# Working with the public sector: what promotes effective relationships across and between sectors?

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# Working with the public sector

Key developments:

- Rise in public sector involvement in delivering public services (Rees and Mullins 2016)

- Decline in grants and increase in contracts

- Rise of 'hybrid organisations' which span sectors or exhibit features traditionally associated with voluntary, private, public sectors (Billis 2010)

- Large academic literature on TSO *experiences* of contracting/commissioning and impact on TSO *values*. Less attention given to *processes* and *practices.*

# Context is everything?

The '*third sector field'* as a complex web of different organisational groupings with vested interests and particular values and rules structured in various hierarchical relationships to one another mediated by umbrella organisations and the state. (Macmillan et al. 2013: 7)

Municipalities create *'civil society regimes'* ranging from liberal, to corporatist, to social democratic, which create different power dynamics, opportunities for involvement and relationships with third sector orgs in delivering public services. (Arvidson et al. 2018)

Localised interrelationships made between the voluntary sector orgs involved in social care, informal carers (i.e. families and friends), and local public sector agencies created varied '*geographies of care'* and complex fields of provision. (Milligan 2001)

# Questions for discussion

- What does a good partnership with the statutory sector look like?

- What factors help or hinder this?

- Are there particular features of your subsector (i.e. area of provision) or geographical location that shape relationships between the state and voluntary sector?

# Reflections from mental health field:

**Independent:**

Does not accept stat sector funding or contracts

Can self-refer, not gatekept

**Interdependent**

Combination of funding sources

Will work with stat services and refer in and out but can self refer as well

**Integrated**

CCG or local authority contracts, with conditions.

Gatekept services only, no self-referral

# Independent -"in-between"- Integrated

**Richmond Fellowship Crisis Houses – various locations**

- Crisis houses situated in areas with acute bed shortages
- RF offers capital for property, CCG funds staff and service
- Access by professional referral only

**Maytree Sanctuary for the suicidal**

- Short-stay Sanctuary Set up by a Samaritans worker in response to personal experience
- Accepts no statutory funding
- Referrals mainly by self or carer

**Beachy Head Chaplaincy Team, Eastbourne**

- Suicide hotspot – chaplaincy service does direct outreach on cliff top
- Combines with street triage (police/NHS MH service) for assessment or to be taken to crisis lounge at A&E
- Funded by public donations only

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# Reflections from targeted youth support field

- Historically a mixed economy

- 2000s – nationally funded programmes involving a range of providers and Govt depts (some funds later devolved to LAs). Audit Commission describes complex national funding mechanisms as 'inefficient'.

- 2010s – reduced funding and removal of ringfenced funding; service closures and mergers; integrated services and outsourcing; prioritisation of flagship NCS.

- Consequences for state-voluntary partnerships/relationships and broader voluntary youth sector

# Questions for discussion

- Does *financial* integration mean loss of *political* independence?

- What possibilities are there for balancing the opportunities and risks of working in partnership?

- What happens if we think beyond two-way relationships when considering these questions?

# More than providers and purchasers…

- "If commissioning systems are focused primarily on procuring and managing large contracts, vital intelligence from a range of voices and a diverse set of providers is likely to be lost." (Livingstone and Macmillan 2015: 230)

- Benefits of a market stewardship approach – and implications for commissioner and voluntary sector organisations?

  - user and provider engagement

  - setting the rules

  - monitoring the market

  - adjusting the rules

    (after Gash 2013)

# The value of infrastructure?

"An LIO can save the public sector time and money by providing a [single front door](#) to the sector, not just as a 'provider', but as a partner in coproduction of services, engagement of local stakeholders, and raising the voice of communities (for example through [quarterly forums](#) or [special interest groups](#)). An LIO can build supply chains of suppliers for large contracts through [consortia](#) or lead partner/subcontractor arrangements, and bring funding into the sector."

(Pedro 2018)

# Questions for discussion

- What kinds of network do you join and/or participate in? Why?

- Does your organisation join or use the services provided by infrastructure organisations?

- Does your organisation contribute to strategic discussions that shape commissioning priorities?

- What would help incorporate a greater range of voices in strategic planning and commissioning?

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