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BIRMINGHAM

'WHEN
TOMORROW
COMES'

The future of local public services

University of Birmingham
Policy Commission
The report

In collaboration with Demos

DEMOS

University of Birmingham Policy Commissions

University of Birmingham Policy Commissions bring leading figures from the public, private and third sectors together with Birmingham academics to generate new thinking on contemporary issues of global, national and civic concern.

Public service reform is an obvious focus for the first University of Birmingham Policy Commission because of the immediate priority given to it by the Coalition Government following the 2010 General Election, and because of its significance for service users, communities, and the public, private and third sectors.

Members of the Policy Commission - The future of local public services
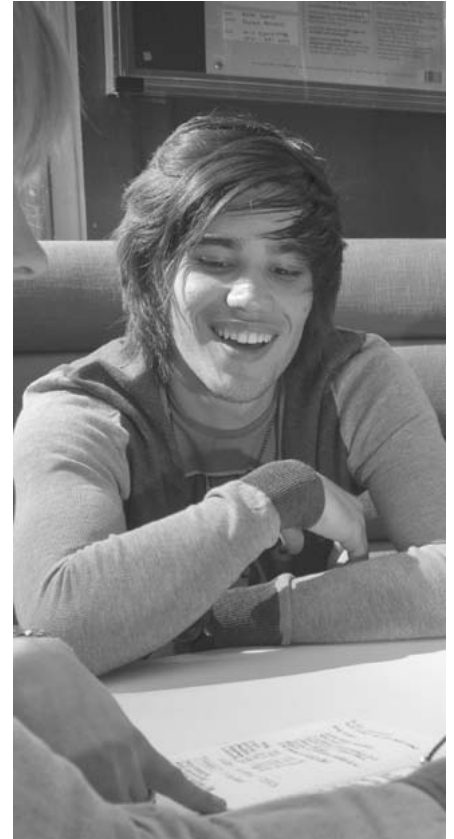
- Deborah Cadman OBE (Chair and Chief Executive, East of England Development Agency)
- Professor Pete Alcock (Professor of Social Policy and Administration and Director of the Third Sector Research Centre, University of Birmingham)
- Derrick Anderson CBE (Chief Executive, Lambeth Council)
- Professor Tony Bovaird (Professor of Public Management and Policy, Institute of Local Government Studies and the Third Sector Research Centre, University of Birmingham)
- Rt Hon. Liam Byrne (Labour MP, Birmingham Hodge Hill)
- Tiger de Souza, (Knowledge and Innovation Manager v The National Young Volunteers' Service)
- Andrew Dick (Chief Executive, Envision – youth charity)
- Professor Kathryn Ecclestone (Professor of Education and Social Inclusion, University of Birmingham)
- Sam Monaghan (Barnardo's Regional Director in the Midlands)
- Rt Hon. James Morris (Conservative MP, Halesowen and Rowley Regis)
- Nick Sharman (Director of Local Government, A4e)
- Jane Slowey CBE (Chief Executive, Foyer Federation)

Policy Commission Executive

- Professor Helen Sullivan (Professor of Government and Society, University of Birmingham)
- Audrey Nganwa (Policy Commissions Research Associate, University of Birmingham)
- Kay Withers (Senior Associate, Demos)

Publication

- Carrie Bennett and Pauline Thorington-Jones (University of Birmingham)

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Foreword by the Chair of the Policy Commission

I am delighted to Chair the first University of Birmingham Policy Commission into the future of local public services. Our existing blueprints for designing public services do not meet the challenges ahead of us and we need to draw on all available resources to find a way forward. The Policy Commission is an important attempt to bring together evidence of past attempts at reform with new research and thinking to generate a set of policy options for the future of local public services in England.

Guided by its expert Commissioners from the worlds of academia, policy and practice, the Policy Commission has focused on what local state, civic and private actors can do, want to do and need to do in order to meet the challenges of designing and delivering local public services in a society that supports individual and collective action, social justice and local democracy.

I am particularly proud that the Policy Commission has championed the voices of young people in its work. So often, policy reformers and thinkers ignore this untapped resource of creativity and enthusiasm. Their ideas and views have shaped a proposal for a new system of Local Public Support to replace the fragmented public service arrangements currently in place. This system of Local Public Support is built on a framework that is robust yet flexible to allow for local diversity and continued adaptation as circumstances change.

The Commissioners and I would like to acknowledge the intellect, patience, diplomacy and skill deployed by Helen Sullivan, ably assisted by Audrey Nganwa, in distilling hours of discussion and lively debate into a report we can all be proud of.

Deborah Cadman OBE
Chair

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Executive summary

Setting the agenda

Building on the work of previous Governments, the Coalition has set about a bold programme of public service reform. From free schools to neighbourhood planning, service commissioning and the involvement of private and third sector providers - no citizen or public servant is immune to the Coalition's agenda. Driven by Localism and the devolution of power the reform programme promises a dramatically different system of public services.

Reform on this scale requires that we review our assumptions about public services, and, crucially who should influence them or has a right to them. At the same time longer term trends indicate increasing demands on public services and finances, challenging us to rethink and reshape established approaches to what we deliver and how.

Guided by its expert Commissioners from the worlds of academia, policy and practice, and working in collaboration with the think-tank Demos, the University of Birmingham Policy Commission examined the potential impact of a localist reform agenda, drawing conclusions and making recommendations to inform current debates and offering longer-term proposals for the future of local public services. Four key questions shaped the Policy Commission's work:

- How will public service roles and relationships be redesigned and what are the implications for citizens, service users and providers?
- What contribution can behaviour change approaches and techniques make to proposals for the future design of local public services?
- How can we reproduce success and mitigate failure in a localist system?
- What will local government's role be?

Young people were a key focus for the Policy Commission. They are an important constituency likely to be affected in multiple ways by the current reforms but their voice in public policy debates is not as strong as others'. The Policy Commission drew directly on young people's experiences as service users, volunteers and citizens and explored their views about public services, Localism and the Big Society. It was advised by the National Youth Reference Group and worked closely with Envision – a youth empowerment charity.

The shape of the agenda - questions, themes and issues

The combined impact of the Coalition's proposals could bring into being a new settlement of 'local public services' - with implications for local government, public service providers, workers and citizens. This required that the Policy Commission consider:

- The nature and significance of the 'local' dimension to public services.
- What it means for services to be 'public'.
- Whether the idea of 'services' is sufficient.

Activating tomorrow's citizens - young people and public services

'Active citizenship' is at the heart of Localism and the Big Society. The prospect of citizens having power to do things for themselves, as well as doing more for, and with, others runs through Coalition proposals from personalisation through co-production to community control. The Policy Commission explored the implications of the Coalition's plans for public service reform on young people as civic actors, service users and volunteers.

The good news for policy makers' wanting to encourage 'active citizenship', is that young people are prepared, up to a point, to get more involved in shaping and running local services, for themselves and for others. The evidence presented to the Policy Commission indicates that policy makers need a range of strategies at their disposal to engage with young people in different circumstances and that those strategies must include provision for young people to develop themselves and their skills. Underpinning successful citizen-decision maker, user – provider relationships are shared commitment, mutual respect for each others' expertise, appropriate resourcing, and a focus on lasting change in services and/or outcomes.

The bad news is that young people feel that they are excluded from decision making and not taken seriously by people in power. Changing this perception requires decision makers' to view young people differently and to develop new ways of engaging and working with them to generate positive outcomes.

The Policy Commission's recommendations are:

- Policy makers need to pay closer attention to the different local 'theories of active citizenship' that may be present amongst citizens, service users and public service providers and work with these rather than attempting to impose a single model.
- Policy makers should acknowledge the joint importance of activism as volunteer work in the service of others and activism as self-protective action and provide resources/make space for both to flourish.
- Continued resourcing of local infrastructure and support organisations that provide local citizens, including young people with the well balanced structured support they need to live 'everyday lives' and to become more actively engaged is essential to building a Big Society.
- The potential of 'asset' based approaches should be examined more fully to consider their applicability to a wider range of service areas.
- More evidence is needed of the impact of 'scaling up' of personalisation on service users, professionals, the management of risk, and outcomes.

- Public service providers need to improve their understanding of the ways in which co-production occurs to inform future decisions about public service design and delivery and the potential and limits of 'collective co-production'.
- Public authorities and service providers should focus on building the knowledge and skills associated with co-production and collaboration, identifying how these need to be distributed within their organisations and putting in place measures to support their development.

Influencing tomorrow's behaviour - options and evidence

Behaviour change strategies and approaches are important elements of the Coalition's agenda for public services. Typified by 'nudge', but embracing a wide range of activities, behaviour change is an influential factor in proposals for designing and redesigning services. The Policy Commission examined the efficacy and evidence base for behaviour change approaches and techniques

The Policy Commission concludes that we still know too little about whether and how behaviour change interventions 'work', and that too often assertion is mistaken for evidence. The complexity of factors influencing an individual's decision making were emphasised to the Policy Commission by the reflections of the NYRG - young people who have been on the receiving end of a variety of attempts to influence their choices. In addition the emphasis that young people themselves place on the role of the family and not the state as the legitimate source of influence suggests that moves to 'professionalise' character development maybe misplaced. Finally, the Policy Commission is concerned that the political, moral and ethical dimensions to behaviour change strategies risk getting lost in focus on the 'science' of strategies such as 'nudge' etc. The Policy Commission concludes that there is a need for clear principles to inform decisions that public authorities and other organisations might make about appropriate interventions.

The Policy Commission's recommendations are:

- The Policy Commission warns against too powerful a role for the state but urges politicians to encourage debate that goes beyond technical considerations of having good evidence to explore who is responsible for behaviour change in the interfaces between the national and local state and its various agencies, the individual and her or his local community, family and other networks.
- Interventions should be designed and implemented at a local level, where joint/dual strategies that i) use deliberative approaches within local contexts to come up with the desired outcomes (giving them legitimacy) and then ii) use approaches that encourage those outcomes.
- There is a need to map the wide spectrum of behaviour change approaches, and to consider their value within specific contexts, for particular behaviours. This could be done by central government or by an independent academic/research institution.
- Behaviour change mechanisms have to be situated within a broader governance context, where outcomes are identified and agreed through the practice of politics, and where the politics of behaviour change occurs within an agreed framework of governance principles that shape how resources are allocated and needs/aspirations are to be met.
- Interventions should not be based primarily on 'measurable' capabilities or skills since this encourages reductionist forms of training.
- Central government should scrutinise developments in economic modelling to assess the costs and benefits of behaviour change interventions as they could have significant implications for future public investment.
- The Policy Commission asks whether there needs to be a body similar to the Campbell Collaboration, to arbitrate debates about behaviour change interventions, and to identify principles and criteria for designing, implementing and evaluating appropriate interventions.

Designing tomorrow's services - changing roles and relationships

The Coalition's ambition is to extend private and third sector engagement in the delivery of public services and to reduce direct provision by the public sector, permanently reconfiguring patterns of public service delivery, and redefining public sector organisations as commissioners rather than direct providers of services. The Policy Commission examined the capacity of public, private and third sector organisations to work in new ways and with different resources.

The Policy Commission concluded that how far and in what ways public authorities and organisations should diversify service supply must be driven by the desire to improve outcomes for service users and communities whilst protecting social cohesion. Greater diversification will require improvements in commissioning practices and changes to service provider behaviours – both of which are significant challenges. If diversification is to lead to pluralism rather than privatisation then the Policy Commission believes that diversification needs to be more locally grounded and with a stronger democratic dimension.

The Policy Commission's recommendations are:

- Public authorities and commissioners need to be confident in their rationale for service diversification based on a clear understanding of the action required to achieve service and community outcomes and an awareness of the challenges.
- Public service commissioners need to ensure that the model of commissioning they adopt is appropriate to the circumstances, that commissioners have the necessary skills and that in cases of joint or shared commissioning involving potential providers, robust accountability arrangements are in place.
- Public service providers, from whatever sector, need to develop new ways of working that are more open, responsive and connected to a locality or service area in order to meet the challenges of joint or shared commissioning.
- Public authorities need to think more broadly and creatively with users and providers about what kind of support is required to achieve outcomes and who and how can best offer that.
- Form, mode and instrumentation should follow function in the design and delivery of services but without risking accountability or the viability of potential providers.
- As policy interventions become more complex to address particularly challenging outcomes, particular attention needs to be paid to the capacity of users to influence the design and delivery of these programmes and for politicians to hold providers to account.
- As users and other citizens play greater roles in the future in the co-commissioning, co-design, co-management, co-delivery and co-assessment of public services, clearer protocols will be needed to ensure that the governance of co-production is appropriate. In particular, it should not become a requirement, should not disadvantage those who cannot contribute, and should not become exploitative, pressurising the weak and vulnerable to give more of their time and energy than they wish.
- Third sector representative organisations need to monitor the impact of Big Society and 'public service' proposals to assess how far they act to enhance or limit the capacity of the third sector to fulfil its advocacy role.
- Public authorities and service providers develop an understanding of the knowledge and skills associated with collaboration and commissioning, identify how these need to be distributed within their organisations and put in place measures to support their development.
- All of those engaged in the delivery of public services, should be identified as 'public servants' who work from a common set of principles rooted in a shared ambition to improve outcomes for citizens and service users.

Supporting tomorrow's learning – success and failure in localism

The radical policy changes proposed by the Coalition in relation to behaviour change, Localism and diversification of service supply will stimulate a range of experiments in local public service design and delivery. Some of these experiments will fail and others will succeed. The Policy Commission reviewed existing evidence about how and why different approaches to delivering local public services fail and succeed, and considering how this can be used to anticipate and mitigate 'failure' as well as account for success in local public services and civic action.

The Policy Commission concludes that putting in place appropriate and sufficient resources to enable decision makers to make informed judgements about the success or failure of experiments is essential to maximise use of scarce resources. This will require drawing on a range of evaluation approaches and techniques. Learning more about and from failure will become more important in a context where we have few blueprints to guide us so making failure more likely, and where experimentation is occurring across and between sectors and will include experiments in self-help and self-organisation. This will require

more openness on the part of 'failed' initiatives or organisations. It will also require a cultural shift in public and policy makers' attitudes towards failure.

The Policy Commission's recommendations are:

- Commissioning processes should be regularly reviewed for intelligence about how they facilitate successful initiatives or contribute to failures. These reviews should involve providers and users in addition to commissioning staff.
- There is a need for evidence to be collected about the failure of self-help and self-organising initiatives in communities and neighbourhoods to assess what the potential and limits of self-help might be and what kinds of additional support might be needed in specific circumstances.
- The move from 'cost' to 'price' based contracting should be reversed if it adversely impacts either on smaller third sector providers or on service quality.
- There should be ongoing micro and macro evaluation of the respective impacts of public, private, third sector or hybrid service provision in terms of value for money, quality of provision, equality of access and user experience in order to inform future decisionmaking about the extension/contraction of particular initiatives.
- Public resources should be moved from ineffective programmes to evidence based ones, accompanied by clarity about what is acceptable as evidence, including young people's perspectives, and attention to questions of fidelity of programme design and impact of local contextual factors on implementation.

- Independent evaluation of interventions is a priority. It is essential that evaluations are clear about who is commissioning and funding them and that governments support and resource independent evaluations of proposed interventions.
- Central government should make funding available to support public service (re)design experiments, to encourage public service commissioners and providers to pursue new ideas, in a context of shared risk and rewards (through learning and transferability of successful initiatives).
- There is a need for a nationally co-ordinated system of support to aid the design, development and evaluation of public service experiments, the innovations that arise from these experiments, and their application in local contexts.
- Computer modelling and simulation could offer important insights into the potential and limits of proposed experiments, so helping to refine them prior to testing on the ground. Partnerships of public service commissioners and providers and universities and other research institutions should be encouraged to pursue these possibilities and take advantage of European and other funding where appropriate.
- Universities and other research and intelligence organisations should invest directly in working with service users and community groups to support the development of their capacity to undertake research and evaluation activities on their own behalf, enabling them to develop ideas for public service experiments as well as contributing their own evaluations of experiments in practice.

Inventing tomorrow's local government – challenges and opportunities

Local government is facing a number of challenges. Proposals for Localism and the Big Society challenge its authority, budget reductions challenge its capacity to act, and longer term political trends challenge its legitimacy. To meet these challenges local government will need to reinvent itself. The Policy Commission explored what we know about local government's capacity for reinvention and the options available to it.

The Policy Commission concludes that local government needs to reinvent itself as local community leader to meet the demands of future local public governance. To secure this role local government needs legitimacy with other public, private and third sector actors based on its capacity to act competently, justly and in the interests of local well-being in a context of scarce resources. It also needs democratic legitimacy with citizens and communities in a context where faith in representative politics and institutions is declining. This means developing meaningful roles for local councillors and going beyond representative institutions to work directly with and alongside citizens and communities to shape the values, policies and outcomes that will define the locality.

The Policy Commission's recommendations are:

- National and local government should work together to develop a vision for the future role and purpose of local government in a new environment. This should include a review of local government finance to give local government sources of finance which are driven more by local decisions and are more independent of central government interference.
- As community leaders local authorities should provide a democratically anchored framework within which local priorities can be set, reviewed and renewed. These need to be considered in the context of support that must be provided, support that is locally needed and support that could be provided. Citizens and users need to be involved in the processes of priority setting in a truly interactive fashion so that there is space for views to be represented, heard and opinions changed or new opinions formed.
- Local government has a key role in promoting citizenship amongst young people. It needs to acknowledge through its actions that young people are part of its communities and not separate from them. It needs to support citizens to become independent actors able to critique public policy and public services. It also has a role in reviewing the use of 'nudge' tactics to change young people's behaviour to ensure that they are being used appropriately.
- Improvements to transparency need to be accompanied by a more expansive and robust expression of accountability that go beyond the financial/performance measures to embrace narratives of why things happened and what might be learned. Local councillors have a key role as ward representatives, mediators of local interests and scrutineers of the actions of local government and other providers.
- Local authorities should consider whether it is easier for councillors to perform their democratic role if services are commissioned externally – does this avoid conflicts of interest for councillors or does it reveal a lack of capacity on their part to be responsible?

Shaping tomorrow's Localism – From deliberation to design

The Coalition's package of reforms for public services if implemented in full will bring into being a new settlement of 'local public services' - with significant implications for how we define and describe public services in the future, for any emerging social contract, and for local government, public service providers, workers and citizens. At present some of these proposed reforms are 'paused' and it is possible that the Coalition's proposals will suffer the same fate as previous attempts and fail to generate the kind of 'transformation' that some supporters wish. The lack of any clearly defined formal framework for the current array of proposals arguably implies that they deserve this fate.

The Policy Commission takes a rather different view. While not wishing to deny the significance of the public spending squeeze in general and the dramatic impact of front loaded local government spending cuts in particular, and regretting the apparent lack of coherence in thinking about the impact of the Coalition's public service reforms on localities, the Policy Commission does believe that the demands of the future will require public services to be delivered in different ways.

The Policy Commission's response is to propose a system of Local Public Support which continues to acknowledge the vital importance of an active state but also recognises that fulfilling citizens' aspirations and meeting their needs in the future will require the provision of new kinds of resources, interventions and/or services, involving citizens in new ways as well as contributions from the public, private and third sectors.

Local Public Support – a system for tomorrow

The Policy Commission advocates a system of Local Public Support that **co-ordinates all available resources (public, private, civic and personal) to offer 'helpful acts' of various kinds (connections, ideas, interventions, products, resources, services) to promote individual and collective well-being.**

Seven re-design principles underpin the system of Local Public Support which should be:

- Citizen centred
- Cost effective
- Democratically accountable
- Legible to citizens and users
- Outcome orientated
- Socially just
- Sustainable

Systems of Local Public Support will be as diverse as the range of localities, neighbourhoods, regions etc. but each should include the following features:

Democratically determined rights and entitlements to local public support

In a system of Local Public Support rights and entitlements to support are decided and determined through democratic deliberation involving the whole community. All democratic deliberation needs to be undertaken in the context of the principles of social justice and sustainability and public authorities, particularly local government, will have a responsibility to ensure that weaker/unpopular 'voices' are not marginalised in these deliberations.

