Working In Collaboration: Learning from Theory and Practice

Literature Review for the National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Healthcare

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“Like ‘community’, partnership is a word of obvious virtue (what sensible person would choose conflict over collaboration?)”

*(Clarke and Glendinning, 2002: 33)*

“Health and welfare agencies and professionals who see the need for collaboration in the delivery of health and social care and programmes for prevention should be critical of the idea of collaboration as a self-evident and desirable goal, or as a panacea, and should enter into collaboration only when it can be demonstrated to be purposeful and accountable, task-related and cost effective”

*(Loxley, 1997: 47)*

“partnerships have no a priori right to being the most effective service delivery method in all situations, the sooner we can learn the simple truth the sooner partnerships can be scrutinised and we will be able to identify when, where and how they can best be used”

*(McLaughlin, 2004:112)*
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1. Introduction and Purpose

The National Leadership and Innovation Agency for Health Care in Wales has commissioned this literature review on partnership working in public services, primarily as a response to the importance given to this form of working in the design and delivery of citizen centred public services in Wales. Although collaboration and partnership working have been features of public policy systems worldwide since the late 20th Century, the focus on collaboration in general and partnership in particular has broadened and deepened so that it has now taken root in most aspects of public service design and delivery. However, the effectiveness of collaboration and partnerships as ways of managing and delivering public policy have been questioned in academic texts (e.g. Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002), in officially sponsored evaluation studies (e.g. Williams et al, 2006), and by practitioners and managers on the ground. These various contributions illustrate the range of problems associated with making collaboration and partnerships ‘work’ including: leadership styles, multiple accountabilities, governance, cultural and professional differences, power disparities, differing performance management arrangements, institutional disincentives, historical and ideological barriers, resource problems and converting strategic intent into effective implementation.

Hence, it is timely to interrogate and review the literature on partnership working to examine its nature and to understand the factors and determinants that influence its effectiveness. This is an expression of the ‘what works’ or evidence-based culture that is part of the national government approach to public policy. This review of the appropriate literature is being used to inform the preparation of a guide to help practitioners and managers become more effective in collaborative arenas.

This literature review:

- takes a UK and international perspective on collaboration but also focuses specifically on Wales where relevant material is available
- reviews the literature on collaboration across all policy areas, but especially in relation to health, social care and well being contexts
- interrogates the theoretical literature but also examines the relevant empirical and evaluation studies that focus on collaboration and in practice
Section 2 opens with an overview of the prevailing policy context in Wales and the UK. It traces historically efforts that have been made to improve the co-ordination and integration of public services, identifies some of the main policy drivers and briefly explores notions such as joined up government. It looks at the emerging policy paradigm in Wales which has recently been codified by the publication of policy documents prepared by Welsh Assembly Government – Making the Connections (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006), the Beecham Review (Welsh Assembly Government, 2006), and Designed for Life (Welsh Assembly Government, 2005) which provides a detailed response in relation to healthcare.

Section 3 examines some of the persistent terminological difficulties that can bedevil understanding of collaboration; reflects on the framing processes that different interests use to explain collaboration; offers a number of reasons to explain what motivates individuals and organisations to work in this way; and, finally, identifies the main costs and benefits of this method of social organising.

Huxham and Vangen (1998) note that research into collaboration and partnership working is striking in part because of: “the astonishing variety of disciplines, research paradigms, theoretical perspectives and sectoral focuses within which it is researched”. Hence, the approach adopted in this review is inevitably diverse, and Section 4 sets out to capture, firstly at a macro-level, the main political, economic and sociological theories that are advanced to explain this phenomena. It then continues with the assembly and review of a wide range of concepts, notions, models, factors and determinants that are considered to play an important part in collaborative working, together with other explanations which focus on issues related to the following:

- The intensity of partnership behaviour that varies between co-operation, co-ordination and collaboration.
- The dynamic component of partnerships that move through different phases, stages or life cycles
- The association of effective partnerships with critical successes factors.
- The existence of barriers to, and drivers of effective collaboration including issues relating to structure, procedure, finance, professionalism and organisational culture.
- The leadership styles that are appropriate to partnership arenas based on facilitation, empowerment and catalytic behaviour.
- The problems associated with designing appropriate accountability and performance management frameworks for partnership settings.
Section 5 focuses on the challenges involved in managing within collaborative arenas. It is based on the premise that this form of organising is materially different from that in hierarchies and markets – it is a form of network governance and demands specific organisational and individual management behaviour. The micro-level perspective reflects the view that: “a new policy environment and new organisational arrangements should make co-operation and collaboration easier than it has been in the past. But real success will depend as much on the determination and creativity of practitioners and managers as it will on government edict and structural change” (Poxton, 1999:3). This underscores the importance of key individuals in the collaboration process, and the need to develop a distinct set of collaborative skills, competencies, abilities and behaviours for this type of management.

Section 6 is devoted to particular governance challenges such as arrangements for accountability and financial planning that exist within collaborative forms of organising. It also discusses the manner in which ‘the public’ as citizens, customers and members of communities of geography, interest and identity have been engaged in the design and planning processes of collaborative initiatives.

Section 7 summarises the key lessons that have emerged from evidence-based studies of collaborative working in three different types of partnerships:

- Strategic partnerships, using recent material from local strategic partnerships in England and Scotland, and community strategy partnerships in Wales
- Policy-based partnerships in health and social care drawing on the national evaluation of Health Action Zones, systematic reviews on the determinants of effective partnerships and the drivers and barriers to joint working, a review of partnership working in Wales between the NHS and local authorities and studies of interprofessionality in health and social care.
- Community-based partnerships, focusing on the ongoing evaluation of the Communities First Programme in Wales.

The section also summarises other material from a range of sources and sectors.

Section 8 highlights the importance of, and methodological, conceptual and practical complexities associated with, undertaking evaluation within collaborative settings.

The key messages to emerge from the review are highlighted at the end of each section, together with suggested further reading on each chapter theme.
2. Policy Overview

The purpose of this introductory section is to position ‘collaborative working’ within a general public policy framework within the UK and Wales. In particular, it sets out to outline how government and other institutions have developed policy approaches and instruments to tackle the challenge of co-ordinating and integrating government policy making and practice.

There is a profusion of different notions and concepts associated with co-ordination and integration in government (6, 2004; Liberatore, 1997; Peters, 1998; 6 et al, 2002). 6 (2004) differentiates between ‘co-ordination’ which refers to processes of planning and dialogue, and ‘integration’ which concerns delivery and implementation, and further distinguishes between ‘joined up government’ as consistency between organisational arrangements, and ‘holistic government’ built upon clear and mutually supporting objectives and linked outcomes.

Pollitt (2003:35) refers to the notion of joined up government as: “the aspiration to achieve horizontally and vertically co-ordinated thinking and action” - an approach which it is hoped will result in a better use of scarce resources, the creation of synergies by assembling different stakeholders in a particular policy field or network, the elimination of overlaps, and the delivery of seamless services. He also suggests that ‘joined-up’ government often conceals a number of important distinctions inherent in this notion, including joined-up policymaking and joined-up implementation; variations in the intensity of joining-up; differences in the direction of joining-up - horizontal as opposed to vertical linkages; and finally, differences in the target of joined-up government – social group, geographical area or policy sector. Joined up government is an intensely political process because power is dispersed and contested between different interests, and negotiations often focus on “attempts to put boundaries in different places and to create border crossings suitable for particular vehicles” (6, 2004:107).

The concept of joined-up government can also be traced to the political science notion of governance (Rhodes, 1996) which Stoker (1998) describes as a set of institutions and actors drawn from, but also beyond government, where boundaries and responsibilities for tackling social and economic issues are blurred; where several institutions are power-dependent; and where the resulting networks are autonomous and self-governing. In such situations, government cannot command and control, but must use new tools and techniques to steer and guide the direction and content of public policy.
Although joined-up government is a seductive notion, numerous problems are associated with its practice suggesting that it may be inherently unachievable. Problems include unclear, obscure and non-transparent accountability arrangements which, coupled with issues of democratic legitimacy and constantly shifting power relationships, create considerable confusion and sources of tension (Skelcher, 1998); increased complexity in dealing with many interconnected issues and actors over different spatial and temporal imperatives (Jessop, 2000); conceptual, methodological and practical difficulties of measuring the impact of joint working; the incompatibilities and paradoxes inherent in pursuing diverse goals such as co-ordination and co-governance (Johnson and Osborne, 2003); and problems that can accompany partnership activity such as, delays from the higher transaction costs from inclusive processes, irreconcilable disagreements, tensions between co-operation and self-interest, and a general loss of autonomy, stability and control (Alter and Hage, 1993). Added to these are a number of strategic dilemmas (Jessop, 2000) associated with this policy orientation including the tension between co-operation and competition; the danger that over-collaboration will stifle innovation and adaptability; the balance between inclusivity and exclusivity in terms of membership; and, finally, the extent to which this mode of governance should be bureaucratised as opposed to maintaining looser and flexible operating systems.

The need for co-ordination and integration in government stem in part from the proliferation of ‘wicked issues’ (Rittel and Weber, 1974) confronting modern society such as health inequality, crime and community safety, poverty and social exclusion which cannot be contained neatly within traditional boundaries. Rather, they bridge, cross and weave between organisational, sectoral, professional and jurisdictional boundaries. They are often the subject of multiple framing because different stakeholders have different views on the causes and solutions of these problems and they are highly complex in nature because of the large number of connections and interdependencies between them. Most importantly, wicked issues are not capable of being managed by single organisations acting independently. This conclusion is emphasised by Kooiman (2000: 142) in the following manner:

“No single actor, public or private, has the knowledge and information required to solve complex, dynamic, and diversified problems; no actor has an overview sufficient to make the needed instruments effective; no single actor has sufficient action potential to dominate unilaterally”
Health is an excellent example of a wicked issue. Social models of health (Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991) emphasise the complicated and interdependent nature of many causal factors and determinants. This is illustrated in a quotation from Better Health Better Wales (1998) as follows:

“A person’s social and economic circumstances are probably the strongest influence on health, avoidable sickness and premature death. There are strong links between the pattern of deprivation and the pattern of ill-health and disease. Where you live and whether you are in work, influences diet smoking, stress and lifestyle.”

In the UK, the need for co-ordination in government stems in part from the fragmentation of public services and the creation of multiple agencies with unclear and differing forms of accountability; from the fact that government in general has tended to intervene in more aspects of society and the economy; from the continuing fiscal problems which place a premium on the need to secure economic efficiency and best use of resources; as a result of decentralisation and devolution which make problems of co-ordination and policy coherence between different tiers of governance highly problematic; and lastly, as a consequence of the increasing globalisation of policy issues.

Figure 1: A History of Partnership Working in the UK

1960s and 1970s: Emphasis on poverty and the problems of Inner Cities
   Educational Priority Areas; Housing Action Areas; General Improvement Areas; Area Management; Inner Area Studies; Urban Programme; Community Development; Comprehensive Community Development.

1980s: Thatcher years focusing on economic regeneration involving the private sector, and some limited activity around the health and social care interface.
   Urban Development Corporations; Urban Task Forces; Inner City Partnerships; Joint Planning and Joint Consultative Committees for health and social care.

1990s and early 2000s: Development of partnerships across a wide policy front promoted by the government mantra of ‘joined-up’ governance, continuation of public private partnerships and explosion of initiatives.
   Single Regeneration Budgets; Estate Action; City Challenge; Local Strategic Partnerships; People in Communities; Communities that Care; Communities First; Drug and Alcohol Partnerships; Community Safety Partnerships; Community Strategy Partnerships; SureStart; On Track; Youth Offending Teams; Local Agenda 21; Health, Social Care and Well Being Partnerships; Health Action Zones; Employment Action Zones; Education Action Zones; Early Years Partnerships; Children and Young People’s Partnerships.

Devolution in Wales and Scotland has resulted in a range of other initiatives, many based on similar types of partnerships in England.

(Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002)
There have been sporadic attempts over successive decades to secure better co-
ordination in government and public policy, but since the election of a ‘New Labour’
administration in 1997, there has been a proliferation of activity across a wide policy
front including crime and community safety, children and young people, the environment,
health, housing, education and transport as indicated in Figure 1 (Skelcher and Sullivan,
or set of good practice guidelines that does not have collaboration as the central
strategy for the delivery of welfare” (p. 309). However, in relation to healthcare in the
UK, McMurray (2007) suggests that government policy, whilst on the one hand extolling
the virtues of a partnership approach, on the other, is guilty of undermining it through
perpetual organisational reforms which destroy, often delicate, communication channels,
decision processes and inter-organisational relationships. In addition, the nature of many
reforms based on contestability, markets and contracts, together with their prescriptive
form, means that “actors at all levels are required to divert attention from long-term
processes, such as boundary spanning activities, as they are directed or incentivised by
central government to deal with that which is politically urgent or organisationally new”
(McMurray, 2007: 79).

The emphasis on partnership working has been precipitated by a range of policy
instruments based on forms of collaboration and partnership that are cross sector in
nature, involve all major policy areas, are applicable at all levels of governance, and are
appropriate at different stages of the policy process. UK Government approaches include
a mixture of coercion, exhortation and prescription involving an explosion of initiatives
and experiments, legislation, and statutory duties aimed at forcing organisations to work
together, and funding streams predicated on inter-organisational working, and resulting in
new ways of working across organisations (Ling, 2002). Although there are examples of
bottom up, opportunistic and random forms of joined up government (6, 2004), the main
thrust can be characterised as hierarchical and centralist.

Since its inception, the Welsh Assembly Government has endeavoured to promote an
inclusive policy process involving multiple stakeholders from both within and outside
government, and has devised strategies for their engagement from the formative stages
of policy development. Formal partnership arrangements have been established with the
main sectors including voluntary, business and local government. The Local Government
Partnership Council, which brings together the Assembly with local government, is a
particularly important body, as it attempts to mediate the interface between local and
national government around complementary financial, policy and performance agendas.
The previous Welsh Assembly Government set out its strategic direction in a number of documents most notably in “Wales: A Better Country” (2003). This articulates a vision for Wales and the priorities for action across the policy spectrum. This agenda has been taken forward in the form a number of major strategies and initiatives which have implications across many policy areas and levels of governance including Communities First, Children and Young People Strategies, Older Person’s Strategies, Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategies. In addition, other specific policy based strategies have emerged covering education, economic regeneration, ICT and waste management.

The generation of complex strategies across the policy spectrum is not without its difficulties for a number of reasons. Firstly, there is the issue of implementation and the ability to convert policy design into effective actions on the ground. Secondly, the profusion of strategies requires coherence, integration and co-ordination in order to avoid duplication, conflict and a general loss in efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources. Thirdly, the requirement by the Assembly on local authorities and other public bodies to produce numerous local plans and strategies has attracted some criticism. This centres on the excessive number, whether they provide any real contribution, the staff and other costs involving in producing the strategies, and the problems associated with achieving compatibility and co-ordination between them. The new plan rationalisation process that has been introduced by the Assembly is designed to address these issues. The case for plan rationalisation was set out in the Assembly’s consultation paper (Welsh Assembly Government, 2005). It argued that the present system had little logic because it had developed over time in a piecemeal fashion; there was little evidence that it promoted a commitment to the achievement of key objectives and it failed to address delivery issues; it resulted in duplication and lack of co-ordination and inhibited partnership working; and that it placed an unnecessary large burden in terms of staff time and other costs on local authorities. The new framework focuses on the local authority’s high-level strategic contribution to national and local priorities, to reduce the burden of preparation and duplication of effort, and to encourage planning on the basis of the needs of citizens and communities rather than service specific needs.

The new arrangements require each local authority to prepare four high level strategies. The Community Strategy remains as the over-arching strategy for the area, setting a clear direction and set of strategic priorities over a 10-15 year timeframe. This strategy will be complemented by:

- A Health, Social Care and Well Being Strategy which sets out their approaches to these issues in a wide context, including where appropriate strategic commissioning
and delivery of NHS and local government services

- A Children and Young People’s Plan which covers services for these groups including education
- A Local Development Plan which sets out the strategic vision for land use and its contribution to higher level objectives

Plan rationalisation invites a review of current partnership arrangements, and a cull of some and a merger of others might be the most effective way forward. In terms of the higher level strategies, the partnerships responsible for their production need to work together to ensure effective co-ordination and communication.

In addition to plan rationalisation, the Assembly has introduced a regional perspective with the introduction of the Wales Spatial Plan which provides a spatial element to policy development and delivery. It is premised on the view that different parts of Wales have different needs, and that these should be reflected in resource allocation and prioritisation. Six new spatial divisions have been created as the basis upon which to devise policy priorities and direct national resource allocations. Representatives from public, private and voluntary groups in those areas make up planning groups. The new regions represent a key departure from the development of uniform national policies and offer a framework for local prioritisation.

The Assembly has recently set out in some detail the manner in which it intends to approach the process by which policy is undertaken and promoted and has linked this with a 5-year action plan for delivery (Welsh Assembly Government, 2004 and 2005). The key principles underpinning ‘the Making The Connections agenda’ for delivering better services are: placing citizens at the centre of service design and delivery; equality and social justice; working in partnership as the Welsh public service; and delivering value for money. The aim is to design and deliver public services that are responsive to the needs of people and communities, particularly those that are vulnerable and disadvantaged; that are accessible to all and open to genuine participation; that are coherent through joined-up and simplified structures; that are more effective in preventing and tackling problems; and that are more efficient in the way they are organised and use resources.

The Beecham Review (2006) of local service delivery in Wales has been the most recent catalyst for the introduction of a comprehensive and whole-system approach to the design and delivery of public services. In the Assembly’s response to this review (2006), it sets out in some detail how a new vision of transformed public services will be achieved.
Five themes are seen as the basis for action: putting citizens first, working together, building a world class workforce, securing a better value for the Welsh pound, and leading change. In terms of the commitment to work together to deliver locally, the establishment of new Local Service Boards (LSBs) in each local authority area is considered to be the key institutional innovation to promote collaboration. LSBs are intended to assemble the key contributors to local service delivery, both devolved and non-devolved. Their mission will be to improve service delivery and undertake joint action where the need is identified in fields such as health and social care. A recent consultation document (Welsh Assembly Government, 2007) invites contributions on the role, function and form of the proposed Local Service Boards. The aim of the Boards is to address the existing public service barriers of culture, capacity and complexity through local leadership working as equals and taking joint responsibility. The LSBs are not envisaged as new organisations but means of agreeing joint action across the whole public service system. Key aspirations include new ways of working, citizen centred services, seamless services, pooling resources, better alignment of services and joint working arrangements – in other words, a wide variety of collaborative forms of working.

The Assembly is committed to strengthening the legislative duties on all public bodies to cooperate, to remove barriers to collaboration and to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy. It also intends to develop financial and governance arrangements across all sectors to make it easier to bring together budgets, staff, facilities and other resources. Local Service Agreements will be developed which set out the priorities for each area balancing local and national needs. Some priorities are envisaged to be shared across LSB areas and here LSBs will need to work together. In addition LSBs will be expected to seek to engage with citizens and identify a manageable suite of shared priorities to secure improved outcomes. Integration and compatibility will need to be encouraged between different performance management frameworks. Importantly, the new Boards are expected to build upon the work of existing delivery partnerships particularly the Health, Social Care and Well Being Partnerships, Children and Young People’s Partnerships and the Community Safety Partnerships. The partnership agenda will also be promoted at a national and regional level, for instance with LHBs commissioning primary and community care and working closely with Local Service Boards. It is hoped that the development of the LSBs will encourage collaborative leadership, a strong public service ethos, and new forms of professional and citizen centred accountabilities. Critical decisions will need to be taken in relation to leadership, the composition of the LSBs, governance and scrutiny, and the local national government interface will need sensitive management.
KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Collaborative working needs to be examined within the context of government’s attempts to co-ordinate and integrate policy making and delivery of services.
- The potential benefits of joined-up government include the better use of resources, elimination of overlaps, creation of synergies and the delivery of seamless services. However, achieving these benefits is challenging because of the associated problems of securing accountability and democratic legitimacy, managing complexity and coping with shifting power relationships, higher transaction costs and the difficulties of measuring success.
- The need for better co-ordination and integration stems from some fundamental challenges to the public policy system including the proliferation of ‘wicked issues’, fragmentation of public services, limited financial resources, decentralisation and devolution, a move towards ‘governance’ models, and a globalisation of policy issues.
- There is a long history of partnership working in the UK and since 1997 this policy paradigm has become a major feature of policy proposals in all policy areas and is promoted through a variety of instruments, duties, financial regimes and initiatives.
- The Welsh Assembly Government is firmly committed to the ‘partnership’ model and recent pronouncements in the shape of ‘Making Connections’ and the Beecham Review further endorse this approach.
- The development of Local Service Boards is envisaged to be the catalyst for collaboration across public services in Wales in the future

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

3. Contemplating Collaboration

INTRODUCTION
This chapter explores the issues that need to be addressed by individuals and organisations who are considering the potential of engaging in collaborative activity with others. It opens with a discussion of definitions, language and terminology – important issues given the contested nature of collaboration. It proceeds with an analysis of the main motivations and drivers that encourage joint forms of working, before ending with an assessment of the costs and benefits of collaborative working.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY
One of the enduring problems of study in the field of inter-organisational relationships is that there is no common and accepted meaning for the terms that are typically used to describe forms of inter-organisation relationships such as collaboration, co-operation, co-ordination, partnership, alliance, and joint working. Such terms are often used interchangeably but mean different things to different people. Ling (2000) concludes that the literature on partnership amounts to “methodological anarchy and definitional chaos” (p.82). Definitions abound and these often reflect conceptions of collaboration as an organisational form as opposed to that as a mode of governance. Interestingly, it can be argued (McLaughlin, 2004) that the lack of definitional clarity can be helpful in some situations because its very ambiguity invites multiple interpretations and, therefore, does not immediately exclude potential stakeholders.

