LSHTM Symposium Event

Open Public Services White Paper and Researching for Change: A think piece

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Public Services Reform

"We've all failed" …. to tailor services to secure the best outcomes for users and their carers!!

Coalition path of Open Public Services through 5 guiding principles: **Choice; Decentralisation; Diversity; Fairness; Accountability.**

5 key groups of beneficiaries - **Individual people; Communities; Local Govt; Public service staff; Independent service providers**

Re-focus upon the needs of the service users themselves, not limited by what current professions can deliver

Re-focus upon how professionals add value to each others work to ensure better outcomes for the users

Sets real challenges for those conducting research, and a greater emphasis on practical solutions – *where addressing the questions of why do research and what is it for will become even more critical for the benefactors and stakeholders of any such research.*

Public Services Reform

Legislation to bring about changes:

- **Localism Act 2011;**
- **Health and Social Care Act 2012;**
- **Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012;**
- **the planned Co-operatives Bill; etc.**

Each seeks to breakdown barriers, ensure accountability to users, sets challenges for providers

The Social Value is of particular interest … requiring triple bottom-line values in public service delivery

So …. loosen the shackles of traditional thinking and consider how do you get varied interest groups to think and work together to respond to these challenges?

Some Issues around Research For Change

- Recognising the different expectations of groups with a stake in research i.e. from service users/patients/carers to Commissioners/policy-makers and practitioners.
- Key challenge: How to move to a more consensual agenda between these different groups, in order to achieve better commonality around rethinking both research purpose and the relationship between doing research and any resulting development practices. What issues need addressing in order to help support the realisation of such agenda?
- Refocus research efforts from inputs and outputs to process-outcomes and high level collective holistic shared outcomes to help people critically both think about in whose name and benefit is research 'really' being undertaken for.
- Owning those high level shared outcomes by people working better together to achieve shared research and development goals and results, with an emphasis more on enabling the actioning of service change and improvements in practice.
- Both embedding and sustaining research for change by using research to change culture around how groups involved in research view each-other and their potential in terms of what they bring– potential assets rather than deficits.

Extending Research Scope

Approaches:

- Rethinking ideas and practices around Scholarship – from traditional academic to Public Engaged Scholarship.
- Use of phronesis as ones lived experiences and reflections as being accepted as a critical compliment to other forms of knowledge creation/production.
- Communities of Practice to Communities of Discovery – deepening the collective drive and interest for doing research.

Methodologies and Methods/Tools:

- Participatory action evaluation and research – enhancing its role
- Stretching frontiers of qualitative research – reinforcing role of peoples experiences and stories as well as use with adult teaching and learning pedagogies like E/PBL.
- SROI – raising profile of mixed methods in a practical way and drawing on different stakeholder perspectives and voices.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) - 1

- What is social return on investment and how does it differ from other evaluation models

- Examples of SROI work undertaken

Social Return on Investment - 2

- How does SROI fit in with Government OPS Reforms.

- How Commissioners of SROI are using it.

Researching for Change: Responding to the Practical Implications

- This includes for **Commissioners/Policy-makers:** joint commissioning including bidding and working for ongoing involvement of all groups with a stake in research and development – around sharing ownership of what findings are and any action plans that results.

- **For Researchers and Practitioners:** being more open to and comfortable with engaging with others beyond their immediate peers including funders e.g. and not just as a reaction to funding body requirements to work with others, but more out of research for curiosity and also ongoing learning that is practical both for and from others.

- **For Research Participants** – to be given opportunities to help define and shape what critical success factors including outcomes around change research and development would look like through more four way dialogic communication/listening by, to and with others.

ALL Recognising Inter-dependency and Building Trust as key.

Some Reflective Questions?

1) As competition and choice intensifies who is best placed to ensure that services for patients, carers and service user communities becomes more co-ordinated and integrated to ensure more successful outcomes, with a diversity of competing providers?

2) Can one reconcile the conflicts and tensions between more diverse providers with likely shorter times in reaching targets for both outputs and outcomes, against the need to have longer term flexible planning for achieving joint high-level holistic health and well-being outcomes concerned with sustainable social value and triple bottom line benefits?

3) How might one start to change incentives and rewards tending to be based currently on individual, activities, actions or interventions to a system based on a culture of collective responsibility and efforts to achieve joint high-level holistic shared outcomes?