Local priority setting in a democratic framework

The system of Local Public Support is driven by the local community priorities negotiated and agreed within a democratic framework that is anchored in the representative institution of local government.

Outcome based commissioning

Outcome based commissioning provides the mechanism for deciding what support will be offered and by whom. It should promote testing of a range of approaches to establish which work best.

Outcome based commissioning demands new behaviours and approaches from commissioners and providers, from whatever sector, particularly where commissioning is joint or shared. Openness, responsiveness and connectedness are key features of commissioner-provider relationships in a system of Local Public Support.

Co-production in the design and delivery of support

This is a way of saving scarce resources, by getting individuals and communities to make more of a contribution to their own and possibly others' well-being, e.g. using less and recycling more.

The experiences of some of the young people who gave evidence to the Commission suggested that engaging in co-production with service providers not only helped to create a better system of support but also enhanced their sense of being independent and responsible individuals, attributes they prized.

Dedicated resources for citizen/ community action

A system of Local Public Support is one which makes resources (human, physical and financial) available for citizens and communities to take action on their own behalf.

Some of these resources will be made available by or transferred from local public authorities or public service providers. However, as important will be the resources that are available from other sources e.g. the private sector and third sector, that enable citizens and communities to improve their own and others' well-being.

Combining preventative and responsive activity

A system of Local Public Support focuses on preventative activity as this can provide a more direct route to achieving positive outcomes and can reduce the need for expensive responsive interventions so saving scarce resources.

There is scope here to explore the potential and limits of behaviour change approaches and to examine the likely contribution of working with asset based models of intervention and support. A key instrument for such approaches is likely to be 'capabilities analysis', which explores what local people can do and are willing to do to contribute to local public support, without reducing either to measurable and trainable 'skills', to set alongside more traditional 'needs analysis'.

Plural provision where this supports outcomes

Form follows function in a system of Local Public Support. Who supplies support, of what type, in what way and how funded are all questions that are answered in relation to what offers the best outcome for individuals and the wider community.

There are opportunities here for innovations in new kinds of supply arrangements involving public, private, third sector and community bodies.

Local public support budget

A local public support budget operates flexibly. It makes use of the range of financial resources available from private, charitable and philanthropic sources.

There are opportunities for experiments in new kinds of funding for local public support including payment by results, social impact bonds, Tax Increment Financing, new local government fees and charges and more joined-up central government funding.

Powerful local politicians

A system of Local Public Support requires powerful local politicians who are able to shape and guide the system in ways that reflect local community priorities. They need to represent the views of those with limited resource power in decision making; and provide a robust framework for local accountability.

Systematic and shared learning

There should be multiple opportunities for systematic and shared learning in order that different aspects of support can be regularly reviewed and revised or replaced if they are not contributing to individual and community well-being.

Making the system work - the conditions for success

A system of Local Public Support will make new demands of citizens, outline new roles and skills for a more broadly defined group of public servants in the public, private and third sectors, place local government and local democracy at its centre, and require a new settlement between communities and central government.

Citizens as genuine co-authors of their well-being

A system of Local Public Support is based on the idea that citizens are genuine co-authors of their well-being. By this we mean that citizens are active contributors to creating and sustaining the good outcomes that they wish for themselves and their wider communities, but crucially, that they do not do so alone, but in conjunction with family, friends, state, third sector and the market.

The conditions for this to work are:

- **Capacity.** To act as co-authors citizens need agency; the wherewithal to act on their own behalves in relations with others. Agency is an expression of personal power which is linked to an individual's competence, capability and confidence and which may be expressed directly or through advocates.
- **Connectedness.** Connections with others can increase the resources, such as expertise, time and support that citizens have at their disposal to contribute to their well-being. Understanding how individuals are connected to each other and to wider society opens up discussions about belonging, fairness and solidarity and what it means to be a citizen 'co-author' whose actions impact both on individual and community well-being.
- **Control.** Co-authorship implies a degree of power and control, both over your own actions but also in exchanges with those who have traditionally exercised power on behalf, of or over, citizens. If citizens are to be active contributors to their own well-being then this requires that politicians, professionals and practitioners give up

control over decisions, budgets and services and help create the conditions for co-authorship to flourish.

■ **Context.** Citizens' capacity to act as co-authors will be influenced by the social, cultural and economic conditions of their neighbourhoods, localities or regions. Discrimination, poverty and inequality will place significant limits on the 'scope of possibility' for some individuals and communities.

Creating twenty-first century public servants

Public services have continued to be designed around professional specialisms even though the silo institutions these ideas created have long since ceased to be useful in achieving local results. They have continued to be viewed through the lens of the public sector even though voluntary and latterly private sector providers are well established in many areas of service delivery.

The Commission outlines its proposals for a new 'Twenty-first century public servant':

■ **Who are they?** Twenty-first century public servants may be: professionals, managers and/or practitioners from across the public, private and third sectors who are working in a system of Local Public Support.

■ **What do they do?** Twenty-first century public servants fulfil a combination of roles, some of which are new, some evolving and some longstanding. Key new roles include: **storyteller**, communicating stories of how new worlds of local public support might be envisioned in the absence of existing blueprints; **weaver,** making creative use of existing resources to generate something new and useful for service users and citizens; **architect**, constructing coherent local systems of public support from the myriad of public, private, third sector and other resources; and **navigator**, guiding citizens and service users around the range of possibilities that might be available in a system of Local Public Support.

Twenty-first century public servants need key skills including:

■ Interpersonal skills specifically facilitation, empathy and political skills

■ Synthesising skills, including sorting evidence from a range of sources, analysing, making judgements, offering critique and being creative.

- Organising skills for group work, collaboration and peer review.
- Communication skills, making more and better use of new and multi–media resources.

Also crucial is a Government that publicly values and supports public service and promotes careers in public services. Educational and training programmes for public servants at all levels, including at national level, will need to be redesigned to accommodate these new roles and skills and to address the existing skills gaps.

A connected and connective local government

Local government will become more important in the future. The redesigned system of Local Public Support that we are envisaging provides important opportunities but also presents difficult challenges. Local government will need to manage these different tensions as well as changing the way it relates to citizens. To achieve this local government needs to be both connected and connective.

In its relationships with citizens and service users:

- Local government needs to be connected directly into local communities in order to develop a deeper understanding of their aspirations and concerns and the outcomes which they most value, to be better able to connect them to resources that can offer appropriate support to mobilise for those resources to be developed where they are not available. This requires that local politicians are perceived to be both credible and legitimate by their constituents.
- Local government needs to be connected to the views and experiences of those accessing local public support in order to develop a better assessment of how the system works and to hold service and support providers to account.
- Local government needs to be connected to the range of potential providers of local public support in order to improve its commissioning capacity and connect existing resources together more effectively. This includes identifying opportunities for co-production and ensuring plurality of provision.
- Local government needs to develop a way of governing that engages individual citizens and communities and providers in the construction of a larger project of social solidarity.

A new national government/ community settlement

Flourishing systems of Local Public Support require changes in the way that central government relates to local government and other local public institutions. Some of these actions are about the appropriate use of power to effect change that is beyond the scope of systems of Local Public Support. Other actions are about changing the culture of public debate.

Central government must acknowledge the contribution of nationally organised public services and systems of Local Public Support to the public who benefit directly from them, but also to creating the conditions for a prosperous private sector and wider social cohesion. This includes acknowledging the contribution of all 'public servants', whichever sector they happen to be delivering services and support from.

Localism should result in a much clearer framework of responsibility and accountability between the 'centre' and 'localities'. These divisions need to be made clear to the public. Where responsibility and accountability is located within localities central government should respect that and not seek to intervene unless there are legal breaches or concerns about public safety.

Moving from our existing system to towards a system of Local Public Support requires action across a range of areas. The Policy Commission's recommendations highlighted earlier in this summary will help localities make that move.

1   Setting the agenda

From some political viewpoints, public services are in an exciting state of flux with new possibilities and potential for better delivery, targeting and a curbing of an intrusive and disabling state. From others, they are in turmoil and upheaval, with a gloomy prognosis for universal provision and social inclusion. Building on initiatives set in train by previous governments, the Coalition's programme of reform, together with the looming impact of public sector spending cuts, signal huge changes to the scope, scale and fundamental purpose of public services.

For over a hundred years, a social contract underpinned political consensus about the sorts of universal and targeted services that should be provided and about who should receive them. This contract was often uneasy and more tacit and implicit than actively debated. There can be no doubt, however, this social contract is now openly contested. The ideological and practical changes taking place, and proposals for the future, are both unprecedented and very radical. The contract between national government and local authorities, and between local politicians, public servants and citizens is being ripped up across state funded education, health, housing, policing and welfare.

Public service workers, and those who manage them, are one target for political attempts to change behaviour and attitudes. Transferring service commissioning and budgeting to GPs, encouraging public servants to develop social enterprise and mutual organisations, and new relationships with private and third sector providers, reconfiguring the planning system and creating free schools, point to the scope and scale of public service reform.

But of course citizens are not immune: changing the eligibility criteria and coverage of housing, disability and employment benefits; promoting civic action, volunteering and giving through the appointment of community champions, donating through cash machines and putting philanthropists in touch with good causes, are just some of the ways policy makers hope to reshape our assumptions about public services, and, crucially, about who deserves or has a right to them.

Running through the above proposals is a commitment to Localism, one of the guiding principles of the Coalition. Localism combines a determination to devolve power to individuals, communities, charities and professionals with a commitment to decentralise power to the lowest institutional level[1]. If implemented in full, the outcome of the Coalition's public service reforms will bring into being a new settlement of 'local public services' - with significant implications for how we define and describe public services in the future, for any emerging social contract, and for local government, public service providers, workers and citizens.

A year into the Coalition Government, it is still unclear how the various policy proposals for public services will play out in practice or indeed if some of them will take off at all. The proposals for elected police commissioners, the imposition of 'shadow' elected mayors in 12 larger cities and the changes to the NHS have been either rebuffed (elected police commissioners in the House of Lords) or withdrawn ('shadow' elected mayors) or put on hold (as part of the Government's 'listening' exercise for NHS reforms) and the public seem to be rather resistant to the idea of the Big Society or at least not to understand it[2].

But the consequences of the initial cuts in public finances are having an effect, with public service organisations announcing reductions in staff and changes to services amidst considerable media attention and in some cases legal action; for example Birmingham City Council's recent failure in the courts to restrict eligibility for some adult social care services.

So while the shape and nature of the next public services settlement and its localist hue remain unresolved, significant changes are already taking place. In part, these are prompted by the current financial and policy context. But they are also informed by longer term social, cultural and economic trends that raise questions of affordability and appropriateness about the shape and nature of existing public service provision.

This coincidence of forces is likely to reshape radically how we think about public services over the next five years. This means it is vitally important for developments to be planned within a coherent framework, and informed by relevant evidence and experience. Yet, much of the public debate so far has been both highly polarised and polarising, and this makes it essential for questions, controversies and tensions to be aired and debated constructively.

The University of Birmingham Policy Commissions

Public service reform is an obvious focus for the first of a series of University of Birmingham Policy Commissions because of the immediate priority given to it by the Coalition Government after the 2010 General Election, and its significance for local citizens, communities, public institutions and the private and third sectors.

Commissions bring together experts from the public, private and third sectors with Birmingham academics to focus on major issues of global, national and civic concern, and to identify innovative policy solutions. They create a space for a contribution that is engaged but not partisan, informed by research and practical experience, and borne out of open and wide-ranging deliberation with a wide range of interests. They provide an opportunity for Birmingham academics to combine knowledge generated from their research with the expertise of policy makers and practitioners makers in an action orientated way.

The members of the Policy Commission were:

- Deborah Cadman OBE (Chair of the Policy Commission; Chief Executive, East of England Development Agency)
- Professor Pete Alcock (Professor of Social Policy and Administration and Director of the Third Sector Research Centre, University of Birmingham)
- Derrick Anderson CBE (Chief Executive, Lambeth Council)
- Professor Tony Bovaird (Professor of Public Management and Policy, Institute of Local Government Studies and Third Sector Research Centre, University of Birmingham)
- Rt Hon. Liam Byrne (Labour MP, Birmingham Hodge Hill)
- Tiger de Souza, (Knowledge and Innovation Manager v The National Young Volunteers' Service)
- Andrew Dick (Chief Executive, Envision – youth charity)
- Professor Kathryn Ecclestone (Professor of Education and Social Inclusion, University of Birmingham)
- Sam Monaghan (Barnardo's Regional Director in the Midlands)
- Rt Hon. James Morris (Conservative MP, Halesowen and Rowley Regis)
- Nick Sharman (Director of Local Government, A4e)
- Jane Slowey CBE (Chief Executive, Foyer Federation)

The Policy Commission worked in collaboration with the think-tank Demos chosen because of its close contact with many of the thinkers, policy makers, politicians and civil servants developing the agendas on public service reform and the Big Society, and its extensive experience of developing radical yet practical policy proposals for real life problems.

The purpose and focus of the Policy Commission

The Policy Commission's purpose was to examine the potential impact of a localist reform agenda on a new public services settlement. It aimed to draw conclusions and make recommendations that would contribute to current debates and offer longer-term proposals for the future of local public services.

The Policy Commission addressed four key questions in its work:

- How will public service roles and relationships be redesigned and what are the implications for citizens, service users and providers?
- What contribution can behaviour change approaches and techniques make to proposals for the future design of local public services?
- How can we reproduce success and mitigate failure in a localist system?
- What will local government's role be?

As the different nations of the UK have distinct public policy agendas, the Policy Commission focused explicitly on England.

Young people were a key focus for the Policy Commission[3]. They are an important constituency likely to be affected in multiple ways by the current reforms but their voice in public policy debates is not as strong as others', possibly because of the demands of their everyday lives. For example, evidence from the National Council for Voluntary Organisations indicates that, 'young people vote less [but]the most common reasons for not participating in the 2010 general election were circumstantial not ideological. Rather than, 'they're all the same' or 'my vote won't make a difference', the reasons most cited were a 'lack of time' or 'being too busy'[4].

The Policy Commission drew directly on young people's experiences as service users, volunteers and citizens and explored their views about how public services can promote well-being. It was advised by the National Youth Reference Group and worked closely with Envision – a youth empowerment charity. The Policy Commission adopted a holistic meaning of 'well-being' as encompassing all aspects of human flourishing, including physical and mental health, a sense of purpose, life and work satisfaction and acceptable levels of material resources. This is an important distinction from meanings in current policy and public discourse, where 'well-being' usually refers to mental health and emotional well-being[5].

How the Policy Commission worked
The Policy Commission launched with a debate at the Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham in October 2010 and ran until June 2011.

Following an initial scoping phase the Commissioners engaged with researchers, policy makers and practitioners in three one-day workshops, using a variety of formats including roundtable discussions, select committee style evidence sessions and case study

presentations. It also engaged separately with specific interest groups and individuals to explore specific questions or issues. Research to support the Policy Commission included a survey of young people's views[6], focus groups with young people[7] and a review of six innovative projects[8]. Full details of the Policy Commission's working principles, activities and contributors are included in the appendices at the end of this main report. Further details of the Policy Commission's research are contained in a separate technical appendix[9].

Evidence, sources and processes for arriving at findings

As a body hosted by a university and comprising academics, expert policy makers and practitioners, the Policy Commission had to work in a way that was faithful to the standards of academically rigorous research while also acknowledging that 'the world of policy making is not one of transferable and enduring scientific truths'[10], notwithstanding recent governments' attempts to privilege a particular 'regime of truth' in the form of evidence-based policy making[11].

Policy making is a political act, an expression of the values that determine the right course of action in a given set of circumstances. It is a process of argumentation involving storytelling, testimony, dispute and conflict, rather than a technical weighing of evidence towards a 'rational' outcome. The Policy Commission strove to reflect the model of argumentation, with Commissioners and external contributors rehearsing arguments to persuade others' of the 'rightness' of their position, drawing on a range of sources to do so. Of course, the acceptance of particular arguments or positions depended partly on what the Policy Commission as a group had already consented to and what was considered an acceptable position between what was being argued and what had previously been agreed.

At the same time, Commissioners were conscious of the need to be clear about the evidence base on which they were relying, whilst those who supported the work of the Policy Commission were responsible for ensuring that Commissioners were exposed to a variety of perspectives and challenges and for establishing the evidential basis of the contributions that were made.

The range of informants, and the ways in which the Policy Commission interacted with them, provided variety in terms of how those contributions were heard, contested and deliberated. They also presented Commissioners with very different kinds of contributions or 'evidence' to work with. This included:

- Findings from academic and policy based research and evaluation projects.
- Expert knowledge drawn from relevant experience.
- Findings from consultation activities (our own and others').
- Results of surveys (our own and others').
- Lay knowledge from service user experience.
- Practice knowledge from experience.

The Policy Commission did not establish a formal hierarchy of evidence to apply to its deliberations, but it was clear that individual Commissioners had strong ideas about the standard of evidence that would be convincing to them or, conversely, evidence with which they neither agreed nor could accept as valid and reliable. Tensions therefore arose between Commissioners concerned that conclusions should be based on evidence that was 'provably' true, those who were satisfied by evidence that was 'probably' true, and those for whom conclusions could be drawn on the basis of evidence that was 'plausibly' true, i.e., convincing to a 'reasonable audience'[12]. Different stances appeared to be based on the extent to which Commissioners viewed 'ideal' public policy decisions as those rooted in an unambiguous notion of generalised and generalisable evidence.

Given this range of views, the Policy Commission sought to examine the value of different contributions through discussion and debate, for example highlighting controversial or 'stand out' contributions and then evaluating them in the context of other contributions. Sometimes such approaches highlighted limitations to evidence for an apparently orthodox position and gave

Commissioners more ways to think about an issue. On other occasions, the process helped to confirm Commissioners' confidence in their initial judgements.

Of course, presentations or contributions based on robust research carried weight with the Commissioners, but these were not the only sources that mattered, often because the kinds of questions at stake went beyond the scope of specific research projects and/or were questions that could not easily be answered by existing research: here, other kinds of evidence could help in the teasing out or thinking through of an issue.

The structure of the report
The report is structured as follows:

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the key themes of the Coalition's proposals for public service reform, illustrates how these themes shaped the questions explored by the Policy Commission and highlights the implications of reforms based on these themes for a new settlement of 'local public services'.

Chapters 3 - 7 provide an analysis of the questions explored by the Policy Commission situating them in the context of current policy and evidence about broader trends in public services.

Chapter 3 focuses on young people as 'active citizens' and explores whether and in what circumstances citizens are prepared to be 'active' and how this knowledge can shape relations between citizens and officials, users and providers in the future.

Chapter 4 considers the potential and limits of behaviour change, examines the evidence base for the efficacy of behaviour change approaches and reflects on how we can use this evidence to shape proposals about the future design and delivery of local public services.

Chapter 5 explores the pressures for increasing diversification of the supply of public services, asks how confident we are about the capacity of public, private and third sector organisations to work in new ways and with different resources, and considers how insights from existing arrangements and practices can help shape more localist services in the future.

Chapter 6 addresses success and failure in a localist system, reviewing the evidence we have of how and why different approaches to delivering local public services succeed and fail, and exploring how can we use this evidence to help anticipate and mitigate failure as well as account for success in local public services and civic action.

Chapter 7 focuses on the challenges posed to local government by Localism, the Big Society and the reductions in local government funding, asks what we know about local government's capacity for reinvention and the options available to it, and reflects on how this knowledge can shape a future role for local government and local councillors.

Chapter 8 draws on the preceding analysis to propose a framework for a new system of Local Public Support. This system acknowledges the vital importance of an active state but recognises that fulfilling citizens' aspirations and meeting their needs in the future requires the provision of new kinds of resources, interventions and/or services, involving citizens in new ways as well as contributions from the public, private and third sectors.

Chapter 9 identifies the conditions for success of this system of Local Public Support highlighting the importance of: citizens as genuine co-authors of their own well-being; twenty-first century public servants, a connected and connective local government; and a new government/community settlement.

2   The shape of the agenda - questions, themes and issues

Public service reform is an ongoing project, underway since the establishment of the Welfare State. Successive governments have attempted to shape public services in response to prevailing socio-economic conditions led by political agendas that are more or less coherent. The Coalition is no exception.