Bardach (1998:8) defines collaboration as “any joint activity by two or more agencies that is intended to increase public value by their working together rather than separately” whereas Gray (1989) conceives collaboration as “a mechanism by which a new negotiated order emerges among a set of stakeholders”. This conceptualisation emphasises several points:

1. Collaborations involve collectively devised strategies for responding to environmental turbulence;
2. Collaboration tends to be imprecise, emergent, exploratory and developmental in character
3. Collaborations serve as quasi-institutional mechanisms for accommodating differing interests in society and for co-ordinating interorganisational relations; they represent a nascent form whose legitimacy as an institution is still being negotiated which can result in more permanent forms of institutional arrangements.
Collaborations serve as vehicles for action learning involving processes of reframing or redefining the problem domain.

Lawrence et al (1999:481) define collaboration as: “a cooperative, interorganisational relationship that relies on neither market nor hierarchical mechanisms of control but is instead negotiated in an ongoing communicative process”. This definition highlights the point that collaboration is not mediated through market mechanisms, so that cooperation depends on an alternative to price structure, and importantly, “whereas hierarchies are associated with a willingness on behalf of members to submit to both direction and monitoring of their superiors, collaboration involves the negotiation of roles and responsibilities in a context where no legitimate authority sufficient to manage the situation is recognised”. Notwithstanding the range of purposes attributed to the notion of ‘partnership’, Sullivan and Skelcher (2002:1) assert that: “partnership is about sharing responsibility and overcoming the inflexibility created by organisational, sectoral and even national boundaries”.

Although a preoccupation with differences in language and definition is often viewed as unhelpful, the variability in the use of particular terms to describe collaboration and the associated differences in meaning by different stakeholders involved in collaborative settings, demands attention. There is evidence that many partnerships encounter difficulties that stem from different interpretations of the nature and purpose of collaboration (Sullivan and Williams, 2007). This is an expression of the process of ‘framing’ whereby different stakeholders or ‘communities of meaning’ (Yanow, 2000) use ‘policy frames’ to make sense of the policy issue in their context. Frames are abstract constructions that contain the key elements of meaning and value in relation to a policy issue. What they exclude is often as important as what they include. According to Rein and Schön ‘framing is a way of selecting, organising, interpreting, and making sense of complex reality to provide guideposts for knowing, analysing, persuading, and acting’ (1993:146). Frames use metaphoric language to help shape understanding and problem identification, to imply courses of action, and to help mobilise calls for action (Benford and Snow, 2000).
WHY COLLABORATE? MOTIVATIONS AND DRIVERS

The need to engage in collaborative behaviour can be observed at both individual and organisational levels. The numerous driving forces and key motivations are generated from within individuals and organisations, and as a result of factors and influences in the external environment. Individual actors seek to promote forms of co-operative behaviour for personal, professional or work-related reasons. For instance, many professionals are driven by an altruistic motivation believing that the public interest or individual needs should be at the centre of public service organisation, demanding integrated and co-ordinated frameworks of service planning and delivery. Some organisations consider exchanging and sharing resources to achieve jointly agreed purposes and benefits, to be more efficient in the use of resources and to promote learning and innovation. Other motivations can be traced to external factors. For instance in the UK, central government is particularly proactive in promoting a collaborative approach through a mixture of statutory regulation and general exhortation, and in Wales, the notion of ‘partnership’ is enshrined in the dominant policy paradigm underlying Welsh Assembly Government’s approach to the design and delivery of public services.

Hudson (1987), reflecting what he refers to as, a ‘pessimistic’ tradition in post war joint working in the UK, considers that collaboration will only occur under certain conditions, where there is:

- Organisational homogeneity (e.g structural or cultural similarity)
- Domain consensus (i.e. agreement on what each organisation will and will not do)
- Awareness within organisation of their interdependence
- Benefit to be gained for both sides
- An absence of alternative organisations with which to collaborate

Mackintosh (1992) suggests that there are three different models of partnership each having a distinctive rationale – a synergy or added value model that aims to increase value by combining the assets and powers of separate organisations; a transformation model which stresses changes in the aims and cultures of partnering organisations; and a budget enlargement model which seeks to maximise the resources that are brought to bear on complex policy or welfare problems. Primarily in the context of a business environment, Child et al (2005) argue that there are numerous motivating factors driving the formation of strategic alliances and other cooperative strategies. They quote Aiken and Hage’s (1968) assertion that: “organisations go into joint ventures because of the need for resources, notably money, skill and manpower”, and refer to Kogut’s (1988) three
basic motivations for their formation as, such a form represents the lowest transaction cost alternative, it enables an improved strategic position, and it affords an opportunity for organisational learning, particularly the transfer of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966) which can only be effected by people from different agencies working together.

Other prominent motivations (Contractor and Lorage, 1988) include risk reduction, achievement of economies of scale or rationalisation, technological exchange, and creating a ‘value chain’ through vertical quasi-integration linking the complementary contributions of individual partners. The compatibility and transparency of motives are highly influential on the nature and success of alliances.

Oliver (1990) offers a framework that summarises the critical contingencies of relationship formation. The first is described as necessity that equates with the mandated agenda detailed above. All the others are voluntary interactions determined by either asymmetry which is the potential to exercise power or control over other organisations; reciprocity, which emphasises co-operation and co-ordination not power and control; efficiency, particularly around reducing transaction costs; stability, to reduce environmental turbulence and uncertainty; and legitimacy, where organisations wish to improve their reputation or image. Of course, decisions to interact with other organisations can be determined by multiple contingencies, even though one particular determinant may predominate. Finally, motivations can alter over time given the experiences of joint working and changing contexts and expectations.

Clarke and Stewart (1997) and the Audit Commission (1998) argue that collaboration is driven by:

- the need to deal with the proliferation of ‘wicked issues’;
- the need to design new relationships with people and communities and to formulate effective ways of engaging with them;
- the desire to give expression to community leadership;
- the need to deliver co-ordinated services because of the fragmentation of public bodies and agencies;
- as a bid for new or enhanced resources;
- to stimulate more creative approaches to problems;
- to align services provided by all partners with the needs of users;
- to influence the behaviour of the partners or of third parties in ways that none of the partners acting alone could achieve; and
- to meet a statutory requirement.
A research study into partnerships in Wales (Bristow et al, 2003) identified three broad categories of motivations and drivers:

- Increasing efficiency: through the improvement in the quality, cost-effectiveness and efficiency of public services, and sharing ideas to harness the distinct competencies of diverse agencies
- Improving inclusiveness: by increasing civic engagement and developing more inclusive and participatory forms of governance for the delivery of public services; balancing individual organisational goals and collective interests in pursuit of the common good; and achieving a clearer alignment between the provision of services and user’s needs
- Integration: to reduce duplication of activities between agencies, and to tackle cross cutting issues facing government

In the field of mental health, Glasby and Lester (2004) consider that partnership working is ‘a must do’ because of a range of political, financial and practical reasons set out in Figure 2.

![Figure 2: The Importance of Partnership Working in Mental Health (Glasby and Lester, 2004)](image)

- Mental health is complex with a range of different agencies involved (including health care, social care, housing, welfare advice and the employment services)
- Many mental health service users are vulnerable and have limited capacity to negotiate complex bureaucracies. They therefore need services that are well integrated at the point of contact, are easy to negotiate and are focused on their needs
- Resources are scarce, but the task is broad. It therefore makes sense for agencies to work together to achieve the vision for mental health, with evidence of, for example, ‘bed blocking’ due to the lack of community alternatives
- Integrating the Care Programme Approach and care management is a high priority and is simpler and more effective when joint working arrangements are sound
- Partnership working can help to minimise bureaucracy and duplication as well as maximising integration for services users and staff

**COSTS AND BENEFITS**

McLaughlin (2004) argues that partnership is a response to fragmentation and offers the potential of ‘adding value’ for each participant because ‘the whole process becomes greater than the sum of the parts’. Each partner:

“In sharing its ideas, knowledge and resources stands to gain from the additional ideas, knowledge and resources that the other members of the partnership bring to it. Partnerships also offer partners the opportunity to influence each other to behave
differently and in ways in which actions can become more aligned allowing partners to achieve their own goals more economically and more effectively” (McLaughlin, 2004:104).

Payne (2000) suggests that partnership working can help with bringing together skills, sharing information, achieving continuity of care, apportioning responsibility and accountability, co-ordinating resource planning and focusing on the needs of service users. Gray (1991) lists the potential benefits of collaborative working as:

- Broad comprehensive analysis of the problem domain improves quality of the solution
- Response capability is more diversified
- Useful in re-opening deadlocked negotiation
- Risk of impasse is minimised
- Process ensures that each stakeholders interests are considered in any agreement
- Parties retain ownership of the solution
- Parties most familiar with the problem, not their agents, invent the solution
- Participation enhances acceptance of the solution and willingness to implement it
- Potential to deliver novel, innovative solutions is enhanced
- Relations between stakeholders improves
- Costs associated with other methods are avoided
- Mechanisms for co-ordinating future action among the stakeholders can be established

It is sometimes taken for granted that collaboration is intrinsically the most effective method of organisation but as Alter and Hage’s (1993) calculus of interorganisational collaboration highlights (Figure 3), there are very real costs to this activity. These can include a loss of status and legitimacy, loss of control and autonomy, conflict over domain, goals and methods, delays in finding solutions caused by problems of co-ordination, and a general loss of stability and certainty.
In their review of the evidence-based literature of health and social care partnerships, Glendinning et al (2005) identified the costs of this form of organising particularly the relatively expensive time of senior managers engaged in collaborative activities and the establishment of new joint planning and delivery arrangements; Newman (2001) points out that collaboration renders decision making more complex and time consuming, leading to increased delays and reduced responsiveness; Leutz (1999) warns, integration costs before it starts to pay; and, in the context of adult mental health services, Glasby and Lester (2004) point out that partnership working may have negative consequences and refer, for example, to staff and the evidence of a reduction in job satisfaction and morale due to confusion over organisational identity, concerns about changes in professional roles and a lack of management role clarity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COSTS</th>
<th>BENEFITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of technological superiority; risk of losing competitive position</td>
<td>Opportunities to learn and to adapt; develop competencies; or jointly develop new products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of resources – time, money, information, raw material, legitimacy, status etc.</td>
<td>Gain of resources – time, money, information, raw material, legitimacy, status, etc; utilization of unused plant capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being linked with failure; sharing the costs of failing such as loss of reputation, status and financial position</td>
<td>Sharing the cost of product development; and associated risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of autonomy and ability to unilaterally control outcomes; goal displacement; loss of control</td>
<td>Gain of influence over domain; ability to penetrate new markets; competitive positioning and access to foreign markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of stability, certainty and known time-tested technology; feeling of dislocation</td>
<td>Ability to manage uncertainty, solve invisible and complex problems; ability to specialise or diversify; ability to fend off competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict over domain, goals, methods</td>
<td>Gain of mutual support, group synergy and harmonious working relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delays in solutions due to problems in coordination</td>
<td>Rapid responses to changing market demands; less delay in use of new technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government intrusion, regulation and so on</td>
<td>Gaining acceptance from foreign governments for participation in the country</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Although there are many different definitions of collaboration, it is important to understand the meanings that different stakeholders attribute to this form of organising. Conceptual confusion and differential framing processes often lead to misunderstanding and conflict during the process of collaboration.
- Definitions often distinguish between collaboration as an organisational form and collaboration as a form of governance. A key distinction is of collaboration as a mode of organising different from hierarchies and markets.
- It is important to understand the different motivations that induce individuals and organisations to undertake cooperative strategies. These vary from mandated forms to ones based on resource exchange and altruism. Other motivations highlight increasing efficiency, improving inclusiveness and promoting integration. Oliver’s model (1990) of the critical contingencies of relationship formation offers a good explanation of this issue.
- There are clearly costs and benefits to collaborative forms of working. It is important to dispel the often unquestioning virtues of collaborative working as an antidote to all policy problems.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

4. Explaining Collaboration

INTRODUCTION
There is no single theoretical framework that adequately explains inter-organisational relationships and no consolidated body of inter-organisational theory. Instead, there is a diverse literature characterised by “a cacophony of heterogeneous concepts, theories, and research results” (Oliver and Ebers, 1998:549). If, indeed, a disciplinary bias exists, Grandori (1997) detects the prevalence of economic and sociological macro-analytical approaches to the subject. However, the absence of consolidation does not equate to a shortage of material, and there is a rich seam of relevant literature and research because of the growing interest in, and proliferation of, inter-organisational forms of working across the policy-making spectrum. Oliver and Ebers (1998) attempt to identify “structural beacons in the messy landscape of inter-organisational research” through a review of the pertinent literature. They conclude that resource dependency and network models dominate the theoretical approaches, considerations of power and control prevail with regard to outcomes, and motivation and interaction predominate in the processes linking antecedents with outcomes. Broadly however, there is no single model that adequately explains inter-organisational relationships. Rather, a number of cross-disciplinary theories and paradigms are advanced to explain this phenomenon.

SOCIOLOGICAL
Work in sociology has generated a coherent body of inter-organisational theory including the exchange perspective (Levine and White, 1961), power/resource dependency perspectives (Aldrich, 1979) and the political economy approach (Benson, 1975). The exchange perspective refers to organisations voluntarily co-operating in inter-organisational exchange of resources including finance, status, legitimacy and assets considered to be essential to their goal attainment. Exchange depends on the degree of consensus amongst organisations about goals, functions, ideologies, cultures, and customers; the motivation to exchange is internal to each organisation based on choosing to interact, and organisations perceive mutual benefits or gains from interacting.

In contrast, power/resource dependency perspectives assume more realistically that there is competition amongst organisations for scarce resources such as functions, finance, and status. Hence, power is important here and the motivation to interact is likely to be asymmetrical, with one or more organisations inducing or forcing others to interact. The process is characterised by bargaining and conflict. The political economy approach (Benson, 1975) is critical of the two previous models because it maintains that they
falsely assume rationality and are without contextualisation in the wider socio-economic structure of society. In contrast, this approach considers that inter-organisational activity is a function of the power relations between various structured interests in a particular policy sector, such as the users of services, service providers, managers, professional groups and politicians. Hardy et al (1998) are helpful on this point when they refer to three aspects of power, the dynamics of which are central to the constitution of inter-organisational domains. They identify formal authority, the control of critical resources, and discursive legitimacy as the sources of power that become manifested in different patterns and contribute to the shape of a particular domain. They further argue that: “the actors with greater access to authority, resources and discursive legitimacy will have the best chance of success in influencing the domain” (Hardy et al, 1998: 219).

A number of theories appear in the economics literature that attempt to explain interorganisational relationships between firms which result in joint ventures, alliances, trade associations and consortia. Transaction cost economics is prominently represented (Barringer and Harrison, 2000), and this centres on how an organisation should manage its boundary spanning activities so as to minimise the sum of its production and transaction costs. The interorganisational option is seen as the alternative to the market or organisational hierarchy when it minimises the transaction costs for participating firms. It helps reduce the costs of opportunism and monitoring inherent in market transactions, and avoids the need to create additional bureaucracy where core competencies may be absent or difficult to arrange.

Other theoretical perspectives appearing in the economics literature include resource dependence, strategic choice, stakeholder theory of the firm, and organisational learning. Resource dependence has already been considered above; strategic choice models look at the factors that provide opportunities for firms to increase their competitiveness or market power driven typically by profit and growth imperatives; and stakeholder theories envisage organisations at the centre of a hub of interdependent stakeholders and as a consequence form relationships to align different interests and reduce environmental uncertainty. Lastly, organisational learning models suggest that firms enter into collaborative arrangements in order to learn from one another, increase organisational competencies and ultimately add value.
Network approaches to inter-organisational relationship formation feature prominently in the literature in a number of disciplinary areas. Two leading academics note that theoretical stances are polarised between a social network perspective which looks at the structural properties of networks, and a governance perspective that focuses on “attributes of both the networked actors and the form and content of their relationships within a particular institutional context” (Oliver and Ebers, 1998:569). The social network approach “consists of a distinctive set of concepts that focus on systems of relations that can be represented and analysed graphically and quantitatively” (Kilduff and Tsai, 2003:127). It focuses on relations and patterns of relations rather than on the attributes of the individual actors and social network research is amenable to multiple forms of analysis which can provide linkages between the macro and micro levels. A social network perspective is premised on a number of key concepts including: embeddedness, social capital, structural holes and centrality. Embeddedness refers to the argument that work related transactions tend to overlap with social relations (Granovetter, 1985); social capital at an individual level relates to the potential resources inherent in an actor’s personal ties; structural holes are gaps in the social world which can be crossed by talented entrepreneurs to gain control of information flow across those gaps (Burt, 1992), and centrality is implicit in any discussion of social capital and structural holes.

Pierre and Peters (2000:37) take the view that: “governance is a useful concept not least because it is sufficiently vague and inclusive that it can be thought to embrace a variety of different approaches and theories, some of which are even mutually contradictory”. However, it can be confusing because it is used as an umbrella concept for different interpretations particularly policy networks, new public management, public-private partnerships, corporate and ‘good’ governance. Governance can be considered in structural terms – for instance, markets, hierarchies and networks – and in terms of process, with reference to steering and co-ordination between actors and institutions at different levels.

Rhodes (2000a) promotes the policy network approach and refers to governance as self-organising, interorganisational networks exhibiting a number of shared characteristics including: an interdependence between organisations with shifting and opaque boundaries between public, private and voluntary sectors; constant interactions between network members driven by a need to exchange resources and/or negotiate shared purpose; game-like interactions, fuelled by trust; and, a degree of autonomy from the state. Importantly, these networks constitute a distinctive way of co-ordinating and a
separate governing structure from markets and hierarchies. The advantages of networks lie in their ability to bring policy makers and implementers together and share expertise and information; to assemble multiple actors together and increase the acceptability of policy and improve the likelihood of compliance; and, finally, to increase resource availability by drawing together public, private and voluntary agencies. There is no single source of sovereign power or authority such as government in networks and "governing becomes an interactive process because no single actor has the knowledge and resource capability to tackle problems unilaterally" (Stoker, 2000:3).

Peters and Pierre (1998) suggest that governance amounts to a prescription for steering society through less direct means and a weakening of the power of the State to control policy. New Public Management (NPM) is sometimes equated with governance because of their numerous similarities; however, there are significant differences between them which suggest they should be treated separately. For instance, governance is about process, NPM is focused on outcomes; NPM is intraorganisational in focus whereas governance is more inter-organisational in perspective; and governance is less ideological driven than NPM.

Jessop (1997) views governance mechanisms as a means of moving from a position of unstructured to structured complexity contrasting with the anarchy of the market and the hierarchy of imperative co-ordination and involving forms of horizontal self-organisation between mutually interdependent actors. Jessop (2000) suggests these include interpersonal networking, interorganisational negotiation and ‘de-centred, inter-systemic context steering’. He argues that the rationality of governance is neither procedural nor substantive but ‘reflexive’ which means that problems of bounded rationality, opportunism and asset specificity can be avoided by focussing around long-term consensual projects; by continuous dialogue and exchange of information to limit bounded rationality; and by locking partners into a range of short/medium and long term interdependent decisions to encourage solidarity rather than selfishness.

