KEY MESSAGES
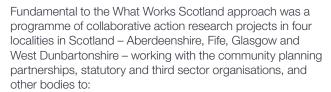## ABOUT PUBLIC
SERVICE REFORM
IN SCOTLAND

What Works Scotland was a research collaboration between the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, other academics and key non-academic partners, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Scottish Government.

What Works Scotland aimed to improve the way local areas in Scotland use evidence to make decisions about public service development and reform. Set up in June 2014, it explored how public services could work towards the recommendations of the Christie Commission on the Future Delivery of Public Services (2011) and the Scottish Government's priorities for reform.

Fundamental to the What Works Scotland approach was a programme of collaborative action research projects in four localities in Scotland – Aberdeenshire, Fife, Glasgow and West Dunbartonshire – working with the community planning partnerships, statutory and third sector organisations, and other bodies to:

- learn what was and what wasn't working in their local area
- encourage collaborative learning with a range of local authority, business, public sector and community partners
- better understand what effective policy interventions and effective services look like
- promote the use of evidence in planning and service delivery
- help organisations get the skills and knowledge they need to use and interpret evidence
- create case studies for wider sharing and sustainability

What Works Scotland brought together the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, other academics, partners from a range of local authorities, and:

- Glasgow Centre for Population Health
- Improvement Service
- Inspiring Scotland
- IRISS (Institution for Research and Innovation in Social Services)
- NHS Education for Scotland
- NHS Health Scotland
- NHS Health Improvement for Scotland
- Scottish Community Development Centre
- SCVO (Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations)

What Works Scotland produced more than 100 publications including research reports, briefings, blogs, event reports and toolkits, to share evidence, learning and ideas about public service reform. All are available online **www.whatworksscotland.ac.uk**

Acknowledgements

The Scottish Government · E·S·R·C ECONOMIC & SOCIAL RESEARCH COUNCIL · THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH · University of Glasgow

Contents

What Works Scotland:
Key messages about public service reform in Scotland

1. Public participation remains a focal point for action in public service reform. There has been considerable progress under the broad platform of the community empowerment agenda. However, there are clear areas for further development and support for authority-led community engagement as well as community-led action. A stronger community sector can be an effective part of a broad alliance that enables community empowerment by improving participation in politics, society and the economy.

2. There is a shared and widespread narrative in support of partnership and collaboration in Scotland, but its implementation in patchy both across and within organisations and sectors. There needs to be a stronger focus on improving the deliberative quality of formal partnerships, and a clearer move towards a culture of co-production in public services.

3. New modes of networked governance currently at play in Scotland are still in their early stages, and their progress depends on developing coherent systems that combine effectively both partnership and participation. Improving the governance of public services in Scotland requires further work that takes into account the power inequalities within and across the public, third and community sectors.

4. The public service workforce, across sectors, shows a remarkable level of resourcefulness and resilience in the face of considerable challenges. But more attention needs to be paid to the stability, training and support for workers at both the frontline and the strategic levels of public service reform. There is a need for action to develop and nurture well-supported communities of practice that can sustain learning and action based on partnership and participation.

5. To achieve reform, leaders have to be able to facilitate change across and between different organisations and sectors. To do this successfully, leadership must build, service and sustain networks with a shared vision which is strategic in orientation. Leaders need to develop skills in staff development, be reflexive and focus on outcomes.

6. Prevention is key to good reform and whilst the topic is high on the agenda across Scotland it is very much an area of evolving policy and practice. Savings from prevention programmes are often difficult to realise. Evaluation and the use of a logic model of anticipated expected outcomes are key, and costs, benefits and trade-offs of prevention have to be clearly understood in each instance, along with unintended consequences such as spillovers and displacement effects. Good prevention requires a long-term commitment, innovation, co-production and the provision of effective and attractive alternatives.

7. Place is now central to the reform process in Scotland. A place-based approach makes it easier for services to be controlled and owned by, and delivered through, the local community. Place-based approaches both rely on, and help to foster, participation and trust. They take time to develop, require long term funding and stability. Co-locating services and the use of a community anchor helps but national organisations have a key role to play.

8. Public services work best when they are a 'learning organisation'. This requires a collaborative approach to both learning and research. Evaluation is most useful when it measures outcomes that are relevant to communities. There is no 'one size fits all' approach to either generating or using evidence; it takes time and demands resource.

Introduction

In our initial proposal for What Works Scotland we argued that it was now clear that a broad consensus existed on the emergent Scottish model and on the role of the recommendations of the Christie Commission and its four pillars. A vision has been articulated and formal institutional arrangements are under way. The Christie report concluded, "The goal must be nothing less than a substantial transformation of our public services. The prize is a sustainable, person-centred system, achieving outcomes for every citizen and every community." However, a common criticism of Christie, and the Scottish Approach to public service reform is that whilst the discourse that surrounds it is now firmly in place, its implementation has been limited and patchy. In this document we aim to help address that gap by sharing summaries of what we have learnt around what works, and what does not, in reforming Scotland's public services.

A KEY FINDING IS THAT EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM (PSR) IS OFTEN ABOUT BESPOKE SOLUTIONS RATHER THAN 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL' CENTRALISED APPROACHES

A key finding is that effective public service reform (PSR) is often about bespoke solutions rather than 'one size fits all' centralised approaches. Local context plays a crucial role in the adoption and development of new processes and structures. The pace of change is uneven and variation across and within local authorities is the norm. Changes in local arrangements help services cope with what is an increasingly complex PSR agenda. New arrangements are seen by some as liberating but for others can be seen as constraining. Building leadership capacity at all levels is key to successful PSR. Whilst there is a strong commitment to partnership and co-production, some of the factors outlined in this report can limit the possibilities for genuine collaborative practices to emerge.

Our emphasis on context-specific solutions doesn't mean that there aren't lessons to be drawn across cases and between projects. In the pages that follow, we have grouped those learning points in eight themes: Participation, Partnership, Governance, Workforce, Leadership, Prevention, Place and Evidence.

These themes are underpinned by two cross-cutting principles foregrounded by Christie and which give the Scottish Approach its defining features. The first principle is that PSR must have a focus on community empowerment, premised on the idea of tackling the power inequalities that sustain other social, economic and health inequalities. The second principle is that PSR must be driven by robust collaboration within and between organisations, and within and between sectors.

Many of our findings build on another key tenet from Christie: PSR is not just about structures but also, and perhaps mainly, about culture (mindsets, practices, interactions). Structures provide a tangible focus, but culture is a more elusive target for reform. Our work has paid particular attention to these elusive aspects of changing public service culture, from everyday frontline practices to strategic policy work. Perhaps the main legacy from What Works Scotland is precisely that contribution to bespoke research and action in the myriad sites where PSR is in motion. This legacy is partly recorded in over 100 publications and provides the foundation for new collaborations across the country in the aftermath of What Works Scotland. The summaries below offer a selection of published findings, with a focus on key research insights, as well as implications for policy and practice.

1. Participation

We use the term participation in Christie's expansive sense, which includes public participation in governance, policy development, decision-making, service design and delivery, and community-led action. What Works Scotland has conducted extensive work on this theme[1] and below are some key insights and implications. The underlying theory of change is that to improve outcomes, communities must be able to shape the services, policies and decisions that affect people's lives. Participation seeks to subvert the power inequalities that can result in policy agendas that are not reflective of the priorities, needs and aspirations of citizens across communities of place, identity or interest.[2]

Research insights

Our research shows that this is one of the most prolific areas of activity in public service reform (PSR). There have been policy and legislative milestones that are helping to advance this agenda at national level, although the pace of development varies across local authority areas. The Community Empowerment Act (2015) is having an impact in the context of community planning[3], be it through the development of local outcome improvement plans, locality plans and various participatory processes with a particular focus on tackling inequalities.[4] More broadly, the Act has created an authorising environment for democratic innovators in the public, third and community sectors to create new spaces for public participation.

