World-Changing Glasgow Transformation
5 Questions for Susan Ashworth

At this stage, what do you think is the most significant achievement or milestone in our transformation?

There has been a huge amount of work put into defining and scoping out the projects which make up our transformation portfolio. I have been very impressed at the level and extent of engagement there has been across the University, and the willingness of the World Changing Glasgow Team to listen to feedback whilst continuing to challenge how we do things in the University. From my own perspective I have found the support I've had from WCGT for the transformation project I'm leading to be invaluable. The Staff Student Service Design (catchily abbreviated S3D) Project is delivering a reshaping of frontline support for students across the Fraser Building, Library and James McCune Smith Learning Hub, alongside the introduction of the new Helpdesk system. We have had excellent support from our WCGT Project Manager and that has really helped to drive the project forward.

Large scale transformation is challenging- what lessons have you learned on the journey so far?

We all need to work together and be prepared to work across departmental and team boundaries to effect change. That said, it is very important that we have a clear understanding of what we want to deliver and that we communicate this in a way that resonates with our staff and students. I think there is a real willingness in the University to improve processes and to make the experience for staff and students better, however change is sometimes seen as scary and when there is a lot of change happening it can be unsettling for people. A common understanding of why we need to transform is therefore critical.

Many universities are transforming- what do you feel makes our transformation unique?

I'm not sure our desire to transform is unique, although the way we are delivering transformation does feel different to some other Universities who have gone down the route of outsourcing their transformation projects. Having an in-house team with staff seconded to work within that team is starting to build a community of people who are delivering transformation from within the University, rather than a sense of transformation being done to us

As Executive Director of Information Services, how do you champion transformation across the University?

I'm directly involved in several transformation projects so partly by living and breathing the process myself. I'm also keen to encourage the staff in Information Services to get involved in projects and to work with them to set our priorities so they have the time and space to make a contribution. Where I've been leading a transformation project I've been meeting with staff and students across the University to tell them about what we are doing, why we are doing it and the transformational change they will personally experience from the approach we have taken.

We have been asking staff to tell us one thing that would improve their daily working life. What would yours be?

Fewer of everything from emails, phone calls etc. but most of all, fewer meetings!