Networks can be defined as patterns of relationships between interdependent actors “who cannot attain their goals by themselves, but need the resources of other actors to do so” (Kickert et al, 1997:6) and “structures of interdependence involving multiple organisations or parts thereof, where one unit is not merely the formal subordinate of the others in some larger hierarchical arrangement” (O'Toole, 1997:45). Ebers contrasts inter-organisational networks with other form of organising and maintains that they “institutionalize recurring, partner-specific exchange relationships of finite duration (often
based on goal accomplishment) or of unspecified duration among a limited number of actors” (Ebers, 1997:21). Also, actors within them individually retain residual control over resources but sometimes jointly decide on their use; processes of negotiation are used to co-ordinate resource allocation decisions, and a wide range of information is shared between organisations.

Jessop (1997) considers that networks are embedded and can be analysed at three levels: the interpersonal level between individual actors; the institutional level between organisations; and, the societal level between functionally differentiated institutional orders. The rise in the prominence of networks is judged to be a major contributing factor to ‘a hollowing out of the state’ (Rhodes, 1996), ‘governance without government’ (Peters and Pierre, 1998) and the need for the state to concentrate on ‘steering’ as opposed to ‘rowing’ (Osborne and Gaebler, 1992).

A key difference between a hollow state and direct government provision is that the latter is a bureaucratic form of control and organisation. Direct government offers a proven and strong form of social control that is both predictable and stable over time. Conversely, the hollow state benefits from the flexibility of networks, but suffers from an inherently weaker form of social action and, because of the need to co-ordinate joint production, instability over time (Milward, 1996: 194). Although network governance can be viewed as a distinct form of social organising: “rather than superseding each other as the dominant ‘operating mode’ of government, markets, hierarchy and networks have been overlaid on each other and co-exist in complex sets of relationships in different settings” (Ranade and Hudson, 2004: 36).

MODELS AND THEORIES
There is no single model that adequately explains inter-organisational behaviour; rather a number of cross-disciplinary models and theories are advanced to explain these phenomena. Some models visualise a typology of different structural forms and others refer to partnership types (Gray, 1989; 6, 1999; DETR, 2001). By inference, the system of classification suggests a spectrum that envisages weak/limited forms of co-operation, through to moderate and finally to strong ties and relationships (Figures 4 and 5). ‘Coadunation’ referred to in Figure 4, represents the farthest point on the integration continuum “which implies the complete relinquishment of autonomy of at least one partnering entity in an effort to strengthen a surviving organisation” (Gajda, 2004: 69).
Figure 4: System of Classification (Gajda, 2004:69)

Defining strategic alliances across a continuum of integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperation</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
<th>Collaboration</th>
<th>Coadunation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared information and mutual support</td>
<td>Common tasks and Compatible goals</td>
<td>Integrated strategies and collective purpose</td>
<td>Unified structure and combined cultures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Low       Formal Integration       High

Figure 5: Partnership Types (Gray, 1989:241)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>Leads to heightened awareness of interdependence; establishing trust and good faith; clarifying parameters of problem domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory</td>
<td>Lead to agreement to analyse and agree on options for dealing with a problem;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confederative</td>
<td>Adopt and implement consensual agreements reached by the stakeholders; co-operative exchanges of resources; co-ordination of behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractual</td>
<td>Institutionalised; contractual agreements enforceable in law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A number of other models view inter-organisational activity in one or two dimensions reflecting the changes in the intensity of interaction and the magnitude of the reconfiguration of power relationships.
Figure 6: Model of Partnership Behaviour (Pratt et al, 1995:100)

Model of partnership behaviour with the horizontal axis representing different types of goals being sought – individual to collective; and the vertical axis measuring the extent to which the purpose and behaviour needed to achieve it can be known in advance – plotted as predictability – at the bottom end the future is predictable, at the top end only a broad view is possible on aims and ways of achieving them; the distinctions between the consequent quadrants are not watertight and partnerships can move between different ones.

COMPETITION most appropriate where there is clear consensus on the nature of success; requires independence from others and motivation by self-interest.

CO-OPERATION where, even though organisations are motivated by self-interest is best to co-operate especially where the landscape is rugged and uncertain; try to influence each other and perhaps achieve win-win outcomes. Pursuing self-interest in an uncertain environment; organisations see their future as linked; emergent strategy; you can proceed without collective goals.

CO-ORDINATION is where solutions are knowable but goals are shared not individual. Because the strategy is overt and a collective goal must be agreed various co-ordinating structures are set up; driving force may be to reduce duplication, pool resources of fits different parts of a service together; co-ordinating partnerships often form around money; rarely infects the way organisations work.

CO-EVOLUTION where the goal is collective but the landscape very rugged; area of ‘wicked issues’ which require new and innovative solutions; not co-ordination of past practice; partners need to co-design something for a shared purpose; not about consensus but lifting the game to a new level; future action is not knowable and the timeframe is convoluted.
Mattessich and Monsey (1992) refer to three types of inter-organisational activity – cooperation, co-ordination and collaboration, and Pratt et al (1999:100) advance a very useful model of partnership behaviour described in Figure 6.

**Figure 7: Stages in the Partnership Process (Wilson and Charlton, 1997:16)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>ACTIVITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | Partners come together through mutual recognition of a common need, or in a joint effort to obtain public funds.  
If they have not worked together before, the partners begin the process of overcoming differences in backgrounds and approach, building trust and respect.  
There may be a need for training, building each partner’s capacity to operate effectively in this new organisation. |
| 2     | Through a process of dialogue and discussion, the partners establish the common ground and work towards agreeing a vision and mission statement for the initiative.  
The original core group might agree on the need to involve more individuals and organisations in the initiative.  
The partners develop mechanisms for assessing needs and quantifying the size of the task they propose to undertake.  
The initiative combines the information generated by the needs assessment exercise with the vision and mission statement to produce an agenda for action. |
| 3     | The formal framework and organisational structure of the partnership is designed and put in place.  
The partners set specific goals, targets and objectives linked to the agenda for action.  
Where appropriate, the executive arm of the partnership selects or appoints a management team to oversee the work of the initiative. |
| 4     | The partnership delivers to its action plan, whether this be service provision or some other function.  
The executive arm seeks to maintain the involvement of all partners, formulates policy decisions and ensures the continuing accountability of the partnership.  
There is an ongoing process of assessing, evaluating and refining the operations of the partnership. |
| 5     | Where appropriate, the partners should plan their exit strategy. This involves developing a new set of goals for the survival and continuation of the work of the initiative in some form.  
They should seek to create ‘life after death’ by transferring the assets of the partnership back into the community with which they work. |
The locus of attention moves away from structure to concentrate on the process of inter-organisational working in a number of models. Gray (1989) captures the collaborative process in three phases: problem setting that involves problem definition, identification and legitimacy of stakeholders and resource identification; direction setting that includes establishing ground rules, agenda setting and exploring options; and, implementation and monitoring; whereas Wilson and Charlton (1997) extend this into a five-stage model (See Figure 7). These process models imply a degree of linearity in the sequence of stages that may not be a correct representation of reality. Inevitably, the process is messy with frequent feedback loops between the various stages.

Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) formulate an interesting extension to the life cycle model of partnership working. They make an important distinction between multi-organisational partnerships as an organisational form as opposed to a mode of governance. However, multi-organisational partnerships have a particular affinity with network modes of governance but, at different stages of the partnership life cycle, hierarchical and market relationships can predominate. So, the early stages of a partnership are characterised by networking with an emphasis on informality and exploration. During the partnership creation and consolidation period there is an emphasis on hierarchical forms of organising to formalise structures and systems; the delivery and implementation stage is conducive to contractual arrangements; and finally, a return to networking is the best strategy in the termination and succession stage. This particular model was developed in the context of time limited urban regeneration programmes and, although it may be equally applicable in other types of partnership, no evidence is available for this.

A further set of models is based on types of factors: ones that concentrate on critical success factors and others that focus on themes and dimensions. Critical success factor models attempt to isolate or identify the key factors that influence the instigation, design, implementation and evaluation of a collaborative venture, often developed from case studies which reflect on what works best and/or what the key influences were on the partnership experience (See Figure 8).
### Figure 8: Factors influencing the Success of a Collaboration (Mattessich, and Monsey, 1992:12)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors related to the ENVIRONMENT</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>History of collaboration or co-operation in the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborative group seen as a leader in the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political/social climate favourable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors related to MEMBERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mutual respect, understanding and trust</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate cross section of members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members see collaboration as in their self-interest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to compromise</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors related to PROCESS/STRUCTURE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members share a stake in both process and outcome</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple layers of decision-making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of clear roles and policy guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors related to COMMUNICATION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open and frequent communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established informal and formal communication links</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors related to PURPOSE</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concrete, attainable goals and objectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared vision</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique purpose</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors related to RESOURCES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient funds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled convenor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A great deal of emphasis is placed on obstacles to successful partnership working and these typically include institutional disincentives, historical and ideological barriers, power disparities, difficulty in gaining consensus over goals and objectives, failure to achieve agreement over problem structures, political, professional and organisational cultures, resource problems and many others. Five categories of barriers to co-ordination are illustrated in Figure 9.
### Figure 9: Barriers to Co-ordination (Hudson et al, 1997a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **STRUCTURAL**            | - Fragmentation of service responsibilities across agency boundaries, both within and between sectors  
                            | - Inter-organisational complexity                                         
                            | - Non-coterminosity of boundaries                                          
                            | - Competition-based systems of governance                                  |
| **PROCEDURAL**            | - Differences in planning horizons and cycles                             
                            | - Differences in accountability arrangements                               
                            | - Differences in information systems and protocols regarding access and confidentiality |
| **FINANCIAL**             | - Differences in budgetary cycles and accounting procedures               
                            | - Differences in funding mechanisms and bases                              
                            | - Differences in the stocks and flows of financial resources               |
| **PROFESSIONAL/CULTURAL** | - Differences in ideologies and values                                    
                            | - Professional self-interest and autonomy                                  
                            | - Inter-professional domain dissensus                                      
                            | - Threats to job security                                                  
                            | - Conflicting views about user interests and roles                         |
| **STATUS AND LEGITIMACY** | - Organisational self-interest and autonomy                               
                            | - Inter-organisational domain dissensus                                     |

Hudson and Hardy (2002) consider that successful partnerships need to be evaluated against 6 key principles – acknowledgment of the need for partnership; clarity and realism of purpose; commitment and ownership; development and maintenance of trust; establishment of clear and robust partnership arrangements; and monitoring, review and organisational learning (See Section 7 on Partnership Health Checks).

This is not an exhaustive list of the many and diverse theories that are advanced to explain collaboration, for example others are based on discourse (Lawrence et al, 1999), negotiated order (Gray, 1989), constitutive value (Cropper, 1996) and collaborative advantage (Huxham and Vangen, 2005). The notion of collaborative advantage refers to the synergy that can emerge from collaborations, generating accomplishments that could not have been achieved by organisations acting independently. It is based on a series of overlapping perspectives on collaborative management which are considered to be the management of aims and objectives, sharing power, building and managing trust, managing complexity and ambiguity, managing the dynamics of collaboration, and displaying appropriate leadership. Realising successful collaboration is viewed as the successful outcome of the management of these themes in practice.
KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Forms of inter-organisational working are the subject of many explanations from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. At a macro level, the main sociological theories highlight resource exchange and dependency perspectives; economic explanations focus on transaction costs and enhanced learning; and political theorists introduce the notions of network governance as ways of understanding why collaboration happens.
- The governance network perspective resonates closely with the current government’s approach to the design and delivery of public services through the mobilisation of a mixture of public, private and voluntary agencies acting in concert.
- At a more practical level, there are a number of different models and theories that seek to explain collaborative working. These emphasise different determinants, including partnership types and forms (particularly the continuum from co-operation, to co-ordination to integration); stages and phases which emphasise the processes of this form of working; and critical success factors which identify particular themes or issues as a help or hindrance to collaborative working.
- The many barriers to collaborative working are identified as structural, procedural, financial, organisational, professional and those related to status and legitimacy.
- Critical success factors associated with effective partnership working include: a recognition of the need for collaboration; deliberation about purpose, aims, roles and responsibilities; developing trust and sharing power; applying effective and appropriate leadership; managing complexity and over-ambition; managing and operationalising robust and accountable partnership frameworks; and attending to performance.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

5. Managing in Collaborative Arenas

INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers the particular challenges of managing within collaborative settings which are often different to those within single organisational forms. The focus is firstly pitched at an organisational level of analysis where some of the problems and issues associated with network management are discussed. This is followed by a section that addresses the way in which strategic management is undertaken in collaborative situations. It refers in particular to the problems associated with the planning model, and discusses the merits of a range of alternative approaches.

This chapter concludes with a micro-level focus on the people who manage within collaborative arenas and the skills, abilities, competencies and behaviours that are considered necessary to be effective in this environment.

ORGANISATIONAL

Some researchers focus on managing within networks arguing that it is materially different from managing in markets or hierarchies as illustrated in Figure 10 (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; O’Toole, 1996; Kickert et al, 1997). O’Toole (1996) suggests that network forms of management are: “consequential in nature, and may be counterintuitive in that “action guided by the hierarchical assumption is likely to lead not just to ineffectual but to counterproductive outcomes” (O’Toole, 1997:47). Kickert et al (1997) provide a very helpful comparison between classical and network perspectives of management. They argue that managing in networks is different because:

- Authority structures are divided and shared, not single as in classical forms
- Problem structures are various and changing and goals are not clear and well defined
- The role of manager is more of a mediator, builder and guardian of the process rather than a system controller
- Management tasks centre on guiding interactions and providing opportunities rather than planning and directing organisational processes
- Management activities centre upon selecting actors and resources, influencing the network environment and context and handling strategic complexity, as opposed to tasks of planning, designing and leading.

In a similar vein, Agranoff and McGuire (2001) consider that, whereas management behaviour in single organisations revolves around planning, organising and leading,
management behaviour in networks involves activation, framing, mobilizing and synthesizing. Activation refers to decisions to select the right actors with the right resources and motivation. Framing occurs at the start of a process and relates to purpose, vision, rules, and values. Mobilizing is the task of gaining support for action both with external players, but also, with the agreement of the home organisation. Lastly, synthesizing aims to create a favourable set of conditions for network development through facilitation, reducing complexity, information exchange, clarification of roles and relationships and improved communication.

**Figure 10: Characteristics of Network Management (Williams, 2005)**

- Network management involves selecting appropriate actors and resources, shaping the operating context of the network and developing ways of coping with strategic and operational complexity
- Networks can be of different types, structure and composition
- Usually involve multiple and diverse partners
- Involves managing flexible structures towards collective efficiency – focus on minimising organisational turf and restrictive rules
- Depends on an ability to manage in different modes of governance to link organisations and facilitate mainstreaming
- Involves conflict resolution using political skills such as bargaining, negotiation, diplomacy and consensus building
- Communication is paramount although this can be costly
- Network capacity is based on the collective skills, resources and knowledge of its members
- Trust is vital – it may not require harmony of beliefs but rather mutual obligation and expectation
- Working in teams and groups is essential
- Network managers must engage in trans-disciplinary practice
- Strong interpersonal, communication and listening skills; an ability to persuade; a readiness to trade and to engage in reciprocal rather than manipulative behaviour; an ability to construct long term relationships

A significant area of debate concerns a perceived loss of control and accountability within forms of inter-organisational working in contrast to operating in hierarchies or markets. This form of public management can result in goal displacement; a lack of transparency in the policy making process; dispersed and unclear lines of accountability; insufficient democratic legitimacy; and a general “leakage in the channels of authority” (Bardach and
Lesser, 1996). Agranoff and McGuire (2001) pose the dilemma that “with no single authority, everyone is somewhat in charge, thus everyone is somewhat responsible; all network participants appear to be accountable, but none is absolutely accountable”. The problems are exacerbated by the demands of multiple accountabilities. To whom are individual actors accountable? To their employing organisation? To their profession? To the partnership or other form of collaborative? To service users or citizens? The answer is probably all in different ways.

The idea of disentangling the proportion of responsibility for outcomes between different organisations is perhaps an inefficient measure of assessing collective accountability and of measuring the effect of collaboration. This has prompted Bardach and Lesser (1996) to propose that accountability frameworks in collaborative settings should move way from hierarchical accountability or ‘accountability to’ – more to a focus on outcomes and performance and ‘accountability for’.

**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT IN COLLABORATIVE SETTING**

The challenge of delivering effective strategic management in the public sector is both complex and demanding, but these challenges are further exacerbated in collaborative situations because of a range of factors, including high levels of complexity, differences in cultures, ways of working and accountability systems, a collision of different modes of governing, problems with performance management, and arguably above all others, difficulties in converting strategic intent into effective delivery on the ground. Although public organisations continue to be preoccupied with the preparation of strategies of various kinds, one researcher suggests that: “strategic planning may be an expensive distraction from the real events of strategy formation – a burden rather than a benefit” (Boyne, 2001), and another comments that a large proportion of these “rapidly find a home in a filing cabinet and are occasionally referred to by those with a strong interest in history” (Stacey, 1990).

One possible reason why these researchers have reached these conclusions is that the public sector has predominantly based its strategic management approaches on a rational or classical model. This model involves a planned, top-down and ordered approach which sets out a series of steps to achieve a future purpose. It is invariably prefaced by a mission statement and accompanying values, goals, objectives and aims. There is a presumed rationality between means and ends, a rational examination of the organisation and its environment is undertaken using a variety of information sources (mainly quantitative), analysis is undertaken, options are generated and success is measured in terms of achieving stated objectives. The result is often a grand design or master plan for the
future which aims to be internally consistent and comprehensive. However, this model has attracted considerable criticism from numerous commentators (Clegg et al, 2004; Mintzberg, 1994) which centre on its over-formulisation which removes thinking and comprehension and ignores emergence and learning; its predetermination which questions an organisation’s ability to predict/control the course of its environment; its separation between formulation and implementation and the implicit detachment of thinking from action which creates tensions between formulators of strategy and the implementers.

A key problem is undoubtedly the artificial separation of policy formulation and implementation (either real or perceived) which is often the root cause of implementation deficits or policy evaporation. This sense of separation is sometimes exacerbated by perceived power differentials and imbalances between strategy makers and service practitioners; although the reality may be that the power of control over resource priorities and allocations lies in service departments and with professional groups, not with the strategy makers. Many implementation studies bear witness to the consequences of splitting formulation from implementation, and the need to embrace a full range of actors in the strategy process.

Although the rational model has a seductive rationality which has ensured its resilience over many years, there are many dangers involved in its importation into collaborative settings characterised by deep complexity, dispersed and shifting power relationships, multiple accountabilities, different cultures and ways of working, and assorted collaborative motivations and objectives. Given the tensions and inherent fallacies of the rational model, a much greater appreciation of the merits of alternative approaches need to be explored and tested. For instance, it may be more appropriate to think in terms of developing a strategic architecture that is loose and flexible, focuses on process and facilitates emergence. The notion of strategy being ‘crafted’ (Mintzberg, 1987) is liberating as it acknowledges ambiguity and lack of closure as opposed to being top down and prescriptive. Such a framework can reflect the involvement of large numbers of legitimate stakeholders both at the planning and implementation stages, encourage processes that are interactive and negotiative with bargaining and consensus seeking around dominant political coalitions, and inviting an emphasis on creativity and intuition.

In this context, it is helpful to examine the potential of other schools of thought on strategic management – Mintzberg et al (1998) identifies ten such schools, including the entrepreneurial school with its focus on strategic visions and strong associations with leaders; the learning school with its emphasis on strategy as an emergent process where formulation and implementation become indistinguishable, and where the responsibility
for strategy is dispersed through an organisation; the cultural school because it is aimed at managing a process of change that promotes many new values and goals in the public sector, including the design of citizen centred services and working across conventional boundaries; and the power school with its insights into the political nature of strategic management at both micro and macro levels.

Advocates of the learning model view strategic management as a process of learning over time. It suggests that: “strategies emerge as people, sometimes acting individually but more often collectively, come to learn about a situation as well as their organisation’s capability of dealing with it” (Mintzberg et al, 1998: 176). There are a number of key premises of the learning model (Mintzberg et al, 1998) as follows:

- That because of the complexity and unpredictability of an inter-organisational environment, often coupled with a diffusion of knowledge bases necessary for strategic action, deliberate control is not effective, and strategy making must take the form of learning over time with formulation and implementation being indistinguishable in part.
- Although learning is expected from leaders, it is the collective system that offers the main learning potential with potential strategist at all points in an organisation.
- The learning proceeds in an emergent fashion as a result of behaviour that stimulates retrospective thinking and acting as a sense making tool.
- The role of leadership in this model is not to preconceive deliberate strategies, but to manage a process of strategic learning to generate novel strategies
- Strategies first appear as patterns out of the past, only later as plans for the future, and ultimately as perspectives to guide overall behaviour.