To date, the Coalition's proposals for public service reform have developed department by department. Nonetheless a number of overlapping themes can be identified across the range of reforms, some of which the Coalition claims are essential to its overall change agenda. These themes are: Localism, behaviour change, the diversification of service supply and experimentation.

These themes and the issues they raise for the future of public services shaped the four key questions addressed by the Policy Commission:

- How will public service roles and relationships be redesigned and what are the implications for citizens, service users and providers?
- What contribution can behaviour change approaches and techniques make to proposals for the future design of local public services?
- How can we reproduce success and mitigate failure in a localist system?
- What will local government's role be?

This chapter explores each of these themes locating them in their longer term policy context, considering the implications of reforms based on these themes for a new settlement of 'local public services', and identifying how separately and together they informed the Policy Commission's agenda.

Themes

The first theme is **Localism**. Localism is defined by the Coalition as the devolution of

'power, money and knowledge to those best placed to find the best solutions to local needs: elected local representatives, frontline public service professionals, social enterprises, charities, co-ops, community groups, neighbourhoods and individuals'[13].

Localism features in a number of ways in the Coalition's programme. It is employed to:

- Shift the focus of public service delivery to the local level and devolve power to professionals working at that level, for example proposals for GP commissioning;
- Change the relationship of public services with localities and with local institutions, for example the proposals for free schools appeal to a set of interests and aspirations that may coalesce around a particular neighbourhood or other community but will function outwith the oversight of the local education authority;
- Create space for, or provide support for the realisation of the Big Society, the Coalition's vision of 'what happens whenever people work together for the common good…achieving our collective goals in ways that are more diverse, more local and more personal'[14], either through local government's continued or even enhanced funding for the third sector, or through public institutions' dispersal of assets to community groups to use to provide services or community resources;
- 'Empower' individual services users, by encouraging an emphasis on personalised budgets or forms of co-production of public services;
- Represent an enhanced expression of democratic accountability for existing public services, for example the proposals to have elected police commissioners or for communities to be able to vote on proposed council tax increases.

As the above examples suggest Localism is not defined by a particular spatial scale. Rather it can refer to a range of spatial and/or social configurations.

The idea of Localism is a touchstone of numerous governments, but very few manage to translate this into devolving real power and resourcing decisions to local politicians, professionals and/or the public even in prosperous economic times.

The New Labour administrations (1997-2010) supported a number of iterations of Localism which *inter alia* attempted to: address the needs of the most disadvantaged communities whilst also 'empowering' them through a massive programme of neighbourhood renewal; improve policing outcomes and relationships between citizens and police officers through neighbourhood policing initiatives; increase the influence of service users over health and social care services through personalisation of services; and enhance the role and status of local government and the influence of local citizens' over decision making through proposals for 'double devolution'. These policies had much in common with the Coalition's plans yet New Labour struggled to realise its goals partly due to its preference for centrally determined targets and performance management systems and in the case of double devolution because of its lack of confidence in local government[15].

The Coalition presents its approach to local government as one based on supporting its freedom to act in support of local communities without being either hamstrung by central government or subject to 'one size fits all' policies. In return local government is advised to resist its own 'centralising tendencies' and devolve as much power as it can to individuals and neighbourhoods in the same way that central government is doing[16].

There is evidence of inconsistency here however as government ministers, particularly those in the Department for Communities and Local Government have repeatedly expressed views about local government matters, from the level of chief executive pay, whether or not council leaders should double up as chief executives, how often refuse should be collected and whether or not councils should charge residents for throwing away too much waste. Again while there is nothing unusual in central government ministers seeking to intervene in English local government matters in this way, such actions suggest a Government that is not as at ease with the idea of a free

and autonomous local government as its espoused commitment to Localism would suggest.

This highlights the importance of the central-local government relationship for shaping the meaning and impact of Localism in general and the future significance and capacity of local government in particular. Equally important to the fate of Localism and local government will be the impact of other Coalition proposals, such as the combined impact of the proposed welfare reforms which are likely to place new and different demands on local communities, infrastructure and institutions.

Localism generates important questions for the Policy Commission including:

- How will proposals to 'empower' citizens, users and public service workers change existing citizen/decision maker and user/provider roles and relationships? What will be expected of citizens, users and public service workers in their new roles, how will they be supported and what happens if expectations are not met?
- What is the future for local government? What roles should it play? Does it have the capacity and capability to fulfil these roles? How does its democratic status influence what these roles might be? What are the implications for councillors?

The second theme is **behaviour change**. The much-touted phrase 'from nanny to nudge' symbolises the Coalition's aspirations to find new ways to change its citizens' behaviours, to shape the habits and attitudes of good citizenship and to spread them more widely. Policy makers hope to change citizens' expectations of what local and national government should, and can, provide as universal public services, who provides them, and how, and to be proactive in changing our own and

others' behaviours in all areas of our lives. Of course, whatever the political hue of government, the state nationally and locally has always tried to change its citizens' behaviours, through interventions that might be overt or covert, or both, and which might be more or less informed by robust evidence. From straightforward information campaigns to subtle and not-so subtle scare tactics, to target-setting, tax breaks, promises of deferred gratification, punishments or softer sticks, rewards and incentives, local and national governments have used an array of tactics to encourage us to do the right thing for ourselves and others. Indeed, history shows that the state project of behaviour change dates back to the 1830s.

The Coalition government has built on the previous government's interest in behaviour change. Yet, it is important to note a new breadth and diversity of references to behaviour change, and the fact that the various techniques and approaches this government is considering are not just employed to encourage change in the behaviours of service users and citizens but also to promote change in how public service workers and even public institutions behave. Recent examples of the former include the 'tenant cashback' scheme, where social housing tenants are in-line for a bonus if they do their own repairs for a year rather than troubling the landlord. More ambitious is the Coalition's desire that we each do more for ourselves instead of relying on the state, encapsulated in the Prime Minister's personal commitment to the Big Society and illustrated by a range of initiatives designed to incentivise 'giving' by making it easier (through cash points), to increase volunteering, and to promote community action. In this case incentives to do good are accompanied by rhetorical appeals that envision a transformed society built on a specific idea of what it is to be a citizen and what a reshaped citizen/state relationship would look like.

Such a redefined relationship would have implications for how public service workers and democratic institutions

relate to and engage with citizens and communities, suggesting among other things a need for new sets of behaviours. However it is important to note that past experience indicates that attempts to inspire more 'active' citizens have often struggled to contend with the shape and nature of local communities and traditions. Society and citizens are heterogeneous not homogenous and different social classes, groups and local areas are differentially able and willing to respond to proposed reforms[17].

Examples of the initiatives aimed at changing the behaviour of public servants and institutions include the Coalition's appeals to public service workers to become social entrepreneurs eg. by establishing and delivering services through mutual organisation or social enterprises. At an institutional level the Coalition has proposed that local authorities are offered a New Homes Bonus where Whitehall matches the Council Tax raised for each new home for six years. Here too it is important to note that public service workers have attachments to particular kinds of and approaches to service provision, often based in a set of values linked to a profession or to an idea of public service.

The questions posed by behaviour change for the Policy Commission are:

- What are the potential and limits of behaviour change approaches and techniques for changing the behaviour of citizens, public service workers and even institutions?
- What do we know about the efficacy of and evidence base for behaviour change approaches and techniques that can help shape proposals for how local public services should be designed and delivered in the future?

The third theme is **diversification of service supply** to extend private and third sector involvement in public service

delivery. As with behaviour change this is not a new phenomenon. Governments have long histories of engagement with private and third sector organisations to deliver public services. However the engagement of private and third sector organisations accelerated and intensified in the 1980s and 1990s, for example through the introduction of the mixed economy of care in social services, the promotion of housing associations as alternative landlords for social housing tenants, and the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering first into 'streetscene' services such as refuse collection and grounds maintenance, and latterly into 'white collar' services including treasury functions and human resourcing. Subsequent governments' enthusiasm for diversifying supply has ensured the continuance of this trend albeit in different ways.

Post 1997, the New Labour administrations placed great emphasis on the potential contribution of various permutations of 'partnership' arrangements between some combination of public, private and third sector bodies, and in some cases even included community organisations, particularly in regeneration initiatives[18]. New Labour also tried to redesign services in order to promote what it considered to be key principles of a 'modernised' system - 'empowerment', 'choice' and 'competition' and trialled new services and systems including local treatment centres that could be run by the NHS or by independent providers, and 'choose and book', a system aimed at improving patient choice over treatment in collaboration with GPs.

What the Coalition is proposing is both a further extension of private and third sector engagement in the delivery of public services in support of these principles and the corresponding withdrawal of public institutions as direct providers, though critics argue that it is privatisation rather than pluralism that underpins this agenda. In this context the recent development in shared service arrangements is an important variation on the theme of diversification of service supply.

In combination, although not necessarily in a coherent or particularly strategic way, these proposals for diversification of supply pose important questions for the Policy Commission:

- How will proposals to diversify public service supply impact on the organisation of providers of public services across different sectors?
- What will these proposals mean for how we understand who public service workers are and how they are trained and supported?
- How will these proposals change the relationship of public service providers with service users, with each other and with government?
- What will these proposals mean for the future role of public institutions, particularly local government which combines close proximity to services users and citizens and a responsibility for the well-being of all its citizens and communities, with a local democratic mandate?

The fourth theme is **experimentation**. As indicated above many of the themes identified in the Coalition's plans are evident in longer term trends in public services. To some extent then evidence from previous initiatives should be able to inform Coalition reforms. However, what is perhaps distinctive about the Coalition programme is the way in which key contextual factors are combining to pose questions that established blueprints for public service reform are unable to address. These contextual factors include the financial crisis, changing demography, new patterns of living and working, the opportunities and challenges presented by the new media, and rising public expectations of services.

In these circumstances experimentation will be an important element of any public service reform – the testing and trying of new approaches and options in specific sites or service areas in order to assess whether and how they perform. This focus on innovation was a preoccupation of previous administrations but unlike New Labour who were arguably more concerned with innovation as a means of supporting 'continuous improvement' [19], the prevailing context is encouraging a shift in emphasis amongst those working in the 'innovation industry' towards what has been termed 'radical efficiency', that is, innovation that delivers much better public outcomes for much lower costs' in part by 'reconceptualising' public service challenges[20].

Promoting experimentation as part of a policy programme that also emphasizes Localism and diversity is likely to lead to multiple experiments being developed and tested within and across English public services. This suggests that there will be important successes and significant failures.

Experimentation raises the following questions for the Policy Commission:

- What do we know about why and how different approaches to delivering local public services succeed and fail?
- How can we anticipate and mitigate 'failure' as well as evidence success in public service reform and civic action?
- How can citizens and services users be insured from the adverse impacts of failure?

From public services to 'local' public services?

The combined impact of the Coalition's proposals will change the future shape and nature of public services in England, potentially bringing into being a new settlement of 'local public services' - with implications for local government, public service providers, workers and citizens. In addition to examining the specific

questions generated by different themes running through the Coalition's proposals, the Policy Commission also explored what a new 'local public services' settlement might look like.

Public services can be defined as:

- The provision and organisation of that provision of a 'helpful act' – a service, intervention or product;
- To meet the needs or fulfil the entitlements of citizens;
- That follows a decision by elected government, their agents or designated authority of a particular jurisdiction that such a service is required or demanded by citizens;
- That is part or fully funded from the public purse;
- That is delivered with or without charge, by public, private, third sector bodies or hybrids thereof, and citizens acting alone or in combination[21].

Definitions of public services are not given and fixed but can change over time. This is because the prevailing political climate influences how we understand what public services are, whether or not we want more/less of them, and how we are prepared for them to be organised. The Coalition's proposals for public service reform point to the potential for a further redefinition - one requiring a reconsideration of:

- The nature and significance of the 'local' dimension to public services. The boundary between national and local public services has, like so many other aspects of British governance, been rather blurred. The National Health Service for example is prized precisely because of its 'national' status and constitution. However in practice diversity in health provision has long been shaped by local discretion, giving rise in recent years to complaints about a 'postcode lottery'.

Elsewhere, the boundaries between national and local do appear to be clearer eg. in relation to welfare benefits which are delivered locally but at national rates and according to national practices, or in relation to youth services which function more or less entirely at the discretion of local authorities though policy advice and guidance is provided nationally and some third sector organisations provide services nationally. But overall public service provision is a differential mix of national and local influence.

The Coalition's proposals offer a rebalancing of the public services settlement with a much stronger role afforded to the 'local', however defined. This raises important questions for the Policy Commission about what the potential and limits of the 'local' might be in a future public service settlement, not least because in practice the 'benefit areas for different local public goods do not generally coincide'[22]

- What it means for services to be 'public'.
  There are questions here about whether and how services are funded and who is eligible to receive them. We have become used to some public services being charged for but at what point does the search for new sources of support for public services render them outside the public domain? Likewise we no longer expect some services to be universally available but at what point might rationing or restriction of multiple public services limit our overall sense of a coherent and shared system of public service? What people understand by the term 'public' is an important issue for the Policy Commission.

- Whether the idea of 'services' is sufficient.
  In future meeting the wishes and aspirations of citizens through service provision from whatever source may be neither practicable due to cost, nor appropriate due to the nature of the need to be met. Rather what might emerge is a system which may have a service element but which offers a range of other resources too. This is a key issue for the Policy Commission and we return to it in chapter 8.

3   Activating tomorrow's citizens - young people and public services

'Active citizenship' is at the heart of Localism and the Big Society. The prospect of citizens having power to do things for themselves, as well as doing more for, and with, others runs through Coalition proposals from personalisation through co-production to community control. But what do we know about whether and how far citizens are prepared to be 'active' and in what circumstances, with what support, and how can this knowledge shape relations between citizens and officials, users and providers in the future?

Young people are the next generation of 'active citizens' so their reactions to ideas about Localism and the Big Society and how they view their future contribution will provide important insights for public policy. Young people are also important because their views are likely be mediated by the double impact of current circumstances, eg. the introduction of tuition fees, high levels of youth unemployment, and the lack of protection for funding for services to young people; coupled with the prospect of the longer term consequences of the recession and public spending squeeze, eg. the lack of affordable housing and the impact of changes to pension entitlements and retirement ages.

The Policy Commission wanted to explore the implications of the Coalition's plans for public service reform on young people as civic actors, service users and volunteers. To do this the Policy Commission:

- Surveyed young people's usage of a range of local services.
- Explored young people's attitudes to becoming 'active citizens'.
- Examined practical examples of involving young people in service design and delivery.
- Reviewed recent developments in user-provider relationships and considered their impact on young service users.
- Considered the risks and limits of 'active citizenship' amongst young people.

The Policy Commission drew directly on the views and experiences of young people themselves as well as those of advocates and service providers across a range of policy areas including citizenship development, community regeneration, education, health promotion, housing, leisure, social care, volunteering and youth services. The impact of 'active citizenship' on the future designation, training and support of public service workers was a key issue in the Policy Commission's deliberations.

Young people's use of local services

To get a better understanding of the range of local services young people used and which mattered most to them, the Policy Commission surveyed young people's views about a sample of local services. The sample selection aimed to provide: a broad enough range of services that would appeal to the age range we were surveying (11-21); coverage of services that were statutory and discretionary; examples of public, private and third sector delivery; and examples of services of particular relevance to young people.

Our survey asked respondents about which services they had used, how often, which services mattered most to them, and which services they would like to use more often (see Table 1).

The survey revealed that overall, 92% of people interviewed had used one of the services listed in the last year. The most popular services were libraries, leisure services (i.e. council gym and outdoor playing facilities) and youth clubs. Outdoor playing facilities and leisure centres were considered the most important services amongst respondents.

52% reported using a library in the last 12 months. This is higher than latest figures for 16 – 24 year old usage reported in the Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport. According to the DCMS survey, usage amongst this group has declined since 2005/6 – from 51% to 42.8% in 2010. However, figures for 11-14 year old usage (61% used a library in the past year[23]) are lower than the figures for the 11- 15 year cohort in the Taking Part: Child Survey (71.6% report visiting a library in the past 12 months).

Advice centres seemed particularly important to young people aged 15 – 18, who made up 68% of those reporting using an advice service[24]. For 11 – 14 year olds, leisure facilities are particularly important with 42% of boys indicating outdoor playing facilities were the most important service listed[25].

Young people in higher education, seemed more likely than other age groups to make use of private rather than public leisure facilities, with 44% using private gyms[26].

As well as asking about which services young people would like to use more often, the survey asked which services they would like more of and whether they thought service provision was sufficient.

About two-thirds (65%) of young people would like to use some services more often (see Table 1). 70% of young people in social classes ABC1 would like to see more services, against 61% of young people in social classes C2DE. 57% of unemployed young people would like to see more services, compared to 69% of those at school[27]. The services young people would like to see more of are youth clubs and outdoor sport/play facilities[28].

However, the majority of young people think there are enough services available (60% think there are enough, against 39% think there are not[29]). 14 and 19 year olds were most likely to say there are not enough services (49% and 48% respectively) as well as those in social classes DE (48%)[30].

The main reasons given for not using services more often were lack of time and cost, with several services getting a slightly higher score for unavailability at the right time (see Table 2). Cost came up repeatedly in our focus groups and in our discussions with the National Youth Reference Group (NYRG).

Encouraging 'active citizens'

Government calls for citizens to become more 'active' in securing their own well-being have featured in UK public policy

Table 1. Young people's use of local services

	Services used in past year		More than once in last year		Most Important*		Like to use more often	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Council leisure centre	344	44	307	39	148	19	166	21
Private gym	160	20	139	18	86	11	158	20
Youth club	155	20	117	15	60	8	70	9
Outdoor playing facilities	353	45	307	39	165	21	122	16
Community centre	85	11	63	8	13	2	25	3
Other faith, voluntary or charity organisation	72	9	58	7	27	3	20	3
Library	404	52	324	41	108	14	80	10
Health centre	294	38	210	26	98	12	13	2
Advice centre eg. Connexions	130	17	83	11	39	5	22	3
Other	24	3	21	3	15	2	15	2
None	65	8	96	12	101	13	270	35

Base 782. Source: LVQ Research Ltd.
*Total is greater than 100% as some respondents chose more than one option

since the financial crisis of the 1970s. Motivated by different ideas and reflected in divergent policies these official appeals have in common a determination to counter what is characterised as the 'passivity' of citizens, the result of the combination of representative democracy, bureaucratic organisation and the privileging of professionals as the guardians of the public interest[31]. There are four dominant appeals to 'active citizenship', each of which offers a different rationale for why and in what ways citizens should be encouraged to do more:

- Empowered citizens: specific interventions are required to 'empower' spatial or social communities failed by established institutions; to challenge prevailing power relations and to tackle institutionalised discrimination.

- Consuming citizens: defining citizens as consumers operating in markets gives them greater control over service design, greater choice amongst providers and results in improved service responsiveness to individual requirements.
- Stakeholder citizens: citizens individually and collectively have a stake in the good governance of societies, though how they view that stake will vary depending on the circumstance; public institutions need to be constructed in such a way as to enable effective expression of individual and collective 'voice'.
- Responsible citizens: individuals and communities have duties to others expressed through self-discipline, family life, strong communities and a relationship with the state based on agreed rights and responsibilities.[32]

These four versions of 'active citizenship' offer very different descriptions of the relationship between the citizen and the state and of the role played by each in securing well-being. Arguably, the Coalition's policy proposals for 'active citizenship' are closest to the interpretation of either 'responsible' or 'consuming'.

The idea of 'active citizenship, what it meant and how it should be operationalised featured prominently in the Policy Commission's discussions. The idea of citizens as 'consumers' predominated, though all four versions of 'active citizenship' appeared in representations made to the Policy Commission. Importantly, while the Policy Commission heard from many public service providers who were designing new approaches to their delivery of services based on one or other conception of 'active citizenship', it heard relatively little evidence about the local public's preparedness to be engaged in this way where they were not already actively involved.

The Policy Commission's survey of young people explored their willingness to become 'active citizens' by getting more involved in decision making and service delivery. Our survey data suggests that young people feel disenfranchised in relation to decision making that affects them, are prepared to get more involved in the design and delivery of services that they might use but are not prepared to devote significant amounts of time to this.

