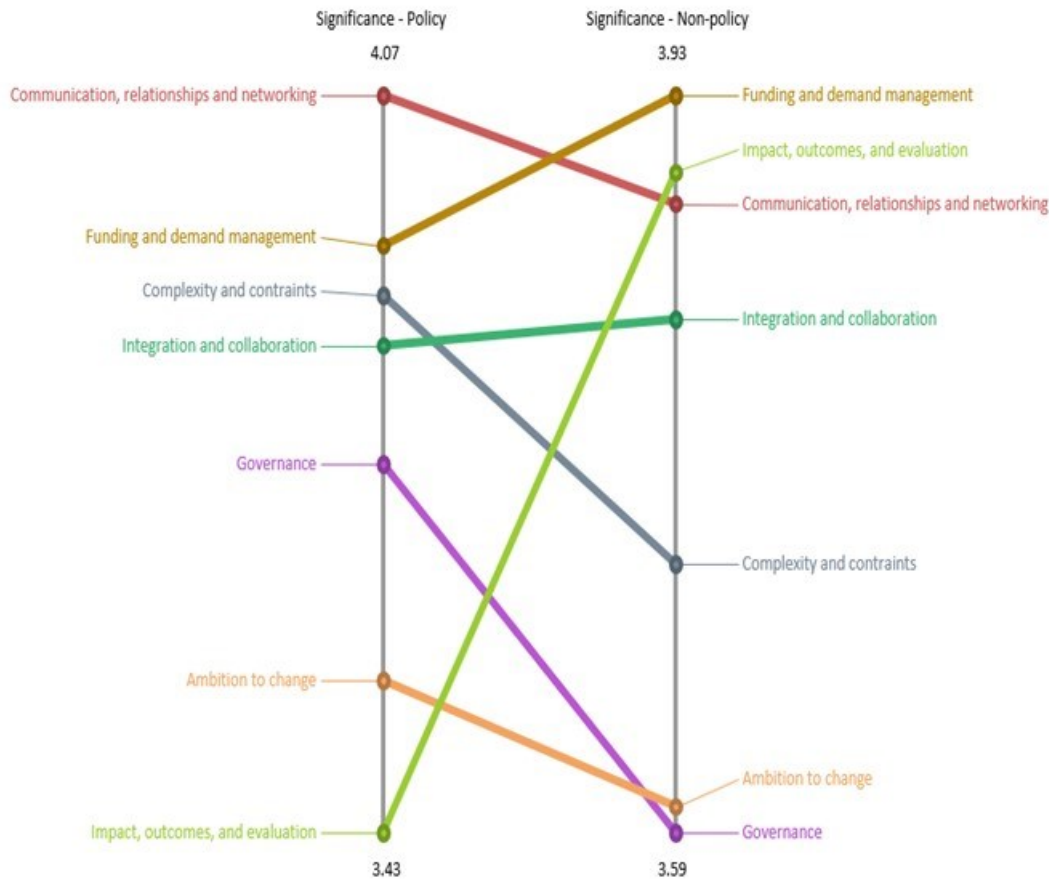


Figure 9:

Relative pattern match report match reports comparing participants from policy and all other sectors for significance rating scale

- 3.35 Differences were noted, particularly the ‘Impact, outcomes, and evaluation’ cluster, which was rated on average, the least significant cluster by policy (3.43), compared to non-policy organisations where this cluster was the second most significant (3.90). Amongst policy, the ‘Communication, relationship, and networking cluster was most significant (4.07), whilst the cluster ‘Funding and demand management’ was the most significant amongst non-policy organisations (3.93).
- 3.36 Rating differences were further evident with the ‘Complexity and constraints’ cluster (more significant amongst policy than non-policy (3.89 and 3.71 respectively), and the ‘Governance cluster’, more significant amongst policy (3.75) and the least significant amongst non-policy participants (3.59). Similarities can be seen with the ‘Integration and collaboration’ cluster for both policy (3.85), and non-policy (3.83).