An area of accelerated development has been participatory budgeting (PB), which in a few years has gone from a handful to hundreds of processes across the country, supported by investment at national and local level.[5] We have seen experimentation with other democratic innovations, such as mini-publics, which are designed to include a cross-section of the population and to enable high quality public deliberation as a basis for informed decision-making.[6] Our work has also offered insight into the contribution of community anchor organisations to the design and delivery of community-led public services that are highly responsive to local needs and aspirations.[7]

Participation can be conceptualised as 'invited' by an organisation or institution, or 'uninvited', that is, initiated by citizens or community groups at grassroots level. Our research has explored both dimensions, usually termed 'community engagement' (invited) or 'community action' (uninvited). In terms of community engagement, we have noted increasing efforts from community planning partnerships (CPPs), third sector interfaces and other organisations and networks.[8, 9 & 10] And we have also seen the proliferation of community action in a variety of contexts and issues, from disability, to skills training, community ownership of assets, economic development, health, food poverty or social exclusion to name a few.[11, 12, 13 & 14]

The most common types of engagement organised by community planning workers are traditional processes, i.e. task groups, targeted workshops, and public meetings. But we have seen an increase in the use of democratic innovations such as participatory budgeting, mini-publics, collaborative governance and online platforms. Although community engagement is a burgeoning field of activity, it is not always seen as a key part of how community planning partnerships work and how decisions about priorities are made.[15 & 16]

THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT ORGANISED BY COMMUNITY PLANNING WORKERS ARE TRADITIONAL PROCESSES

There are three challenges that can slow down current progress. Firstly, participatory processes require sustainable funding, long-term commitment, ongoing learning and adaptation, and sometimes institutional reform. Public funding is under pressure for community organisations and projects, and community workers across sectors often face unstable conditions. Secondly, there are challenges related to inclusion and diversity. Inequalities faced at large in society – education, confidence, resources, responsibilities (work and caring), language barriers, disabilities – often constitute the key barriers that prevent people from taking part in community engagement processes. Local community engagement can overcome some barriers to inclusion, but there are structural inequalities in society (e.g. income, wealth) that are beyond the scope of influence of local processes. Moreover, local participatory processes often struggle to demonstrate that they are engaging a cross-section of the population. We have documented the difficulty of ensuring equality in terms of access to, as well as influence within, participatory processes; but we have also offered strategies to address these issues in practice.[17 & 18]

Finally, there is the challenge of increasing the deliberative quality of public participation. Deliberative quality refers to the standard of communication in public forums. Deliberative processes can create shared spaces for: exploring local complexities, including different interests and emotional commitments; bringing in evidence, expertise and insights to deepen dialogue; and facilitating deliberation to find common purpose and deal productively with unresolved differences.[19 & 20]

Implications for policy and practice

Our key message is that for community participation to be worthwhile and make a difference, it must be inclusive, deliberative and consequential. This can be broken down into a focus on:

- **Lowering barriers to participation.** Unless corrective measures are put in place, participatory processes will be skewed by the self-selection bias which limits what sections of the population can take advantage of opportunities to participate. This results in skewed agendas for policy and community action. To achieve greater levels of equity in participation, resources must be invested to help young people, single parents, carers and those suffering from financial problems to get involved. This will go some way to enabling people facing socio-economic challenges to take part and thus correct the over-representation of advantaged groups. There is also merit in considering how social innovations such as the Universal Basic Income may contribute to enhance citizenship and community engagement.

- **Investing in capacity and skills.** Community organisers and trained facilitators play a central role in developing inclusive processes, designing productive forums, and mobilising communities to make a difference. Effective facilitation and process design are key factors that distinguish productive from unproductive community participation. Training and support must be offered to facilitators and organisers to ensure that they are equipped to deal with a high-pressure role.

- **Improving the deliberative quality of participatory processes.** Even some of the most celebrated forms of community participation, such as participatory budgeting or community anchors, suffer from a deliberative deficit. But this is even more urgent when it comes to processes organised by public authorities and services. We have illustrated this with cases where creating the space to work through disagreement was a key component of what made an intervention effective,[21 & 22] and by exploring the quality of deliberation in community planning partnerships.[23] Deliberative models of participation aspire to a world where public decisions are made on the basis of the best available evidence and reasons, rather than the power of coercion, partisanship, interests or money. Promoting awareness and training on deliberative standards and facilitation must be an integral part of the formation of participation practitioners across sectors. More broadly, a deliberative culture should be incorporated into the ethos of public authorities and services.

- **Investing in digital participation.** At local level, better use of online technology such as crowdsourcing platforms, deliberative forums, and community organising tools can complement face-to-face processes and boost inclusion, creativity, capacity and effectiveness. At national level, collaborative learning platforms are central to the continuous development of communities of practice. Tools and resources need to be managed to ensure they can continue to be used alongside the National Standards for Community Engagement.[24]

- **Demonstrating the impact of community participation.** There needs to be a transparent feedback loop between the input from a participatory process and the policies, services and decisions informed by it. Participants must know how their contribution has shaped the result, and if it hasn't, the reasons must be explained. There needs to also be a clearer connection between activity at local and strategic levels. For example, the monitoring of the new local outcome improvement plans and locality plans should pay attention to the level and quality of community engagement in deciding priorities and developing policies and services. Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act should pay close attention to the extent to which it contributes to reduce, increase or reproduce existing inequalities at local level and across Scotland.

- **Fostering a participative culture in public authorities.** Commitment and buy-in to community participation is required particularly at a strategic political and senior management level.[25] Participatory processes must be coherently embedded within institutional arrangements, which sometimes requires administrative reforms. For example, the mainstreaming of participatory budgeting agreed by COSLA and the Scottish Government may require reforming financial procedures in local authorities.[26] Existing recognition and promotion criteria for senior staff should include demonstrating impact through community engagement that makes a difference to people's lives.
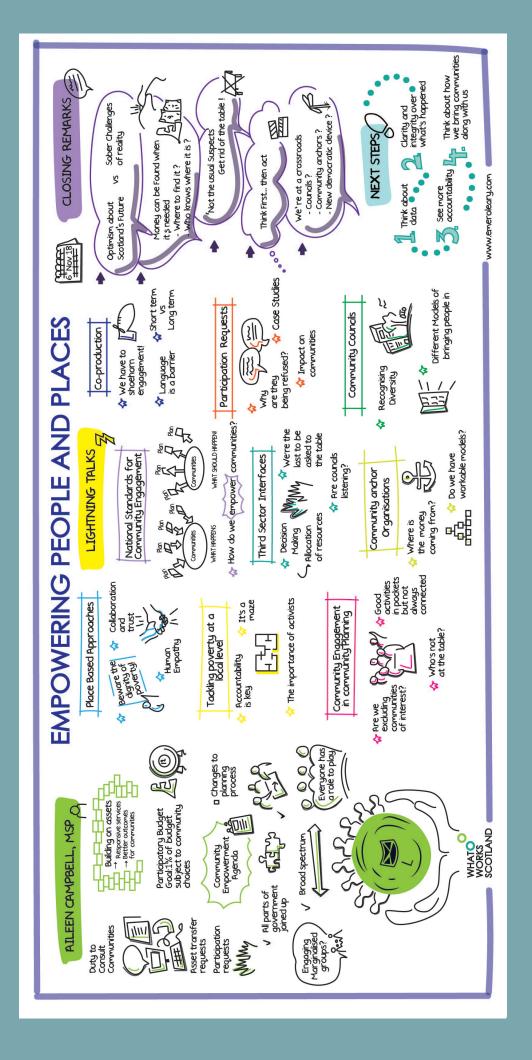
- **Joining up participatory and representative democracy.** Elected representatives at local and national level need to play a more prominent role in participatory processes. In some cases, they may contribute a constituency perspective as part of a deliberative process. In others, they may act as sponsors, organisers and even facilitators. Perhaps their most crucial role is to link the results of community participation into the system, whether that is the council chamber or parliament, or the decision body of a public authority. A more participatory and deliberative democracy needs to build on the strengths of representative institutions, as well as shore up their weaknesses.[27 & 28]

- **Opening space for community action.** Authority-led community engagement is important, but much of the current innovation and development are taking place in the domain of community-led action. For example, community anchor organisations show clear potential to mobilise and act on community interests, develop assets and deliver public services.[29] These spaces for participation, independent from the state and the market, and own by communities and for communities, must be supported and grown. Public authorities must recognise that a strong civil society and community sector are crucial to deliver on public service outcomes.