The survey asked young people if they felt they had a say in which services were provided in their area, if they would like to have some influence over those decisions, and what they would be prepared to do to shape services.

The survey findings reveal that only 20% of young people feel they have enough of a say in which services are provided in their area. The percentage who feel they do not have enough of a say remains high, even when reaching age 18 (76%) increasing to 85% at age 21[33]. 87% of working young people feel they do not

Table 2. What stops young people using services?

	Council leisure centre (Base 166)	Private gym (Base 158)	Youth club (Base 70)	Outdoor playing facilities (Base 122)	Community centre (Base 25)	Other voluntary/ charity organisation (Base 20)	Library (Base 80)	Health centre (Base 13)	Advice centre eg. Connexions (Base 22)
	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)	No (%)
Lack of time	74 (45)	62 (39)	24 (34)	50 (41)	11 (45)	9 (43)	54 (67)	2 (17)	9 (39)
These things are not available often	7 (4)	7 (5)	20 (28)	21 (17)	6 (23)	2 (9)	4 (5)	-	92 (10)
Not available at the right time for me	16 (10)	5 (3)	5 (7)	8 (7)	3 (13)	4 (19)	8 (10)	2 (17)	4 (16)
No-one to do them with	15 (90	9 (6)	4 (6)	10 (8)	2 (9)	2 (9)	2 (3)	1 (8)	2 (10)
Cost too much	69 (42)	83 (52)	4 (6)	7 (6)	-	-	1 (1)	1 (8)	-
Not allowed by parents	4 (3)	2 (1)	1 (1)	5 (4)	-	1 (7)	-	-	-
Not allowed by the organisation that provides the service	-	3 (2)	1 (1)	1 (1)	-	-	-	-	-
Too far away/ difficult to get to	23 (14)	16 (10)	5 (7)	14 (12)	1 (4)	1 (5)	5 (6)	2 (17)	3 (15)
Service isn't very good quality	1 (1)	1 (1)	5 (8)	9 (7)	2 (7)	-	3 (3)	1 (9)	4 (17)
Other	3 (2)	9 (5)	6 (8)	8 (6)	2 (9)	3 (13)	10 (12)	2 (13)	1 (4)
Don't know	3 (2)	(8)	6 (8)	12 (10)	1 (3)	2 (12)	2 (2)	1 (9)	1 (6)

Source: LVQ Research Ltd.

have a say. Young people in higher education were most likely to say they have enough of a say in which services are provided (29%)[34].

Just over three-fifths of young people would like to have more of a say in which services are provided (61%) and this is highest amongst age group 15 – 18 (68%)[35] and those in higher education (69%)[36]. Young people in the north of England were least likely to want to have a say in which services are provided (51% compared to 65% in the south)[37]. Minority ethnic groups were much more likely to want to have more of a say (79%) compared to 59% white British[38]. In terms of becoming active and contributing to shaping services, the survey found that 48% of all young people were willing to help in some way to provide services and this was pretty

evenly spread across all age groups, with 15 – 18 year olds most likely to be willing to offer some help. Social class AB were reported as most likely to be willing to help (59%)[39].

Importantly perhaps for policy makers trying to activate the Big Society, the survey found that young people already connected to voluntary organisations were more likely to say they were willing to help to bring services to their area (69% compared to 48% overall)[40].

The survey asked young people who had expressed a willingness to become active, what they would be prepared to contribute (see Table 3).

Of those willing to help, young people were most likely to say they are willing to sign a petition (48%), then volunteer to design services (39%), then run services. Young people from social class ABC1 were more likely to volunteer to run the service than those from social class C2DE (42% compared to 28%)[41]. Young people between 11-14 years were more interested in designing services (46%), while those between 19-21 were more enthusiastic about improving or running services (42% and 41%)[42]. Young people already connected to voluntary organisations were more likely than other service users to express an interest in running them (60%)[43]. These levels of expressed willingness are higher than actual participation figures drawn from the Taking Part survey – in 2008/9 27.6% of young people aged between 16 and 24 said they had volunteered in

Table 3. What young people are prepared to contribute

What kind of help would you be willing to offer?	No	%
Willing to speak out or sign a petition to bring services to your area	182	48
Willing to pay a membership fee	73	19
Willing to pay for using services	82	22
Willing to volunteer to help design the service	148	39
Willing to volunteer to help improve the service	126	33
Willing to volunteer to help run the service	135	36
Willing to volunteer to publicise the service to get more young people using it	105	28
Other	4	1
Don't know	2	1

Base 379. Source: LVQ Research Ltd.

the last 12 months. However, this survey showed that young people, and the over 75s, were the only groups where volunteering rates had increased steadily since 2005. In 2005/6, 24.7% of 16-24 year olds had volunteered in the last 12 months, increasing to 25.5% in 2006/7, 26% in 2007/8.

The survey also explored how much time young people felt able to give to shaping local services (see Table 4).

The findings reveal the most popular option was one evening every few weeks (42%). Community centre and voluntary organisation users were willing to put the most time in – with 49% and 42% saying they would be willing to contribute one afternoon or evening a week[44].

Our focus groups with young people at four schools in Birmingham supported these findings[45]. The 16-18 year olds confirmed that they felt uninvolved in decision making about things that affected them, and that they would like to get involved – 'We would prefer to go to a centre that we help to run'[46]. However there was an important difference for them between being involved and taking a service over – 'I don't think we could run it [a leisure centre] on our own'[47]. Our consultation with the NYRG generated a rather different outcome. They argued strongly that given the opportunity and with the right kind of support they would

be happy to run services for young people including taking responsibility for the management and administration eg. paying rent, finding sponsorship. NYRG members were older than those in our focus groups and also more experienced in participating in decision making forums.

However, increasing young people's engagement with public services is not just a matter of dealing with practical problems of access and skills and time, important though these are. More fundamental blockages are the perceptions of young people and their advocates about how public service providers view young people. The Policy Commission heard that young people felt 'invisible' to most public services. Young people in our focus groups explained this in the following ways:

'It feels like everyone makes decisions for us and don't really ask what we think or what we'd like'[48]

'People don't listen to young people, if they listened more they'd care about their community more'[49]

'The police and emergency services aren't accessible to young people. They don't have a good relationship with us and are more likely to respond to adults'[50] .

When young people were visible to public services it was argued that they were 'represented as an issue or problem, not as individuals who are just being themselves' [51]. Associated fears about 'bad things happening' to young people meant that in practice policy focused too often on 'prevention' rather than to promoting the possibility of 'good things for young people'[52]. The Policy Commission believes that building good relationships with young people is essential if they are to become more actively engaged in service design and delivery. Public service workers will be key to building these relationships and service providers need to ensure that staff are equipped to do this.

Activating young citizens

The Policy Commission was keen to explore some practical examples of initiatives delivering services for, to and alongside young people in such a way as to encourage their participation, action and self-worth. It commissioned Demos to look in detail at six initiatives to examine how they included young people

Table 4. Amount of time young people are prepared to put into shaping local services

If you would be willing to volunteer in any of the ways outlined, how much time do you think you would be willing to put in?	No	%
One afternoon or evening every few weeks	158	42
One afternoon or evening a week	121	32
Two afternoons or evenings a week	46	12
More	18	5
Don't know	36	10

Base 379. Source: LVQ Research Ltd.

from varied backgrounds, how they organised themselves to meet young people's aspirations, and how their approaches might be adopted and adapted by decision makers and public service providers looking to engage more holistically with young people.

The six initiatives located in the areas of health, housing and leisure, offered coverage of: a broad range of policy and service areas; highly localised initiatives and national programmes; initiatives trying to innovate in service design and/ or the engagement of young people; and schemes provided by a range of providers. Figure 1 summarises each of the initiatives studied[53].

The six initiatives provided some helpful insights into the issues that decision makers and providers might consider when trying to engage young people.

The examples highlighted the importance of **using informal tools of engagement**. All the initiatives recognised that the traditional methods of service provision and engagement were too 'top-down' and alien to young people. They sought to use modern informal 'engagement tools' including social networking platforms like Facebook, though these were not problem free.

For example, the MyNav initiative provided important insights into the difficulties facing a public service provider looking to engage young people on a positive, pro-social basis rather than on a compulsory or deficit-led approach. Because MyNav used the frameworks of social media there was an expectation that young people – feeling familiar with it – would engage happily and readily. However, many saw the similarities between MyNav and sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Bebo and simply questioned why they should participate in this rather than the others. This has consequences for those who believe that the key to engaging young people is mimicry – designing the service to closely resemble an existing aspect of young people's lives. By encouraging young people to compare a public

Figure 1. Summary of initiatives

Health
Uscreates - Uscreates is a social design agency of designers, journalists and facilitation experts that uses strategies of co-creation and social marketing to develop successful and cost effective means of combating social challenges including public health, climate change, community empowerment and economic issues. It recently recruited 30 young people to help mastermind and deliver pilots and to appear in media promotions for an anti-Chlamydia campaign. www.uscreates.com/ - Birmingham
Right Here – working with young people to design and deliver mental health support (professional and peer-based support), raise awareness and reduce stigma of mental health. Funded and supported principally via the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Young people (service users and others) play key roles in national and local advisory panels **www.right-here.org.uk/** - Brighton/Sheffield

Leisure
StreetGames – a national network of 120+ local projects working with local providers to make innovative use of limited space to allow disadvantaged young people the chance to participate in sports. Funded nationally by the Co-operative and locally by local authorities and others. Street Games has developed 'The Cooperative Street-Games Young Volunteers Scheme' (CSYV). www.streetgames.org/drupal-5.0/index.php - Nationwide
Higher Croft Action Group – a resident led group that began with the transfer from the local council to the community group of two local assets that had fallen into disrepair and disuse – a multi-use games area and a recreational games park. The group raised funds to regenerate and rebuild these assets, hosting community cohesion events at the new sites (such as a local carnival, youth club, football tournament and junior master chef competition) and providing volunteering opportunities to young people in the community to help to manage the new assets - Blackburn

Housing
Phoenix Housing Co-operative "Housing Plus" – is working in partnership with local organisations and using volunteers from the co-operative to transform long term void properties into viable homes for their members, maximising on efficiency to reduce costs. Volunteers working in properties have found employment due to skills they have learnt. www.phoenixhousingcoop.org/plus.html - Poplar, London
MyNav - A web-based, informal programme modelled on the idea of a flexible, personalised journey inherent in 'sat nav' technology, offering information, advice and guidance to help young people navigate the transition from a child's social identity and service expectations to those of an adult and so help them to attain a sustainable livelihood. Funded via a range of government and other sources **http://my-nav.net/** - selected Foyers including Peterborough

service with an already popular experience or product providers may well be opening themselves up to a form of competition they are likely to lose. Part of the problem of 'last resort' – young people's reluctance to actively engage with public services – may well spring, or at least be exacerbated by, this issue.

MyNav appeared to overcome these problems by developing and promoting its unique selling points: it is a closed system that allows users greater security; it offers young people more control over what is contained in their site package; and it is now linking up with non-public providers such as Facebook to offer

'value-added' to those non-public services used by young people already.

The examples emphasised the need to understand and work with the **different levels of attachment** that young people might have to an initiative. The initiatives tended to attract a 'core' group of young people who were early adopters of the initiative, felt strongly attached to it, and remained committed to it. For example Right Here's young people's panels were made up of *'young people, 16-25, who felt passionate about mental health. Either because they had mental health issues themselves and didn't like the services they went through or because they had personal interest.'*[54]

This could have positive benefits in that these were young people who were more likely to invest in co-creation and could act as peer 'ambassadors' connecting the initiative to a broader network of young people. However there could sometimes be negative impacts, particularly if young people's attachment to a project risked excluding others. For example the Higher Croft Action Group engaged young people in the design of spaces and services. Their success led to difficulties when some young people became territorial over the facilities. Respondents explained:

'We also need to educate them a bit more that 'it's not just for you, it's for the whole community'. If there's a football team playing on that pitch when you want to that's tough. They say 'well we'll beat them off', - 'well, you won't'. They need to learn to share.'[55]

'Because they find it hard to get something to call their own, once they've got it they find it so hard to share.'[56]

Getting beyond the core group required initiatives to think more creatively about how they engaged with young people eg. using incentives. As young people beyond the core group tended to have lower levels of attachment to the initiative there were likely to be higher levels of turnover and a need for more regular renewal of youth outreach.

Leaders of initiatives regarded young people's role as **ambassadors** as very important, particularly in supporting the engagement of other young people who might have been considered 'hard to reach' groups. For example, in MyNav there was a deliberate attempt to work with the active users or early adopters of the scheme in order that they might share their knowledge with other young people in Foyers and so encourage them to use the system. Those who were active users, who had demonstrated commitment to the project were recognised through access to training and support.

The role of youth ambassadors was important to Uscreates' efforts to both normalise testing and encourage participation. They used the youth ambassadors both online and in their public campaign – featuring them in advertising and events. Uscreates was clear that their ambassadors helped the campaign to resonate with young people and that the use of young people to represent the campaign was necessary.

Not all of the initiatives had difficulty in engaging the **'hard to reach'**. For example StreetGames' works with some of the most deprived communities in the country but has been able to activate young people from a wide range of backgrounds e.g. 22% are from black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. Its philosophy emphasised the importance of accessibility to maintaining a credible offer to communities who are less likely to take advantage of public services.

'What we've found is that, particularly through schools, those who are already good at sport are likely to use their school's facilities and so on. But those who are less good are left out.So the projects are firstly about ease of access. The fact that it's not a club and not initially about competing and winning, it's about coming along to play with your mates is really important. And also we offer a wide range of sports activities, not just football, so it can involve people. For instance we offer a lot of dance now because it's got really popular for young men and women.'[57]

Giving young people a sense of **'ownership'** over a project was a powerful tool in getting young people more engaged with an initiative's activities. When young people took a role in project creation and decision-making the projects were better able to identify and meet local needs. For example, Uscreates worked with young people and NHS Birmingham East and North to increase Chlamydia screening rates among 15 to 24 year olds. Thirty Youth Ambassadors were recruited to both author the programme, which they called CHECK YOU OUT!, and deliver the pilots. Uscreates began by recruiting young people from the target area to give them insight into awareness, understanding and attitudes towards sexually transmitted diseases and Chlamydia in particular. They used established charities and community groups within their target areas to access young people from all backgrounds. Events run by Uscreates were based on suggestions from young people involved in the campaign – these ideas were then developed by service designers alongside young people in order to ensure that they were attractive to the target groups.

The examples suggested that the roles young people take on eg. as **trustees or executives** will vary according to the nature and context of the project. For example MyNav, hosted by the Foyer Federation and influenced by its pro-social ethos, trusted young people to be competent executives, adapting the MyNav system to their purposes. Right Here, an embryonic project working with service-users and local 'youth panels' to develop a preventative mental health programme adopted what it called a 'collaborative rather than youth-led' approach. In practice this meant that project workers guided the youth panel's funding decisions, drawing up 'shortlists' of projects for them to choose from. One respondent explained:

This is because, in terms of youth participation, we are very clear that young people have a lot to bring to the table, as well as experts, in terms

Action Group are wary of short-term or one-off grants for activities that they are not certain they can maintain once the source of funding expires. This has limited some of their activities but they feel that it is essential if they are not to repeat the mistakes of other organisations in the area. They believe that the success of the Action Group in engaging young people who found it hard to trust public services and were cynical about using them, has proved that there approach is the right one despite ongoing funding difficulties.

The cases contain lessons for public service re–design. The importance of **core funding or assets** to underpin the work of the projects is a key issue – most of the projects we reviewed were attached to or supported by larger organisations that could provide infrastructure support of various kinds. The one exception – the Higher Croft Action Group - did have physical assets to work with but acknowledged that it led a relatively precarious existence. Those organisations with more secure funding eg. StreetGames acknowledged that not all of their local projects had survived recent local authority cuts. They were looking to alternative funding sources such as the new philanthropic and community asset initiatives emerging from the Big Society agenda and from Government itself.

However funding rules can disadvantage small groups and organisations. For example, Higher Croft Action Group has attracted inward investment for their services and facilities, but as a small, community led organisation they often felt disadvantaged in dealing with commissioners and funders because they did not have the infrastructure needed to support bids to some funding pots.

Working at the **local** level to develop the most appropriate intervention and **getting connected to local public services** are key messages. For example, Right Here spent a year preparing the ground for its initiative including developing relationships with public services and third sector

of grant-making. We are talking about around £6m on the table. That's a big responsibility. We wanted to make sure young people had the information they need. As much as possible we brief them but all the decisions in Right Here, at least at a national level, are made as a joint process.'[58]

Finally the Higher Croft Action Group did not see the young people involved in its project as having any kind of leadership role. Leadership was the domain of the organisers who engaged young people engaged in social and behavioural development to compensate them for past 'social negligence'.

Getting and keeping young people involved meant offering young people access to **new knowledge and skills**. For example, the Co-operative StreetGames Young Volunteer programme created in 2007 helps 16-25 year-olds gain sports qualifications and community leadership skills whilst volunteering. It has helped over 3,700 volunteers gain more than 4,875 qualifications since its formation. Its national framework means it can provide guidance and assistance to local services, disseminate evidence on 'what

works' and provide training and toolkits to new partners and in areas where partners feel they would benefit from further support.

The 'Housing Plus' initiative run by the Phoenix Housing Co-operative brought empty properties back into use. Co-operative members undertook the refurbishment, supported financially by Phoenix's 'operating surplus'. A site manager oversaw volunteer's work. The scheme offered members the opportunity to develop new skills but also to make use of the ones they already had, eg. '*Some had skills already, particularly painters and decorators. There was a carpenter. The refurbs definitely brought out a previously untapped pool of skills.'*[59]

The experience of the initiatives emphasized the importance of **sustainability** particularly in a context where young people have experience of short life initiatives and may feel 'betrayed' by them. Some of the participants felt that precariously funded services were in danger of 'doing more harm than good' by raising expectations and failing to promote young people's confidence in the reliability of public services. For example, Higher Croft

organisations in the localities it was working in. The Higher Croft Action Group facilitated non-confrontational contact between the local 'Community Beat' neighbourhood policing teams and young people. To build a wider network of support the Group took this approach with other local public services – including Connexions and local social housing providers.

Accessing volunteers was becoming difficult for one of the initiatives. Uscreates has largely relied on partner organisations to access potential participants and volunteers in the past. However, they had noticed a growing reticence amongst local groups to provide access to their volunteer base.

> *'With the increased demand for volunteers, other groups have become far more protective about sharing their volunteers (implications for the Big Society.'[60]*

The data from our six initiatives suggests that policy makers keen to support the Big Society need to make significant investments to grow and develop the potential enthusiasm and motivation identified by our survey and focus groups. The Policy Commission believes that the investment required goes beyond that offered via the Community Champion and National Citizen Service schemes and needs to include continued investment in existing local infrastructure and support services that provide important resources to a wide range of individuals and communities, particularly those who are marginalised or disadvantaged[61].

Developments in user-provider relationships

Service user movements, the introduction of market mechanisms and more recent emphases on personalisation, choice and latterly, co-production, have changed relationships between service users and providers over the last three decades. The Policy Commission was keen to explore what could be learned from some of these experiences in relation to services for young people and how they might inform public service arrangements in the future.

A key message emerging from the Policy Commission's discussions with young service users, providers and advocacy organisations was that young service users had a clear idea of the kind of relationship they wanted to have with service providers, one in which they were treated more as equals with important resources to bring to decision making about the services they used.

Importantly the idea of a more equal relationship was not one in which service users saw themselves as more expert than providers about their circumstances. Rather they saw their relationship as one in which both service users and providers drew on their own sources of expertise to work at the issue together. This reflects an approach to co-production that is based on what Annmarie Mol calls the 'logic of care'; a relationship based approach in which service decisions are regularly renegotiated in response to changing circumstances, opportunities and experience[62]. The National Youth Reference Group represented this in a slightly different way describing the kind of service organisations that 'work' for young people are those which:

- Can construct individual relationships;
- Can help you achieve what you need;
- Can offer confidentiality;
- Can provide funding for people to support themselves;
- Can help develop citizenship;
- Can enable young people to express themselves in different ways.[63]

The Policy Commission heard evidence from a number of organisations that actively engaged young services users in service redesign including InControl, the National Youth Agency, St Basils and Uscreates. They reinforced the message from the practical initiatives discussed above that service users brought valuable resources and insights to these processes and that young people were prepared to commit time and effort to shape service provision that improved their lives. They also emphasised that these developments were resource intensive and needed to be integral to the work of the organisation – for redesign to be sustainable it has to be undertaken

over time and as part of mainstream of organisational development, not tacked on or tokenistic. Young service users also highlighted this point, the NYRG arguing that 'young people need to be involved from the beginning and not half way through when you need our help'. This requires that public service workers see the value and benefit of viewing service users as a resource to be drawn upon to help improve services and outcomes as opposed to viewing them as beneficiaries of public service providers' efforts[64].