4. Summary

- 4.1 This GCM study explored with participants the underlying principles and concepts they associated with the RIF. Demographic data shows that participants represented all regions across Wales (including national), and a range of organisations. Most participants had senior roles within the RIF (n=29). Participants enrolled onto the Group Wisdom™ software took part in all, or some of the three activities, brainstorming, sorting, and rating.
- 4.2 Following the brainstorming activity, participants sorted and rated 98 concepts and ideas (statements), which enabled the development of a 7-cluster map of concepts and ideas associated to the RIF:
1. Communication, relationships, and networking;
 2. Integration and collaboration;
 3. Ambition to change;
 4. Impact, outcomes, and evaluation;
 5. Funding and demand management;
 6. Complexity and constraints; and
 7. Governance.
- 4.3 The cluster map shows the conceptual relationship between clusters. Higher level aspirational and strategic concepts within RIF – ‘Communication, relationships and networking’, ‘Integration and collaboration’, and ‘Ambition to change’ – are clustered closer together. These are offset by the operational practicalities of developing/managing/delivering RIF represented by the clusters on ‘Complexity and constraints’, ‘Funding and demand management’, and ‘Governance’, which are also sorted together. The final cluster – ‘Impact, outcomes and evaluation’ – acts as a bridge between these two groupings of clusters.
- 4.4 The ‘Integration and collaboration’ cluster was on average rated the most understood cluster, and the ‘Funding and demand management’ cluster was on average rated the most significant cluster.
- 4.5 Whilst some clusters had similar average ratings (Ambition to change, Governance), there were also discrepancies e.g., the ‘Funding and demand management’ cluster was rated as most significant, but less understood. Similarly, ‘Integration and collaboration’ was rated as most understood but less significant.

- 4.6 At a cluster level, 'The constraints of the priorities and pressures on core service budgets' statement, was most understood. This statement sits within the 'Funding and demand management' cluster, which was represented the most with four of the top ten statements. The statement 'It's appearing to prop up core statutory services' within the 'Complexity and constraints' cluster was most significant. The cluster 'Funding and demand management' was represented the most with four statements in the top ten, followed by the 'Complexity and constraints' cluster with three statements.
- 4.7 The go-zone showed the statements above or below the mean (average) across the two ratings of 'understanding' and 'significance'. The go-zone enabled identification of the top ten:
- Most understood and most significant statements (green zone)
 - Least understood but most significant statements (orange zone)
 - Least understood and least significant statements (blue zone)
- 4.8 Statements in the green quadrant are 'positive' relative to the others in terms of how well understood they are and how significant they are in achieving RIF's aims. The opposite is true for statements in the blue quadrant – they are not felt to be well understood or significant, and therefore rated much more negatively than others. There is a spectrum within each quadrant, as represented by the rating scores for those statements in the 'top (and bottom) ten'.
- 4.9 To summarise, four key messages can be taken from the GCM study:
- There was participation from a very good cross-section of stakeholders. Participants represented all the regions in Wales and national perspectives, and a range of different organisations;
 - The cluster map shows two distinct groups of concepts emerging – the relatively positively-rated 'strategic' concepts underpinning RIF ('Ambition to change', 'Communication, relationships and networking', and 'Integration and collaboration') offset by the relatively negatively-rated 'operational' concepts underpinning RIF ('Complexity and constraints', 'Funding and demand management', and 'Governance');

- The ratings scales shown in the pattern match show that whilst some clusters have similar average rating scores on the two scales (understanding and significance), there are also discrepancies between the two ratings for some concepts. This is most marked for 'Funding and demand management' which is rated as the most significant cluster in delivering the aims of RIF but is less well understood. Similarly, 'Integration and collaboration' is most understood concept, but considered less significant in achieving the outcomes under RIF; and
- In the go-zone analysis, there are a series of statements rated in the green quadrant (i.e. above average rating from participants for significance and understanding within RIF) including ones on financial pressures, RIF being used to prop up services, and system pressures. Statements in the grey zone (i.e. rated by participants as being the least significant in delivering the aims of RIF and least understood) include concepts and ideas that are core to RIF itself like the models of care, the erosion of organisational boundaries, and autonomy in integrated care systems.

Limitations

- 4.10 We aimed to recruit up to 100 participants responsible for developing / managing / implementing / delivering RIF funded projects/programmes across Wales. Those in senior and operational roles were represented the most (n=29), with only one participant identifying as a supervisor or practitioner. Nonetheless, participants represented all regions in Wales, and all organisations. Furthermore, this study is one of several others contributing to the year one Conceptualisation Phase of the national evaluation of the RIF. As the evaluation moves into year two, 'Implementation', we will be seeking to engage and hear from all professional stakeholders of the RIF (including the workforce).