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Footnotes

1 Empowering People and Places: What Works?
http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/events/empowering-people-and-places-what-works/

2 'Hard to reach' or 'easy to ignore'? Promoting equality in community engagement – Evidence review http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/hard-to-reach-or-easy-to-ignore-promoting-equality-in-community-engagement-evidence-review/

3 Community Planning Officials Survey: Understanding the everyday work of local participatory governance in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-officials-survey-everyday-work-of-local-participatory-governance/

4 Community Planning after the Community Empowerment Act: The Second Survey of Community Planning Officials in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-after-the-community-empowerment-act-second-survey-of-community-planning-officials/

5 Participatory budgeting http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/participatory-budgeting/

6 Mini-publics: examples and resources http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/mini-publics/

7 Community anchors and community capacity-building http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/community-anchors-and-community-capacity-building/

8 Community Planning Officials Survey: Understanding the everyday work of local participatory governance in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-officials-survey-everyday-work-of-local-participatory-governance/

8 Participation and representation: Strengthening the third sector voice in local governance http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/participation-and-representation-strengthening-the-third-sector-voice-in-local-governance/

10 Community Planning after the Community Empowerment Act: The Second Survey of Community Planning Officials in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-after-the-community-empowerment-act-second-survey-of-community-planning-officials/

11 Strengthening Community Councils: Exploring how they can contribute to democratic renewal in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/strengthening-community-councils-and-democratic-renewal-in-scotland/

12 Fun, Food, Folk: The Centrestage approach to dignified food provision http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/centrestage-dignified-food-provision/

13 Community anchors and community capacity-building http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/community-anchors-and-community-capacity-building/

14 Aberdeenshire case site http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/casesites/aberdeenshire/

15 Community Planning Officials Survey: Understanding the everyday work of local participatory governance in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-officials-survey-everyday-work-of-local-participatory-governance/

16 Community Planning after the Community Empowerment Act: The Second Survey of Community Planning Officials in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-after-the-community-empowerment-act-second-survey-of-community-planning-officials/

17 'Hard to reach' or 'easy to ignore'? Promoting equality in community engagement – Evidence review http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/hard-to-reach-or-easy-to-ignore-promoting-equality-in-community-engagement-evidence-review/

18 Policy briefing – Mainstreaming participatory budgeting: What works in building foundations for a more participatory democracy? http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/policy-briefing-mainstreaming-participatory-budgeting/

19 At the frontier of collaborative and participatory governance: Eight key discussions to support putting Christie into practice – reflective learning with practitioners from Aberdeenshire CPP http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/frontier-of-collaborative-and-participatory-governance/

20 Mini-publics: examples and resources http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/mini-publics/

21 The Operation Modulus Approach: further lessons for public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/the-operation-modulus-approach-further-lessons-for-public-service-reform/

22 Local solutions to local problems: innovation in public participation http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/local-solutions-to-local-problems-innovation-in-public-participation/

23 Community Planning Officials Survey: Understanding the everyday work of local participatory governance in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-officials-survey-everyday-work-of-local-participatory-governance/

24 National Standards for Community Engagement http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/national-standards-for-community-engagement/

25 Community-led Action Planning Day event report. West Dunbartonshire http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-led-action-planning-day-event-report/

26 Hope for Democracy: Participatory Budgeting in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/hope-for-democracy-participatory-budgeting-in-scotland/

27 Participatory governance http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/participatory-governance/

28 Pluralism and Democratic Participation: What Kind of Citizen are Citizens Invited to be? https://doi.org/10.1163/18758185-01404002

29 Community anchors and community capacity-building http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/community-anchors-and-community-capacity-building/

Opposite page: Graphic capturing the discussions at the What Works Scotland Empowering People and Places conference, November 2018

EMPOWERING PEOPLE AND PLACES

AILEEN CAMPBELL, MSP

- Duty to Consult Communities
- Asset transfer requests
- Participation requests
- Building on assets
  ↑ Responsive services
  ↑ Better outcomes for communities
- Participatory Budget Goal: 1% of budget subject to community choices
- Changes to planning process
- Community Empowerment Agenda
- ✓ All parts of government joined up
- ✓ Broad spectrum
- Everyone has a role to play
- Engaging Marginalised groups?

Place Based Approaches
- ☆ Collaboration and trust
- ☆ Beware the dignity of poverty!
- ☆ Human Empathy

LIGHTNING TALKS

National Standards for Community Engagement
- WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN! — Communities — Plan
- WHAT HAPPENS — Communities — Plan
- How do we empower communities?

Co-production
- ☆ We have to shoehorn engagement!
- ☆ Language is a barrier
- ☆ Short term vs Long term

Participation Requests
- ☆ Why are they being refused?
- ☆ Impact on communities
- ☆ Case Studies

Third Sector Interfaces
- ☆ Decision Making
- ☆ Allocation of resources
- ☆ We're the last to be asked to the table
- ☆ Are councils listening?

Community Councils
- ☆ Recognising Diversity
- ☆ Different Models of bringing people in

Community anchor Organisations
- ☆ Where is the money coming from?
- ☆ Do we have workable models?

Tackling poverty at a local level
- ☆ It's a maze
- ☆ Accountability is key
- ☆ The importance of activists

Community Engagement in community Planning
- ☆ Good activities in pockets but not always connected
- ☆ Who's not at the table?
- ☆ Are we excluding communities of interest?

WHAT WORKS SCOTLAND

CLOSING REMARKS

6th Nov 18

- Optimism about Scotland's Future
- Sober Challenges vs of reality
- Money can be found when it's needed
  - Where to find it?
  - Who knows where it is?
- "Not the usual Suspects" Get rid of the table!
- Think First... then act
- We're at a crossroads
  - Councils?
  - Community anchors?
  - New democratic device?

NEXT STEPS

1. Think about data
2. Clarity and integrity over what's happened
3. See more accountability
4. Think about how we bring communities along with us

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2. Partnership

Partnership, as understood by the Christie Commission, is both an assemblage and a way of working; both an ongoing arrangement and an evolving set of practices. Partnership has become a key mantra of the Scottish Approach to public service reform. Partnership working was celebrated in the Christie report, and turned into a key to unlocking improvement through collaboration between and within the public, third and community sectors. This aspiration has structural and cultural implications. In terms of structures, there has been policy development in contexts such as the integration of health and social care, or the legislation for community planning partnerships in the Community Empowerment Act. However, culture change (mindsets and practices) remains the most challenging dimension of public service reform.[1 & 2]

Research insights

Theoretical commitment to the narrative of partnership is widespread in Scotland, but its implementation is patchy both across and within organisations and sectors.[3 & 4] At its best, partnership entails sharing power. Power to mobilise resources, to set policy agendas, to co-produce services, to develop strategies and to influence decisions. Power-sharing relies heavily on trust and openness: people are more open to collaborate in partnerships if they know what is involved and there is a clear shared purpose[5]. The point of power-sharing is to achieve collaborative advantage, that is, outcomes that cannot be accomplished by any single organisation on its own. This applies to most of the complex or 'wicked' problems that public policy seeks to address today. The opposite of collaborative advantage is collaborative inertia, which takes place when partnerships are established but fail to generate collective action and make a difference.[6] A focus on collaboration that does not produce results can be a costly diversion of time and resources that may be better deployed in other initiatives.