Much of the evidence presented to the Policy Commission concerned the management of complex service relationships, involving a range of services and multiple providers. Young people with complex lives found that services could be fragmented and difficult to access (as is also the case for many adults). Crucial were intermediate organisations that could help them navigate the range of services they required as well as provide a constant point of contact and advocacy.

Many of those contributing to the Policy Commission, particularly those working with young people in complex service relationships, drew attention to the value of working with 'asset' rather than 'deficit' based models of young people and their circumstances. Adopting this approach requires structural as well as cultural shifts in how service and support are decided and provided. The Policy Commission believes that there is merit in this approach but has questions about how widely it could and should be applied across service areas and how compatible it is with the existing model of defining and measuring outcomes.

A number of contributors highlighted the role of personalisation in redesigning public services. The idea that public services should be tailored to the individual, with budgets devolved to the service user or frontline staff has gained traction partly because of the way it has mobilised such wide ranging political support[65]. Advocates suggested that personalisation was of particular value to young people because of its emphasis on

direct engagement with and power to service users, features which could overcome young people's sense of not being included in decisions which affect them.

However supporters also argued that personalising budgets for young people was different to doing the same for adults and that it was not possible to read across from the experience of one to the other in attempting to design new services. They stressed the need to create the right environment within which young people and their families could make best use of a personalised approach, eg. the organisation In Control does this partly by working with small numbers of families per manager (2-6)[66]. Contributors also highlighted the difficulties that service specific budgets played in hampering the development of personalised services for young people whose service requirements breached 'siloed' budgets eg. social care, post 16 education and health.

The Policy Commission acknowledges the potential value of personalisation but was left with three key questions: what happens when individual budgets begin to be operated on an industrial scale - how do you manage scale and give freedom to individuals and what are the implications for professionals?; to what extent does personalisation disconnect individuals from or reconnect them to wider society?; and how can collective benefits to communities, either geographic or social, be achieved through funding which flows mainly to individuals?

The relationship between the individual and wider society has been considered in a slightly different way by Bovaird and Loeffler in their study of co-production in Europe[67]. They found that citizens were more likely to engage in co-production activities when they did not require much personal effort or any need to engage with others, eg. recycling household rubbish. As co-production demanded more from citizens either in terms of changing their own behaviour eg. switching to a healthier diet, or

interacting more with others eg. participating in a community group, then citizens engaged less often. They concluded that this pattern would persist without a more 'systematic and co-ordinated approach to collective co-production' which could involve action by government and other organisations and should be based on an assessment of the likely benefits that could accrue.

Risks and limits to 'active citizenship'

Two important dilemmas were present throughout the Policy Commission's discussions about young people as 'active citizens'. The first concerned the extent to which young people could or should have 'equal' relationships with professionals or other decision makers eg. politicians, and what the balance between 'freedom to act' and 'observing a duty of care' should be. While some argued powerfully in favour of a much greater voice for young people in decisions that affected them, on the basis that this was the only way to raise young people's expectations of services, others argued equally strongly against what they termed 'fetishising' young people and participation in pursuit of an inappropriate ambition to hand over power and control.

The second dilemma concerned the unintended consequences of increasing the involvement of young people in the design and delivery of local public services, specifically the risk that young people might be 'incorporated' into established modes of thinking and so

become 'active' but less critical citizens; activism becomes equated to volunteer work in the service of others, not self-protective action rooted in a rights based discourse[68]. Some contrary examples included 'Youth Voice' www.bigsocietysbigmouth.org – a site of protest at the public spending cuts including the Education Maintenance Allowance, tuition fees, education funding, and volunteer infrastructure.

Contributors to the Policy Commission argued that supporting young people to think critically about public policy and to act independently of the state were important aspects of developing citizens of the future. They suggested that this capacity could be compromised as the infrastructure to support young people's voluntary action is not protected from public sector funding cuts and this could truncate young people's ability to mobilize and take action on matters that are important to them.

Implications for public service workers

For 30 years public service workers have been on the receiving end of numerous policy initiatives aimed at changing or improving their interactions with variously; citizens, the public, users, or customers. The Policy Commission acknowledges that some public service workers have adapted to the broadly described shift from ' impartial guardian of the public interest' to 'responsive public official' with more alacrity and adeptness than others[69], but it does not agree that overall public service workers'

'default position remains 'no'' as some would have it. Rather the Policy Commission believes that there is a clear tension between how public service workers may be educated and trained, and how they have been required to practice in the prevailing organisational and/or public policy context.

In the future public service workers will need to meet demands from service users keen to play an active role in how their services are designed and delivered. They are also more likely to be involved in beginning to make demands of actual or potential service users, encouraging them to take a more active role in decisions that affect them. Public service workers will face new challenges associated with working in a more plural environment where a variety of organisations offer distinct and distinctive services and interventions to different groups.   These various demands and challenges will require the acquisition of particular knowledge, skills and ways of working.

The Munro Review of child protection argues that increased autonomy over service priorities brings with it greater responsibility for public service leaders in 'deciding the range of services they will offer, defining the knowledge and skills needed and helping the workers develop them'[70]. The Policy Commission concurs with this and its review of developments in user and citizen engagement lead it to conclude that public service workers will need to be knowledgeable about and skilled in two important domains: **co-production and collaboration** (see chapters 8 and 9 for more detail on each).

Conclusion

The good news, for policy makers' wanting to encourage 'active citizenship', is that young people are prepared, up to a point, to get more involved in shaping and running local services, for themselves and for others. The evidence presented to the Policy Commission indicates that policy makers need a range of strategies at their disposal to engage with young people in different

Recommendations

The Policy Commission has the following recommendations:

- Policy makers need to pay closer attention to the different local 'theories of active citizenship' that may be present amongst citizens, service users and public service providers and work with these rather than attempting to impose a single model.

- Policy makers should acknowledge the joint importance of activism as volunteer work in the service of others and activism as self-protective action and provide resources/make space for both to flourish.

- Continued resourcing of local infrastructure and support organisations that provide local citizens, including young people with the well balanced structured support they need to live 'everyday lives' and to become more actively engaged is essential to building a Big Society.

- The potential of 'asset' based approaches should be examined more fully to consider their applicability to a wider range of service areas.

- More evidence is needed of the impact of 'scaling up' of personalisation on service users, professionals, the management of risk, and outcomes.

- Public service providers need to improve their understanding of the ways in which co-production occurs to inform future decisions about public service design and delivery and the potential and limits of 'collective co-production'.

- Public authorities and service providers should focus on building the knowledge and skills associated with co-production and collaboration, identifying how these need to be distributed within their organisations and putting in place measures to support their development.

circumstances and that those strategies must include provision for young people to develop themselves and their skills. Underpinning successful citizen-decision maker, user – provider relationships are shared commitment, mutual respect for each others' expertise, appropriate resourcing, and a focus on lasting change in services and/or outcomes.

The bad news is that young people feel that they are excluded from decision making and not taken seriously by people in power. Changing this perception requires decision makers' to view young people differently and to develop new ways of engaging and working with them to generate positive outcomes.

4   Influencing tomorrow's behaviour - options and evidence

Behaviour change strategies and approaches are important elements of the Coalition's agenda for public services. Typified by 'nudge', but embracing a wide range of activities, behaviour change is an influential factor in proposals for designing and redesigning services, including for young people. But what evidence is there about the efficacy of behaviour change approaches and techniques and how can we use this evidence to shape proposals about the future design and delivery of local public services?

The Policy Commission wanted to explore the potential and limits of behaviour change approaches and consider their utility in for policy makers, practitioners, service users and citizens. It was specifically interested in whether and how reductions in public spending, changes to public service provision, and an increased focus on 'self-help' will generate new approaches to behaviour change, both to encourage 'good citizens' generally, and, specifically, better behaviour as service users. This raises important but often overlooked questions that the Policy Commission wanted to explore about the implications of these changes and interventions to encourage them for the respective roles of local and national government, families, schools, community organisations and religious groups (amongst other stakeholders).To do this the Policy Commission:

- Reviewed examples of interventions that set out to change people's behaviour, specifically young people's behaviour; identifying the tensions and dilemmas associated with these and similar interventions. Examples included the following initiatives:
  - Peer education and mentoring projects to prevent teenage pregnancy
  - Interventions as part of early prevention strategies in schools for emotional and behavioural problems
  - Projects to encourage those indifferent to volunteering (as opposed to those already well-disposed) to become volunteers;

- Sports projects as vehicles to develop health and community cohesion
- Campaigns in night clubs and cinemas to encourage wider take-up of chlamydia testing
- Campaigns in night clubs to encourage active intervention by peers to challenge binge drinking behaviour
- Community action projects that draw explicitly on 'nudge' behavioural techniques to encourage behaviours such as book donations
- Explored the views and experiences of young people about behaviour change
- Considered the principles that might underpin behaviour change interventions

Tensions and dilemmas

The Policy Commission evaluated a range of interventions, exploring their underlying rationale and aims, their implicit and explicit images and expectations of participants' behaviours and influences on those behaviours, and the evidence used to justify their claims. From this review it identified a number of key tensions and dilemmas that undermine the possibility for wider civic debate about effective, appropriate approaches to behaviour change. Predictably, these tensions are old and intractable, but they will take on new forms as the logistics of the Big Society unfold. The Policy Commission believes they need to be debated now, not least because policy and practice suffer from historical amnesia: many interventions currently vying for attention have been tried before, in different guises, with negative effects or unanticipated outcomes that reappear in new, contemporary forms. The Policy Commission therefore believes that debates about how public, third sector and private organizations should, or should not, try to change their own and their citizens' behaviours, and how far attempts to do so should employ behavioural psychology, must take account of the lessons of history.

Historical insights are crucial. Not only do various interventions vie for attention, but the field of behaviour change is characterised by *ad hoc*, short term implementation, and a 'doomed to succeed' approach where over-enthusiastic claims for anticipated effects often accompany over- positive evaluations of their impact, despite lack of evidence. There is therefore a tendency for laudable aims but little consideration of the possibility of unanticipated negative consequences or of moral and political questions about who should decide what, and whose, behaviour needs to change, how it might be done, and whether participants are involved in these decisions.

Interventions offer explicit and implicit images of their participants. Arguably, a dominant model in public services has been to regard behaviour as an individual matter, and disembodied from communities and localities. Here, a deficit model encourages professionals to identify, assess and then address individuals' behavioural needs, and to turn them into targets and outcomes, often without consultation or meaningful collaboration. In contrast, an asset-based model encourages individuals, communities and professionals to negotiate and agree what behaviours should change, to consider what interventions might work in the complex social, cultural contexts that shape collective and individual behaviours, and jointly to make the most of each other's contributions to affect the outcomes of interventions.

Images of participants reflect underlying ideas about human nature. For example, some approaches to 'nudge' are predicated on ideas that humans are often irrational, too busy, unwilling or unable to think through difficult and complicated questions, and just need nudging towards rational decision-making. Other interventions might depict us as driven by self-interest and the desire to maximise our own advantages at the expense of others: sometimes nudge approaches seek to make us more altruistic or compassionate through

incentives that we will benefit materially or psychologically in terms of our own wellbeing. For example, it has become commonplace in lifestyle magazines to encourage us to commit everyday acts of generosity by appealing to psychological evidence that we will develop our own emotional well-being rather than depicting altruism as a social and collective good in its own right. Some interventions depict participants as emotionally or psychologically vulnerable, and therefore requiring therapeutic support. Other interventions might regard participants as innately altruistic, compassionate and collectively-minded, and then build on those attributes. It is therefore important to consider images of the human subject embedded in interventions, to consider when a particular image is valid, and whether participants have been involved in thinking about these questions.

The Policy Commission believes that the lure of behavioural science has made public services increasingly preoccupied with ever-more accurate ways of identifying and assessing a widening array of behavioural traits and capabilities and then treating them as trainable 'skills'. This has justified a shift in responsibility for shaping behaviour in relation to 'character development' (an idea that is back in political fashion), health, parenting, social and personal relationships. One effect has been to move responsibility for behavioural change into schools, guidance and welfare agencies and psychology services, and away from parents, religious organisations and the wider community.

The Policy Commission believes that these political and moral considerations are especially important in a context where behavioural psychology, supplemented with ideas from neuroscience, has become more politically influential over the past 15 years or so. The setting up of the Behavioural Insight Unit in 2011 seeks to generate a convincing evidence base for effective behaviour change strategies. A report for the RSA, called Motivation,

Behaviour and the Microfoundations of Public Services, argued that:

A greater comprehension of cognitive pathways, social norms and moral motivations should join with a continuing understanding of instrumental factors in shaping government policy-making. Given the demands of co-production, and the limits to available finance, it could be argued that a shift to a more subtle range of interventions is essential to the future of public services. Our caution rests not so much over the ethical or political issues thrown up by such developments... There is currently a gap between our understanding of general and psychological processes and capacity to ensure that these insights become effective tools for social engineering[71].

The Unit has developed a check list of psychological effects that consciously and unconsciously influence individual conduct in anti-social and pre-social behaviour, and in healthy and prosperous lifestyles.

The Policy Commission considers that there needs to be more public debate about the influence of behavioural psychology, and particularly about the rise of 'nudge', with attention to the following perspectives. Human behaviours are extremely complex, influenced by a range of interconnected factors. For example research on young people and alcohol by Szmigin et al[72] described individuals decisions about whether or not to 'binge' drink as 'calculated hedonism', based on a multiplicity of considerations that may be resistant to media messages about the dangers of excessive alcohol.

This makes it difficult to determine the precise chain of nudges required for particular behaviour change, and what influence (if any) the different interventions have on each other. Nudge is likely to be most effective and harmless in narrow circumstances in controlled environments (eg. encouraging individuals to recycling towels in a hotel)

and less effective for broader, complex life situations and choices.

In addition, nudge risks creating a diminished view of humans as simplistic, irrational, too busy, multi-tasking, and unwilling to participate in serious civic engagement with difficult issues underlying the behaviour(s) in question. However, despite being seen as amenable to being nudged, eventually individuals start to see through attempts to manipulate their behaviour: numerous examples of compliant game-playing abound throughout the public sector, with or without nudge.

More positive approaches come from some community action projects, where proponents argue that considered use of nudge that addresses explicitly the pitfalls summarised above avoids nudge being either covert or underhand, nor simply about the behaviour of individuals. Proponents also argue that randomised controlled trials suggest that:

- Nudging increases the likelihood of putting desired behaviours into action, helping to make the most of the untapped potential that exists for citizens to do more of the behaviours they would 'like to do anyway'.
- Nudge is not necessarily a one way processes – communities can take action to nudge public professionals to act in certain ways; if citizens are mobilized to speak /act, public institutions need to be geared up to respond.
- Nudge needs to be linked to 'think' through deliberative approaches that enable people to reflect on the issues that matter to them and to consider and debate the different options available[73].

In the light of evidence about nudge, the Policy Commission believes that there is a need to consider the ethics of covert versus explicit efforts to change citizens' behaviour, and to decide when approaches to nudge undermine the democratic process and processes of open debate, or, conversely, when they encourage both.

The views of young people

Our survey of young people (11-21) explored behaviour change in two ways. First we asked young people (15-21) about their awareness of particular media campaigns and whether or not those campaigns had made any difference to their subsequent behaviour. Then we asked young people (11-21) about who they thought should be able to influence their behaviour and what the role of government should be.

Young people had generally high levels of awareness of many of the campaigns we identified in the survey (see Table 5).

The most noticed or prominent behaviour change campaigns were those related to health, i.e. 5 a day, then stop smoking campaigns (90% recognise 5 a day campaigns, 90% recognise stop smoking campaigns and 78% recognise Change4Life).

Young people were relatively unaware of campaigns to engage them in volunteering activities with only 40% awareness.

Recognition was slightly higher for ABC1 social groups for health campaigns, and higher for C2DE groups for campaigns to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, road safety promotions and gang violence awareness[74].

Although across the board, young people were relatively unwilling to say the campaigns changed their behaviour (see Table 6), some individual campaigns appeared to buck this trend. The highest scores were for 5 a day campaigns, with almost half of young people (49%) reporting that they had changed their behaviour as a result of the campaign. This figure was slightly higher for girls (56%) than for boys (42%)[75]. The Change4Life campaign achieved 30%. However, most campaigns achieved under 10%. The National Youth Reference Group concurred with this emphasising the importance of a range of social, economic and environmental factors on any decisions they took.

Table 5. Young people's awareness of media messages

Which of the following advertising messages are you aware of/have you heard of?	No	%
Campaign to encourage people to eat five fruit or vegetables a day (i.e. 5 a day)	450	90
Campaigns to encourage people to take more exercise (i.e. change for life)	390	78
Campaigns to stop smoking, (i.e. pictures and health warnings on cigarette packets)	447	90
Campaigns to encourage testing for sexually transmitted infections (i.e. RU Clear Chlamydia campaign)	354	71
Campaigns to stop binge drinking (i.e. know your limits drinking adverts)	381	76
Campaigns to promote road safety (i.e. don't let your friendship die on the road campaign)	318	64
Campaigns to stop gang violence (i.e. carry a knife and lose your life campaign)	280	56
Campaigns to stop anti-social behaviour	286	58
Campaigns to encourage volunteering	197	40
None	11	2

Base 498 (15-21 years). Source: LVQ Research Ltd.

Table 6. How young people's behaviour changed

Which of the following have personally changed what you do yourself?	No	%
Campaign to encourage people to eat five fruit or vegetables a day (i.e. 5 a day)	245	49
Campaigns to encourage people to take more exercise (i.e. change for life)	151	30
Campaigns to stop smoking, (i.e. pictures and health warnings on cigarette packets)	74	15
Campaigns to encourage testing for sexually transmitted infections (i.e. RU Clear Chlamydia campaign)	49	10
Campaigns to stop binge drinking (i.e. know your limits drinking adverts)	47	9
Campaigns to promote road safety (i.e. don	40	8
Campaigns to stop gang violence (i.e. carry a knife and lose your life campaign)	21	4
Campaigns to stop anti-social behaviour	20	4
Campaigns to encourage volunteering	21	4
None	150	30

Base 498 (15-21 years). Source: LVQ Research Ltd.

Table 7. The right to change young people's behaviour

Which organisations or individuals do you think have a right to change how you act or think?	No	%
Family	659	84
Friends	339	43
Youth workers	81	10
Teachers/School or Lecturers/College	261	33
Doctors/hospital	211	27
Voluntary organisations	42	5
Charities	38	5
Church or mosque etc	42	5
Social workers/Social Services	84	11
MPs/The government	92	12
Other	26	3
None/Don't know	52	7

Base 782. Source: LVQ Research Ltd.

Table 8. How the Government should try to influence young people

How do you think the government should try to influence how you act or think?	No	%
By passing laws which ban activities of which it does not approve	136	17
By taxing activities of which does not approve	65	8
By running marketing and advertising campaigns against activities of which it does not approve	197	25
By getting its message into the networks from which you get your information (i.e., Facebook or friendship groups	339	43
Other	26	3
None	219	28

Base 782. Source LVQ Research Ltd.

The survey revealed some interesting answers when it comes to considering who has a right to change behaviour (see Table 7): the highest legitimacy was afforded to family members (around or above 80% - but with a slight drop off for 19 year olds plus)[76]. The level remains high for girls with 84% of 19 – 21 year olds think family has a right to change behaviour as opposed to 69% of boys[77].