The idea that there are limits on the ability to devise deliberate strategies through controlled managerial actions may be highly relevant within many complex inter-organisational settings. The alterative notion of an emergent strategy that emphasises individual, organisational and inter-organisational learning may be a more proposition as it acknowledges the ability to experiment, and shifts the onus of strategic leadership to all levels of an organisation. Organisations that deliberately develop strategies to promote learning are sometimes referred to as ‘learning organisations’ where leaders take risks and promote experimentation; participative policy making is undertaken; decentralised decision taking is encouraged; cross functional teams are set up; inquiry and dialogue is promoted; there is a culture of feedback and transparency; systems and structures are established to share learning; boundary spanners are employed; and the promotion of inter-organisational learning is encouraged at all levels. The development and implementation of strategy
through learning networks is emphasised by Dromgoole and Gorman (2000), and the role of leaders in creating a fertile environment to promote learning is underscored by Gillen (2000).

Understanding the reality and potential of strategic management in organisations is important because: “there is little point in formulating strategies that may be elegant analytically if there is no understanding of the processes that are actually at work” (Bailey and Johnson, 2001:228). Moreover, the strategic management process may not be adequately captured by a single perspective or school described above although systematic patterns or differences may be present in an organisation.

THE ROLE AND BEHAVIOUR OF BOUNDARY SPANNERS

Much of the literature on inter-organisational relations is framed at the macro-level. However, it can be argued that the role and behaviour of individual practitioners and managers in the collaborative process is fundamental to the character and effectiveness of this mode of organising. Trevillion (1992:50) reflects that: “where inter-agency work is successful, it often seems to demonstrate that it is not agencies which relate to one another but people representing them” and the DLTR (2002:125) underlines this point by noting that: “the evidence is that joined up delivery has occurred extensively but in an ad hoc, almost accidental manner dependent on the energy and imagination of individuals”. People who work across boundaries – the boundary spanners – are characterised by their approach to different aspects of management role and function:

Leadership

Conventional models of leadership – trait, style, contingency and transformational – presume leadership is concerned with a formal leader who influences, directs and transforms others who follow. But, leadership in collaboration is contested, negotiated and sometimes unknown. Therefore, new forms of leadership are needed to reflect shared responsibilities, diversity, and fragmentation of power. Although interest in leadership for collaboration is a comparatively recent phenomenon, earlier references can be traced back to the early 1990s particularly in the work of Chrislip and Larson (1994), Feyerherm (1994) and Crosby and Bryson (2005a and 2005b).

Chrislip and Larson (1994) use the term ‘collaborative leadership’ to describe a form of leadership that they consider is necessary to be effective in contexts where public policy issues are complex and ambiguous and where particular efforts are needed to negotiate a ‘broader good’ amongst competing parochial interests. The authors highlight an important connection between problem type and leadership focus. Type I problems are readily
definable and have known solutions; Type II problems are clearly defined but the solution is less clear and there is disagreement on the appropriateness of action between different interests; and Type III problems are those where neither the problem nor the solution is definable. The consequence of identifying the problem type is that:

“leaders can quickly determine whether they can do the problem-solving work themselves or whether their task is to create a consistency for change by convening and catalysing the relevant people to do the work” (Chrislip and Larson, 1994: 63)

It is likely that collaborative situations will be populated by Type II and III problems requiring collaborative leadership based on four principles outlined by Chrislip and Larson (1994): inspiring commitment and action, leading as a peer problem solver; building broad-based involvement, and sustaining hope and participation. The leadership approach majors on the process and the leadership role “is to convene, energize, facilitate, and sustain this process” (Chrislip and Larson, 1994:146). The authors argue that their recipe for collaborative leadership is analogous to what others refer to as transforming (Burns, 1978), servant (Greenleaf, 1977) or facilitative (Kotter, 1990) leadership.

Figure 11: Leadership Capabilities (Crosby and Bryson (2005b)

- Leadership in context: understanding the social, political, economic and technological ‘givens’
- Personal leadership: understanding self and others
- Team leadership: building productive work groups
- Organisational leadership: nurturing humane and effective organisations
- Visionary leadership: creating and communicating shared meaning in forums
- Political leadership: making and implementing decisions in legislative, executive and administrative arenas
- Ethical leadership: adjudicating disputes and sanctioning conduct in courts
- Policy entrepreneurship: co-ordinating leadership tasks over the course of policy change cycles

Crosby and Bryson (2005a and 2005b) have been advocating their distinctive approach to collaborative leadership for over a decade as a means of “developing regimes of mutual gain”. They promote a leadership framework which articulates visionary, political and ethical dimensions, and which is influenced by work on policy entrepreneurship, advocacy coalitions and agenda-setting. The framework is grounded in the realities of an interdependent world of diverse stakeholders and shared power arrangements; emphasises the widespread use of deliberative forums to share meanings, resolve conflicts and negotiate the best way forward; highlights the importance of an integrated approach
to strategic management and policy change; and promotes the exercise of eight main leadership capabilities (Figure 11).

Feyerherm (1994) explores three leadership behaviours that are most likely to result in convergence between different groups working within interorganisational systems:

- Surfacing or illuminating assumptions and beliefs: this refers to either one’s own or others interpretations to create more information about different views and to extend the possibilities for joint action. However, surfacing assumptions does not necessarily mean that changes will occur in interpretive schemes.
- Creating alternatives: involving problem-solving behaviours coupled with supporting, bridging and facilitating particularly to generate new frameworks and social consensus.
- Initiating collective action: forming structures and developing and presenting proposals

This research emphasises the importance of leaders as managers of meaning who are “conceptualizers, providers of reasoning and context, facilitators, and profound questioners” (Feyerherm, 1994:268). It also challenges the view that leadership is a property centred in one person rather than been dispersed amongst a wider set of members.

The emergence of theories and research on collaborative leadership comes at a time when an increasing focus particularly in the USA is being given to notions of ‘collaborative governance’ defined broadly as “some amalgam of public, private, and civil-society organisations engaged in some joint effort (Donahue, 2006:2) and ‘collaborative public management’, defined as “a concept that describes the process of facilitating and operating in multiorganisational arrangements in order to remedy problems that cannot be solved – or solved easily – by single organisations” (McGuire (2006:33). Cooper et al (2006) extend the latter notion to one of ‘citizen-centred collaborative public management’ to emphasise the role of the public in these processes. Although questions can be raised as to how recent a phenomena this form of management is, there is little doubt that societal changes in terms of diversity, dispersed power, the growth of networks, permeability of structures and processes and the nature of complex issues, are primary determinants of collaborative public management. Now, “far from being episodic or occurring in just a few programs, collaboration in public management is as common as managing bureaucracies” (McGuire, 1996:40), although it is important to recognise that single organisation management remains. The consequence of identifying collaborative public management as different from managing within a single organisational hierarchical setting is that the requisite skills are also liable to be different – an argument that is supported by a number of academics (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001; O’Toole, 1996; Goldsmith and Eggers, 2004; Kickert et al,
This differentiation naturally leads to the issue of what form of leadership is most appropriate and effective for a collaborative public management context. An emerging literature that reflects the context of collaboration can perhaps be viewed as a new contribution to the existing leadership theories - examples of this new body of literature are Luke (1998), Linden (2002), Alexander et al (2001) and Lipman-Blumen (1996).

Luke (1998) illustrates the key differences between traditional forms of leadership and collaborative leadership and argues that:

“These popular approaches often prescribe a set of skills that help executives to pursue organisational excellence, take charge, stimulate extraordinary performance by employees, or change in an organisation’s internal culture by being transformational. However, because these approaches are fundamentally based on hierarchical authority, they cannot be transferred easily to the interconnected and non-hierarchical contexts of public problems” (Luke, 1998:2)

Luke introduces the concept of catalytic leadership for interorganisational settings which require leaders to have certain foundational skills. Firstly, an ability to think and act strategically, involving systemic thinking to reveal interconnections and strategic leverage points, to frame and re-frame issues, to define outcomes, and to assess stakeholder interests. Secondly, the need for interpersonal skills to facilitate a productive working group or network, requiring the application of facilitation, negotiation and mediation skills, and lastly, the need for an underlying character which is not synonymous with personality, but is evidenced by a passion for results, a sense of connectedness and relatedness, exemplary personal integrity and strong ethical conduct.

Lipman-Blumen (1996) takes up the challenge of devising a new approach for leadership to reflect the tensions between two antithetical forces – interdependence and diversity. She argues that: “the individualistic, competitive, charismatic leadership strategies, whelped on the American frontier, will no longer work. The ego-driven, manipulative, Machiavellian leadership style won’t suffice either” (Lipman-Blumen, 1996: xiii). Hence, the need for the ‘connective leadership’ model which is based on three general categories or sets of behaviours used by individuals to achieve their objectives – a direct set, which is closely related to various forms of diversity and prompt expressions of individualism, a relational set, which emphasises identification with others, and an instrumental set, which provides a source of ethically rooted action to harmonise the contradictory forces of diversity and interdependence. Each set encompasses three styles which results in a complement of nine achieving styles, and “connective leaders use the full palette of connective leadership styles
in various combinations” (Lipman-Blumen, 1996: 119). The metaphor of a highly networked society is further reflected in Saint-Onge and Armstrong’s (2004) notion of a ‘conductive’ organisation where leadership is considered to a critical component of its structural capital - a core competency expressed by leaders through five main capabilities – detecting patterns, responding with speed, creating partnerships, generating capabilities and infusing meaning.

Linden (2002) refers to the concept of collaborative leadership and sees this expressed through four qualities in collaborative leaders – being resolute, focused and driven especially about collaboration; having a strong but measured ego; being inclusive and preferring to ‘pull’ rather than ‘push’; and finally, having a collaborative mind-set which focuses on seeing connections to something larger. The challenge for the collaborative leader is to apply these qualities to key tasks which essentially focus on the process of collaboration including, helping to identify shared purposes, demonstrating a desire to search for shared solutions, identifying the right people, highlighting the importance of an open and credible process founded on trust and championing initiatives.

Alexander et al (2001) outline a case for collaborative leadership within the setting of community health partnerships which posses distinctive characteristics that call for a type of leadership (and that produce leadership dilemmas) unrecognised or rarely discussed in the collaborative leadership literature” (Alexander et al, 2001: 160). The authors clearly differentiate between leadership within traditional organisations which is linked to formal hierarchical authority, and leadership in partnerships where even formally designated leaders only hold tenuous authority. Collaborative leadership is viewed in terms of five distinctive leadership themes – systems thinking, vision-based leadership, collateral leadership (which is not quite the same as distributed leadership because broad-based leadership supports, but does not substitute for, leadership expressed by formally designated leaders), power sharing, and process-based leadership.

The need for collaborative leadership models to cope with settings that are characterised by diversity, interdependence, ambiguity and uncertainty may usefully be informed by recent developments in complexity theory. Marion and Uhl-Bien (2002) apply complexity thinking to propose the notion of ‘complex leadership’ which is based on the application of five core leadership roles:

- Fostering network construction: here leaders learn to manage and develop networks and cultivate interdependencies both inside and outside an organisation
• Catalyzing bottom-up network construction: through delegation, encouragement and providing resources to subordinates, encouraging networks and empowering workers to problem solve themselves
• Becoming leadership ‘tags’: providing a symbol, ideal or flag around which others rally around
• Dropping seeds of emergence: by encouraging creativity, experimentation and innovation
• Thinking systematically: encouraging an appreciation of the ‘bigger picture’.

Complex leadership is aimed “at creating conditions that enable the interactions through which the behaviours and direction of organisational systems emerge. Leaders provide control by influencing organisational behaviour through managing networks and their interactions” Marion and Uhl-Bien (2002: 406).

Huxham and Vangen (2005: 202) identify leadership as one of the key themes in their theory of collaborative advantage, and contend that “it is far from straightforward to translate mainstream theories of leadership to collaborative settings”. Notions of informal, emergent and shared leadership have more relevance in their conceptualization of collaborative advantage where structure, processes and participants provide the framework for ‘contextual leadership’. Enacting this form of leadership to achieve collaborative advantage is argued to depend on embracing the ‘right’ kind of members; empowering members to enable participation; involving and supporting all members; and mobilizing members to make things happen. However, where leadership approaches involve manipulation and self-interested behaviours, it can border on ‘collaborative thuggery’ and not be in the spirit of collaboration.

Hambleton et al (2001) develop a three-fold typology of leadership styles in partnerships – designed and focused, implied and fragmented, and emergent and formative. They argue that these styles are influenced primarily by the policy environment, partnership arrangements, personal characteristics and relationship with followers. In terms of personal characteristics and attributes, the research findings suggest that leadership in inter-organisational settings is most effective when it is clear, accountable and pragmatic, and based on a particular style or styles such as broker or negotiator. Conversely, it is least effective when it is opaque and precarious. Furthermore, “because partnerships are collaborative, directed in practice largely to building consensus, strong leadership is perceived to be inimical to joint working. Strong leaders are suspected of taking over” (Hambleton et al. 2001:13)
Reticulist/Networking

Friend et al (1974) focus on a cluster of reticulist or networking skills and emphasise the importance of cultivating inter-personal relationships, communication, political skills and an appreciation of the interdependencies around problem structure and potential solutions. A fundamental prerequisite for the effective reticulist is an ability to cultivate a network of personal relationships that, although designed to achieve professional or organisational goals, will be “guided by other motives at the more personal level such as the desire to be liked or esteemed by his associates” (Friend et al, 1974:365).

In addition to these, reticulists are expected: to deploy political skills which “must include a sure grasp of modes of behaviour relevant to different types of relationship between agencies and between actors” (Friend et al, 1974:367); to appreciate when to engage in bargaining, persuasive or confrontational modes of behaviour; and to adopt the ‘mixed scanning’ approach associated with Etzioni (1967), knowing how to move “between different levels of strategic and tactical exploration so as to develop an appreciation of how one influences the other” (Friend et al, 1974:365). Rhodes (1999) makes the connection with the old-fashioned virtues of diplomacy and the arts of negotiation and persuasion, and Webb (1991:231) emphasises that reticulists are “individuals who are especially sensitive to and skilled in bridging interests, professions and organisations”.

In a similar vein, Hoskings and Morley (1991) summarise the functions of networking as gaining information, achieving influence to help implement the actor’s agenda and, to exchange with others, co-operation and resources. Ebers (1997) description of reticulists as ‘informational intermediaries’ highlights their role in intelligence gathering and scanning activities and in acting as a gatekeeper or bridge between the home organisation and others within inter-organisational domains.

Agranoff and McGuire (1998:78) recognise that networking in general “requires a capacity that is different from that of single organisation management”. They refer to the need to acquire knowledge of joint financing arrangements, negotiation of joint strategies, inter-organisational project management, writing of inter-agency agreements, contract management and assessment, and an ability to deploy resources wisely. Further, they emphasise the need to change the focus of human resource strategies to respect the actions of people from a wide range of backgrounds and training; to reflect management through a myriad of clusters rather than subordinates and boss; and to develop the ability to work in groups through an understanding of team building, conflict resolution and problem solving.
Network management entails interagency group working that may well be qualitatively different from other forms of co-ordination. It involves the building of social capital, shared learning, joint problem solving and negotiation around a whole range of personal, professional and organisational concerns. The creation of synergy requires the dismantling and unpicking of individual actors' ideologies and views, and a subsequent re-packaging to co-produce new outcomes. These engagements are based on trust rather than legally bounded authority rules and relationships.

One note of caution is sounded by Ferlie and Pettigrew (1996) in their research within the NHS. They highlight the difficulties of sustaining a move to a network-orientated style of management, and suggest that often mixed modes of management may still persist. The problems associated with moving between different approaches can follow a number of tracks: inertia, aborted excursion, organisational transformation or unresolved excursions. They conclude that the NHS is an example of an unresolved excursion, where, despite attempts at reorientation, the previous archetype (based on hierarchical co-ordination) is still apparent resulting in a period of considerable disequilibrium. Therefore, where different modes of organising are combined or integrated, as is the case in multi-organisational theatres, the challenge for effective boundary spanners is to appreciate when and how to switch between the different modes.

Finally, although the benefits of a networking approach are seductive, The Local Government Management Board (1997) warn of the perils of informality in networks in terms of the fragility of personal relationships, the creation of cliques and the tensions of multiple accountabilities.

**Entrepreneur**

Inter-organisational activity is often prompted by the need to address complex and interrelated policy problems whose resolution demands new ideas, creativity and lateral thinking in order to break free of conventional and tired paradigms of thinking and action. Entrepreneurial and innovative capacities are highlighted by Leadbeater and Goss (1998:15) who refer to civic entrepreneurs as “often creative, lateral-thinking rule breakers” who “frequently combine a capacity for visionary thinking with an appetite for opportunism”. These operators either innovate new products or services themselves or “create the space for others” to do so. Moreover, they possess an armory of both political and managerial skills, which are used to support risk-taking when absorbed in experimentation and innovation.
Kingdon (1984) underlines the importance of ‘policy entrepreneurs’ skilled at coupling problems, policies and politics who have the defining characteristics of a claim to be heard by virtue of expertise, an ability to speak for others or the occupation of an authoritative decision making position, a competency in negotiating skills and well developed political connections. The ability to anticipate and prepare for ‘windows of opportunity’ is highly valued in the context of limited financial resources and competition for funding. The profile of effective policy entrepreneurs suggests that they must be creative and insightful, socially perceptive, able to mix in a variety of social and political settings, able to argue persuasively, be strategic team builders, and prepared to lead by example (Mintrom, 2000). A key message is that creativity and innovation must be coupled with an appreciation of how and when to convert solutions into practice, and although technical expertise and legitimacy are important, other competencies centred on political awareness and networking need to be brought to bear on the task to ensure successful implementation.

**Trusted Agent**

Trust is often isolated as one of the most important factors to influence the course of inter-organisational relations. Webb (1991) is forthright in his assertion that: “trust is pivotal to collaboration. Attitudes of mistrust and suspicion are a primary barrier to co-operation between organisations and professional boundaries: collaborative behaviour is hardly conceivable where trusting attitudes are absent”. It is a highly contested notion that is the subject of a substantial body of theory from a variety of disciplines (Giddens, 1991; Lane, 1998; Boon, 1994; Lewicki and Bunker, 1996; Cummings and Bromily, 1996; Das and Teng, 2001; Sydow, 1998). Various models of trust implicate the concept with faith, predictability, goodwill and risk taking. Others suggest that it can be derived from calculation, value and norms or common cognition (Lewicki and Bunker, 1996). Bachmann (2001) refers to trust as a mechanism for coping with uncertainty and complexity and there are theories that position trust at both a personal and system level.

Other authors distinguish between real and simulated trust and attempt to disentangle the two heavily loaded notions of trust and power. They suggest that most functional interpretations of trust “ignore the fact that power can be hidden behind a façade of ‘trust’ and a rhetoric of ‘collaboration’ and can be used to promote vested interests through the manipulation and capitulation of weaker parties” (Hardy et al, 1998).

**Interpreter**

Boundary spanners also play a role as interpreters who focus on engaging with people from other organisations, professions and sectors to understand their views, cultures and
motivations in order to work together within inter-organisational frameworks. Central to this overall purpose are a range of competencies designed to build and sustain effective inter-personal relationships through communication, support, empathy and listening. These contribute to the acquisition of an important knowledge base about different languages, cultures and frames, and provide the medium to influence the course of decision making through negotiation, conflict management and consensus building (Williams, 2005). However, there are a number of particular sensitivities involved within inter-personal relationships, and careful judgements are needed to manage the intensity of these and the implications of redistributed power relationships.

**Competency Frameworks**

A number of key roles are inherent in boundary spanning and an interrogation of the literature identifies a number of over-arching competency frameworks (See Figure 12) which are suggested as necessary to support boundary spanning roles. The term competency is interpreted in different ways in each of the frameworks. Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) refer to a mixture of skills and attributes of reticulists, as do Ferlie and Pettigrew (1996) in relation to network managers. A list of partnership skills are the focus of DETR and Cabinet Office studies, and collaborative capacities is the preferred language of Bardach (2001), each one acting as a platform for the other. What is striking about these frameworks is the high degree of consensus on many of the individual elements contained within each of them. Perhaps, what they do not do so well is attribute any measure of importance between the skills, attributes or capabilities, or indicate how they might interrelate with each other.