There is an expectation that community planning partnerships can provide an effective platform for joint working and decision-making, co-production and local governance. Our research indicates that partnership work across sectoral, organisational and departmental boundaries has been inconsistent across the country.[7] In terms of health and social care integration, the structural and cultural policy changes that are required to enable this policy shift are work in progress. There is a lack of institutional leadership, thus integration is often left to individual innovators or "boundary spanners" and these are acting as key drivers of change. Where change is occurring, this is arguably happening despite the system.[8]

Creating effective partnerships to deliver public services entails: 1) shared vision and understanding of aims, objectives, roles and responsibilities; 2) strong, reflective and responsive leadership; 3) meaningful and tailored performance management systems; 4) staff development; 5) focus on outcomes; 6) strong links between operational and strategic functions; 7) equal and transparent relationships between partners.[9]

OPERATION MODULUS IS AN EXEMPLAR OF HOW TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP INTERVENTIONS, CONSISTENT WITH CHRISTIE

Operation Modulus is an exemplar of how to develop effective partnership interventions, consistent with Christie. It is a model of a way of working, not a blueprint, and so needs to be adapted to local contexts. Operation Modulus happened because strategic leaders in Community Planning and Fire and Rescue collaborated to base a Fire and Rescue officer centrally within the community planning partnership. Other strategic leaders can replicate or adapt this model. Operation Modulus was implemented without additional funding by partners, but by partners working in a different and planned way together. It demonstrates how, by taking this approach, public money can be saved while improving outcomes.[10]

Another example of partnership working is the West Dunbartonshire collaborative work on refugee resettlement. It illustrates how effective partnership requires a clear purpose and rationale. The need to resettle the Syrian families quickly led to a sense of urgency to act and this galvanised cross-agency collaboration between services at a local level. The early convening of a multi-agency group; the use of evidence to identify suitable locations; and early engagement with established communities, along with the creation of a Resettlement Team, all contributed to the success of this programme.[11]

Implications for policy and practice

■ To be more effective, partnerships must work on three key ingredients of effective collaboration: inclusion, interdependence and deliberative quality. Firstly, inclusion means providing opportunities for meaningful collaboration between all the affected stakeholders. It is crucial to mobilise all the relevant interests, experiences and types of expertise in order to improve outcomes. Secondly, interdependence refers to the incentives for collaboration: potential partners will be more likely to cooperate if they think that they cannot accomplish their objectives alone. Good partnership work entails discovering areas of interdependence: those complex issues that require joining forces. Finally, deliberative quality is an often-overlooked ingredient in effective partnership. Deliberation entails critical engagement with a range of perspectives, arguments and evidence, working through differences and disagreements, and generating well-informed decisions. Sustained deliberation supports partnership development and building shared understanding among diverse groups of partners.

■ Everyday 'mundane' practices (e.g. meeting rituals) are a key foundation for large-scale change. More attention needs to be paid to the challenges of collaborative group-working: the need for a listening culture of 'sharing airtime'; the value of peer support for people leading groups; and, the potential use of co-working and independent facilitation. Partnerships that work through deliberation, learn from examples of success and 'failure' and from other evidence, and test out actions, provide strong foundations to support culture change in public services.[12]

■ Improving partnership working requires fostering a culture of collaboration instead of competition, as well as ongoing learning through sharing and discussing evidence, and effective communication. The examples of Operation Modulus and refugee resettlement illustrate how outcomes can be achieved when collaboration overcomes 'silo thinking' and traditional 'problem ownership'. These were cases where partners were not distracted by the question 'whose problem/budget is this?' and instead focussed on 'what needs to be done and how do we do it?'

■ The role of the private sector in collaborative settings like community planning partnerships needs to be better articulated. Getting the private sector engaged with partnerships remains a challenge. Key to the success of public service reform initiatives is the ability of partners to be able generate meaningful opportunities for beneficiary groups. A partner that can provide opportunities for employment in a supportive environment is a strong asset in public service reform.[13]

■ There needs to be a broader and clearer understanding of the outcomes from partnership work. For example, the added value of community planning partnerships needs to be better communicated across authorities and communities, and at national level. This should entail reporting more systematically the collaborative advantages gained through partnership work, as well as specific outcomes for a range of communities of place, practice and interest.[14]

Footnotes

1 Implementing health and social care integration in Scotland: Renegotiating new partnerships in changing cultures of care https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12537

2 Community Planning after the Community Empowerment Act: The Second Survey of Community Planning Officials in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-after-the-community-empowerment-act-second-survey-of-community-planning-officials/

3 Fife Collaborative Action Research Programme: An overview of the process http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/fife-collaborative-action-research-programme-an-overview-of-the-process/

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5 'Hard to reach' or 'easy to ignore'? Promoting equality in community engagement – Evidence review http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/hard-to-reach-or-easy-to-ignore-promoting-equality-in-community-engagement-evidence-review/

6 Community Planning after the Community Empowerment Act: The Second Survey of Community Planning Officials in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-after-the-community-empowerment-act-second-survey-of-community-planning-officials/

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8 Implementing health and social care integration in Scotland: Renegotiating new partnerships in changing cultures of care https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12537

9 Partnership working across UK public services http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/partnership-working-across-uk-public-services/

10 Operation Modulus: putting Christie into practice in the Gorbals http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/operation-modulus-putting-christie-into-practice-in-the-gorbals/

11 Resettlement of Syrian Refugees in West Dunbartonshire http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/resettlement-of-syrian-refugees-in-west-dunbartonshire/

12 Aberdeenshire case site http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/casesites/aberdeenshire/

13 The Operation Modulus Approach: further lessons for public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/the-operation-modulus-approach-further-lessons-for-public-service-reform/

14 Community Planning Officials Survey: Understanding the everyday work of local participatory governance in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-officials-survey-everyday-work-of-local-participatory-governance/

3. Governance

The What Works Scotland programme had a particular focus on developing and mobilising evidence for public action, be it within or between public, third and community sectors. However, if more and better evidence, on its own, could solve policy problems and improve public services, we would probably be in a very different position. Many of the challenges in sustaining the pace, breadth and depth of public service reform relate to challenges in governance. The theme of governance is somewhat theoretical, but it provides a broader context to situate the other themes in this report, and it also has some practical implications.

Research insights

Governance, in its broadest sense, refers to the processes of organising and governing collective action. Governance takes place through networks, markets and the state, and power dynamics are at the centre of these relationships and processes. This theme is therefore closely related to the Participation and Partnership themes. Good governance, in the context of the Scottish Approach, seeks to coherently combine public participation and stakeholder collaboration to maximise their potential in delivering effective and responsive public services.[1 & 2]

FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE, THE SCOTTISH APPROACH EPITOMISES THE EVOLUTION AND UNCOMFORTABLE OVERLAPPING OF THREE PARADIGMS OF GOVERNANCE

From an international perspective, the Scottish Approach epitomises the evolution and uncomfortable overlapping of three paradigms of governance. Firstly, the classic *Public Administration* paradigm which took shape in the aftermath of the Second World War, and where hierarchies and logics of command and control were central to governing the large scale of the emerging welfare systems. Secondly, in the 1980s the *New Public Management* paradigm irrupted into the scene, challenging public administration to borrow approaches and techniques from the world of business, advocating a more managerial approach to services, and having an optimistic view about the power of markets and the efficiency of market dynamics.

Finally, in the last two decades, the paradigm of the *New Public Governance* has emerged to respond to the demands of a world where networks (and not just hierarchies or markets) are crucial to grapple with the complexities of public policy and services. The Scottish Approach aspires to be an exemplar of the *New Public Governance*, which seeks to be more responsive and creative than classic *Public Administration*, while being more democratic (participative and collaborative) than the *New Public Management* paradigm. Our research indicates that there is progress in this regard, but the transition is patchy across policy and geographical areas.[3 & 4] In many places, the competing logics of these three paradigms (hierarchical, managerial, participatory) coexist and overlap, often uncomfortably. This sometimes is interpreted as a clash of public service cultures which can create confusion at both the strategic and frontline levels of public services.[5]

A significant factor regarding governance in Scotland is the current centralisation of authority, the limited powers of local government, and the absence of a fully-functioning tier of local democracy close to communities of place.[6 & 7] A range of partnerships, in particular community planning partnerships, are expected to bridge the gap between localities and the strategic governance of public services. However, these partnerships often struggle to enable community participation and empowerment. In this context, advancing public service reform requires rewiring governance processes by learning from experiences with more participative and deliberative forms of local governance.

A RANGE OF PARTNERSHIPS, IN PARTICULAR COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIPS, ARE EXPECTED TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN LOCALITIES AND THE STRATEGIC GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC SERVICES

In terms of public service reform, improving governance has often meant reforming structures and procedures; the 'hardware', to use a computing metaphor. Getting that dimension right is crucial, but perhaps the best-known secret in the world of governance studies is that policy and public service successes and innovations often hinge on the 'software': relationships, mindsets, values and ways of working. This relates closely to Christie's calls for culture change in the design, management and delivery of services.