Notably, teachers were felt by a significant proportion of respondents to have legitimacy in seeking behaviour change: 33% of all young people thought teachers had a right to change their behaviour (compared, for example, to just 10% for youth workers). Voluntary organisations, faith groups were all given relatively low markings against this question (around 5%). MPs and social workers scored slightly higher (12% and 11% respectively). The NYRG argued that change occurred more as a result of 'being inspired' by someone, rather than because of someone's position in authority.

Generally, young people from social groups ABC1 and C2DE gave similar answers to questions regarding legitimacy of organisations seeking to change behaviour, apart from in the case of teachers where 38% of young people ABC1 said it was OK for teachers to attempt to change their behaviour compared to 29% of young people C2DE, friends (48% compared to 38%) and doctors (31% to 23%)[78].

Interestingly for the government's 'Work' agenda, only 6% of unemployed young people felt that MPs had the right to change their behaviour compared to 18% at 6th form college and 12% overall[79].

One consistent message about Government's right to influence young people that emerged from our focus groups is connected to respondents' ideas about citizenship. One respondent put it this way,

"Governments and councils do influence [the way people think or behave] all the time and they have the right because they were voted in – but we didn't vote for them because we can't yet. When we can vote then they will have the right."[80].

In terms of how government actually effects change, highest support was for using the networks which young people currently use to get information from (i.e. Facebook etc) – 43% peaking at 65% at age 18[81] (see Table 8). The NYRG agreed with this point but cautioned against official bodies trying to mimic the behaviour of young people in its messaging – an issue that also arose in our examination of practical initiatives to engage young people (see chapter 3).

Young people at 6th form college expressed most faith in the efficacy of law (26% compared to 17% overall)[82].

Conclusion - principles for appropriate behaviour change interventions

Despite the salience of behaviour change amongst policy makers, the Policy Commission concludes that we still know too little about whether and how behaviour change interventions 'work', and that too often assertion is mistaken

for evidence. The complexity of factors influencing an individual's decision making were emphasised to the Policy Commission by the reflections of the NYRG - young people who have been on the receiving end of a variety of attempts to influence their choices. In addition the emphasis that young people themselves place on the role of the family and not the state as the legitimate source of influence suggests that moves to 'professionalise' character development maybe misplaced. Finally, the Policy Commission is concerned that the political, moral and ethical dimensions to behaviour change strategies risk getting lost in focus on the 'science' of strategies such as 'nudge' etc. The Policy Commission concludes that there is a need for clear principles to inform decisions that public authorities and other organisations might make about appropriate interventions based on:

- The extent to which behaviours are individual or collective, psychological and transferable between situations, or cultural, social and situated/context-specific.
- The extent to which behaviours should be treated as merely technical questions about the most accurate definitions of skills and assessments, promoted by proponents of various interventions and interest groups.
- The need to debate who is responsible for developing and changing particular behaviours, in order to enable citizens to make informed contributions to decisions about behaviour change: here, legislation, where policy makers must argue a case for a particular intervention, is a vehicle for public debate.
- The extent to which rhetoric about moving away from measurable and auditable outcomes in favour of 'co-production' of outcomes and interventions is belied by over- reliance on behavioural approaches.
- The extent to which evaluations of initiatives currently in place a) reflect conflicts of interest, where programmes are evaluated by supporters, or, at the other extreme, carried out by individuals who disagree with the basis of the

intervention, and b) emphasise summative evaluation rather than learning and development during the life of the intervention.

- the need for systematic comparison of programmes and outcomes, and avoidance of replicating and promoting programmes shown to work only in specific circumstances.

Recommendations

The Policy Commission has the following recommendations:

- Approaches based on psychological insights can be useful, but they avoid difficult civic questions about the causes of positive and negative, social and anti-social behaviours, and responsibility for changing them. The Policy Commission warns against too powerful a role for the state but also urges politicians to encourage debate that goes beyond technical considerations of having good evidence and, instead, to explore who is responsible for behaviour change in the interfaces between the national and local state and its various agencies, the individual and her or his local community, family and other networks.

- Evidence of effective change suggests that interventions should be designed and implemented at a local level, where joint/dual strategies that i) use deliberative approaches within local contexts to come up with the desired outcomes (giving them legitimacy) and then ii) use approaches that encourage those outcomes, based on informed decisions about the pros and cons allow individuals, groups, professionals and practitioners to find solutions that work best within their local area.

- There is a need to map the wide spectrum of behaviour change approaches that have either sprung up in ad hoc ways, or been introduced as part of policy initiatives, and to consider their value within specific contexts, for particular behaviours. This could be done by central government or by an independent academic/ research institution.

- Behaviour change mechanisms have to be situated within a broader governance context, where outcomes are identified and agreed through the practice of politics, and where the politics of behaviour change occurs within an agreed framework of governance principles that shape how resources are allocated and needs/aspirations are to be met.

- Interventions should not be based primarily on 'measurable' capabilities or skills since this encourages reductionist forms of training.

- A challenge in determining the costs of behaviour change interventions, together with the cost benefits of services forgone, is to consider factors such as the long delay between investment and return, and the fact that the investor is not necessarily the beneficiary. An economic model used in America in thinking about cost-benefits is currently being adapted for the UK context by the Social Research Unit. The *Every Child a Reader* programme, part funded by the JJ Charitable Trust, used this approach in its evaluation and concluded that for every £1 spent, £18 would be saved in future spending[83]. *Central government should scrutinise these developments carefully as they could have significant implications for future public investment.*

- The Policy Commission asks whether there needs to be a body similar to the Campbell Collaboration[84], to arbitrate debates about behaviour change interventions, and to identify principles and criteria for designing, implementing and evaluating appropriate interventions.

5   Designing tomorrow's services - changing roles and relationships

Public services are delivered by a range of providers from across the public, private and third sectors. The Coalition's ambition is to extend private and third sector engagement in the delivery of public services and to reduce direct provision by the public sector, permanently reconfiguring patterns of public service delivery, and redefining public sector organisations as commissioners rather than direct providers of services. But how confident are we about the capacity of public, private and third sector organisations to work in new ways and with different resources, and how can insights from existing arrangements and practices help shape more localist services in the future?

According to pollsters Ipsos MORI the public at large continue to value the contribution of the public sector, not least because they are resistant to the idea of public services being run for profit[85]. However the public is also pragmatic, supportive of private provision where it can offer faster treatment, for example. The public also appears to be more accepting of private sector provision in those areas where there is little contact between provider and user eg. waste services and more resistant in areas such as health and education, though again they are pragmatic about this[86]. In general the public like the idea of voluntary sector provision though appear to have little idea of how it works in practice[87].

The Policy Commission wanted to examine what further diversification of the supply of public services would mean for the organisation, roles and relationships of providers of public services across different sectors and how it would affect the achievement of outcomes for individuals and local communities. To do this the Policy Commission:

- Examined the role of commissioning across a range of services and outcome areas.
- Explored the relationship between outcomes and services.
- Reviewed different approaches to organising and funding services

involving the public, private and third sectors.
- Assessed the impact of a focus on outcomes on the contribution of the third sector and on volunteering.

The Policy Commission drew on the views and experiences of service providers and other experts across a range of policy areas including education, health and social care, housing, leisure, volunteering and youth services. It examined the shape and nature of current public service supply and considered the potential and risks associated with new kinds of contributions from, and collaboration between, public, private and third sector bodies. Changes to the identification, training and support of future public service workers following further diversification were key issues in the Policy Commission's deliberations.

Commissioning in theory and practice

Commissioning was a key theme throughout the work of the Policy Commission, attracting considerable support but also considerable criticism from across the sectors. Advocates emphasised commissioning as key to both diversifying supply but also getting the best results from a plurality of potential providers. Critics were mainly concerned with what they considered to be the poor practice of public service commissioners – who were charged with multiple failings including: lacking clarity about the nature and content of outcomes sought; lacking appropriate knowledge to understand the range of potential suppliers and so generate a sufficient pool or market, specifically but not exclusively in the third sector; lacking sufficient commercial skills to get the best out of external suppliers; and lacking the necessary relationship building skills to develop and sustain relationships with potential suppliers and to draw on their skills to refine the services being commissioned.

The Policy Commission accepts the logic and principles of commissioning but is sceptical about the extent to which the rhetoric and theory of commissioning is

achieved in practice, in part because of the criticisms identified above, but also because of the range of claims that were made about commissioning and models of commissioning that were put to the Policy Commission at different points in time - a summary of which is contained below:

Effective commissioning:

- Is based on a comprehensive resources review and needs assessment;
- Uses methods appropriate to the outcomes being sought e.g. sole, joint, lead commissioning, etc;
- Is based on an accurate 'theory of service', i.e. a clear understanding of what is appropriate and effective for the user groups involved;
- Maintains the link between the service being commissioned and the agreed community outcomes;
- Promotes innovation in services to generate improvements;
- Facilitates learning about commissioning and about how to design/deliver successful services;
- Actively decommissions services as well as commissions them;
- Make use of a range of mechanisms for securing services eg. grants, contracts etc;
- Engages users/beneficiaries throughout;
- Plans for failure, by considering a range of possible future scenarios, limiting the circumstances in which there is a single supplier, so that failure, should it occur is easier to mitigate.

The Policy Commission believes that while these features may all be legitimate dimensions of an effective commissioning process not all of them will be pertinent to each case of commissioning and public service commissioners need to be clear about which features are most important in each set of circumstances.

In future commissioning may be undertaken more often with others either jointly or in closer collaboration with those who are likely providers of the service. On the basis of the evidence presented to it the Policy Commission believes that joint or shared commissioning poses significant

challenges for both commissioners and providers; challenges which many on either side are not yet equipped to meet. Commissioners need to be confident in how public decisions are made and accounted for in joint or shared commissioning. This means that they are fully aware of the range of appropriate providers, how to engage with them and absolutely clear about the basis for choosing to commission one provider over another. Providers may be expected to be more closely involved in setting outcomes and shaping programmes to achieve them, to be more responsive to adapting programmes over time as circumstances change, and to bearing more of the risk associated with more experimental programmes. These new demands challenge providers to be more open, responsive and connected to a locality or service area.

The role of outcomes and the relationship with services

In submissions to the Policy Commission diversification of supply was justified principally on the basis of achieving service and community outcomes which required *inter alia*: the co-ordinated action of multiple providers; or the specialist intervention of particular niche providers; or the capacity for innovation and/or efficiency offered by a particular organisation. The Policy Commission acknowledges the force of this rationale but was also conscious of the costs (financial and other) often associated with working in this way, the relatively small evidence base to support the achievement of outcomes in some policy areas, and the implications of opting for diversification on other aspects of service organisation eg. integration or collaboration.

The Policy Commission considered how a focus on outcomes can generate a different conception of what support to young people or other service users should be and what it looks like. It may be that mainstream 'services' are not what is required, rather what is needed is a particular kind of intervention or resource that can stimulate change, join things up or fill a gap. This broadens our

conception of what local public services might mean in the future and it also changes how we understand the contributions that different organisations can making to achieving outcomes, e.g. Foyers work with 10,000 young people and provide support and resources in a range of ways but they are not seen as a youth service.

The Policy Commission also acknowledges that a focus on outcomes coupled with longer term trends of 'personalisation' is generating a more segmented approach to the provision of public services with a greater emphasis on 'niche' or 'targeted' service provision and less emphasis on universal approaches. There are short term question arising from these developments about who supplies services to 'unpopular' users as well as longer term questions about the impact of this segmentation on social cohesion. More generally, public services may not simply be designed to provide user benefits – there may be wider social, economic or environmental benefits which need to be weighed in political decisions about the appropriate tax/ spending mix. These questions have implications both for service commissioners but also for local government as the institution with democratic oversight of local well-being.

New approaches to organising and funding services

The Policy Commission heard about a wide variety of options for organising the delivery of public services and spent some time discussing the merits of different organisational forms (eg. mutuals, hybrids), modes (eg. co-production, prime contractors) and instruments (eg. social media). It concluded that the key decision that commissioners should be concerned with is how to meet the aspirations of service users - the relevant form, mode and instrumentation should follow from this.

However the Policy Commission is aware that there are risks associated with the kind of diversification of supply implied by this approach and has highlighted two

concerns in particular. The first is that despite, and sometimes because of, the focus on user outcomes, democratic concerns about collective issues such as social cohesion, inequality, mutual respect and environmental sustainability, get shifted to the margins of decision making and accountability is difficult to secure because the lobbies who scrutinise and campaign for these issues are relatively weak. The second is that risk gets shifted to those least able to bear it, eg. smaller providers or even service users themselves. The Policy Commission is clear that whatever the organisational form, mode and instrumentation used, democratic accountability for public services needs to be easy and effective, and the right incentive structures (cultural, performance, and financial) need to be in place to align commissioner, provider and user behaviour with desired outcomes.

In trying to address some longstanding and complex problems eg. unemployment, policy makers have developed similarly complex programmes. The Government's 'Work' programme is a recent example which requires the achievement of a broad range of outcomes involving a myriad of providers from the public, private and third sectors. To function effectively this programme requires a networked approach to delivery based on multi-actor partnership arrangements and contractual relations and an integrated approach to commissioning, using provider and user perspectives to arrive at agreements about what to do and how to do it. Partners have had to restructure their own organizations (in whatever sector) to fit in with the demands of the programme and its more networked approach.

The Policy Commission believes that this kind of complexity poses significant challenges for all those involved and also raises important questions about how users can influence the commissioning process and how politicians can hold such 'networked' arrangements to account, particularly when the programme is commissioned nationally. It also calls into question how serious is

the Coalition's commitment to Localism given that it has built in only a very weak role for local decision-making about the appropriate design and delivery of services or for local governance over how decisions are made and programmes implemented.

The Policy Commission considered some of the new funding options currently being trialled in different parts of public services, eg. payment by results and social impact bonds. Third sector organisations offered evidence about the potential adverse impact of these new funding models on the viability of third sector organisations engaged in public service provision. Other developments such as personalisation had also challenged third sector providers eg. in the move from 'block' to 'spot' contracting[88]. The Policy Commission's view is that any new approaches to funding public services need to be evaluated to consider their cost/benefit in terms of outcomes, but also to assess their unintended impact on other public policy goals eg. broadening the engagement of SMEs and third sector organisations.

The contribution of the third sector
The role of the third sector was a consistent theme in many of the Policy Commission's discussions about improving outcomes for service users. The Policy Commission noted the evidence of the Public Administration Select Committee (2008) that had found little systematic comparative evidence on the added or distinctive value of third sector organisations in providing services over and above public or private provision:

> 'The central claim made by the Government, and by advocates of a greater role for the sector in service delivery, is that third sector organisations can deliver services in distinctive ways which will improve outcomes for service users. We were unable to corroborate that claim'[89].

The Policy Commission was keen to explore the basis upon which third sector organisations engaged in providing public services and the value they thought they brought. Three claims were made by or associated with the third sector in discussion with the Policy Commission or in evidence from existing research: it has a particular ethos of care, it is able to meet the needs of niche groups that other organisations cannot for financial reasons, and it is cheaper due to its volunteer base. While it is possible to theorise about how each of these claims might contribute separately and together to the achievement of improved outcomes for service users, the Policy Commission was not able to draw any particular conclusions from the evidence presented to it[90].

A number of contributors made representation to the Policy Commission about what they saw as the threat to the third sector of the increasing emphasis on contributing to service user outcomes by providing public services. They argued and the Policy Commission agrees that the advocacy and challenge roles played by the third sector as part of the public community of a locality are vitally important to the achievement of wider community outcomes and should not be risked through the inappropriate engagement of the organisation in providing public services. This has implications for both public sector commissioners and for third sector organisations themselves. It implies that commissioners must ensure that the culture of advocacy and challenge is not undermined by the contracts which it lets – eg. new advocacy bodies may need to be funded when traditional advocacy bodies become heavily dependent on service contract funding. Third sector bodies may need to construct boundaries between their different functions (in much the same way as private auditing firms need convincingly and transparently to separate auditing from consulting activities) or to restrict service contract funding so that it does reach such levels that their organisational viability would be threatened if the contracts were not renewed.

Financial pressures on third sector organisations arising from the cuts in public spending were also much in evidence in the Policy Commission's meetings. A key issue the Policy Commission explored was the pressure on third sector organisations and the possibility that they may become more reliant on volunteers themselves than paid staff with the corresponding implications for investment in recruitment and retention. The Policy Commission acknowledged that there were important distinctions to be drawn between different kinds of voluntary organisations but noted that smaller more locally based third sector organisations may experience particular challenges in the current climate.

In this context a key challenge for the third sector and indeed more broadly for Government (national and local) is to increase the number of those involved in volunteering. Contributors to the Policy Commission had a variety of ideas about how volunteering might be encouraged ranging from those which were about identifying specific incentives, eg. making changes to the tax system to support time banking or similar initiatives; those that focused on a system wide approach e.g. an individual locally driven engagement approach delivered through a national construct to ensure consistency of delivery and clear strategic objectives. 'v' argued that a greater penetration was achieved through a systematic approach (vinvolved) compared with more ad-hoc provision (Millennium Volunteers)[91], to those that focused on the need to change the basis of our social relationships, e.g. the need to create a culture where human capital is valued through voluntary activity.

The Policy Commission also discussed the impact of introducing volunteers into mainstream public services. Contributors argued that this changes the dynamic of the service relationship between provider and user and that both may require additional support in a period of transition.

A number of questions were raised that the Policy Commission was not able to answer but which will be need to be addressed if volunteers are to become more a part of local public services. These included: whether not service users' expectations of service might have to change; whether potential suppliers understood how much it costs to draw on volunteer support especially in new areas of work; whether service users should expect the same level of service from volunteers as private or public employees; and will the increasing involvement of the state make all of this more expensive, i.e. will it bring in public sector standards/ways of working that add to costs?

The Policy Commission is of the view that prevailing circumstances and underlying trends will increase the likelihood of public authorities contemplating diversifying their service supply. A key challenge is how to develop and sustain a genuinely plural system of provision, while avoiding the dominance of a single sector or group of national providers.

Implications for public service workers

The Policy Commission acknowledges that the removal of the performance regimes and targets established under the New Labour administrations is helpful in so far as their removal permits public service workers to use their own initiative, skill and judgement to improve individual and/or community outcomes. However the Policy Commission is concerned that without sufficient support and culture change nationally and locally, public service workers will not regain the confidence and competence they need to act on their own initiative but will remain confined by institutionalised norms of behaviour. This could be very damaging in a period of public spending cuts when the emphasis will be on working to do more with less.

The Policy Commission supports the findings of the Munro Review[92] of child protection which argues for a move from a 'compliance culture' to 'learning culture' and the development of an intelligent and adaptive whole system of support and would wish to build on these ideas for application throughout public services where appropriate. In addition to providing a clearer focus on improving outcomes, this approach offers a more considered approach to managing risk by ensuring a clearer understanding of what risk is, how it should be managed and how accountability should be practiced. This is crucial in a context where diversification of service delivery in public services is likely to increase. In turn this will increase the need for expertise in **commissioning**. This will make significant demands on public servants and require them to develop new knowledge and skills, including, 'commercial' skills for some.

The growth in hybrid arrangements for delivering services eg. partnerships and networks offer a specific challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is how to ensure that diversity of supply does not get in the way of achieving improved outcomes, and understanding the extent to which the cultures and practices of different organisations involved in delivering services can promote or hinder the ambitions behind diversification. This will necessitate the development of knowledge about and skills in **collaboration**. The opportunity is to redefine all of those engaged in the delivery of public services, from whatever sector, as 'public servants' and to associate with that role a set of values and attributes that begin from a shared ambition to improve outcomes for citizens and service users (see chapter 9).

Conclusion

Public authorities and organisations will continue to face intense pressures to diversify their supply of services as current financial pressures combine with increasing levels of demand and rising service user expectations. How far and in what ways they diversify should be driven by the desire to improve outcomes for service users and communities whilst protecting social cohesion. Greater diversification will require improvements in commissioning practices and changes to service provider behaviours – both of which are significant challenges. If diversification is to lead to pluralism rather than privatisation (as some critics suggest) then the Policy Commission believes that diversification needs to be more locally grounded and with a stronger democratic dimension.