**Figure 12: Competency Frameworks for Boundary Spanners**

(Williams, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Frameworks for Boundary Spanners</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills and Attributes of Reticulists (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Critical appreciation of environment and problems/opportunities presented; understanding different organisational contexts; knowing the role and playing it; communication; prescience; networking; negotiating; conflict resolution; risk-taking; problem-solving; self-management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Skills and attributes for network managers (Ferlie and Pettigrew, 1996) | • Strong interpersonal, communication and listening skills; an ability to persuade; a readiness to trade and to engage in reciprocal rather than manipulative behaviour and an ability to construct long-term relationships.  
• the ability to cross a variety of occupational, organisational, social and political boundaries; an ability to speak different languages; an ability to act as an interpreter between different group; to be credible with a range of different groups  
• tolerance of high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty; a long term as well as a short term view; a good strategic sense, vision and ideas; an ability to reflect on experience and to conceptualise; a capacity to learn quickly and to adapt to new situations  
• an ability to impart knowledge to others; to act as teacher and mentor; an ability to transfer knowledge from one setting to another; an ability to convey requisite standards and attitudes to others inside and outside the organisation |
| Partnership Skills (DETRA, 1999; DETRb, 1999) | • Strategic capacities; listening; negotiation; leadership through influence; performance management and evaluation.  
• ability to work across boundaries through brokering, networking, resource packaging and building trust |
| Neighbourhood Manager Skills (Taylor, 2000) | • able to operate in situations of multiple accountability; able to exercise influence without traditional line management authority; can enable rather than control; skilled in mediation, brokerage, negotiation, networking, conflict resolution and problem solving; people who are catalysts and who are equipped to operate in unfamiliar territory and across boundaries |
| Partnership Skills (Jupp, 2003) | • brokerage skills; facilitation; negotiation; co-ordination; project management |
| Collaborative Capacities (Bardach, 2001) | • creative opportunity; intellectual capacity; trust; leadership; communication; continuous learning; advocacy; steering. |
| Partnership Skills (Cabinet Office, 2000) | • leadership; policy vision; strategic management; project management; exploiting IT; managing change; managing stakeholders |
| Boundary Spanning Competencies (Williams, 2005) | • Reticulist; entrepreneur; leader; interpreter and communicator; expert; organiser |
KEY LEARNING POINTS

• Managing in network forms of organising which includes partnerships is materially different to managing in hierarchies and markets. It demands a different approach, focus and role.

• Management behaviour in networks involves activation, framing, mobilizing and synthesizing.

• Problems of accountability and legitimacy are particularly problematic in this form of organising – boundaries and responsibilities are often blurred and opaque.

• At an individual level, the role and behaviour of boundary spanning personnel are highly influential on the course and effectiveness of collaborative encounters. These people need particular skills and abilities to operate and these can be grouped under a number of main headings – leadership, networking, entrepreneurial, trust building and interpreter.

• Traditional styles and forms of leadership are not considered to be appropriate in collaborative settings. Catalytic, facilitative and empowering approaches appear to be more effective. Leaders that are deep thinkers, who can mobilise effective interpersonal skills to integrate diverse agendas, people and cultures towards shared purposes, are highly prized.

• A cluster of reticulist or networking skills emphasise the importance of cultivating interpersonal relationships, good communication, political skills and an appreciation of the interdependencies around problem structure and potential solutions. Networking involves building social capital, shared learning, joint problem solving and negotiation around a range of personal, professional and organisational concerns; it requires diplomacy and negotiation skills. However, there problems with networking relating to the fragility of personal relationships, the creation of cliques and the tensions of multiple accountabilities.

• Entrepreneurial and innovative capabilities are considered to be important in view of the need to address complex problems that have proved resistant to resolution.

• An ability to build and maintain trust is considered to be pivotal in the development of collaborative relationships.

• The role of interpreter requires a proficiency in building and sustaining effective interpersonal relationships through communication, support, empathy and listening.

• A number of different competency frameworks exist that specify a range of skills, abilities, attributes and capabilities considered necessary to be an effective boundary spanner.
SUGGESTED FURTHER READING


6. Governance and Public Participation

INTRODUCTION
The arrangements that are made to govern and control public organisations and to hold them to account within a framework of open and transparent democratic government is an important focus of attention. This focus is heightened in collaborative arenas where different organisations, often with different forms of governance and accountability arrangements, come together in various forms to pursue joint action. The ensuing governance issues are often problematic, and this chapter addresses these, drawing in particular from the work of Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) and the Audit Commission (2005).

It also discusses the increasingly important policy imperative of Government to ensure that public services are designed and delivered in ways that ensure that the public are afforded meaningful opportunities to participate in decision making processes. Welsh Assembly Government refers to the need to promote public services in Wales that are ‘citizen-centred’ and ‘customer focussed’. The discussion considers how the ‘public’ is framed, who to involve, how to engage with ‘hard to reach groups’, and problems of capacity and leadership. All of the issues take on a different complexion within collaborative forms of organisation.

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE
Collaborative working highlights the “potential redundancy of long standing traditions, rules and norms that govern activity within and between organisations and point to the need for the development of new forms of control” with those associated with hierarchies and markets (Sullivan et al, 2007). Sullivan et al (2007) argue that there are three main reasons for exercising control in collaborations. Firstly, to provide a clear focus and purpose for joint engagement to secure mutually agreed outcomes. Secondly, to regulate the behaviour of actors involved in the collaboration through a combination of incentives and sanctions, and thirdly, to secure optimal performance. In other words, the reasons for control are similar to those in hierarchical arenas, but “in collaborations, exercising that control is considerably more difficult because many of the levers present in hierarchical relationships are unavailable, for example, established chains of command, and universal rules and norms of appropriate behaviour”. Control in collaborations has to be negotiated rather than prescribed, and a sufficient reservoir of collaborative capacity is needed to effect this collaborative control. The key elements of collaborative capacity are: strategic, to develop vision and key themes; governance, to clarify upward and down accountability; operational, to build organisational processes and structures able to deliver new activities;
practice, to enhance the skills and abilities of staff; and community and citizen, which focuses on the cultural, material and personal resources to facilitate engagement in partnership processes (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002).

Collaborative working takes many different organisational forms including statutory bodies, joint committees, charities, trusts, companies and unincorporated associations. Whatever the form, there are important issues to address in relation to corporate governance to ensure maximum public probity, transparency and public accountability. There is evidence of a ‘democratic deficit’ (Skelcher, 1998) as a result of the growth in partnership across the public sector. Supporters of the ‘democratic deficit’ position argue that more investment is needed in clearly formalising the rules concerning the appointment of members to collaborations and their roles and conduct, particularly in relation to finance and performance accountability.

The Audit Commission (2005) acknowledges that partnership working is an important aspect of the public policy landscape but emphasises that this form of working can be risky and its governance problematic. It argues that public bodies need to be vigilant in relation to value for money and accountability arrangements and this can be achieved by determining exactly what benefits a partnership delivers, and ensuring that leadership, decision-making, scrutiny and systems and processes such as risk management are clearly in place.

The Audit Commission emphasises that governance models vary and that the right balance must be struck between managing risks and ensuring that any governance framework does not stifle innovation or inhibit flexibility. It recommends that public bodies:

- Should understand intimately the partnerships they are engaged in with reference to money and other investments, and should regularly review their involvement in order to strengthen accountability, manage risks and rationalise working arrangements
- Establish clear criteria against which partnerships can be evaluated especially in relation to cost effectiveness
- Take hard decisions to scale down involvement if costs outweigh benefits or if the risks become too great
- Agree and review regularly protocols to govern the partnerships
- Communicate with service users and citizens about the work of the partnerships, clarify responsibility and accountability and set out joint complaints procedures
The question of accountability in and of partnerships is key to securing sound governance. The Audit Commission (2005) report looks at different mechanisms for dealing with accountability as: giving an account, being held to account, taking account and redress. Whereas arrangements for these are commonplace in corporate bodies, they are less well developed in partnerships. Another important question relates to the nature and level of integration involved in a partnership. The Audit Commission suggests that the governance risk associated with any given partnership varies between multi-agency settings, integrated working arrangements and in new corporate entities or organisational forms. Partners need to be able to design governance arrangements that are appropriate to the level of risk. In particular, the challenges of responsible governance within single organisations are different to those in joint governance situations.

This conclusion resonates with the findings of a report (ODPM, 2004b) on governance in Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) which argues that different governance arrangements are necessary for different types of LSP model – advisory, commissioning, laboratory and community empowerment. The report suggests that the key questions to ask in order to develop the right governance structures for each model include questions of purpose, membership, rules of engagement, accountability, scrutiny, roles, outcomes, delivery and ways of working. Again, the importance of getting the right balance between over-bureaucratisation and rule-systems as opposed to flexibility, informality and innovation is highlighted.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Although public participation is not a new phenomenon it has become increasingly high profile in various policy programmes since 1997. One analysis identifies six key purposes for the promotion of public participation at the local level (Sullivan, Barnes and Matka, 2002):

- citizen participation for governance: citizen involvement in the development and implementation processes of partnerships
- community development as a method of working
- user involvement in the planning, delivery and practice of decision making about public services
- communication and other strategies to keep the public involved and to develop public support
- community and user involvement in generating evidence and knowledge particularly about needs and aspirations
- citizen empowerment through programmes to build social capital and reduce social exclusion
Public participation in collaborative arenas presents specific challenges because of the peculiar nature of this form of organising. Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) argue that the synergy between public participation and partnerships can be conceptualised in at least three ways – as a means to consult or involve the public, as a constituent ingredient of partnership working, or as a potential outcome of the partnership process itself.

**Figure 13: Public Participation in different types of partnership (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002:167)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implications for Citizens</th>
<th>Strategic partnership</th>
<th>Sectoral partnership</th>
<th>Neighbourhood partnership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
<td>Representative - focus on community leaders and umbrella groups</td>
<td>Participative – focus on users and beneficiaries</td>
<td>Representative &amp; participative - focus on users and community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to Community</td>
<td>Distant - infrastructure necessary to secure and support participation</td>
<td>Close</td>
<td>Close</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remit</td>
<td>Wide ranging</td>
<td>Focused on specific service</td>
<td>Focused on local wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
<td>Citizens one of many stakeholders represented</td>
<td>Users a key stakeholder with providers and commissioners</td>
<td>Citizens one of many stakeholders but with greatest interest and often largest number</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) stress that different forms of partnership – strategic, sectoral and neighbourhood – have different implications for public participation as illustrated in Figure 13. Approaches to citizen involvement in collaborative settings requires the resolution of a number of key issues, including who to involve, at what level should involvement take place, what role should community leaders play in the process, what capacity do citizens have to be meaningfully engaged, what influence does the different power relationships between key stakeholders have on the process, and how should marginalized and disenfranchised groups be engaged.

**Who to involve?**

Although the term ‘community’ is prominent in public policy discourse, it is a highly contested notion and it is now commonly accepted that communities in modern societies take a number of different forms including communities of place, identity and interest (Etzioni, 2000). The national evaluation of community strategies in Wales
(Williams et al, 2006) found that people were engaged through different identities by government, and moreover, different participation techniques were deployed as illustrated in Figure 14.

**Figure 14: Framing Participation (Williams et al, 2006: 95)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRAMING OF IDENTITY</th>
<th>PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>as individual citizen</td>
<td>Surveys and questionnaires; road shows and exhibitions; newsletters; web sites; vox pop; citizen’s panels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as a member of an area-based community</td>
<td>Public meetings; community and area forums; conferences; open space technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as a member of a voluntary or special interest group</td>
<td>focus groups; consultation letters; meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as a member of a ‘hard to reach’ group</td>
<td>Festival or Congress; focus group; theatre in the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recent research points to the power exercised by public bodies in identifying and shaping who ‘the public’ is for any new collaboration. This can result in tension between citizens, communities and officials where views about who should be involved do not complement each other (Barnes et al, 2007).

**Participation at Different Levels of Collaboration**

As Sullivan and Skelcher (2002) point out (see above Figure 12) collaborative activity can be categorised as taking place at three levels - strategic, sectoral and neighbourhood – and although some initiatives may be level specific, others may operate across a number of levels. However each level holds specific implications for public participation that will determine the nature of the collaborative relationship that develops. For instance, in strategic collaborations, public participation is rather remote from the co-ordinating bodies with the public involved as consultees or represented by an umbrella body consisting of ‘representatives’ of the community. Sectoral collaborations tend to be more focused and techniques to involve people as service users are more appropriate, however, professionals, by virtue of their authority, retain considerable influence over decisions and processes. Lastly, neighbourhood collaborations are geographically based but are wide ranging in their interest. It is at this level that public participation with collaboration is potentially widest and deepest, though here too exclusion can be practiced either as a result of the way in which ‘the public’ is defined for the purposes of the collaboration.
and/or as a consequence of tensions between different communities in the same neighbourhood (Barnes et al, 2007).

**The Role of Community Leaders in Collaboration**

Traditionally, elected councillors have assumed the main role of community leaders, but this has increasingly been challenged by others who claim some legitimacy in this area such as leaders of communities of identity, such as faith communities or domestic violence survivors group, leaders of communities of place and leaders of communities of interest (Purdue et al, 2000). Their legitimacy rests upon a number of factors such as authority conferred from elsewhere, specific knowledge, experience of the community or demonstrable evidence of having benefited the community through their actions. However, while community leadership may now be accepted as a key component in the successful operation of cross-sector collaborations, past experience of collaborative endeavours suggests that operationalising this can prove challenging to both public organisations and community leaders. Five issues have been identified:

- **The selection of community leaders:** How community leaders are identified and invited into collaborations can be critical in establishing their credibility with the wider community and their impact within the collaboration.

- **‘Making’ and ‘breaking’ community stars:** Participation in collaborative activity can give community leaders access to power and decision making in a way that they have not previously experienced. While this can prove positive, the prevailing power relationships among the partners may mean that it is short-lived.

- **Community leaders, representation and accountability:** Whether and how community leaders can be seen to be representative and accountable and by whom is a long standing tension in cross sector collaborations.

- **Incorporation:** The experience of collaboration can lead to community leaders becoming incorporated as ‘unpaid community professionals’, able to manage the bureaucracy and paperwork associated with the implementation of regeneration programmes.

- **Sustaining community leaders:** ‘Burnout’ is a major problem for community leaders in collaborative activity. They are generally under greater time pressures than statutory partners and will invariably experience stress as a result of their voluntary role.

**Public Capacity for Collaboration**

The extent to which members of the public are able to influence collaborations depends in part upon whether or not they are able to draw upon sufficient capacity to support
them. A number of area-based initiatives in the UK have devoted resources to capacity building programmes to increase personal skills, expertise and confidence. Time and money are especially important in this process. In some cases the desired outcome is to enable communities of interest, identity and/or geography to take the lead in leading and managing their own communities. However, in other cases public or community capacity is just one of a number of elements that need to be in place if positive outcomes are to be achieved.

**Power Relationships in Collaboration**

Successive evaluations of regeneration programmes and health and social care initiatives reveal the level of frustration experienced by community members who gain a place at the decision making table only to find that their input is marginal to the outcomes of the programme (Barnes et al, 2007). The imbalance in power stems from the fact that statutory bodies have both the authority to act in key policy and service areas and can call upon significant resources to support them. If statutory bodies are not prepared or required to give up power then it remains likely that ‘empowerment’ will result merely in the increase of communities’ responsibilities rather than their influence (Peterman, 2000).

**Hard to Reach Groups**

One of the main problems faced by policy makers seeking to engage the public is a general disengagement from and lack of confidence in conventional political processes. This condition is especially felt by groups in society that are marginalised or socially excluded including young people and ethnic minorities. Research suggests that effective participation of so called ‘hard to reach’ groups in collaboration require careful planning and resourcing. Involvement needs to be designed in from the beginning of the collaboration and needs to be supported by the use of skilled outreach and/or development workers where necessary (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002; Barnes et al, 2007).

The key messages to emerge from the National Evaluation of Community Strategies in Wales (Williams et al, 2006) were:

- Public participation techniques need to be more creative and innovative in design and delivery, particularly to counter the negative stereotyping of political processes and the ineffectiveness of many traditional methods. This is particularly important in relation to groups of the population who for numerous reasons are less able or inclined to engage with public decision making.
- There needs to be greater effort to secure a better understanding of, and integration
between, representative systems of democracy and participatory approaches which are often promoted in collaborative ventures. Currently, there is considerable confusion on these matters both by elected politicians and the public.

- Public participation must be seen as a seamless rather than discrete process; it needs to be continuous, co-ordinated and above all transparent. The guidance for Children and Young People’s Partnerships (Welsh Assembly Government, 2002) stress that: “users deserve feedback on how their involvement has (or has not) influenced planning and design and why if they are to perceive their contribution as valued and given due consideration by those with the power to decide”.
- Effective public participation is resource intensive – the process is inevitably elongated and requires co-ordination and support. It is premised on a capacity to engage meaningfully and equally and, therefore, capacity building programmes are necessary.

Building Participative Local Partnerships
Lowndes and Sullivan (2004) maintain that multi-agency partnerships have considerable potential to enhance public participation through seeking to capture the views of citizens ‘in the round’; reducing the costs and maximising the benefits of public participation exercises; involving community representatives directly in decision making and service management; and building the capacity of communities for the future.

They also advance a number of key principles to underlie the design of participative local partnerships including, the development of partnership-specific modes of deliberation and decision making which are different to those that apply for other modes of organising; mixing a variety of participation methods to maximise involvement and which are appropriate for different purposes and target groups (inappropriate methods will only enhance apathy and cynicism); co-ordinating local partnership working to ovoid participation fatigue and make the best use of limited resources; building a capacity for community involvement and local leadership through skills development, capacity building programmes and training.

KEY LEARNING POINTS
- Working in collaboration is different to working in hierarchies and different forms of control are necessary
- Building collaborative capacity (e.g. strategic, governance, operational, practice and community) is essential for exercising control within collaborative arenas
- Corporate governance and accountability issues are important matters to address in different ways across different collaborative forms
There are a number of different reasons for the promotion of public participation, including improved communication, governance, empowerment, community development and user involvement.

Different forms of partnership – strategic, sectoral and neighbourhood – have different implications for public participation.

Approaches to public participation in collaborative settings require the resolution of a number of key issues, including who to involve, at what level should involvement take place, what role should community leaders play in the process, what capacity have citizens to be meaningfully engaged, what influence does the different power relationships between key stakeholders have on the process, and how should marginalized and disenfranchised groups be engaged.

The national evaluation of community strategies in Wales found that people were engaged through different identities by government, and different participation techniques were deployed for each.

The selection and involvement of community leaders is important as is their accountability, legitimacy, representativeness, use of power and sustainability.

Citizens need the capacity, confidence and skills to effectively and fairly engage within public involvement processes.

Special efforts, over a sustained period and by competent facilitators, are required to engage with marginalised and disenfranchised groups.

Key lessons from the national evaluation of community strategies in Wales highlighted the need for more innovation and creativity in techniques; an acknowledgement that processes needed to be continuous, co-ordinated and above all transparent; and that the process was resource intensive in terms of finance and staff.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING


7. Lessons from Evidence-Based Practice

INTRODUCTION
There are few substitutes for robust, evidence-based research evaluations of collaborative activities. However, although the body of material on such evaluations has begun to increase, in general it is relatively sparse. This section selects examples of studies that focus on three different types of partnership – strategic, policy-based and community-focused. The strategic partnerships are primarily those that cover a wide geographical area such as a local authority and embrace a broad spectrum of social, economic and environmental issues. Conversely, the policy or sector based partnerships are set up to address issues in a particular field, and although the discussion below focuses on health and social care, additional perspectives are included from community safety, children and young people and partnerships in general.

The material presented from health and social care is quite comprehensive and includes studies from England, Scotland, Wales and Canada. A number of issues are explored in these including: the drivers and barriers to joint working, the problems associated with people from different professions working together, and the likely ingredients for effective partnership working. The chapter concludes with emerging evidence from an evaluation of the Communities First Programme in Wales which illuminates the issues of partnership working with local communities.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS
Evidence relating to strategic partnerships is drawn from three main sources: evaluation studies of Local Strategic Partnerships in England, research on partnerships concerned with urban regeneration in the UK, and a national evaluation of community strategies in Wales. These evaluations highlight a number of key issues in strategic partnerships, including the influence of context and wider environmental factors, resourcing both financial and staffing, leadership approaches and membership of partnerships, governance and accountability, performance management, and the mechanisms for converting strategic intent into effective delivery.