Implications for policy and practice

■ All stakeholders in formal partnership structures must pay attention to their governance practices. Partners across services and sectors must engage with the complexities and 'messiness' of making a difference locally. For example, CPP boards should investigate how board members see their role and capacity to participate, challenge and influence decisions and, if appropriate, revise working arrangements to enable productive scrutiny and shared decision-making.[8] These should support longer-term deliberation on practical issues and provide spaces for critical reflection on aspirations for sustaining a public service ethos and working to address wicked policy issues.[9]

■ The Scottish Approach to public governance must seek to develop a coherent system where community participation feeds into partnership working, informs formal decision-making and leads to action. Community engagement in community planning partnerships, for example, should be more coherently and transparently linked to decision-making, regardless of the type of process and level of power-sharing at stake (e.g. consultation, co-production, delegation).[10]

■ The role of community-led institutions needs to be strengthened. For example, community anchors could become sustainable and strong levers to improve governance and advance public service reform. Community anchors offer distinctive and unique contribution to not only public service reform but more generally to locally-led economic and social development through: their local leadership and governance structures; their local knowledge, flexibility and creativity; their potential to work with local diversity and connectivity and connecting to 'hard-to-reach' groups, local social capital and preparedness to work with local difference.[11] Other community-led institutions also need to be reimagined. For example, the role of community councils[12] in local democracy, should be a central consideration in any local governance reform.

■ Finally, new governance mechanisms are needed to support learning across communities and scaling-up successful interventions. There is great potential for communities and public services to learn from other examples of public service reform in action. A strategy and relevant mechanisms need to be in place to facilitate this learning.[13]

Footnotes

[1] Community Planning after the Community Empowerment Act: The Second Survey of Community Planning Officials in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-after-the-community-empowerment-act-second-survey-of-community-planning-officials/

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[4] At the frontier of collaborative and participatory governance: Eight key discussions to support putting Christie into practice – reflective learning with practitioners from Aberdeenshire CPP http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/frontier-of-collaborative-and-participatory-governance/

[5] Collaborative Action Research and public services – insights into methods, findings and implications for public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/collaborative-action-research-and-public-services-insights-into-methods-findings-and-implications-for-public-service-reform/

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[11] Community anchors and community capacity-building http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/topics/community-anchors-and-community-capacity-building/

[12] Strengthening Community Councils: Exploring how they can contribute to democratic renewal in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/strengthening-community-councils-and-democratic-renewal-in-scotland/

[13] The Operation Modulus Approach: further lessons for public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/the-operation-modulus-approach-further-lessons-for-public-service-reform/

4. Workforce

The Christie Commission report is made clear that the future of public services is inextricable from the future of its workforce, across public, third and community sectors. The workforce has to be involved in introducing change. It is not enough to talk about co-production with communities; if services are to be successful those implementing and delivering the services also have to feel ownership of the approach, and need the skills to use evidence and to facilitate dialogue. Co-production, participation and partnership working can challenge professional identities and this has to be addressed. In addition, the current context of austerity policy and financial constraints adds uncertainty about the sustainability of initiatives and funding streams, which can have an impact in the morale and capacity of frontline staff across sectors.

CO-PRODUCTION, PARTICIPATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING CAN CHALLENGE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITIES AND THIS HAS TO BE ADDRESSED

Research insights

Much of our learning about this theme comes from the intensive work with practitioners through our collaborative action research (CAR) programme.[1] The CAR approach to service improvement has its strengths, including rich knowledge generation, co-production of evidence, and impact opportunities, such as support for partnership working and multi-sectoral collaborations. However, it also raises issues regarding the time, resource, and the ways of working within complex multiagency systems.[2]

THE VALUE GIVEN TO THE KNOWLEDGE AND EVIDENCE OF DIFFERENT LEVELS AND TYPES OF PRACTITIONER IS UNEQUAL

CAR demonstrates the value of bringing professionals and practitioners from very different backgrounds together into one group to co-produce work involving diverse sources of knowledge and evidence. The value given to the knowledge and evidence of different levels and types of practitioner is unequal. It is therefore easy to overlook how important it can be to simply bring people into the same room and into a collaborative process that values equally their knowledge, skills and experience. The perspective of frontline officers in particular must be heard and valued.

Our CAR illustrates how this can be done using professional, external researcher-facilitators, namely: providing safe, protected, facilitated spaces for dialogue and deliberation; building relationships between practitioners with diverse backgrounds and knowledges, including diverse roles and at a variety of levels within organisations; and engaging critically with diverse sources of evidence in order to deepen understanding of a policy area or problem and inform future policy and practice decisions. The application of CAR in the context of public service reform is challenged by the mismatch between the normal timescales for research and the fast-paced environment of policy and decision-making; and the current institutional context of budget cuts, restructuring and high levels of staff turnover. Our experience throughout the What Works Scotland programme has been that frontline workers are stretched in many directions and their resilience and creativity is often tested as they try to navigate a complex context of multiple national and local policy agendas.

Implications for policy and practice

- Supporting the development and consolidation of skills across the workforce is required to enable community participation and effective partnership working. This includes core skills such as process design, organisation, coordination, communication, mediation and facilitation. It also takes local knowledge and the necessary know-how to build trust, negotiate competing agendas and create spaces for meaningful dialogue and deliberation.[3 & 4]

- Approaches to using evidence may differ depending on context and purpose, and on the previous experience of staff in using evidence in their work. People will also vary in their capability to interpret and use evidence, suggesting that there are potentially training needs to consider. There should be further support for capacity-building and skills development in community planning teams – in particular analytical training – to make effective use of evidence from a range of sources. Other skills in high demand amongst community planning workers relate to leadership and facilitation, suggesting there is scope for a national programme to support professional development and peer learning.[5]

- At present, there is little systematic, independent evaluation of partnership and prevention activity across Scotland. Addressing this could involve a combination of upskilling the workforce in evaluation methods and collaborating with external researchers by, for example, forming local partnerships with universities.[6]

- If the real benefits of the Self-directed Support Act (2013) are to be realized, local authorities, care providers, and the Scottish Government need to act to bring social care providers more in line with the policy. They need to ensure that the necessary structures are in place for engagement with disabled people, and it is only then that they will be able to take advantage of the Act.[7]

- Transformation in working practices and cultures is key to successful community-led action planning. Successful community-led action planning needs to be linked to wider transformations in working practices and cultures. In practice this means increasing the decision-making autonomy and capacity of staff to listen to a diversity of views, to learn from local people, to compromise and respond positively to change.

Good governance, through effective participation and partnership, must be supported by properly resourced and stable teams of partnership workers and community organisers with capacity to develop processes that can address local issues, priorities, needs and aspirations. In these circumstances, communities of practice can be developed across practitioners.

The CAR programme has demonstrated how public service workers can learn from international evidence, and use this in ongoing forms to further develop relationships and impact on policy and practice debates across Scotland.[8]

Footnotes

[1] Collaborative Action Research and public services – insights into methods, findings and implications for public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/collaborative-action-research-and-public-services-insights-into-methods-findings-and-implications-for-public-service-reform/

[2] Fife Collaborative Action Research Programme: An overview of the process http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/fife-collaborative-action-research-programme-an-overview-of-the-process/

[3] Aberdeenshire case site http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/casesites/aberdeenshire/

[4] Community Planning after the Community Empowerment Act: The Second Survey of Community Planning Officials in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-after-the-community-empowerment-act-second-survey-of-community-planning-officials/

[5] Community Planning Officials Survey: Understanding the everyday work of local participatory governance in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-planning-officials-survey-everyday-work-of-local-participatory-governance/

[6] Evaluation of Police and Fire Reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/evaluation-of-police-and-fire-reform/

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5. Leadership

The theme of leadership has permeated through all our work. As Scotland's public services seek to establish a more joined up and coherent approach to meet the demand for integrated service provision through adopting collaborative and facilitative working practices, leaders face new challenges. This has led to calls for new forms of leadership to move practice beyond traditional, hierarchical and managerial approaches that have dominated in the past.

Research insights

There is a growing expectation in Scotland that new modes and practices of public service leadership are needed if we are to successfully reform the way our public services are designed and delivered.[1] To be successful our research suggests that leadership has to be able to facilitate change within and between different organisations and sectors. It requires leadership for cultural change in addition to the traditional focus on structural changes in working practice. If our public services are to deliver the aspirations of Christie this shift is essential. Whilst this is demanding, it is possible, as our work on, for example participatory budgeting, has demonstrated. Here we have shown how new forms of leadership has brought people together to work collectively, challenge hierarchies, build relationships across the system and engage in collective problem-solving. This approach encourages deliberative decision-making and creative co-production.[2]

There are a range of different activities associated with good public service leadership. These include:

- Working with communities and individuals to identify their assets and, importantly, how they can be realised.