Recommendations

The Policy Commission has the following recommendations:

- Public authorities and commissioners need to be confident in their rationale for service diversification based on a clear understanding of the action required to achieve service and community outcomes and an awareness of the associated challenges.

- Public service commissioners need to ensure that the model of commissioning they adopt is appropriate to the circumstances, that commissioners have the necessary skills and that in cases of joint or shared commissioning involving potential providers, robust accountability arrangements are in place.

- Public service providers, from whatever sector, need to develop new ways of working that are more open, responsive and connected to a locality or service area in order to meet the challenges of joint or shared commissioning.

- Public authorities need to think more broadly and creatively with users and providers about what kind of support is required to achieve outcomes and who and how can best offer that.

- Form, mode and instrumentation should follow function in the design and delivery of services but without risking accountability or the viability of potential providers.

- As policy interventions become more complex to address particularly challenging outcomes, particular attention needs to be paid to the capacity of users to influence the design and delivery of these programmes and for politicians to hold providers to account. This may require a trade-off between programme complexity and legibility to the public and their representatives. An alternative localist option is that more decisions and power could be devolved to localities to assess whether programmes and partnerships could be devised that were more accessible to users and democratic influence while at the same time having sufficient creativity to achieve agreed outcomes.

- As users and other citizens play greater roles in the future in the co-commissioning, co-design, co-management, co-delivery and co-assessment of public services, clearer protocols will be needed to ensure that the governance of co-production is appropriate. In particular, it should not become a requirement, should not disadvantage those who cannot contribute, and should not become exploitative, pressurising the weak and vulnerable to give more of their time and energy than they wish.

- Third sector representative organisations need to monitor the impact of Big Society and 'public service' proposals to assess how far they act to enhance or limit the capacity of the third sector to fulfil its advocacy role.

- Public authorities and service providers develop an understanding of the knowledge and skills associated with collaboration and commissioning, identify how these need to be distributed within their organisations and put in place measures to support their development.

- All of those engaged in the delivery of public services, should be identified as 'public servants' who work from a common set of principles rooted in a shared ambition to improve outcomes for citizens and service users.

6 Supporting tomorrow's learning – success and failure in localism

The radical policy changes proposed by the Coalition in relation to behaviour change, Localism and diversification of service supply will stimulate a range of experiments in local public service design and delivery. Some of these experiments will fail, eg. partnership arrangements may fail due to incompatible organisational cultures, civic organisations might fail through lack of citizen capability or commitment, or social enterprises might fail to generate sufficient business. Planning for and developing ways in which to respond to failure will be crucial in order to avoid individual services users and communities being left without services. Conversely it will be important that successful enterprises are able to be reproduced. But what evidence do we have of how and why different approaches to delivering local public services fail and succeed, and how can we use this evidence to help anticipate and mitigate 'failure' as well as account for success in local public services and civic action?

The Policy Commission wanted to explore how future learning in public services could be supported by examining past experiences of and views about success and failure, and by considering different approaches to evaluation. To do this the Policy Commission:

- Reflected on past experiences of 'market' and 'government failure' to identify lessons that might be of value in a localist or Big Society context.
- Examined evidence of organisations' attempts to 'scale-up' or replicate successful initiatives.
- Examined evidence of how organisations dealt with failure, and the roles played by support or infrastructure organisations.
- Explored how different forms of evaluation assessment could contribute to judgements of success or failure.
- Deliberated about who should step in following a Big Society or localist failure.

The Policy Commission drew on a range of experiences from children's services, housing policy, sport and the third sector.

Lessons for Localism from 'market' and 'government' failure

The Policy Commission identified three lessons from past experiences of 'market' and 'government failure' that could help inform risk management in a Big Society or localist context.

The first lesson was about providing support for a diverse range of service providers to emerge and flourish so that the claimed benefits of this diversity i.e. more responsive, creative and tailored services, could be realised. This support would vary depending on the specific needs of potential service providers eg. whether they were new employee mutuals, embryonic third sector or private sector suppliers. A particular emphasis on growing and supporting smaller, local organisations to compete with the already well established third and private sector providers would also be required. Service commissioners could provide some of this support, but some might need to come from national sources.

The second lesson concerned coupling effective support with effective regulation to ensure that providers continue to deliver value, however defined, and new or emerging contributors are not 'crowded out' by the established provider environment. Regulation may take two forms – by the commissioners as part of ongoing performance review, and by an external independent reviewer. It is important that services are not 'over-regulated' so that potential creativity is strangled by 'red tape'.

The third lesson focuses on integrating service users into decision making that affects them, within a wider context of an ongoing democratic debate about local community priorities and values.

Even taking account of these lessons the Policy Commission's view is that Coalition's policy and public spending decisions are so radical that service (re)designers are working without a blueprint, making experimentation inevitable. Experimentation is particularly risky in public services as it involves investing scarce resources that could

always be put to safer use elsewhere. The consequences of failure can be materially damaging for service users and reputationally damaging for the organisation involved. However the benefits of success can mean significant improvements for service users, better use of resources and a store of knowledge that can be made available to other service areas or organisations.

The Policy Commission believes that for self-help and self-organisation to flourish spaces and support are required – both of which are put at risk in an environment where all activities are seen as expressions of instrumental policy goals. It is important that resources are made available to encourage individuals or groups to pursue things that they think are valuable.

Success and 'scaling-up'

The Policy Commission considers that while reproducing successful initiatives and services is to be encouraged, 'scaling up' should not be at the expense of losing organisational characteristics that are highly valued eg. flexibility, innovation, limited bureaucracy or being locally connected. This requires further work to establish a clearer understanding of how to prevent mission drift in the process of scaling-up. Alternatively it may require a different approach to reproducing successful initiatives which could include adopting a franchise model and more networked form of organisation.

The particular characteristics of any local context are such that very few successful initiatives can be simply transplanted from one site to another or one sector to another. Instead the Policy Commission concurs with the view that a process of adaptation or 'grafting' is required.[93] This has implications for commissioners and funders who may want a particular kind of intervention.

Dealing with failure

The Policy Commission found it difficult to access many accounts of learning from failure in public services, though recent research on organisational turnaround provides important insights into local

government and health[94]. There are also few examples of learning from failure in the third sector. Contributors to the Policy Commission argued that failing organisations can be turned around but there is a need to understand the context in which they are operating and draw on the right resources (human and financial) to respond.

Umbrella or infrastructure organisations have a key role to playing in avoiding or addressing failure in new public/third sector commissioning arrangements. These organisations can help to improve the relationship between the third sector and its commissioners by representing broad concerns to commissioners and identifying weaknesses in particular third sector organisations and helping to address these through peer review and quality assurance processes. They can also help to put in place support to deal with the likely future causes of failure in the third sector, eg. payment by results, lack of capital, users with more complex circumstances, commissioners'/funders' unrealistic expectations about what can be delivered or what outcomes can be generated.

While much more should be done to anticipate and reduce failure, including the development of 'failure policies'[95] , sometimes crises occur which cannot be anticipated. Such exceptional circumstances need to be acknowledged.

The Policy Commission believes that an apparent public inability to acknowledge that failure at some point is inevitable has contributed to a culture in which organisations (public, private and third sector) are reluctant to be open about their experiences with detrimental consequences for wider learning. This has been exacerbated by the strong emphasis in public policy on accountability, responsibility and the associated tendency towards 'blame games' which contributes toward organisations hiding failure *and* talking up the promise of progress towards success. This is likely to be particularly damaging in an environment where

organisations are being encouraged to assess the impact of their work in new ways eg. social impact, and where shared learning might accelerate progress.

Options for evaluation

Important in any system of knowledge generation is a framework for assessment that enables appropriate judgements to be made about whether or not something is a 'success' or 'failure'. Over the last decade the emphasis on 'evidence-based' policy and practice encouraged investment in evaluation, an important dimension of which was the direct engagement of service users, including young people, in assessing the worth of policy programmes and/or activities within them, eg. the national evaluation of the Children's Fund[96].

While views about the overall impact of the 'evidence-based policy' movement are mixed, the Policy Commission considers that its emphasis on the potential power of knowledge and evidence has stimulated a wide range of community/user led research that can help improve the design and achievement of outcomes[97].

Equally important is the availability of resources to promote successful initiatives to as wide an audience as possible, and the means to learn from and communicate lessons about failed initiatives.

Outcomes comprise tangible and intangible impacts making it very difficult to undertake any kind of cost/benefit evaluation using monetary values when the benefits may be intangible, when value changes over time and when the cost/benefit of an individual unit or activity cannot be extracted from the wider system of provision. Social Return on Investment approaches offer an adjustment to conventional cost/benefit analysis, but they too continue to face the challenge of quantifying benefits.

On this basis the Policy Commission believes that alternative approaches to evaluation that do not rely wholly or solely

on the need to monetise or quantify benefits but focus instead on a wider range of measures including user assessment, may be appropriate. Possible evaluation options include theory-based evaluations such as 'theories of change' [98] or 'realistic evaluation'[99] which include coverage of issues raised at different points in the Policy Commission's work such as: the impact of context on implementation, the standards of evidence that may be required for different kinds of programme, addressing questions of attribution, the value of formative evaluation in creating the space for learning and development, and the ability to undertake systematic comparisons of programmes and outcomes and to clarify the circumstances under which particular interventions will 'work'.

In the event of localist failure?

The Policy Commission is of the view that the Big Society will not replace the state – at any level but particularly not the local level. It believes that there is a public mandate for an active local government and local public services albeit in different form. In this context the Policy Commission considers that decisions about whether or not the commissioner should step in in cases of service failure depends on a set of prior decisions relating whether or not the service is statutory. If it is then the commissioner has to step in, but if it is not then action depends on how the commissioner views the service. If it a service that the commissioner has decided it does not wish to/cannot afford to provide any longer, then the commissioner can opt out should failure occur, but if it is a service that the commissioner believes to be core to the well-being of its communities, then the commissioner retains a responsibility for making sure it is provided. The Policy Commission recognises that this decision is made more complicated should there be a difference of view between a key commissioner and its commissioning partners, or the wider local polity about the significance of the service.

Conclusion

Radical policy agendas lead to experimentation which generates both success and failure. Putting in place appropriate and sufficient resources to enable decision makers to make informed judgements about the success or failure of experiments is essential to maximise use of scarce resources. This will require drawing on a range of evaluation approaches and techniques. Learning more about and from failure is likely to become more important in a context where we have few blueprints to guide us so making failure more likely and where experimentation is occurring across and between sectors and will include experiments in self-help and self-organisation. This will require more openness on the part of 'failed' initiatives or organisations. It will also require a cultural shift in public and policy makers' attitudes towards failure.

Recommendations

The Policy Commission has the following recommendations:

- Commissioning processes should be regularly reviewed for intelligence about how they facilitate successful initiatives or contribute to failures. These reviews should involve providers and users in addition to commissioning staff.

- There is a need for evidence to be collected about the failure of self-help and self-organising initiatives in communities and neighbourhoods in relation to specific services and in relation to specific groups in order to assess what the potential and limits of self help might be and what kinds of additional support might be needed in specific circumstances.

- The move from 'cost' to 'price' based contracting should be reversed if it adversely impacts either on smaller third sector providers or on service quality.

- There should be ongoing micro and macro evaluation of the respective impacts of public, private, third sector or hybrid service provision in terms of value for money, quality of provision, equality of access and user experience in order to inform future decision making about the extension/contraction of particular initiatives.

- Public resources should be moved from ineffective programmes to evidence based ones, accompanied by clarity about what is acceptable as evidence, including young people's perspectives, and attention to questions of fidelity of programme design and impact of local contextual factors on implementation.

- Independent evaluation of interventions is a priority. History shows a tendency for proponents of particular methods to make large claims, and to marginalise the sort of independent, longitudinal evaluation that avoids a tendency to extrapolate findings from small scale studies to larger populations. It is essential that evaluations are clear about who is commissioning and funding them and that governments support and resource independent evaluations of proposed interventions.

- Central government should make funding available to support public service (re)design experiments, to encourage public service commissioners and providers to pursue new ideas, in a context of shared risk and rewards (through learning and transferability of successful initiatives).

- There is a need for a nationally co-ordinated system of support to aid the design, development and evaluation of public service experiments, the innovations that arise from these experiments, and their application in local contexts. This support does not need to be and indeed ideally should not be, provided by a single organisation, but comprise a network of linked organisations that collectively provide this support in a way that fits with the problem to be addressed.

- Computer modelling and simulation could offer important insights into the potential and limits of proposed experiments, so helping to refine them prior to testing on the ground (for example, as currently being explored in the 'Modelling Birmingham' project of Birmingham City Council). Partnerships of public service commissioners and providers and universities and other research institutions should be encouraged to pursue these possibilities and take advantage of European and other funding where appropriate.

- Universities and other research and intelligence organisations should invest directly in working with service users and community groups to support the development of their capacity to undertake research and evaluation activities on their own behalf, enabling them to develop ideas for public service experiments as well as contributing their own evaluations of experiments in practice.

7 Inventing tomorrow's local government – challenges and opportunities

Local government is facing a number of challenges. Proposals for Localism and the Big Society challenge its authority by devolving power to individuals, communities and professionals. Budget reductions challenge its capacity to act to meet the demands of its communities, particularly those adversely affected by the recession. Longer term political trends such as the disengagement of citizens from local party politics and from the representative institutions of government challenge its legitimacy. To meet these challenges local government will need to reinvent itself. But what do we know about local government's capacity for reinvention and the options available to it and how can this knowledge help shape future local government?

The Policy Commission wanted to explore how local government might reinvent itself, what this would mean for its future role, its relationships with other public, private and third sector organisations and with citizens. To do this the Policy Commission:

- Reviewed the Coalition's proposals for Localism in the context of previous reforms.
- Examined the future of local government as community leader.
- Explored the prospects for local councillors, identifying potential roles.
- Considered the balance of central-local responsibilities in the context of current public debates.

The Policy Commission drew on a wide range of expertise and experience from the public, private and third sectors and from representative organisations, local government workers, advisers and researchers.

Localism and local government reform

Local government is no stranger to reform. Its constitutionally subordinate position means that national governments can and regularly do intervene to 'reform' its duties, functions, how it is organised and funded. Since the 1980s programmes of 'reform' or 'modernisation' have dramatically reduced the level of

power and discretion of local government and the institution has regularly had to reinvent itself in the face of repeated Governmental intervention and longer term social and political trends[100].

The Policy Commission believes that the Coalition's proposals for Localism lack a coherent framework within which to understand the future role of local government. The contents of the Localism Bill are at once too broad – focusing on actions in relation to individuals, communities and local government among others – and too narrow – exploring only a limited range of issues in relation to the role of local government. In addition there is insufficient acknowledgement of and connection to the range of proposals from other Government departments, eg. housing benefit reform, education reform, police reform, that will have a significant impact on local government's capacity to act in the future. If Localism is to become meaningful then it requires a much more coherent narrative about the role and purpose of local government which should be developed in discussion with local government institutions.

The Policy Commission considers that the proposed reforms could finally break the link between local government's democratic role and that of direct service delivery that has been an integral element of UK local government since the ideas and practice of local government became institutionalised in the late 19th century. This is not new - this connection has been repeatedly challenged by government reform programmes as well as some academic observers[101] since the 1980s. In its place it has typically been proposed local government become an 'enabling' institution, although very different versions of what 'enabling' might be have been offered [102].

Many local authorities have moved some way towards an 'enabling' model which has included diversifying service provision to private and third sector bodies and redefining the roles and relationships of councillors. The Coalition's proposals offer further

encouragement to this. The implications for local government as a service commissioner and direct provider are considered in chapter 5 as part of the wider discussion of the diversification of public services. What remains peculiar to local government, however, is its' democratic underpinning and role. The remainder of this chapter will focus on the democratic dimension and the potential opportunities associated with it.

Local government as community leader

Recent research emphasises the importance of local government's role as community leader in a context of diverse and complex communities, fragmented service delivery and a myriad of bi-lateral and multi-sectoral partnership arrangements[103]. Contributors to the Policy Commission from the public, private and third sectors concurred with this view basing their assessment on a combination of factors: local government's democratic basis, its multi-functionality and its responsibility for the well-being of its local communities (codified in the LGA 2000 under the power of well-being).

The Policy Commission's view is that local government's continued claim to community leadership is contingent on two important linked factors: its capacity and capability to fulfil this role in the context of further limits to its powers and reductions in its budget, and its ability to enhance its democratic legitimacy in a context of declining faith in representative politics and institutions. Local government's claim to community leadership needs to be matched by an ability to renew the community leadership role to meet current and future challenges and opportunities. The Policy Commission has identified six contemporary tensions that provide challenge and opportunity for future local community leadership.

The first tension is the increasing emphasis on individualisation versus the continued desire that citizens have to be connected, expressed most vividly perhaps through the use of social media.

This provides an opportunity for local government to work with its citizens to explore how this desire for connectedness can translate into public policies which express particular values e.g. friendship, solidarity and sharing, while at the same time posing questions about what else might need to be added to round out those values, eg. reciprocity and attention.

The second tension is that between an increasing emphasis on people being encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and local government's continued role to safeguard or protect individuals, who either cannot or refuse to take full responsibility for their own actions. This provides an opportunity for local government to support those who are willing and able to act on their own behalves, but it also challenges local government to work with others (providers and users) to agree what might be acceptable levels of risk in different circumstances.

The third tension is between user well-being and/or community well-being, where the uninhibited pursuit of the former diminishes the latter, eg. through anti-social behaviour, the over or under development of a village etc. The challenge for local government here is twofold: how to ensure that individuals are equipped with the necessary skills and resources to make good decisions, whether or not they choose to do so and how to establish the parameters of support that will be available to individuals should they make poor or selfish decisions which have negative consequences not only for themselves but also for the wider community.

The fourth tension is to respect the diversity of and within communities while at the same time working to promote social cohesion. This requires among other things an ability to plan and forecast future public service requirements across the range of services– a task that is likely to be more challenging in the absence of public institutions that held those planning and forecasting capabilities such as strategic health authorities.

The fifth tension is managing the increasing fragmentation of local services prompted by diversification alongside the emphasis on providing a more integrated and co-ordinated system of services and support to achieve agreed outcomes. The challenge and opportunity here is to promote collaboration amongst different providers and to promote co-ordination across commissioners.

The final tension is how to manage the promotion of economic development and growth whilst also promoting environmental sustainability. This is not a new challenge but it remains a key one.

Of course local government also needs to manage the service-specific tensions identified in chapter 5 that apply to all local public bodies involved in commissioning and delivering services: eg. quality and cost, prevention and responsiveness.

Options for local councillors
The Policy Commission's examination of local councillors focused on two main areas: the roles that they play, and the ways that they engage with citizens. A number of different councillor roles were identified in the discussions of the Policy Commission, each of which imply a different kind of relationship with citizens and others[104]:

- Advocate – councillors take action on behalf of particular individuals or interests;
- Co-ordinator – councillors work to 'join up' relevant actions and/or services in their localities on behalf of their communities;
- Executive - councillors shape the meaning of policy for their locality and take key decisions re resourcing, modes of delivery, etc;
- Meta-governor- councillors design and guide the space and framework within which others act;
- Representative – councillors represent particular views, interests or demands to decision makers;
- Mobiliser – councillors initiate local activism in support of particular community concerns; and

- Scrutineer – councillors scrutinize decisions and policies to improve local accountability.

These roles are overlapping and will not apply to all councillors at all points in time. However the Policy Commission believes that these roles will continue to be important in the future and that some roles e.g. meta-governor, mobiliser and scrutineer will become more important in a new context of multiple providers and user interests, where it may be unclear where formal democratic control ends and informal legitimacy over decisions begins. Consequently the Policy Commission believes that local government will need to be very attentive to the relationship between representative modes of democratic decision making and the growth in more participative and deliberative democratic practices in order to both maximise the benefit of participative practices in themselves and also to enhance the legitimacy of representative democratic processes as a result.

It will also continue to need to work with long standing and new 'community champions' who themselves have different sources of legitimacy. The form of this relationship between those elected representatives whose legitimation comes through the ballot box and those whose legitimation comes through their ability to mobilise strong support amongst fellow citizens or service users may take many forms but will require both groups of 'representatives' to show respect for the role which each other can play in helping collective outcomes to be debated and achieved.