Local Strategic Partnerships
Long term evaluation studies of the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) in England provide a rich source of learning on collaboration at a strategic level. LSPs are bodies that bring together different parts of the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, in order that their activities might complement each other and generate improved services.
and better social, economic and environmental outcomes. They are non-statutory and non-executive bodies that operate at a level which enables them to act strategically, while at the same time being relevant and accessible to direct community participation (ODPM/ DfT, 2006). In addition LSPs are key agents in the design and delivery of local neighbourhood renewal strategies in particular local authority areas. Some of the important messages that have emerged from the research evaluation are summarised below under a number of main headings including, context, time, resources, membership and involvement, delivery, performance management, governance and accountability. (Note: This section draws heavily on ‘People, Plans and Partnerships: A National Evaluation of Community Strategies in Wales’ (Williams et al, 2006)

• **Context**

  The evaluations consistently highlighted the importance of context in shaping local experiences of LSPs (ODPM/DfT, 2005, 2006) concluding that the LSPs that had made progress were those which were rooted in ‘a positive local context’ including: ‘a history of strategic partnership working predating the LSP, and of trust and good working relationships between partners. Positive local contexts were considered to be those in which the geographical area covered by the LSP is a good ‘fit’ with both socio-economic patterns, and with the boundaries of key partners, and in which there is a stable local political environments (ODPM/DfT, 2006:116). Political turbulence was seen as an inhibitor to sustained community leadership (ODPM/DfT, 2006: 117). The importance of these factors to the development and robustness of LSPs suggests that local actors need to both understand the key contextual factors operating in their locality and find ways of supporting positive contextual attributes while transforming or minimising the impact of negative contextual factors. A variety of other contextual factors are also considered important in influencing the development of LSPs including: changes in the institutional environment and the introduction of new governance mechanisms.

• **Time**

  Evaluations of partnership working regularly make reference to the importance of time in enabling the development of strong partnerships that are fit for purpose (Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002), and this was reiterated by the evaluation studies. The passage of time (coupled with a positive context) was considered to allow for new rules, relationships and roles to reach maturity.

• **Resources**

  Resources in partnerships are considered important to build a strong strategic
partnership (process), and to begin delivering change in line with agreed partnership priorities (delivery). Resources can be offered ‘in kind’, i.e. secondment of staff or allocation of premises, or they may be financial resources, and the amount and kind of resource needed will depend on the kind of local strategic partnership that is envisaged. Drawing on the work of the LSP evaluation, the ODPM’s consultation paper on the future of LSPs (ODPM 2005a) suggests the following as key building blocks for successful LSPs:

- **Leadership**: clarity of vision, commitment of all partners to agreed priorities/targets and embedding these within partners’ own business plans
- **Delivery manager**: a senior manager and small team to enable and drive implementation of the local strategy. This involves planning, coordinating action with priority places and groups, project management, overcoming obstacles and tracking progress.
- **Delivery system**: a system with sufficient analytical capacity is needed to collate and analyse data, appraise options and provide evidence-based management information to drive and monitor performance.
- **Communication across the partnership**, with all sectors and with the public is vital so there is awareness of goals, actions and achievement (p.44).

Those LSPs that were considered ‘fit for purpose’ by the evaluators were those that had staff at the appropriate levels of salary, seniority and with the right skills levels for what the LSP was trying to achieve. There was also some concern from respondents that the staff skills mix utilised by LSPs for developing their strategies would not be appropriate should the LSP move into delivery. Both the LSP and community strategies evaluations highlighted the importance of key senior staff being deployed to drive and develop successful LSPs and community strategies (ODPM/DfT, 2006, ODPM, 2005b).

**Delivery**

The final report of the LSP evaluation (ODPM/DfT, 2006) argued that LSPs had been more involved in the design rather than the delivery of community strategies and local neighbourhood renewal strategies. In part the evaluators suggested this reflected ambiguity about the role of the LSP, and in part, a lack of capacity in the LSP to undertake delivery. Few LSPs had made substantial progress in shifting the priorities and resource and planning mechanisms of main service delivery organisations. In those areas that had moved forward, evaluators identified strong leadership and engaged middle management as key features supporting this progress (ODPM/DfT, 2005).
A key question running through the evaluations of LSPs in England concerned the meaning of ‘delivery’. For some respondents, LSPs are non-executive bodies, with no power to deliver anything, beyond the production of a strategic framework or community strategy. Delivery occurs through the actions of specific organisations, partnerships or initiatives that may be enabled by the strategic framework the LSP/community strategy provides, but are not dependent on them. For others the act of enabling or facilitation is part of delivery – the provision of a strategic framework and the ongoing direction of the LSP constantly checks and steers the activity of those who are partners in the LSP and may also act to encourage new approaches to service design within and between organisations. In some cases the LSP itself might seek to commission or initiate activity that is not undertaken by any existing organisation, partnership or initiative, but has been identified as a key priority by LSP partners. The national evaluation of LSPs considered ‘delivery’ by reference to progress in relation to three sets of outcomes: process, governance and service outcomes (ODPM/DfT, 2006).

- Process outcomes include: understanding partners’ priorities, mapping partners’ spending programmes, sharing data and information, sharing staff resources, pooling budgets, levering in resources, and joint funding of projects.
- Governance outcomes include: the development of a collective vision and agreed strategy; widening the range of interests involved in decision making, bringing marginalised social groups into decision making, building a stronger and more united local voice, achieving greater legitimacy in the eyes of the community, innovation and dissemination of good practice, more effective influence on council decisions, more effective influence on regional and national issues.
- Service outcomes include: ensuring community strategy priorities are reflected in partners’ plans, services delivered better to meet community needs, services which better meet needs in priority neighbourhoods, meeting floor targets.

The national evaluation of LSPs reported that ‘leading edge’ LSPs were making progress in shifting priorities and altering mainstream behaviour, but concluded that for many LSPs ‘mainstreaming’ was a major challenge (ODPM/DfT, 2005). It identified two forms of ‘mainstreaming’ in localities. ‘Strategic mainstreaming’ which involves the refocusing of mainstream programmes (and mainstream funding) onto targets agreed and shared by local partners, reflecting the pattern of local needs, and ‘Initiative mainstreaming’ which describes a “bottom up” approach, the aim of which is to spread approaches and learning from localised, short-term pilots, frequently on the periphery.
of mainstream services, to mainstream programmes; and to achieve sustainable funding for these pilots.

• **Performance Management**
  The evaluations of LSPs reported that while localities were developing approaches to performance management, many were still at an early stage and were finding it difficult to move from performance monitoring to the active management of performance (ODPM/DfT, 2005, ODPM, 2005f). In addition, performance managing an LSP is different from the task in a single organisation, with indicators being hard to agree and outcome focussed management remaining relatively less advanced (ODPM, 2004c). In the final LSP evaluation report (ODPM/DfT, 2006) performance management was understood as: monitoring/managing the delivery of LSPs strategies and plans, assessing the effectiveness of partnership working, as an aid to improvement planning, and to identifying added value. The benefits of performance management were considered by respondents to be: clarifying strategic objectives, closer alignment of plans and priorities, providing an evidence base for improvement and identifying where improvement was needed. The key problems reported by respondents in relation to performance management concerned data gathering (access, resourcing and interpretation), as well as the fact that different organisations will have different views about the value of and approach to performance management based on their own experiences.

• **Governance and Accountability**
  The Governance action learning set held as part of the national evaluation of LSPs identified four kinds of LSP (ideal types). It argued that few LSPs operated entirely in any one mode, but the balance between them varied widely. The four types described were:
  • Advisory: here the LSP acts as a consultation and discussion forum and often forms the basis for consensus building, but has no independent power to act. It draws its accountability and legitimacy entirely from member organisations, particularly the local authority.
  • Commissioning: in this situation the LSP has its own staff and authority, is able to implement decisions and commission projects, and therefore has to create its own forms of accountability and legitimacy.
  • Laboratory: in this type, the prime focus is on generating new ideas and new ways of designing local services, drawing on the combined thinking of senior managers and community leaders.
  • Community empowerment: here attention is focused on creating strong networks within the community rather than on the key public agencies.
The action learning set concluded that each mode raised different governance issues, and the right governance approach depended on the balance between the modes. The action learning set proposed a series of questions for any LSP to ask itself to help develop the right governance structures: questions about purpose, membership, rules of engagement, accountability, scrutiny, roles, and outcomes, delivery and ways of working (ODPM/DfT, 2005).

Finally, the national evaluation of LSPs suggested that the variation in progress by LSPs in England could be understood by reference to the incidence of ‘virtuous and vicious circles’ (ODPM/DfT, 2006: 116-118). The former summarised what the evaluation found to be the main drivers of progress for LSPs, while the latter brings together the barriers reinforcing each other and preventing or limiting the development of LSPs.

Virtuous circles comprise: positive local context; partners willing to be engaged; effective local leadership, from the local authority and key partners, contributing to sense of collective leadership; LSP staff team with capacity to communicate with range of stakeholders, establish inclusive and efficient LSP infrastructure, set up and operate robust performance management arrangements; sufficient resources to run the LSP (from range of partners); LSP that leads the development of the community strategy and ensures that it adds value and drives partner activity; and, progress that can be attributed to LSP and generates rationale for sustaining LSP into longer term. On the other hand, vicious circles comprise: negative local context; superficial commitment of partners; ineffective local leadership – dominant or weak local authority, other partners unwilling to invest in leading; LSP ‘rubberstamps’ community strategy and it has no impact in driving mainstream change in locality; inadequate staffing and resources – too little and too reliant on local authority; no focus on performance management, so no real idea of whether/how change is occurring; and, lastly, an LSP not identified with progress – instead considered a ‘talking shop’ which is not sustainable over time.

Partnerships in Urban Regeneration

Carley et al (2000) evaluated the effectiveness of 27 partnerships in nine city-regions across the UK and identified a number of key lessons for better partnerships:

- The critical importance of political and executive leadership
- The importance of visioning processes to be a catalyst for shared action, a mechanism to enthuse stakeholders and a benchmark against which future progress can be measured
- Translation of visions into workable, consensual objectives supported by
commitments to finance, people, targets and monitoring

- Integration of ‘community’ into local partnerships through effective engagement strategies and capacity building programmes
- Managing the tension between inclusiveness versus efficiency on partnership decision making structures
- Nurturing partnerships through formal and informal attempts to build mutual understanding
- Recognising the importance of people and the complexity of interpersonal and organisational interactions; promoting effective communication, diplomacy, mutual understanding and learning
- Developing a culture of working in partnership through positive attitudes and values

**National Evaluation of Community Strategies in Wales**

Another evaluation in Wales sheds light on the nature and effectiveness of strategic partnerships. The evaluation of communities strategies (Williams et al, 2006) reports on the approaches taken to the design and delivery of communities strategies which are complex strategic management initiatives involving collaboration between many diverse public, private and voluntary agencies. Community Strategy Partnerships are the central organising and co-ordinating structure for the overall project, and their robustness and effectiveness are critical success factors. The research study examined the effectiveness of the partnerships so far and raised a number of issues concerning their future fitness for purpose. The advice from the evaluators was that Community Strategy Partnerships need to reflect on their appropriateness in terms of a number of key factors:

- **The role, function and purpose of the partnerships:** these are the key questions that determine the composition and business of the partnership. The resulting structure will follow from whether they are seen as advisory, consultative, co-ordinating, scrutinising or executive.
- **Representation:** the issues here relate to the optimum size of the group and resolving the tension between manageability and inclusiveness. It will depend on the role of the group, and the choice of individual representatives needs to take account of experience, knowledge, expertise, the role of personal relationships and organisational status, as well as availability, legitimacy and nature of mandate from the host organisation. The continued appropriateness of the make-up of a community strategy partnership needs to be the subject of regular review to ensure that the ‘right people are at the table’ and to avoid problems of ‘groupthink’.
- **Leadership:** this is a critical issue which permeates all facets of the process,
structure, people, culture and strategy, and concerns both the appropriateness of the formal leaders of the partnership, the styles of leadership they promote and the extent to which this function is dispersed or shared throughout the theatres of partnership. The notion of community leadership is important in this context and striking a balance between providing strategic direction and empowering others requires careful judgement.

- Organisation: the issues under this heading relate to frequency and style of meetings; agenda setting and forward planning; monitoring progress and implementing decisions. It also concerns more fundamental matters relating to internal and external communication, marketing and profile.

- Resourcing and servicing: partnership working is highly demanding in terms of servicing the process and structures. Are dedicated staff and/or other resources available to maintain this process, and is this share equally amongst partnering organisations? Is there capacity for task and finish groups?

- Accountability and governance: typically these are often ill-defined and unclear in many partnerships. This invariably stems from the lack of clarity of purpose making it difficult to hold people and organisations to account for their actions. Frameworks for both individual and collective accountability need to be established. Careful balances need to be made between the degree of formalisation through protocols, compacts and other mechanism, and more flexible arrangements based on trusting relationships which can be seen to underpin this network mode of managing.

- Individual and group development: working in partnership is materially different from working in single organisations, and requires particular skills, competencies and capabilities. Is there a strategy within each community strategy partnership to ensure that individual and group capacities are developed? Are adequate resources available?

- Performance: community strategy partnerships epitomise a particular way of working that seeks to build trust, develop co-operative behaviours and build inter-organisational capabilities. It is important that process outcomes are also the subject of regular review as well as changes to the quality of life.

POLICY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS: HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE
A number of literature sources are particularly instructive in examining evidence-based policy in health and social care, and these are as follows:

- a review of recent evidence on the success of health and social care partnerships in England (Glendinning et al, 2005)
a number of studies that focus on the barriers and drivers to effective joint working (Cameron and Lart, 2003; Snooks et al, 2006 and Stewart et al, 2003)

studies examining the problems of people working at the boundary between health and social care and the issues of interprofessionality (Hudson et al, 1997; Glasby and Lester, 2004; Freeth and Reeves, 2004)

a study of partnership working between the NHS and local authorities in Wales (Young, 2003)

the lessons emerging from the experience of the Health Action Zones in England (Barnes et al, 2005; Barnes and Sullivan, 2002)

following a review of the available literature on health and social care partnerships, Powell et al (2004) set out possible dimensions of success in relation to process and outcomes, the Department of Communities and Local Government (2006) outline what steps need to be taken to construct effective partnerships, Hudson and Hardy (2002) outline six key principles for successful partnerships, and an international dimension is provided from the home care sector in Canada (McWilliam et al, 2003) with proposed strategies for effective partnerships

Health and Social Care Partnerships in England

The review by Glendinning et al (2005) consisted of a structured literature review on the success of partnership working between health and social care services, a longitudinal study of the development of partnerships between Primary Care Groups and Primary Care Trusts, and a study of the first sites to use the health flexibilities arrangements.

The findings of the literature review was that the vast majority of studies focused on the process of joint working as expressed in measures such as levels of engagement and commitment of partners, levels of agreement on purpose and levels of trust, reciprocity and respect, as opposed to measuring the difference the partnerships made. Also, even where outcomes were being measured, the causal relationships involved were inconclusive. In addition, no study was found that had measured the cost-effectiveness of health and social care partnerships.

The findings from the other two elements of the review confirmed that major changes had taken place between the NHS and local government, including the creation of organisational vehicles, the creation of strategic vehicles such as joint investment plans and LSPs, the creation of new joint services, strategic commitment to address wider causes of ill-health and health inequalities, creation of ‘whole’ systems’ approaches, and the identification of areas of duplication and overlap.
Also, the review found evidence that certain factors militated against the success of the impact of partnerships on their outputs and outcomes. These factors included excessive organisational turbulence, the fact that improvements in inter-organisational funding arrangements or strategic planning cannot predict nor prescribe increased collaboration between frontline professional, administrative or information management staff, and finally, that the government’s partnership imperative backed up by extensive performance management regimes and associated rewards and penalties makes it difficult to create and maintain local ownership of partnerships.

Milewa et al (2002) explored the extent to which the idea of public and patient involvement by PCTs and PCGs engaged in partnership working, was affecting the relationship between the health service and citizens. Their research concluded that “the institutionalisation of partnerships suggests that the considerable influence of managers and professionals is becoming more susceptible to challenge” and that:

“Managers and health care professionals face increasingly assertive user and advocacy organisations – an influence exacerbated by the status of such interests as local stakeholders in the formulation of local policies in and through partnership structures” Milewa et al (2002:807).

Moreover, there was also evidence that the government was using the principle of professional accountability to local citizens and patients to develop and institutionalise new systems of surveillance and control over the medical professions.

**Barriers and Drivers to Joint Working in Health and Social Care**

Following a systematic review, Cameron and Lart (2003) identify the factors that support or hinder joint working between health and social care, and these are summarised in Figure 15.

Snooks et al (2006) in a similar review of the evidence concerning the effectiveness of services delivered jointly by health and social care providers, identified a number of barriers to successful joint working, including lack of investment in service planning, training, team development and leadership particularly at the start of such a venture, unclear leadership channels, variable management structures and different terms and conditions for staff, difficulties with roles and boundaries particularly unequal power relationships, and inadequate communication channels. On the positive side, good practice was identified as investing in leadership, commitment of partners, integrated and flexible management structures, agreement about purpose, supportive environment including suitable institutional structures, satisfactory accountability arrangements and
appropriate audit and assessment, effective communication, shared decision making, and a relaxation of boundaries - structural, organisational and financial.

**Figure 15: Factors Supporting or Hindering Joint Working (Cameron and Lart, 2003)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Aims and objectives</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Organisational differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Roles and responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Strategic support and commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication/IT systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Co-location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personalities involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong management and professional support</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Resources and personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Past history of joint working</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Cultural and Professional Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Negative assessments/professional stereotypes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trust and respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Joint training/team building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different professional philosophies and ideologies</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contextual Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Political climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Constant re-organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Co-terminosity</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Financial uncertainty</td>
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In a Scottish context, Stewart et al (2003) generate a matrix of drivers and barriers to integrated working in health and social care (Appendix 1). The authors argue that the matrix can be used as a tool to enable practitioners to reflect on their experiences. The matrix is themed into national policy frameworks, local planning context and operational factors. The importance of having a sympathetic and integrated national policy context was underscored with consistent policies, clear strategic direction, and funding mechanisms that are strategic rather than supporting separate and short life projects. At a local level, a key barrier was seen to be the variation in the timing of planning cycles both across and between agencies, as was the absence of a history of joint working. Early involvement of all stakeholders was considered to be vital in promoting a shared vision and ownership of the collaborative process. Stewart et al (2003:347) argue that:
“Although it is too prescriptive to assert that certain elements are prerequisites for integrated working, it is possible to discern common configurations that contribute to the emergence of a pathway to integrated working. The promise of mutual benefit and a supportive policy environment create a favourable backcloth.”

At an operational level, they suggest the drivers and barriers exist at two levels – at one level there are the more strategic factors that relate to the relations between partners and organisational culture, and at the other level, they focus on the development and support of staff attitudes and practices that are conducive to integrated working.

**Interprofessionality**

Hudson et al (1997) examine the problems, tensions and dilemmas of professions working at the boundaries between health and social care. This interface is often recognised as being problematic for a number of reasons, including organisational, where different officers are the subject of varying patterns of employment and accountability; operational, particularly in relation to roles and budget responsibilities; professional in relation to where people define their role and territory; and cultural, where different models – medical, nursing and social – guide professional behaviour. Carrier and Kendall (1995) make the point that: “the concept of a hierarchy of professions differentiated by full and semi-professional status has a particular relevance for health and social care professions which have contrasting histories and contrasting contemporary circumstances on such matters as length of training, legal registration and rights to practice. Hudson et al (1997) outline a model that they describe as ‘a juxtaposition of alternatives’ to capture various dilemmas faced by people working at the health/social care interface. The model is offered as an organising tool to help understand complex realties.

The ten juxtapositions are:

- organisational shift versus individual entrepreneurialism: this refers to how initial progress can best be achieved – either through a strong lead from the top or through individual entrepreneurs or champions (formal or informal) keen to embrace and promote change
- excellence versus equity: this concerns the dilemma of the way in which scarce resources are deployed across a geographical area – through concentrating on centres of excellence or through measures to promote equity across a wide area
- costs versus benefits: this relates to the judgement individuals and organisations have to make on the merits or otherwise in investing in collaborative activity
• medical/nursing versus social models: this is a fundamental barrier between health and social care professionals
• flexibility versus agreements: involving the tensions inherent in promoting evolutionary understandings as opposed to formally binding protocols or agreements
• project management versus mainstream management: the extent to which innovative projects can be sustained, rolled-out and mainstreamed
• co-location versus non co-location: concerning the pros and cons of physical accessibility for both practitioners and clients;
• team loyalty versus organisational loyalty: the problems of multiple accountabilities
• social work versus care management: the tensions involved in different professional practices and between preventative and crisis management
• markets versus hierarchies versus networks: the merits and relevance of different form of organising, and the need to appreciate when and how to operate in any of these forms.