- Working to empower individuals.

- Working across and between silos.

- Facilitating new ways of working to support cultural change.

A key challenge for public service organisations is the creation of an environment where this new form of leadership can emerge and flourish.[3] This can be achieved by increasing autonomy through decentralization and empowering communities and individuals whilst maintaining intelligent lines of accountability.

Good leadership involves making power dynamics open and visible and, where appropriate, seeking to cede power in order to let others take the lead. People have to be prepared to renegotiate the balance of power at all levels for this to work and possess the skills to create, service and manipulate communication networks. They also have to be able to identify where best to intervene in the organisation. This is often described in the literature as a reticulist.

PEOPLE HAVE TO BE PREPARED TO RENEGOTIATE THE BALANCE OF POWER AT ALL LEVELS

The most effective leader may be from outside traditional lead agencies and often occupational jurisdictions may have to be challenged if leadership is to promote innovative partnerships. Leadership can support partnership working.[4]

Working with CPPs, we have supported collaborative action research in four local authority areas to generate and use evidence to improve and reframe practice. This requires re-thinking roles and responsibilities to lever cultural change by linking leaders at different levels across a range of services and encouraging them to develop a localised agenda for system improvement.[5]

Different leadership approaches suit different situations and there is no one type of leadership that fits all needs. At times leadership has to be distributive, at others facilitative, collaborative or even hierarchical or a combination[6]. Context is key and this means that people and organisations have to be adaptable, flexible and reflexive to develop an understanding of what type of leadership works best, when and where.

Trust and relationship building are an essential prerequisite for effective leadership. Without them it is impossible to bring people together and support them to engage in meaningful deliberation that leads to action.[7]

We have been able to test the validity of our findings through our work with CPPs and have developed an approach to spreading this learning.[8]

Implications for policy and practice

There are encouraging signs that new forms of leadership practice are beginning to emerge across Scotland's public services, but progress patchy. Public service leaders have a decisive role in promoting, advocating, defining and defending innovative approaches to leadership by their officers. It requires a commitment both in terms of resource and, importantly, time. Services have to become more flexible, collaborative, better networked and mutualistic.

Effective leadership is an integrated approach that facilitates change through identifying assets, empowering individuals and reculturing organisations and systems to deliver improved outcomes.

Good leadership entails:

- A shared vision and understanding of aims, objectives, roles and responsibilities
- Strong, reflective and responsive approach
- Meaningful and tailored performance management systems
- Staff development
- Focus on outcomes
- Strong links between operational and strategic functions
- Equal and transparent relationships between partners

It is difficult and demanding but if we are to fully realise the potential of our public services investment in leadership skills is essential.

Good public service leaders are:

1. **Skilled communicators** – able to use adaptive language to empathise with others through negotiation and see challenging and complex situations from a range of perspectives. They can demonstrate empathy with other perspectives whilst influencing individual and group positions.

2. **Excellent networkers** – able to use their expertise and social and emotional intelligences to gain access to a diverse range of settings, both locally and nationally. They seek out and connect with those who have similar interests to build coalitions and alliances that can lever the outcomes that they desire in different parts or levels within the system.

3. **Strategic in orientation** – able to see the 'big picture' and understand the contributions that partners can make. These leaders have the ability to get the appropriate expertise and experience around the table and can make the case for collaboration, so individuals can see the value added in working together strategically to generate long-term productive relationships.

4. **Contextually astute** – able to understand the relationship between organisational conditions, individuals' behaviours and outcomes. These leaders understand the power of context and are astute in developing solutions that optimise the capability and capacity residing in specific settings.

5. **Problem solvers** – able to think laterally and creatively to seek solutions. These leaders are not linear thinkers. They make connections that most of us fail to see. This means that they tend to be innovative, challenge orthodoxies and push the boundaries of practice.

6. **Self-managing** – adept at risk-taking within a framework that understands organisational capacity. These leaders dare to challenge the status quo and take risks without being reckless. When something is not working, or looks problematic, they fail fast and adapt their approach to achieve success.[9]

These 'softer' and more nuanced attributes move leadership beyond position and power and the hierarchies of the past that are limiting the implementation of our aspirations for the future.

Footnotes

[1] Community Planning after the Community Empowerment Act: The Second Survey of Community Planning Officials in Scotland **http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/community-planning-after-the-community-empowerment-act-second-survey-of-community-planning-officials/**

[2] What Works in Public Service Leadership: Exploring the Potential **http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/what-works-in-public-service-leadership-exploring-the-potential/**

[3] What Works in Public Service Leadership: Exploring the Potential **http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/what-works-in-public-service-leadership-exploring-the-potential/**

[4] Operation Modulus: putting Christie into practice in the Gorbals **http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/operation-modulus-putting-christie-into-practice-in-the-gorbals/**

[5] Public Service Leadership: What Works? **http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/public-service-leadership-what-works/**

[6] Public Service Leadership: What Works? **http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/public-service-leadership-what-works/**

[7] Transforming communities? Exploring the roles of community anchor organisations in public service reform, local democracy, community resilience and social change **http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/exploring-the-roles-of-community-anchor-organisations-in-public-service-reform/**

[8] Facilitative Leadership: Involving citizens and communities in local decision-making **http://whatworksscotland.blogspot.com/2017/05/facilitative-leadership-involving-citizens-and-communities-in-local-decision-making.html**

[9] Public Service Leadership: What Works? **http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/public-service-leadership-what-works/**

6. Prevention

Prevention is a fundamental pillar of Christie and is central to the Scottish Approach to Public Service Reform. Throughout our work in What Works Scotland we have explored the different meanings of prevention, the challenges it poses and the difficulties in the effective execution of prevention work.

Research insights

One of the key insights that emerged from our five research seminars on prevention was just how difficult it is to work preventatively. It is a very complex and demanding area. It is hard to predict with any accuracy just how beneficial a policy will be or when it will achieve its effect and there are often unintended and/or unseen benefits or costs, associated with any preventative action. For example, when it comes to planning and working out how to fund preventative services, it is hard to justify disinvestment now, in order to fund new initiatives to save in the future. Our research suggests that this is very much an area of developing and evolving policy and practice.

ONE OF THE KEY INSIGHTS THAT EMERGED FROM OUR FIVE RESEARCH SEMINARS ON PREVENTION WAS JUST HOW DIFFICULT IT IS TO WORK PREVENTATIVELY

That said, there are a number of insights that have emerged from our work. These include:

Co-production can lay the groundwork for prevention. Our work with Operation Modulus demonstrated how involving communities and those who design and implement services builds trust and confidence of participants in a programme. Co-production can help to strike the right balance between upstream and downstream activities. This takes time and effort, it is an iterative process, not a transaction. A strong co-production approach to programme development has the potential to sow the seeds for further preventative work in a community.[1]

Prevention is not only difficult to implement, it is also difficult to sustain. There are times, for example, where the immediate needs of the system can be used to undermine long term work aimed at reducing need in the future.[2] It is hard to predict quantifiable benefits in both the short and the long term and there are often unforeseen benefits and costs associated with prevention[3].