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Annex A

Full statement list (n=98)

Number	Statement
1	The importance of foregrounding person-centred approaches in integrated care
2	The importance of face-to-face professional and patient interactions
3	The importance of co-location for integrated care
4	The importance of communication across professional networks
5	Erosion of organisational boundaries
6	How to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of integrated care
7	A common vision for integrated care across all system components
8	Importance of formal and informal professional networks
9	Reconciliation of system and individual responsibilities
10	Collaboration between discrete elements of the health sector e.g. primary and secondary care
11	Importance of a robust evidence base for integrated care
12	Importance of autonomy in integrated care systems
13	Sustainable
14	Outcome focused
15	Seamless Care
16	Over-engineered
17	Controlling
18	Constraining and limiting
19	Limited value
20	Time consuming
21	Burdensome
22	Bureaucratic
23	Propping up core services
24	Conflicts and duplicates other Welsh Government initiatives creating complexity and conflict
25	Tapering should work but the timing is wrong
26	The new models of care are fundamentally flawed. They aren't models of care, but are good practice component parts of a model of care
27	A lack of recognition that different cohorts have different needs and solutions
28	A missed opportunity

29	The funding being very welcome, but the strings attached make it (almost) not worth it
30	RIF has become the panacea for all problems/funding needs
31	The funding which has not enabled a shift left as the demand at the front door has grown
32	Too much of the funding was used for additional regional management teams who are not in touch with the front line
33	Preventative benefits are not seen in the same financial year
34	Mainstreaming the funding, which remains a challenge as the benefactors in the system are often not the same as the area undertaking the work, i.e., third or independent sector
35	A principle of RIF was to enable an integrated cultural shift
36	How RIF should be a means to an end as part of a much wider systems change
37	How funding can be a distraction as well as a motivator
38	Too much focus on projects
39	A lack of mainstreaming
40	How RIF isn't really consistent with the principles of the SSWBA or Future Generations Act - not long-term
41	A lack of support wrapped around the system to achieve the transformation intended
42	Misplaced assumptions of delivery
43	The ambition of RIF, which was correct
44	A lack of monitoring taking place or guidelines to work in - which has meant really chaotic execution
45	An opportunity to do more differently
46	A chance to consolidate learning
47	RIF as not having impacted the siloed approach of services
48	How at times it does seem that there is an extra layer of bureaucracy
49	It's appearing to prop up core statutory services
50	Huge potential
51	A lack of governance and accountability
52	The RIF not being systematically connected through governance and accountability
53	How RIF is part of the wider system of Healthier Wales
54	The Principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act - multi-agency and integration, co-production and voice, prevention, well-being
55	Squaring top-down approach with bottom-up co-production with individuals and communities

56	National consistency (the same offer wherever we live)
57	The little time to implement learning from the evaluation (RIF ending March 2027, and the evaluation ending December 2025)
58	That funding is too siloed
59	That policy is too siloed
60	The importance of RIF being linked into other policies and programmes to be effective
61	Transformation aims
62	The value of models of care
63	Measuring outcomes
64	The constraints of the priorities and pressures on core service budgets
65	Supporting some innovation
66	The good intentions of RIF are unrealistic to achieve with pace and scale
67	The time required to manage the financial complexity of RIF
68	The complexity of funding streams (different funding streams all being managed under one umbrella)
69	Financial stability, which is a relief
70	Attempts to slice the fund under different themes - all with pros and cons
71	Collaboration with full integration (where that is possible)
72	Preventative services
73	The opportunity to test new models
74	Integrated Health and Social Care
75	Introducing, developing, and trialling the opportunity to develop relationships not just transactional activities
76	How to positively challenge current cultural working practices and assumptions within organisations
77	The historical governance which makes it challenging for partners to shift some of their ways of working to enable full compliance
78	A modus operandi which makes it challenging for partners to shift some of their ways of working to enable full compliance
79	Financial pressures, which create challenges for partners to shift some of their ways of working to enable full compliance
80	Prevention - e.g. setting in place long term plans to reduce / re-channel demand
81	Working together to deliver better outcomes for the population -together we are better
82	Collaboration across partners to address mutual headaches
83	Encouraging new ways of working

84	Learning from one another to deliver better outcomes for the population - together we are better
85	Supporting collaboration
86	How sometimes the systems, processes, and complexity/ competition (especially under financial pressures) get in the way
87	The complexity in delivering against all the various components of RIF, which makes it very challenging to buy into
88	A tool to support better joined up health and care services
89	How RIF doesn't align to the existing thinking that currently sits within the system across our range of partners
90	How complicated RIF is
91	Partnership approaches
92	Co-production
93	Population needs being addressed
94	Joined up approaches to health and well-being that includes the third sector
95	The challenge of moving projects from RIF to mainstreaming
96	The importance of citizen and carer voices in the design of RIF funded activities
97	How RIF is a tiny part of the whole Health and Social Care System
98	How funding contributes to integrated partnership working