A telling conclusion is that: “the real issue – whether at professional or organisational level – is whether or not there is a willingness to align decisions. And this is as much a question of politics, personalities and culture, as legislation and finance” (Hudson et al, 1997: 30).

In a further study of the influence of inter-professionality in the context of the development of integrated teams covering nursing, social work and housing, Hudson (2006a) frames his action–research model against two dominant models of interprofessional working – the pessimistic model consisting of the three components of professional identity, professional status, and professional discretion and accountability, and an optimistic model that suggests that effective inter-professional working will flourish where, the promotion of professional values of service to users can form the basis of inter-professional partnership, that socialisation to an immediate work group can over-ride professional or hierarchical differences among staff, and that effective inter-professional working can lead to more effective service delivery and user outcomes. Figure 16 illustrates the changes in the behaviour of professionals during the development of an integrated team approach and the importance of mutual understanding, careful selection of team members, parity of esteem, re-orientation of professional affinities, flexibility, creativity, underpinned by co-location.
Figure 16: Key Features of Separate and Integrated Arrangements (Hudson, 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre–Sedgefield Integrated Team Arrangements</th>
<th>Features of Sedgefield Integrated Team</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Low degree of inter-professional mutual awareness</td>
<td>• High degree of mutual awareness between separate disciplines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Slow and disjointed responses</td>
<td>• Speedy and joint responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tight role boundaries and rigid responses</td>
<td>• Flexible role boundaries and creative responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low trust relationships and separate problem-solving</td>
<td>• High trust relationships and collective problem solving</td>
</tr>
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Glasby and Lester (2004), in their review of partnership working between health and social care in UK adult mental health services, also alight on the problems of engaging with members from particular professions, and report on Norman and Peck’s (1999) study which highlights issues such as the loss of faith by mental health professional in the system within which they work, strong adherence to uni-professional cultures, the absence of a shared philosophy for community mental health services and a mistrust of managerial solutions. They also refer to the findings of Nolan et al (1998) who identified the key obstacles to collaboration as individual practitioners’ lack of knowledge of other professionals, a tendency to stereotype other workers, defensive attitudes and a lack of certainty over one’s own role.

Within the context of adult mental health services, Glasby and Lester’s (2004) review of the literature suggests a number of ways in which effective partnership working can be achieved, including the existence of a key power broker (Norman and Peck, 1999); personal and leadership styles that are positive and willing to pioneer new approaches (Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, 2000); inter-professional education (Roberts and Priest, 1997); inter-agency agreements about how to prioritise and allocate referrals (Maunder et al, 2001); securing senior management commitment, developing a shared vision, investing time in staff, owning each other’s difficulties and recognising that partnerships are a means to an end rather than an end in themselves (Gulliver, 1999); and structural change or service redesign. Overall, the message from Glasby and Lesser (2004:14) is:

“Ultimately, therefore, it seems as though the way forward may lie in an incremental approach, whereby individual partners make use of whatever avenue they think may be beneficial and locally appropriate to travel closer to the overall goal of more effective partnership working”
The emphasis placed on professionals working together highlighted in the last few studies is picked up by Freeth and Reeves (2004) in their discussion of the collaborative competencies that are considered necessary to work together. Engel (1994) and Hornby and Atkins (2000) consider that these include:

- Describing one’s roles and responsibilities to other professions
- Recognising and respecting the roles, responsibilities and competence of other professions
- Coping with uncertainty and ambiguity
- Facilitating interprofessional care conferences and meetings
- Handling conflict with other professions
- Working with other professions to assess, plan and provide care

Freeth and Reeves (2004) argue that although some competencies may occur as a result of trial and error, “most people will benefit from planned educational experiences”. They advocate a model of teaching which they refer to as presage-process-product.

**Partnership Working Between the NHS and Local Government in Wales**

The Welsh evaluation (Young et al, 2003) was intended as a baseline study of partnership working between the NHS and local government, and an assessment of the likely potential of the Section 31 Health Act flexibilities which encourage greater collaboration and joint working. The report notes that the ‘Berlin Wall’ between health and social care services has been a longstanding preoccupation of policy makers with many efforts over the years designed to encourage closer working including Joint Consultative Committees, joint planning, joint commissioning and joint finance. However, fragmentation of service providers and the creation of internal and quasi-markets have tended to sharpen boundaries and make cooperation more difficult. The study mapped a very extensive and eclectic range of partnerships – formal and informal – involving health and social care including ones based on specific client groups, service types, inter-sectoral joint working initiatives and named strategic partnerships (Young et al, 2003:26).

A number of partnership issues were raised by respondents to the research including, the need to build and nurture relationships; the need to broaden the base of stakeholder membership; the need to overcome differences in professional and organisational cultures and to make partnership a core mutual priority. Other concerns related to installing relevant ‘partnership practicalities’ such as improving planning and commissioning arrangements and looking to create compatible financial and business planning systems, accountability
frameworks and performance management systems. Importantly, organisational alignment was seen as a more realistic goal than integration of services. Resource issues were considered to be a problem – not only financial, but staff and time. As the authors note: “this importance of having adequate time, space and energy to build on shared learning and invest in nurturing trust relationships that are the basis of long-term inter-agency collaboration cannot be underestimated” (Young et al, 2003: 32).

In relationship to partnership working between health and social care, the report concludes that perceived policy turbulence in the external environment does not encourage risk taking and is a deterrent to local partners acting ambitiously, and there are significant practical difficulties within existing organisational systems and structures which inhibit this way of working. Notably, they include the need to re-work financial frameworks to give partnerships decision making powers in the face of organisational pressures; dealing with personnel issues such as joint training, contracts and career paths; and tackling the trade-off between scope of membership and activity and efficiency. Importantly, the researchers in this study recommended the need for partnerships to adopt a realistic focus to their activities and to avoid over-ambition, to ensure that mechanisms were put in place for partners to learn from each other (particularly outside-facilitated opportunities to share best practice), and generally to ensure that there were robust frameworks to measure, monitor and learn about developments in all aspects of partnerships.

**Health Action Zones**

The development of Heath Action Zones (HAZs) in England and the subsequent evaluation of their effectiveness provide a rich source of evidence on partnership working in fields of health, social care and well being more generally. Sustainable transformation through partnership was the central thrust of this initiative, but as Barnes and Sullivan (2002) point out, in practice, HAZs faced the familiar problems faced by other examples of collaborative working including cultural differences, practical and systemic differences, competing philosophies and models of health and professional defensiveness, but also additional challenges in the form of complexity arising from the sheer range of problems faced, their temporality, and the problems of verticality and the relationship between bottom up initiatives and centrally driven priorities and targets. Sullivan et al (2006) explore how HAZs faced the problems of developing different forms of collaborative capacity (as defined by Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002) through the development of bespoke strategies which met with mixed success. Some important lessons to emerge from the evaluation about the HAZ partnerships are:
• It is not possible to understand local partnerships divorced from their national context, nor expect them to deliver if national policy is not moving in the same direction
• Although the ‘logic of partnership’ was well embedded, what was less apparent was ‘how to do partnership’ particularly in relation to decision making, accountability and performance management.
• Commitment to partnership cannot equalise power imbalances between stakeholders
• Strategies to develop collaborative capacity need to be appropriate to the local context

Building Effective Partnerships

The UK government’s Supporting People Programme involves collaboration across a number of major policy fields including health, social care and housing. Following research into health pilots, the Department of Communities and Local Government (2006) has published a practical guide to partnership which highlights important ‘lessons learnt’, features examples of good practice and draws attention to the key issues that need to be taken into account when designing services that cross organisational boundaries. Figure 17 summarises the key lessons for effective partnerships.

Figure 17: Supporting People: A Practical Guide to Partnership Working (Department of Communities and Local Government, 2006)

THINKING OF WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP
• Partnership working is most effective when agencies recognise the interconnectedness of their work
• It is important to include all agencies or professional who may have an important perspective or experience to contribute, or without whose ‘buy-in’ the new service is unlikely to succeed
• It is easier to build on a shared history of joint working. Agencies who already work together successfully will have established a level of trust that is essential to joint working
• Those starting afresh should not be deterred by ‘teething troubles’ that inevitably accompany new ways of working/relationships but should allow additional time to establish the foundations of the partnership
• Developing complementary aims and objectives will help secure the buy-in of partners. However, it is important to ensure that these are translated into discrete, measurable goals that can assess the influence of the service
• Having agreed the aims and objectives of the imitative, it is important to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each partner. This will ensure that there is no duplication of effort as well as no gaps in provision.

Fig 17 continued overleaf...
ESTABLISHING GOOD FOUNDATIONS

- Clear and effective governance arrangements are the bedrock of successful partnership working. This involves deciding what it is you are seeking to deliver, how it will be delivered, who will manage whom, who can make what decisions and where accountability for the service will lie.
- Set up a steering group to provide the service with access to appropriate advice and support. The effectiveness of the group will depend on a range of issues, these include: the size and make-up of the group, whether members have sufficient authority to resolve problems as they arise, and how the meetings are managed.
- A well-managed steering group provides the link between operational and strategic level working which is essential for joint working.

SETTING UP A NEW SERVICE

- Developing policies and procedures in a consensual and inclusive manner can help to build a sense of ownership and commitment towards the service.
- Having set up the policies and procedures that underpin the service staff working in partner agencies need to be made aware of them.
- Managerial arrangements in collaborative services can often be complex. Keep them simple is the best strategy.
- Monitoring performance is an important activity. Make sure that systems are set up to capture two different streams of data. The first relates to monitoring the process of joint working and the second relates to the outcome of the service.

MAINTAINING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

- Maintaining strong and effective links between the strategic and operational levels is crucial.
- Periodically review the health of your partnership at both the strategic and operational level and address any difficulties you identify.
- Communication is key to the success of joint working. Ensure that a range of informal and formal channels are established.
- To maximise the relevance and effectiveness of any service, it is important that what a service provides reflects what people who use the services say they need. Wherever possible, this means involving people in developing services and in designing and monitoring their delivery.

The guide to partnership working also considers issues around mainstreaming new services and joint commissioning as well as a number of detailed good practice points to take into account at various stages in the partnership process.

Reviewing the literature on partnership working in health and social care, Powell et al (2004) attempt to conceptualise what constitutes ‘success’ in partnerships in relation to process and to outcome. Firstly, in relation to process, the following dimensions are suggested:
Successful partnerships are dependent on the level of engagement and commitment of partners as reflected in behaviours and beliefs. Successful partnerships require agreement about purpose and the need for partnership. Indications of this can be gathered from the degree to which this is agreement about shared aims and vision and the existence of interdependency between partners. Successful partnerships involve high levels of trust, reciprocity and respect between partners. Successful partnerships are strongly influenced by context including financial climate, institutional structures and history of interagency activities. Successful partnerships must have satisfactory accountability arrangements and systems for auditing, assessing and monitoring partnership activities. Successful partnerships require adequate leadership and management.

These process concepts are designed to ensure that the partnerships are ‘healthy’ in terms of encouraging effective working relationships between people and organisations from different cultures, sectors and disciplines. Another way of conceptualising success is in terms of achieving outcomes both in terms of changes in the level, organisation and delivery of services, and/or, improvement in the health status, well being or quality of life of citizens. In relation to these, the literature review suggests the following dimensions:

- Improvements in the accessibility of services to users
- Making the distribution of services more equitable which involves examining the distribution of services in relation to need
- Improvements in the efficiency, effectiveness or quality of services delivered through partnerships
- Improvements in the experiences of staff and carers
- Improvements in health status, quality of life or well being.

On the basis of extensive research in the fields of health and social care, Hudson and Hardy (2002) advance a set of six principles that are considered to be the key to successful partnerships (a Partnership Assessment Tool has also been developed on the basis of these). The key principles are:

1. Acknowledgement of the need for partnership: this relates to the extent to which there is a history of partnership in an area, and whether there is a recognition of the need to work in this way. A previous track record of successful partnership
working is unsurprisingly an important determinant of future potential. In terms of an appreciation of partner interdependencies, it is important to recognise the difference between ‘domain dissensus and consensus’ – in other words, where it is legitimate for organisations to work together, and where organisations have core business that they would expect to undertake with little or no reference to other bodies.

2. Clarity and realism of purpose: this relates to visions, values and objectives, the extent to which they should be made explicit, and the importance of securing ‘quick wins’ for long term progress (Bryson, 1988)

3. Commitment and ownership: this relates to issues of leadership, entrepreneurship and institutionalisation. It also recognises the importance of dedicated boundary spanners who are skilled in this area of inter-agency working.

4. Development and maintenance of trust: trust is considered to be hugely influential in partnership settings at all levels – individual, professional and organisational. Although joint working is possible with minimum levels of trust, there are limitations; trust is implicated in issues of territorial disputes, professional jealousies and resource protection. Barber (1983) is quoted as reflecting that: “trust is, of course, hard won and easily lost, which means that the maintenance of trust is an endless and reciprocal task”. The importance of having the ‘right people’ in partnership is underscored by the importance of trust, the conduct of meetings need to be sensitive to partners with differential power, status and access to resources.

5. Establishment of clear and robust partnership arrangements: including minimising elaborate bureaucratic procedures and structures whilst clarifying accountability arrangements and resource commitments. Recognising when partnerships no longer function or have achieved defined tasks is very important.

6. Monitoring, review and organisational learning: refers to the need to be fastidious in terms of identifying the benefits and outcomes of partnership working both in terms of achievement of service aims and objectives, and assessing how well the partnership process has proceeded. Transferring learning into organisational heartlands and associated service areas is important in this context.

The authors are honest in their assertion that: “even if adherence to such principles does not itself guarantee successful partnership, ignoring them is likely to hinder or undermine partnership working”.

Finally, focussing on an international perspective from the home care sector in Canada, McWilliam et al (2003) advance the cause of a flexible, client-driven partnership approach involving personal and organisational level interventions based on building
trust and understanding, making connections, developing a sharing culture and creating mutual knowledge and understanding.

Translating these principles into practice, the authors report on strategies for building an empowering partnership approach detailed in Figure 18.

**Figure 18: Strategies for Building an Empowering Partnership Approach**

*(McWilliam et al, 2003)*

**Strategies for Building an Empowering Partnership Approach**

- partnering organisations have developed an introductory training programme
- ‘Train the trainer’ approach to enable client care teams to foster reflective practice, self-evaluation and interpersonal exchanges, and to hone partnership skills and implementing flexible, client-driven care
- regular team conferencing to build on formal education
- performance partnership plan to replace traditional staff evaluation strategy
- communication plan directed at clients, public and caregivers
- creation of experiential learning opportunities
- through a formal memorandum of understanding, partnering organisations have re-organised staff into ‘neighbourhood teams’
- leadership is provided through an Inter-Agency Leadership Partnership
- specific policy and procedural changes support and sustain knowledge uptake and skills development e.g. new client assessment form
- revisions to the protocol for care management have promoted the implementation of flexible, client driven care
- performance appraisal have been revised to focus on assessment of progress toward care partnerships – they emphasise the equitable contribution of the knowledge, status, and authority of all partners, and take an empowering, mutually respectful, formative, rather than summative, evaluation process
- introduction of a system of reward and recognition of employee performance reinforces the partnership building process
- success stories are reported via partnering organisation communication lists
- a learning organisation is created through a shared continuous improvement infrastructure
- small, solution-focused work groups assemble on an ad hoc basis to address priority issues and projects; thee are self-governing teams with members from across the partnering organisations
POLICY OR SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Welsh Assembly Guidance (2002) for the establishment of Children and Young People’s Partnerships across Wales includes an annex which sets out the characteristics of effective partnerships. These are believed to be:

• securing clarity of purpose and role
• nurturing the right attitudes and process which involves investing in time to build good working relationships and understanding; ensuring regular commitment to partnership meetings and the cultivation of a ‘partnership’ mindset; an appreciation of differential power relationships; a willingness to be innovative and promote dialogue about best practice and evidence-based studies; an insistence on transparent and democratic decision making and an agreed approach to conflict resolution; a leader that can promote a culture of mutual trust and dialogue; and the dedicated support of a partnership co-ordinator
• developing a strategic approach which focuses on direction and priority setting and resource allocation; linking the work of the partnership into the mainstream of member organisations; developing a systematic approach to assessing and analysing need and reviewing effectiveness; developing links to other major initiatives and funding programmes; fostering commitment from senior levels of organisations; investing in development and training; and clarifying accountability arrangements.
• Monitoring and evaluation based on clear objectives and targets with a focus on outcomes and partnership processes; promoting constant learning; developing common performance management systems; effectiveness measured in relation to outcomes for user and the effectiveness of relationships between partners
• Representation and inclusiveness particularly to encourage the less powerful and resourced groups through peer support, funding, childcare, capacity building and training; effective meetings of partnerships should aim at a group size between 8 and 18; governance issues should be formalised to identify how business is transacted and managed.

In the field of community safety, a guide to partnership working (Nacro, 2001) sets out an outline plan for effective partnership working which is based on a number of key themes with suggested actions for the partnership as a whole and for each partner agency. The themes are: establishing a vision for the partnership; clarifying roles and contributions; enabling all agencies to make a contribution; ensuring the partnership
has adequate resources; establishing a partnership structure with clear lines of accountability and decision making procedures; establishing appropriate partnership processes; establishing a culture for the partnership and enabling it to deliver on its targets; minimise culture clashes; set up communication channels; and implement a system of annual reviews. The guide also underscores the importance of people as: “any partnership is only as good as the individuals who form it”, and effective teamwork is highlighted so issues such as leadership, responsibility, role, accountability, support, diversity and training are paramount.

POLICY AND SECTOR BASED PARTNERSHIPS: GENERAL
Huxham and Vangen (2005) offer ten tips for collaboration in general which include budgeting sufficient time for collaborative activities; protecting your own agenda but being prepared to compromise; look to achieve small wins to build trust; focus on communication; allow boundary persons to act with autonomy; act both facilitatively and directly; and finally, don’t do it unless you have to! As part of the WORD programme sponsored by the National Assembly of Wales, research has been published on the collaborative working capabilities of Local Health Groups (Link et al, 2000a). A report considered the fundamental prerequisites of a successful collaboration to be that:

- All key stakeholders must be identified and involved
- Each partner organisation should be demonstrably committed to the collaboration, represented by similarly committed individuals
- There should be equity and respect between partners to allow the development of mutual trust
- A clear and explicit vision of working should be developed and agreed by all partners with realistic, measurable and attainable goals and objectives
- All elements of the partnership need to be reviewed regularly
- Each partner needs to clearly understand the role and responsibility of each agency
- Good systems of communication are vital
- There needs to adequate dedicated resources – staff, budget and time
- A realistic timetable

A related report (Link et al, 2000b) goes on to produce a so-called tool – a Partnership Development Framework for Interagency Working- that can be used by health and social care partnerships to help maximise their potential. This is essentially a simple check list of factors involved in interagency collaboration grouped around organisational and cultural issues, clarity of partnership, managing change and implementation of the partnership.
Finally, in their research on partnerships within Wales, Bristow et al (2003) identified four key areas of underperformance which needed to be addressed:

- **Conflicting goals:** currently there were too many conflicting demands made on individual partnerships, particularly the strategic ones such as the HSCWB partnerships. Although goal ambiguity may be a route to securing initial ‘buy-in’ to partnerships, in the longer term, lack of specificity about common purpose is a recipe for ineffectiveness. Therefore, clear objectives are important, although these can be flexible, and partners need to agree on their likely contribution in terms of staff, time and money. Agreed protocols are helpful here.

- **Contested roles:** partnerships are unlikely to be successful if members are vying with each other for the same roles and responsibilities, or do not understand how their assets complement those of other partners.

- **Confused authority:** the number of partnerships and the complexity of their interactions raise important questions about lines of accountability and control; uncertainty of powers and position can create conflict and confusion; some partnership structures duplicate other arrangements and there is little ‘joining up’.

- **Constrained capacity:** there was ‘partnership overload’ and the burden fell on a small reservoir of individuals.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

The Communities First Programme in Wales is a good example of an initiative that centres on the formation of local, community-based partnerships. This programme is the subject of an ongoing evaluation but initial findings on the progress of the many individual partnerships across Wales identify a number of interesting perspectives.