The benefits of prevention programmes extend well beyond those who are the immediate targets and their effects are felt by all sectors of both society and the economy.[4]

The community sector can act as a long-term voice for sustaining a focus on preventing inequalities. In our work with Aberdeenshire CPP we were able to demonstrate how community participation is key to developing good preventative practice, and to ensuring that the focus stays on prevention.[5] This, we argue, can best be achieved by developing initiatives that work though a place-based, community organisation – an anchor organisation – and these can best host public service reform initiatives. Anchor organisations can build on local programme success to develop further initiatives, including prevention-based approaches.[6]

Good community anchors are well placed as leaders in work that aims to mitigate the worst excesses of inequality. They can help to develop sustainable initiatives that boost the local economy, tackle poverty and reduce harm.[7]

Good prevention work that aims to tackle inequality should be empowering and enabling and it is characterised by reciprocity. The initiatives should be enjoyable, sociable, positive experiences, and bring people together to address isolation and loneliness by building or re-building communities of geography or interest.[8]

To be effective, prevention programmes have to offer desired and meaningful opportunities as alternatives. Effective prevention services are targeted at a population and are able to foster independence.[9]

IF WE ARE TO TACKLE AND PREVENT THE ROOT CAUSES OF INEQUALITY A PREVENTION-FOCUSSED APPROACH HAS TO BECOME THE NORM ACROSS ALL LEVELS OF THE SYSTEM

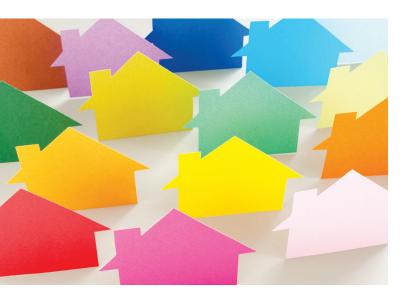## Implications for policy and practice

- To develop good, sustainable, prevention-focussed work funders and those who design and deliver services must combine a focus on both upstream and downstream action. If we are to tackle and prevent the root causes of inequality a prevention-focussed approach has to become the norm across all levels of the system. Currently prevention is mainly left to those working directly in the frontline. Whilst these organisations will continue to play a key role in attenuating the dire consequences for citizens and communities they need support from the centre.[10]

- In developing and promoting prevention it is important to offer alternatives that are attractive and appealing.[11]

- Prevention requires innovation and collaboration across a range of different sectors. Prevention can mean that an investment by one sector will lead to a saving in another[12]. The system has to be able to respond to this, perhaps the growth of integrated working will help here. Often, however, these savings are difficult to realise. Whilst, for example, a crime prevention programme may see fewer people going to prison, there will be little financial gain to the prison system.

- In addition, greater collaboration and integration will enable greater sharing examples of activities around prevention. Organisations will then be able to discuss how these findings can be adapted to a service's particular needs, or to take account of the local context.

- Evaluation is key. Organisations have to develop a robust evidence base, providing insights into successful and unsuccessful local initiatives; and embracing innovation as a way of developing and improving approaches to prevention. The use of a good logic model and a well developed theory of change can help here.[13]

- Prevention requires investment now to save money in the future. This means that prevention programmes are always under threat until they start to deliver savings and this may be a long time in the future. Other strategies and funding streams should be explored including the use of Social Investment Bonds and other public private initiatives.[14]

Footnotes

1 The Operation Modulus Approach: further lessons for public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/the-operation-modulus-approach-further-lessons-for-public-service-reform/

2 Implementing health and social care integration in Scotland: Renegotiating new partnerships in changing cultures of care https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.12537

3 Report to Scottish Parliament Finance Committee http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/report-to-scottish-parliament-finance-committee/

4 The Operation Modulus Approach: further lessons for public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/the-operation-modulus-approach-further-lessons-for-public-service-reform/

5 Scoping Report from the Aberdeenshire CPP and What Works Scotland's Collaborative Learning Day http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/scoping-report-from-the-aberdeenshire-cpp-and-what-works-scotlands-collaborative-learning-day-8-december-2015/

6 The Operation Modulus Approach: further lessons for public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/the-operation-modulus-approach-further-lessons-for-public-service-reform/

7 Transforming communities? Exploring the roles of community anchor organisations in public service reform, local democracy, community resilience and social change http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/exploring-the-roles-of-community-anchor-organisations-in-public-service-reform/

8 Fun, Food, Folk: The Centrestage approach to dignified food provision http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/centrestage-dignified-food-provision/

9 Operation Modulus: putting Christie into practice in the Gorbals http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/operation-modulus-putting-christie-into-practice-in-the-gorbals/

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12 The Operation Modulus Approach: further lessons for public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/the-operation-modulus-approach-further-lessons-for-public-service-reform/

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14 At the frontier of collaborative and participatory governance: Eight key discussions to support putting Christie into practice – reflective learning with practitioners from Aberdeenshire CPP http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/frontier-of-collaborative-and-participatory-governance/

PREVENTION REQUIRES INVESTMENT NOW TO SAVE MONEY IN THE FUTURE

7. Place

Over the course of our four-year programme the importance of 'place' has emerged as a central element of successful public service reform. This is a post-Christie development and place has become the fifth pillar of the Scottish Approach to public service reform[1]. As this has evolved with an emphasis on increased community participation, partnership asset-based working, and a focus on neighbourhoods, it has led, inexorably, to a call for a return to place as a focus for public service reform.

Research insights

Benefits of place-based approaches

A place-based approach makes it easier for services to be controlled and owned by, and delivered through, the local community. They can ensure that reform reflects the needs of the community and that they are better able to respond to a community's complex needs and priorities[2]. It offers opportunities to devolve power from the centre and the potential to build on and develop successful initiatives for future developments[3]. It facilitates learning across, and between, services.

Services located within the community are more likely to be engaged with by the community and they encourage community participation. Place-based approaches both rely on and help to develop, long term, sustained relationships. These enable the development of trust[4].

Place offers a more meaningful focus around which people can become involved. Our work on developing health statistics for local communities demonstrated how place enables not only practical, problem-based, tangible involvement but also allows people to see the outcomes they are interested in[5].

A place-based approach enables learning to be shared and spread across, and between, systems. This is currently an area where services are weak[6]. In our work on integration we were able to show how place provides an opportunity for shared learning to be spread across and between different services and sectors[7].

It offers the opportunity to devolve power away from the centre to the communities. In our work with Glasgow[8] and West Dunbartonshire[9] CPPs we were able to demonstrate how using place gave the communities the potential to steer and direct projects moulding them to fit their interests.

A place-based approach allows a focus on both prevention and performance in an efficient and strategic manner that takes account of the local characteristics. We have been able to demonstrate the importance of working in place in economic regeneration and argue that regeneration must adopt tailored approaches, designed to take account of local contexts and to meet the needs of local communities[10]. Place is also key to prevention, where contextual knowledge enables the development of an efficient and appropriate service[11].

Enabling place-based approaches

Community-led anchor organisations play a key role in the development of place-based approaches. These are organisations that enable local community development, represent community interests, and work in partnership with the public sector. Working through anchor organisations can ensure that services are connected with the community, are community led, and build on success for future developments[12]. Whilst there is no 'one size fits all' description of a community anchor, to be successful they require: a sustainable, independent income stream, time to establish, a shift in working practice, and a flexible approach to working[13].

Place-based approaches also require stability. They are dependent on the establishment of trust and this grows out of long-term relationships.

Building partnerships between services and developing services that share the same physical space encourages frontline staff to interact with one another, produces services that are more joined up and means that they are more likely to encourage those they work with to make full use of the services[14].

Whilst a place-based approach is key, this does not mean that national organisations do not have an important role to play. Community engagement by national agencies is crucial to place-based approaches. Organisations such as the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and Skills Development Scotland, health and social care partnerships, and local agencies (i.e. local authorities, community, third sector and community planning partners) play a key part in the successful delivery of place-based approaches[15].

Challenges to place-based approaches

Giving power to a community demands the ceding of power by those who hold it. This can sometimes be challenging and agreeing to let go can be difficult.

Institutional restructuring, organisational restructuring and high staff turnover impedes the capacity to develop and sustain place-based approaches. This is particularly important at a time of institutional flux and austerity. Stability is required to sustain place-based approaches.[16]

There is a danger that place can easily become a catch-all for a range of potentially inconsistent policy agendas. The downside of a place-based approach is the risk that it becomes weakly-specified, poorly-evidenced and 'a receptacle for odds and ends'.[17]

GIVING POWER TO A COMMUNITY DEMANDS THE CEDING OF POWER BY THOSE WHO HOLD IT

Implications for policy and practice

The evidence from our work supports the value of place as a focus for public service reform and continued efforts to take a place-based approach, provided there is careful consideration of location, history and people and it is responsive and sensitive to local areas.[18]

This could be promoted/ensured by:

- The establishment and use of good, well connected community anchors.[19]
- Adequate resourcing to enable facilitation, education, information and support so that services can work with community members.
- Collaborative and cooperative approaches so that, together, individuals, communities and services can learn how to translate any complexities associated with terminology or the participation process.[20]
- Ongoing professional development and support for members of staff. Initiatives fail if the workforce is not brought on board and involved from the start.[21] The workforce at all levels and across all partners has to feel involved from the start and both they and the community have to have a sense of shared ownership.[22]

Footnotes

1 The emerging Scottish model: avoiding everything becoming nothing http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/the-emerging-scottish-model-avoiding-everything-becoming-nothing/

2 Insights from 'Your Community' – a place-based approach to public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/insights-from-your-community-a-place-based-approach-to-public-service-reform/

3 Blog: Community Anchors and Opportunities for Locally-led Public Service Reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/blog-community-anchors-and-opportunities-for-locally-led-public-service-reform/

4 Policy briefing: Public service leadership: Rethinking leadership for collaborative settings http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/policy-briefing-public-service-leadership-rethinking-leadership-for-collaborative-settings/

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8 Collaborative dissertations in Thriving Places http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/casesites/glasgow/collaborative-dissertations-in-thriving-places/

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12 Community Anchors http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-anchors/

13 Community Anchors http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/community-anchors/

14 Building Connections: co-locating advice services in GPs and job centres https://www.gcph.co.uk/745_building_connections_co-locating_advice_services_in_gps_and_job_centres

15 Outcomes Based Approaches in Public Service Reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/outcomes-based-approaches-in-public-service-reform/

16 Insights from 'Your Community' – a place-based approach to public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/insights-from-your-community-a-place-based-approach-to-public-service-reform/

17 Insights from 'Your Community' – a place-based approach to public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/insights-from-your-community-a-place-based-approach-to-public-service-reform/

18 Insights from 'Your Community' – a place-based approach to public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/insights-from-your-community-a-place-based-approach-to-public-service-reform/

19 'Hard to reach' or 'easy to ignore'? Promoting equality in community engagement – Evidence review http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/hard-to-reach-or-easy-to-ignore-promoting-equality-in-community-engagement-evidence-review/

20 Insights from 'Your Community' – a place-based approach to public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/insights-from-your-community-a-place-based-approach-to-public-service-reform/

21 Changing the culture of social care in Scotland: Has a shift to personalization brought about transformative change? https://doi.org/10.1111/spol.12352

22 Insights from 'Your Community' – a place-based approach to public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/insights-from-your-community-a-place-based-approach-to-public-service-reform/

8. Evidence

From the outset What Works Scotland sought to develop knowledge around the systems, processes and partnerships that support the use of evidence in transforming public services for all of Scotland's communities.

There are currently some major areas of activity that are central to the Scottish Approach to public service reform that are under-researched and poorly evidenced. For example, there is little systematic, independent evaluation of partnership and prevention activity across Scotland. The same is also true of outcome-focussed work[1] and little is known about the long-term effects of taking part, or not taking, part in community engagement.[2]

Research insights

Good public service reform requires a collaborative approach to both learning and research. This collaboration must cut across all levels of the system, from those who use the services through to those who design and commission them. Critically, it must also involve those charged with evaluating their performance.[3]

Evaluation is most useful when it measures outcomes that are relevant to communities and other stakeholders, and it is only by working with them that their views can be incorporated into the design and planning of evaluations[4]. Working with partners, including NHS Health Scotland, we have developed and applied a systematic and collaborative approach to evaluation planning to a range of national and local interventions, including the Community Empowerment Act and Glasgow's Thriving Places initiative. Evaluability Assessment is increasingly being used by the Scottish Government to plan the evaluations of national policies, as well as being taken by other stakeholders.[5] We are now developing guidance materials to make the approach accessible to the widest possible range of potential users.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to either generating or using evidence. Approaches to using evidence differ depending on the context and purpose for which it is needed, and on the previous experience of staff in using evidence in their work.[6] To meet this services have to adopt a variety of approaches to the way they collect and display evidence.[7]

Co-producing research with the people whose lives an initiative seeks to change is fundamental to the successful outcomes.[8] This requires space for open discussion, an analysis of the community's assets and the alternatives on offer.[9]

Whilst focusing on outcomes can be a challenge in evaluation it can also help to cement a partnership. In order for people to be able to actualise change, public services need to actively facilitate meaningful alternatives to peoples' current circumstances. Focusing on improving outcomes for some members of a community can benefit all members of a community.[10]

Our work developing an evidence service for those who work with children and families demonstrates the requirement for clear communications and the encouragement of open discussion. Getting groups to work together and talk together helped to foster a shared understanding of what evidence type was needed and why, and how best that evidence could be presented.[11] Giving all those involved the opportunity to work collaboratively to identify gaps in knowledge helped partners think through and articulate what they wanted to know and why.

Collaborative action research is an excellent method to support the evaluation of community relevant outcomes and to meet the needs identified above. It provides a space in which policymakers, service providers, and those who use the services can collaborate to develop critical reflective practice. It is a flexible, inclusive approach that enables: participatory and collaborative activity; research, inquiry and reflection; and strategies for action, prevention, culture change and perhaps social change. It can be used to frame improvement tools, desk research, and shared analysis.[12]

We used a collaborative approach to develop a toolkit to evaluate Participatory Budgeting collaboration. This made sure that all involved fully owned, understood, and were able to advocate for the use of the evaluation toolkit they designed. It enables evaluation to be developed that takes account of the culture, context and needs of the service.[13 & 14]

EVALUATION TAKES TIME, IS RESOURCE HEAVY AND TIME CONSUMING

Implications for policy and practice

Evaluation takes time, is resource heavy and time consuming. It has to be planned into the development process. This is particularly pertinent at a time of institutional flux and high staff turnover as local authorities restructure departments, services and job roles. This instability impedes the ability of staff and partners to develop and sustain collaborative work.[15]

Adopting an outcome-based approach can help forge collaboration and outline the pathway to policy implementation, bringing together a range of diverse stakeholders.[16]

A good approach must embrace complexity, value the perspective and contributions of multiple stakeholders and capture evidence to support improvement and transformation. For this to be effective the evidence-gathering approach has to be contextualised and bring together data from different sources to develop a broad picture of what is happening.[17]

The use of community impact assessments, equality impact assessments, strategic community assessments or auditing of the processes, and longitudinal studies makes it easier to recognise who benefits, and who does not, from any given initiative.[18]

Successful partnership working, innovation and prevention requires all agencies to focus on being learning organisations. This involves learning from examples of activities which have been tried elsewhere and could be adapted to the local context; embedding a culture of evaluation so there is a robust evidence base providing insights into successful and unsuccessful local initiatives; and embracing innovation as a way of developing and improving approaches to prevention.[19]

SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP WORKING, INNOVATION AND PREVENTION REQUIRES ALL AGENCIES TO FOCUS ON BEING LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

Footnotes

1 Outcomes Based Approaches in Public Service Reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/outcomes-based-approaches-in-public-service-reform/

2 'Hard to reach' or 'easy to ignore'? Promoting equality in community engagement – Evidence review http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/hard-to-reach-or-easy-to-ignore-promoting-equality-in-community-engagement-evidence-review/

3 Collaborative Action Research and public services – insights into methods, findings and implications for public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/collaborative-action-research-and-public-services-insights-into-methods-findings-and-implications-for-public-service-reform/

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5 Policy briefing – Evaluability Assessment: A collaborative approach to planning evaluations http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/policy-briefing-evaluability-assessment-a-collaborative-approach-to-planning-evaluations/

6 Making data meaningful: Evidence use in a community planning partnership in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/making-data-meaningful/

7 Developing an evidence service for the children and families workforce http://www.crfr.ac.uk/assets/briefing-73web.pdf

8 Operation Modulus: putting Christie into practice in the Gorbals http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/operation-modulus-putting-christie-into-practice-in-the-gorbals/

9 Making data meaningful: Evidence use in a community planning partnership in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/making-data-meaningful/

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13 Evaluating the impact of participatory budgeting http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/casesites/glasgow/evaluating-the-impact-of-participatory-budgeting/

14 Making data meaningful: Evidence use in a community planning partnership in Scotland http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/making-data-meaningful/

15 Insights from 'Your Community' – a place-based approach to public service reform http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/insights-from-your-community-a-place-based-approach-to-public-service-reform/

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19 Evaluation of police and fire reform: partnership, innovation and prevention year three case study https://www.gov.scot/publications/evaluation-police-fire-reform-year-3-thematic-case-study-partnership/