The assessment was undertaken following the use of a ‘partnership health check’ tool developed by local authorities (www.lgpartnerships.com) and customised by the evaluation team. The original tool required an assessment to be made against a number of elements including common interest supersedes personal matters; partners are mutually accountable for tasks and outcomes and partners strive to develop and maintain trust, and other elements were added to this for the evaluation of the Communities First partnerships including a common vision, existence of a good co-ordinator and team, and statutory partner involvement at senior level. The main findings (Welsh Assembly Government, 2005) of this exercise were:

- There was a lack of understanding across Wales on the role and function of Communities First and this often represented a barrier to progress – misinformation and the lack of a good communication plan were cited as major faults.
• The passage of time was important in achieving maturity in partnerships
• The lack of access to support agencies inhibited effective progress
• There was no clear evidence that the legal structure or composition of the partnerships had a major impact on how the partnerships worked. More important: “were the personalities and attitudes of the members and trust and respect between them, the resources they bring to the table and how far they have reached a common vision and understanding of how Communities First operates” (Welsh Assembly Government, 2005: 83)
• There needs to be an acceptance that induction, training and professional support are an important part of effective partnerships
• Partnership agreements, constitutions and protocols for roles and responsibilities and conduct of business should be in place irrespective of whether the partnership has a formal legal structure or not
• Some partnerships tended to stagnate because of inexperience of how to proceed, lack of leadership or a conflict of view of personalities
• The skills and experience of co-ordinators was very important in nurturing effective partnerships
• Although a greater scale of resources available to partnerships may appear to affect the rate of progress of partnerships, the research evidence concluded that this was not necessarily the case and other factors could compensate such as the experience of a local co-ordinator or commitment of local people

KEY LEARNING POINTS
• A ‘hierarchy of evidence’ exists which ranges in quality and robustness. Evidence-based studies represent the top end of this spectrum but the evidence from these is comparatively modest. A variety of other material and sources offer additional learning on the dynamics, determinants, mechanics and effectiveness of partnership working.
• It is useful to distinguish between different types of partnerships: strategic, sectoral and community-based and important to note where the challenges facing each are common or distinctive
• The potential of local partnerships is often contingent and/or constrained by a wider set of factors including central government policy and the history of collaborative working in an area.
• A number of important factors appear to be influential in determining the effectiveness of partnership working. These are:
1. recognising the need for co-operative strategies but clearly defining the limits and potential of these from the perspectives of different partners
2. negotiated purpose, formulating aims which are clear and realistic, and minimising goal ambiguity
3. clarifying roles and responsibilities
4. promoting effective and appropriate leadership
5. building collaborative capacity in people, teams and organisations through learning, training and skills development
6. fostering trust and enhancing collaborative cultures
7. designing appropriate partnership structures with clear lines of accountability, reporting and membership; and ensuring that decision making arrangements are formalised through protocols or similar agreements legal or otherwise
8. ensuring resource availability through budget alignment and planning
9. recognising the problematic nature of delivery, determining what this constitutes and ensuring that effective implementation structures are installed
10. installing robust monitoring, evaluation and performance management frameworks

RECOMMENDED READING


8. EVALUATING COLLABORATION

INTRODUCTION
Evaluation occupies an uncomfortable place in policy makers’ hearts. For some it is a ‘necessary evil’ unloved but required, for others it is a largely ‘academic’ activity with little relevance to the real world of politics, policy making and practice, while for some it is a vital but overlooked and underused part of the policy making process itself. After being relatively marginalised in the 1980s and 1990s, in recent years, there has been a considerable resurgence of interest in evaluation. This can be traced, in part, to the advent of ‘evidence-based policy making and practice’ which ‘New Labour’ emphasised in its 1997 election slogan of ‘what counts is what works’ (Davies et al, 2000). Broadly, this policy aims to improve the evidence base for the effectiveness of policy interventions, and support the more effective use of evidence in policy formulation and service delivery. The drive for evidence-based policy making is partly informed by Government’s need to make best use of public spending, and partly by the complexity and apparent intractability of the policy challenges facing policy makers and practitioners.

As so much government policy was contingent upon collaboration between actors from different sectors, finding out ‘what works’ would require attention to be paid to the evaluation of the contribution made by collaboration and partnership to the achievement of public purpose. This imperative was underpinned by the fact that the existing evidence base on the impact of collaboration (in the 1990s) was very limited. For example Hallett (1995) concluded that: “there is limited evidence about the outcomes of co-ordination, reflecting both a rather uncritical acceptance of its benefits in much of the literature and the methodological difficulties of establishing links between co-ordination and outcomes”. This normative view of partnerships was also highlighted by Ling (2000: 82) who observed that partnership ”is seen, generally as a ‘good thing’ although very little empirical work has been done to justify either the claim that policies in the past failed because of a lack of partnership or that new partnership arrangements have demonstrably improved outcomes”.

UTILISATION OF EVALUATION RESEARCH
Although the credibility of evaluation and research has improved overall in recent years, their impact on policy design and practice remains marginal in many instances (Coote et al, 2004). Weiss (1998) considers that: “it appears to take an extraordinary set of circumstances for research to influence policy decisions directly”. She continues that the conditions that are more likely to suit the instrumental use of research are if findings are
non-controversial; neither provoking rifts nor running into conflicting situations; if changes implied are small scale; if the environment is stable without big changes of leadership; and, when a programme is in crisis and nobody knows what to do. An evaluation of the impact of research in local government (Percy-Smith et al, 2003) was similarly gloomy. It concluded that the effects of research on policy were relatively small; that policy officers have typically acquired research functions without necessarily having the skills to discharge them effectively, and skills gaps existed in relation to the interpretation, appraisal, application and commissioning of research; that the dissemination of research within local authorities was uneven and unsystematic; that frontline officers were least likely to get access to the findings of research, although some professional groups had more acceptance than others of the value of research; that overall local government did not provide a culture that was supportive of research and that this was reflected in the relatively small resources dedicated to research and evaluation.

Percy-Smith et al (2003) concluded that the evidence from evaluation and research studies is more likely to impact on practice if:

• Policy makers and practitioners understand and believe in the benefits of using evidence
• Users of research are partners in the process of evidence generation
• Research is timely and addresses an issue that is relevant with a methodology that is relatively uncontested
• Results support existing political ideologies, are convenient and uncontroversial
• Results are reported with low degrees of uncertainty, are robust in implementation and can be implemented without incurring high costs if the decision needs to be reversed
• Researchers and key users seek implementation with skillful advocacy and great stamina

Powell et al (2004) summarise the picture in relation to evaluation in social care and health partnerships in the following way: “research that brings together rigorous and systematic evidence of the outcomes, causality and costs of partnerships has yet to be conducted” (p.314). They argue that the development of an evidence base in this area is weakened by problems of conceptualising success, of attributing successful outcomes to partnership arrangements, and by the absence of evidence on whether attributed benefits outweigh the costs of partnership working.

Leathard (2005:147) notes that “only by the 21st century has a quietly increasing number of studies addressed the outcomes of partnership working and collaborative endeavours”. However, the study also highlights a number of factors that appear to limit the impact of such research and evaluation and echo some of Powell et al’s findings:
Once evaluated, little appears to have taken place in response to the findings.

The constant process of change and re-organisation in this policy field make evaluation very difficult.

There is little basis for an overarching approach to evaluation because "with a range of bodies, organisations, individuals and research teams, all variously and separately involved with evaluation in this field, no overall targets nor commonly agreed interagency objectives have been established”.

The continuing structural divide between health and social care as evidenced in professional outlooks, values and competition for domains and procedures, is a barrier to effective evaluation.

Lastly, fundamental questions remain about for whom evaluation is intended, who is the best agency to undertake the task, and who should take responsibility for the outcomes.

Coote et al (2004) in an important study of 'what works' in the evaluation of complex policy interventions (necessarily based on collaboration) recommend that for evaluation to be valued and valuable in the future:

- there should be a sustained investment in time and resources to develop evaluation techniques, particularly the best ways of combining multiple methods;
- a broad consensus needs to be built about evaluation standards;
- a more open and extensive dialogue needs to be generated about the challenges of evaluating complex community-based initiatives;
- the value of involving practitioners in evaluation is recognised as is the opportunity for learning from their experience. This requires the development of skills and techniques to allow this to happen.

A key message from the reviews of research utilisation is that evaluation is as much a political as a technical exercise and its potential and limitations will in part be determined by the prevailing political context.

**APPROACHES TO EVALUATION**

Mackenzie and Benzeval (2005) identify three dominant paradigms in evaluation research:

- **Positivism.** Popular in the US in the 1960s and 1970s when government invested large amounts of money in complex interventions to address inequalities and influential in evaluation research in the UK. In this paradigm the aim of evaluation
was to measure the net impact of a given programme by controlling for contextual variables so that policy decisions might be taken about whether or not to continue the programme. The evaluator was a technical expert with skills in manipulating variables and measuring effects in an objective way and the method of choice was the randomized control trial. The approach was criticized on a number of fronts: it was very difficult to employ a purely experimental approach to these ‘real life’ policy interventions (for ethical as well as technical reasons); the findings themselves were inconclusive, despite the claims made for the power of the method; the approach was insufficiently sophisticated to help draw conclusions about why change did or did not occur (where it could be detected); the approach drew artificial distinctions between interventions and their context.

• **Realism and social constructionism.** This paradigm is one in which the idea of ‘objective knowledge’ is itself contested as participants bring with them into research and evaluation sets of values which inform how they construct knowledge. For some evaluation in this paradigm is concerned with using qualitative methods to uncover and reflect back to stakeholders the various perspectives that have been presented to the evaluator. Others argue that the evaluator needs to do more, and to make judgments about what may be competing or conflicting values. One variant within this paradigm sees evaluators as having a democratic duty to seek the views and perspectives of key stakeholders and to redress imbalances in power in presenting findings (2005:46). Critics of this paradigm argue that it can often be very difficult to arrive at any generalisable conclusions at all because the evaluation is so context and/or task specific.

• **Theory based evaluation.** Unlike positivism and constructionism which are methods or data driven, this paradigm is theory driven. It was developed in recognition of the fact that existing approaches to evaluation had failed to grasp the complexity of the policy interventions that were the subject of examination and that this problem was likely to be intensified as policy interventions were becoming more complex in response to societal problems. The most well-known version of theory based evaluation is ‘Theories of Change’ (ToC) developed by the Aspen Institute’s Roundtable on Comprehensive Community Initiatives (Connell et al., 1995; Fulbright-Anderson et al., 1998). The approach is most simply defined as ‘a systematic and cumulative study of the links between activities, outcomes and contexts of the initiative’ (Connell and Kubisch, 1998, p. 35), and is undertaken with the evaluator
working with key stakeholders to elicit their theories of why, and under what set of contextual circumstances, a particular initiative is anticipated to lead to the desired long-term outcomes. This approach encompasses two distinct types of theory – implementation theory that focuses on how an intervention is put into practice as advocated by Wholey (1983) and Chen (1990), and programme theory that explains the rationale underlying the intervention’s design as advocated by Weiss (1995). Theory is not used as a term for grand formal reasoning, rather it is the more nebulous form of thinking that people do as a matter of course in planning and implementing solutions to problems.

The ToC assumes that affected stakeholders will be involved in developing and evaluating a relevant theory for the proposed intervention. Here ToC is reminiscent of responsive/interactive approaches to evaluation that seek to improve the quality of the intervention through the involvement of communities and officials. (Fetterman et al, 1996). An important assumption of the ToC approach is that the involvement of stakeholders will extend ownership of the intervention, assist its implementation and support evaluation in part by enabling evaluators to target their efforts more precisely. The question of ownership is examined by Sullivan and Stewart (2006) in relation to three major comprehensive community initiatives in England. The authors conclude that that there is little evidence of ‘total’ ownership in these examples but suggest other possibilities for ownership referred to as ‘elite’ (ownership by the most powerful members of the collaboration), ‘principal’ (ownership by the funders of the initiative) and ‘evaluator’ (ownership by those leading the evaluation of the initiative).

The evaluation of Heath Action Zones in England was based on a ToC approach (Barnes et al, 2005). Reflecting on their experience of using this approach, the evaluators argue that ToC can sharpen the planning and implementation of an initiative, facilitate the measurement and data collection elements of the evaluation process, and help to reduce problems associated with causal attribution of impact. However, the ToC approach is not without problems. In the HAZ evaluation a number of practical problems were experienced including timing (the evaluation did not begin until after the initiative itself so it was not able to capture the formulation of early ToC in localities), resource limitations (which reduced the amount of interaction with individual HAZs), and government policy change which reduced commitment to the initiative. However, the evaluators also came up against some conceptual problems including: understanding and responding to the real life complexity of
HAZ; measuring impact in an environment where stakeholders had very different views about what impact meant and the evidence base was often partial (Sullivan et al, 2004); and the role of the evaluator, particularly in relation to the existence of competing theories of change (Sullivan et al, 2002).

Another theory-based approach to evaluation that is ‘home grown’ is Realistic Evaluation (Pawson and Tilley, 1997). Its central tenet is that ‘it is not programmes as such that work but the generative mechanism that they release by way of providing reasons and resources to change behaviour’ (p. 36). This is partly because social programmes are generally loose confederations of plans, policies and activities and therefore to consider them to be a united whole is facile. Secondly, they are implemented in a variety of pre-existing contexts and communities that represent a rich interweaving of potentially relevant factors such as social capital, race relations and organisational cohesiveness.

From a policy point of view, the evaluation findings that matter are those that provide judgements about what worked where, with whom and why. Thus, Pawson and Tilley (1997) argue that the key role of evaluation specific contexts, the intervention and its outcomes and, in particular, to understand the mechanisms by which an intervention leads to certain outcomes within certain contexts. Not only will the implementation of a social programme be implemented differently in different areas but also there will be conflicting theories about the mechanisms by which it will be thought to impact on key outcomes. Realistic evaluation, therefore, shares with Theories of Change a concern for both context and the testing of theory. The approaches are, however, different in how they conceptualise theory and in the scale of the programmes within which they are believed to be best suited to generating learning.

Central to the task of evaluation is measuring impact which is about understanding: “how successful the program is in achieving its purposes and/or through what kinds of causal mechanisms it will operate” (Chen, 1990: 143). Establishing what in fact constitutes success from the perspectives of different stakeholders is fundamental, as is defining the criteria to measures success and the choice of evidence to undertaken the task (Sullivan et al, 2004; Sullivan and Skelcher, 2002). Some indicators of success can be measured in the form of outputs, usually on a quantitative basis, others are more qualitative in nature as they rely on ‘stories of individual transformation’. Again, the importance of recognising the process elements of partnership working are increasingly seen as a legitimate benefit, as are the cultivation of new ways of thinking and working.
within a whole-system. Arguably, the most difficult evaluation challenge relates to evaluating outcomes because of their inherent complexity and the difficulty associated with developing valid and robust causal mechanisms.

Evaluation which involves communities has also gained in popularity in part because communities are often cited as ‘partners’ in the development and delivery of particular policy interventions, and also because evaluation approaches such as ‘theories of change’ emphasise the importance of involving communities where they are stakeholders in the intervention. Some evaluation endeavours are explicitly designed to empower a local community to be involved in the evaluation processes (Cockerill et al, 2000). Asthana et al (2002) developed an evaluation strategy which aims to: “increase stakeholders’ awareness and recognition of the full spectrum of issues that influence and characterise partnership working” (p. 782). They refer to a conceptual ‘coat hanger’ to evaluate partnership working which is based on an adaptation and extension of the Partnership Assessment Tool developed by Hudson et al (2000). The framework examines context, inputs, processes, outcomes, principles and impacts at two levels of analysis – organisational and operational.

**Partnership Health Checks and Toolkits**

A wide range of toolkits and frameworks have been developed to assess the process or health of partnerships in many policy areas. The underlying aim of these toolkits is to link theory with practice, although the robustness of the evidence-base of some of the theoretical frameworks presented is variable. A well used example is the Nuffield Institute’s Partnership Assessment Tool (Hardy, 2000) which has been developed as a result of a strong evidence base (See Chapter 7), and there are many others such as the Audit Commission Effective Partnership Working Checklist for Action (Audit Commission, 1998), the Partnership Readiness Framework (Greig and Poxton, 2000), and the Strategic Alliance Formative Assessment Rubric (Gajda, 2004).

A comprehensive study commissioned by Communities Scotland and the Community Planning Task Force (Rocket Science, 2003) examined a range of currently available partnership toolkits. It concluded, on the basis of 19 examples, that:

- a wide range of toolkits can be of value, although many ‘toolkits’ duplicated each other
- many tools were relatively simple and not sophisticated enough to reflect the complexities of partnerships
- some ‘toolkits’ are inconsistent and gaps exist
- many ‘toolkits’ are transferable across policy areas up to a point
- ‘Toolkits’ address some but not all of the evaluation challenges posed by partnerships.
Drawing on Benson’s (1975 and 1983) concept of an inter-organisational network, Hudson (2006b) constructs a framework or ‘components of a holistic perspective’ to broadly assess the effectiveness of partnership working (Figure 18). The application of this framework is used in two stages. The first aims to summarise the current state of a partnership in respect of each of the eight dimensions using a commentary in which progress is assessed as high, medium or low, and the second stage involves making a judgement about the relationship between the variables.

**Figure 19: The Components of a Holistic Perspective (Hudson, 2006b)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPONENT</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideological consensus</td>
<td>The extent to which there is agreement regarding the nature of the tasks facing the partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain consensus</td>
<td>The extent to which there is agreement regarding the role and scope of each partner’s contribution to the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive evaluation</td>
<td>The extent to which those in one part of the partnership have a positive view of the contribution of those in another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work co-ordination</td>
<td>The extent to which autonomous partners are prepared to align working patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfilment of programme requirements</td>
<td>The degree of compatibility between the goals of the partnership, and the goals of the individual stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of a clear domain of high social importance</td>
<td>The extent to which there is support for the objectives of the social importance of partnership from the range of affected constituencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance of resource flows</td>
<td>The extent to which there is adequate funding for the objectives of the partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence of the organisational paradigm</td>
<td>The extent to which stakeholders see themselves as working for the partnership rather than representing their constituency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
KEY LEARNING POINTS

- A new ‘evidence-based culture in public policy in the UK has raised the profile and importance of evaluation.
- Evaluation of collaborative working is a complex conceptual, methodological and practical challenge.
- Problems relate in particular to determining additionality, causal effects and sustainability.
- Evaluation requires a commitment of time and resources, and needs to be built into the policy process from its inception not as an afterthought.
- In the knowledge that the impact of evaluation studies on policy and practice is limited, extra efforts need to be invested in ensuring that various barriers are removed to dissemination and that steps need to be built into the process to maximise the potential for utilisation.
- There are different approaches to evaluation; some are methods led, others theory led. Some identify the evaluation as removed from the intervention, others see evaluation as closely linked and a means of improving policy development in a formative way. In some cases the evaluation is itself designed to explicitly empower communities.
- Evaluation approaches that recognise the importance of context and the range of often conflicting perspectives and interests of stakeholders have become popular in relation to the evaluation of complex public policy interventions. The ‘Theories of Change’ approach is one example, realistic evaluation another.
- The outcomes of collaboration are often hard to measure, in part because of the complexity of establishing causal relationships.
- Understanding the costs and benefits of partnership working can be achieved through a focus on process outcomes. A variety of partnership health check tools are available to measure the partnership process.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING


### Appendix 1: Drivers and Barriers to Integrated Working (Stewart et al, 2003)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drivers</th>
<th>Barriers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. National Policy Frameworks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Joined-up</td>
<td>• Piecemeal and contradictory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strategic</td>
<td>• Promote ‘projectitis’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Realistic</td>
<td>• Unrealistic change agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B. Local planning context</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Planning and decision cycles mesh</td>
<td>• Incompatible planning and decision cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Joint acceptance of unmet need</td>
<td>• Not needs led</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agreed, comprehensive vision, owned at all levels</td>
<td>• Issues seen in isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C. Operational factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relations between partners</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Trust permits risk taking</td>
<td>• Lack of trust prevents risk-taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Open, honest communication</td>
<td>• Defensive, limited communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘Can do’ culture</td>
<td>• Sees institutional and legal barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organisational culture</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collective responsibility publicly demonstrated</td>
<td>• Senior figures devalue/disown common purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexible enough to learn as goes</td>
<td>• Presses on regardless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change management</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Agreed roles and responsibilities</td>
<td>• Unclear responsibilities, conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Staff valued</td>
<td>• Staff expendable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enabling staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Centred on user need</td>
<td>• Tribal, protectionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Willing to take risks</td>
<td>• Covers own back</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘We have nothing to lose’</td>
<td>• ‘we have everything to lose’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ‘We will find a way’</td>
<td>• ‘no way’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional behaviour</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• User focused</td>
<td>• only seen from agencies’ agenda; invisible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Visible benefits shared</td>
<td>• winners and losers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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