Balancing central-local responsibilities
The Policy Commission believes that the cumulative impact of decades of reform has left many citizens confused about what local government can and should be held accountable for. Debates about education and adult social care dominate the media and while these have a distorting effect, not least because a sizeable proportion of local government is

not and never has been responsible for them, they are debates that typify some of the difficulties for local government in managing its relationships with users and citizens. In the case of education repeated reform has limited the power of Local Education Authorities and also reduced the resources that they have to provide specialist support as more funding is channelled directly to schools. In adult social care local government retains formal responsibility but in a context where the predicted rate of

increase of demand for services has so far outstripped available funds that a national commission has been established to consider funding options and the Law Society is proposing both to clarify individual's rights to services and to establish a code of practice that all local authorities must follow in their delivery of these services.

The Policy Commission believes that, in circumstances where most meaningful decisions about services are made

nationally or centrally, it becomes difficult to understand how these can be considered in any way the responsibility of local government. The Policy Commission considers this requires a national dialogue with the public about how such services are resourced and delivered.

Conclusion

Local government needs to reinvent itself as local community leader to meet the demands of future local public governance. To secure this role local government needs legitimacy with other public, private and third sector actors based on its capacity to act competently, justly and in the interests of local well-being in a context of scarce resources. It also needs democratic legitimacy with citizens and communities in a context where faith in representative politics and institutions is declining. This means developing meaningful roles for local councillors and going beyond representative institutions to work directly with and alongside citizens and communities to shape the values, policies and outcomes that will define the locality.

Recommendations

The Policy Commission has the following recommendations:

- National and local government should work together to develop a vision for the future role and purpose of local government in a new environment. This should include a review of local government finance that goes beyond the remit of the current resources review and builds on the work of the Lyons Inquiry to give local government sources of finance which are driven more by local decisions and are more independent of central government interference.

- As community leaders local authorities should provide a democratically anchored framework within which local priorities can be set, reviewed and renewed. These need to be considered in the context of support that must be provided, support that is locally needed and support that could be provided. Citizens and users need to be involved in the processes of priority setting in a truly interactive fashion so that there is space for views to be represented, heard and opinions changed or new opinions formed.

- Local government has a key role in promoting citizenship amongst young people. To do this with credibility it needs to acknowledge through its actions that young people are part of its communities and not separate from them. It

needs to support citizens to become independent actors able to critique public policy and public services. It also has a role in reviewing the use of 'nudge' tactics to change young people's behaviour to ensure that they are being used appropriately.

- Improvements to transparency need to be accompanied by a more expansive and robust expression of accountability. Our understanding of accountability has narrowed so that we tend to conceive of it simply as accounting for how money is spent and /or the achievement of certain tasks. This encourages a practice of compliance to stated measures and inhibits creativity. We should return to a broader conception of accountability in which more attention is paid to local circumstances and the construction of mechanisms for giving and holding to account that go beyond the financial/ performance measures, but embrace narratives of why things happened and what might be learned. Local councillors have a key role as ward representatives, mediators of local interests and scrutineers of the actions of local government and other providers.

- Local authorities should consider whether it is easier for councillors to perform their democratic role if services are commissioned externally – does this avoid conflicts of interest for councillors or does it reveal a lack of capacity on their part to be responsible?

Shaping tomorrow's Localism – From deliberation to design

The Coalition's package of reforms for public services if implemented in full will bring into being a new settlement of 'local public services' - with significant implications for how we define and describe public services in the future, for any emerging social contract, and for local government, public service providers, workers and citizens. At present some of these proposed reforms are 'paused' and it is possible that the Coalition's proposals will suffer the same fate as previous attempts and fail to generate the kind of 'transformation' that some supporters wish. The lack of any clearly defined formal framework for the current array of proposals arguably implies that they deserve this fate.

The Policy Commission takes a rather different view. While not wishing to deny the significance of the public spending squeeze in general and the dramatic impact of front loaded local government spending cuts in particular, and regretting the apparent lack of coherence in thinking about the impact of the Coalition's public service reforms on localities, the Policy Commission believes that the demands of the future will require public services to be delivered in different ways.

The Policy Commission's response is to propose a system of Local Public Support which continues to acknowledge the vital importance of an active state but also recognises that fulfilling citizens' aspirations and meeting their needs in the future will require the provision of new kinds of resources, interventions and/or services, involving citizens in new ways as well as contributions from the public, private and third sectors. The system of Local Public Support is described in chapter 8.

A system of Local Public Support will make new demands of citizens, outline new roles and skills for a more broadly defined group of public servants in the public, private and third sectors, place local government and local democracy at its centre, and require a new settlement between communities and central government. These conditions for success are described in chapter 9.

Moving from our existing system to towards a system of Local Public Support requires action across a range of areas. The Policy Commission's recommendations at the end of chapters 3-7 will help localities make that move.

8   Local Public Support – a system for tomorrow

Fulfilling citizens' aspirations and meeting their needs in the future will require the provision of new kinds of resources, interventions and/or services. In this chapter we offer one way of meeting this challenge through the development of a new system of Local Public Support. By this we mean **the co-ordination of all available resources (including public, private, civic and personal) to offer 'helpful acts' of various kinds (eg. connections, ideas, interventions, products, resources, services) that are appropriate to need and circumstance and which promote individual and collective well-being.**

The Policy Commission advocates a system of Local Public Support that is underpinned by seven re-design principles derived from our analysis of current circumstance and trends outlined in the previous chapters. These are:

- Citizen centred: the system begins from the circumstances and aspirations of the citizen and proceeds in participation with them; recognising citizens' dual desires to be acknowledged as individuals but also to be connected to a wider society.
- Cost effective: use of resources in the system is assessed via considerations of quality and cost but undertaken with reference to how all available resources have been used.
- Democratically accountable: the system has transparent decision making, meaningful scrutiny and opportunities for redress.
- Legible institutions: all arrangements for determining and offering support in the system are as simple and accessible as possible.
- Outcome orientated: system resources are organised in ways that support the objective of individual and collective well-being.
- Socially just: the system promotes equality of opportunity, respect for human rights and the dignity and value of all citizens and redistributes resources fairly.
- Sustainable: the system balances social, economic, environmental and political impacts.

Our expectation is that any system of Local Public Support will be as diverse as the range of localities, neighbourhoods, regions etc. Acknowledging this diversity our proposal is presented as a framework of individual features each of which offers scope for experimentation in its development, but which, when realised together, will create a new adaptive system of Local Public Support.

The key features we have identified are:

- Democratically determined rights and entitlements to local public support.
- Local priority setting in a democratic framework.
- Outcome based commissioning.
- Co-production in the design and delivery of support.
- Dedicated resources for citizen/ community action.
- Combining preventative and responsive activity.
- Plural provision where this supports outcomes.
- Local public support budget.
- Powerful local politicians.
- Systematic and shared learning.

1. Democratically determined rights and entitlements to local public support

In a system of Local Public Support rights and entitlements to support is decided and determined through democratic deliberation involving the whole community. As much local public support in the future is likely to be combination of that which is universal; targeted; niche; and discretionary, it is vital that decisions about how support is organised and who is eligible are undertaken with existing users and the wider social and spatial communities. All democratic deliberation needs to be undertaken in the context of the principles of social justice and sustainability and public authorities, particularly local government, will have a responsibility to ensure that weaker/ unpopular 'voices' are not marginalised in these deliberations, including by establishing a framework for deliberation based on the promotion of individual and community well-being. Engaging young people in this way may

help overcome some of the resistance expressed to the Policy Commission about Government's right to try and influence them while they could not influence it, i.e. they were not eligible to vote.

A system of Local Public Support cannot override those rights and entitlements determined elsewhere eg. Human Rights, statutory national standards. Rather it acts to complement them by engaging users and other community members directly in debates about how these rights and entitlements may be locally codified and expressed in areas where localities have discretion.

In addition to codifying what the particular rights and entitlements of 'local citizenship', local deliberations could also consider ways in which those rights and entitlements might be promoted, protected, incentivised, rationed or enforced. There are opportunities here to consider the contribution of 'nudge' type initiatives as well as consider the scope for charging and for local sanctions.

2. Local priority setting in a democratic framework

The system of Local Public Support is driven by the local community priorities negotiated and agreed within a democratic framework that is anchored in the representative institution of local government but operationalised through a range of participative and deliberative mechanisms. The priority setting process cuts across all of those areas that influence individual and community well-being regardless of where those services and resources are commissioned from or located. Once priorities are set negotiations with commissioners and budget holders outside the locality, eg. Whitehall may be necessary in order that agreements may be reached about how specific priorities and outcomes may be achieved.

In a system of Local Public Support priority setting and the outcomes derived from it are not rational and technical but the result of a political

process in which local communities come to a consensus about what their priorities are. Other approaches to priority setting may inform this process[105] but do not override it.

3. Outcome based commissioning

In a system of Local Public Support outcome based commissioning plays a key role as it is through this process that the range of support to be offered will be established. Commissioning is undertaken within the framework of agreed local community priorities and outcomes and in the context of co-production with citizens and service users.

A system of Local Public Support should offer considerable flexibility to decision makers and commissioners to try out a range of approaches to achieving outcomes in order to establish which works best for which users and communities in which circumstances. This is important as it will allow for testing of the appropriate relationships between interventions and outcomes, for example how realistic is it to connect crime reduction compared to improved health with sporting activities for young people? It will also permit the exploration of a range of interventions where outcomes may be agreed but there is no agreement on what the key problem is, eg. the outcome is improved health but there is

disagreement about whether the problem is structural (so give power to GPs) or clinical (more chronic conditions imply more primary care and fewer hospitals), or what kind of problem it is - political, technical etc.

Outcome based commissioning demands new behaviours and approaches from commissioners and providers, from whatever sector, particularly where commissioning is joint or shared. Openness, responsiveness and connectedness are key features of commissioner-provider relationships in a system of Local Public Support.

4. Co-production in the design and delivery of support

Co-production is a significant feature of a system of Local Public Support. It is seen as a way of saving scarce resources, by getting individuals and communities to make more of a contribution to their own and possibly others' well-being, eg. using less and recycling more. It is also seen as a means of generating new resources by increasing individual and community capability eg. the knowledge and skills gained by participating as a school governor and the associated increase in local governance capability in a neighbourhood. Finally it is seen as a way of stimulating creativity and

innovation in service or support through the exchanges with public service workers that may arise from co-produced activities.

The experiences of some of the young people who gave evidence to the Policy Commission suggested that engaging in co-production with service providers not only helped to create a better system of support but also enhanced their sense of being independent and responsible individuals, attributes they prized.

Engaging in and benefitting from co-production can occur in a variety of ways. A system of Local Public Support would pursue some or all of these. However a key challenge is the transformation of co-production from something that largely attaches to and benefits individuals, i.e. individuals acting alone or in individual relationships with public service workers, to 'collective co-production' where the benefits accrue to the wider community[106]. Public authorities and service providers are likely to be key to stimulating any move to 'collective co-production' partly due to their co-ordinating capacity but also because they have existing assets eg. community buildings and other resources that could be made available to users and communities as part of developing new collective co-production.

Other areas to explore in the development of co-production in a system of Local Public Support include:

- The management of risk in co-production; the role of trust, agreed standards and accountability.
- The potential of co-production to generate new uses of social media in a system of public support - particularly perhaps in the development of relationships with more social media savvy young people.
- The opportunities co-production might offer to a new kind of volunteer and the potential of co-production to attract different kinds of people to become volunteers.

5. Dedicated resources for citizen/community action

A system of Local Public Support makes resources available for citizens and communities to take action on their own behalf. These resources may come in a variety of forms eg. they may be physical assets, they may be represented in the support given by intermediary or infrastructure organisations and/or they may be financial resources such as grants or loans that enable citizens and communities to provide their own services and support.

Some of these resources will be made available by or transferred from local public authorities or public service providers. However as important will be the resources that are available from other sources eg. the private sector and third sector that enable citizens and communities to improve their own and others' well-being. Examples offered to the Policy Commission included Iris Lapinski's training programme 'Apps for Good' www.appsforgood.org which enables young people to learn to develop social media applications to address problems particular to them, eg. the development of a 'stop and

search app' which allowed young people to share their experiences of being stopped by the police as well as giving them access to information about their rights, and O2's support for 'think big' a £5m programme that awards young people money and offers mentoring to support the development of good ideas into practical projects and outcomes.

In a context of increasing social diversity it is likely that some communities' aspirations will remain outside of or on the margins of the mainstream. A system of Local Public Support can make available resources for community members to work with academics and others or to undertake their own research to contribute to a better understanding of how a system of Local Public Support can benefit them [107].

6. Combining preventative and responsive activity

A system of Local Public Support focuses on preventative activity as this can provide a more direct route to achieving positive outcomes for individuals and communities and can reduce the need for expensive responsive interventions so saving

scarce resources. There is scope here to explore the potential and limits of behaviour change approaches and to examine the likely contribution of working with asset based models of intervention and support. A key instrument for such approaches is likely to be 'capabilities analysis', which explores what local people can do and are willing to do to contribute to local public support, without reducing either to measurable and trainable 'skills', to set alongside more traditional 'needs analysis'. When a system of Local Public Support is driven by 'needs analysis', it is typically triggered only when urgent needs for 'treatment' type support are becoming evident, which inevitably results in underplaying the role of early preventative activities. A 'capabilities' approach identifies early those who have important contributions to make to the system of Local Public Support, encourages these contributions to be made in effective ways, and thereby helps the people whose contributions are built into the system to benefit from the all positives which follow from feeling needed, appreciated and empowered, all of which are likely to result in more positive behaviour and less need for later intensive interventions.

7. **Plural provision where this supports outcomes**

    Form follows function in a system of Local Public Support. Who supplies support, of what type, in what way and how funded are all questions that are answered in relation to what offers the best outcome for individuals and the wider community. Evidence about this will be derived from national data and intelligence as well as from past local experience. As outcomes for individuals and those for the wider community may sometimes conflict, and there will be occasions when trade-offs need to be made, e.g. between diversity and integration, these decisions are as much political as technical ones and need to be taken democratically.

    Local government has a key role in shaping the operating environment for this system which includes making and managing markets and community support spaces, co-ordinating activity and holding suppliers to account.

    There are opportunities here for innovations in new kinds of supply arrangements involving public, private, third sector and community bodies.

8. **Local public support budget**

    A local public support budget operates flexibly within and between the resource streams of local public authorities and providers. It makes use of the range of financial resources available from private, charitable and philanthropic sources.

There are opportunities for experiments in new kinds of funding for local public support including payment by results, social impact bonds, Tax Increment Financing, new local government fees and charges and more joined-up central government funding.

A local public support budget also take account of local social as well as financial resources – and the 'capabilities analysis' mentioned above contributes to this.

9. **Powerful local politicians**

    A system of Local Public Support requires powerful local politicians who are able to: shape and guide the system in ways that reflect local community priorities, direct resources in support of co-production and innovation; stimulate and respond to community action and challenge; represent the views of those with limited resource power in decision making; and provide a robust framework for local accountability. Elected politicians will need to work closely with other recognised community leaders and influencers and different localities will have different mechanisms for engaging with and drawing on the resources of citizens and communities.

10. **Systematic and shared learning**

    A system of Local Public Support should contain multiple opportunities for systematic and shared learning in

order that different aspects of support can be regularly reviewed and revised or replaced if they are not contributing to individual and community well-being. Learning should be derived from a range of mechanisms that are already in place in a system of Local Public Support including: the findings of deliberations with the public, evidence from community based research, the reviews of support undertaken as part of the commissioning process, users' reviews of specific forms of support, formal independent evaluations of major initiatives, outcomes of research into public support provision undertaken by universities and others, results of internal and external scrutiny and inspections, and intelligence about new developments and practice elsewhere.

All evidence should be published on a dedicated website to make it as transparent and accessible as possible. It should also be subject to a process of 'meta – review' by independent observers so that the overall health of the system of Local Public Support can be assessed and debated. Local universities might have a key role to play here. However it should also be possible for community organisations or others to undertake analyses of the evidence and upload their own judgements about a particular aspect of local public service support for others to review.

9   Making the system work - the conditions for success

The Policy Commission identified four conditions for a system of Local Public Support to operate successfully.

1. Citizens as co-authors of their well-being

A system of Local Public Support is based on the idea that citizens are genuine co-authors[108] of their well-being. By this we mean that citizens are active contributors to creating and sustaining the good outcomes that they wish for themselves and their wider communities, but crucially, that they do not do so alone, but in conjunction with a range of other actors and forces that shape what is possible, including the family, friends, state, third sector and market.

For citizens to become co-authors in the way that we propose requires attention to a number of key conditions. Meeting these conditions places particular demands on different aspects of a Local Public Support system but serves to emphasise the importance of the whole system in 'co-authoring' future citizens:

- **Capacity.** To act as co-authors citizens need agency; the wherewithal to act on their own behalves in relations with others. Agency is an expression of personal power linked to factors including an individual's competence eg. being literate and numerate, capability eg. having good health, enough work, and confidence, eg. able to make decisions. Agency may be expressed directly or through advocates. A system of Local Public Support makes an essential contribution to the development of an individual's overall capacity to act through the work of local schools, health centres, and economic development initiatives in combination with the work of families, social networks and third sector organisations.

- **Connectedness.** Connectedness is important in a number of ways for citizen co-authors. Connections with others can increase the resources (expertise, time, support) that citizens have at their disposal to contribute to their well-being. Mastery of new media can add to these resources but also is valuable of itself as it provides access to ways of communicating and working that are becoming part of the mainstream. Finally understanding how individuals are connected to each other and to wider society opens up discussions about belonging, fairness and solidarity and what it means to be a citizen 'co-author' whose actions impact both on individual and community well-being.

A system of Local Public Support contributes to connectedness in numerous ways: it provides a resource for building individual social capital eg. through engagement with third sector organisations; it offers access to and training in new media; and finally it can help citizens develop a critical understanding of their position in a globalised society in the context of wider structures and processes of change eg. through citizen education. Osler's[109] argument for citizen education undertaken in support of the development of cosmopolitan citizens and based on human rights principles and reflexive learning identifies a range of benefits from this approach that would complement the kinds of skills and attributes of putative citizen co-authors including: cooperative practice, democratic decision-making, including participation in the management of learning, independent reasoning and critical awareness, and effective communication skills, including those for transnational and intercultural communication.

- **Control.** Co-authorship implies a degree of power and control, both over one's own actions as discussed in relation to capacity but also in exchanges with those who have traditionally exercised power on behalf of, and indeed over, citizens eg. local government, public service providers. If citizens are to be active contributors to their own well-being then this requires that politicians, professionals and practitioners cede control over decisions, budgets and services and help create the conditions for co-authorship to flourish.

- **Context.** Citizens' capacity to act as co-authors will be influenced by the social, cultural and economic conditions of their neighbourhoods, localities or regions. Discrimination, poverty and inequality will place significant limits on the 'scope of possibility' for some individuals and communities. This in turn places a responsibility on a system of Local Public Support to take action to address, as far as it is able, the causes and the expressions of structural discrimination and disadvantage and to engage with other actors eg. national government to take action that is outwith its scope.

Co-authorship does not imply that all citizen action needs to be undertaken in concert with agents of the state, but it does insist that all citizen action is affected one way or another by wider social forces which include but are not restricted to the state. Independent self help activities with no connection to the state or acting in resistance to the state are essential and in a system of Local Public Support there will always be clear boundaries between the distinctive contributions of the state and civil society.

Co-authorship is also something that continues to develop over time and in response to new circumstances. Reeves and Collins described it as a 'state of becoming, not a state of being'[110]. The National Youth Reference Group described it rather differently but equally effectively in their evidence to the Policy Commission. For them 'every day is a school day'[111].

2. Twenty-first century public servants

'Community members envision a world, professionals envision a service'[112]

Our proposals for a system of Local Public Support have significant implications for the people who provide public services. Public services have continued to be designed around professional specialisms even though the silo institutions these designs

created have long since ceased to be useful in achieving local well-being. Public services have continued to be viewed through the lens of the public sector even though voluntary and latterly private sector providers are well established in many areas of service delivery.

The persistence of these ideas has been perpetuated by the way in which training, development and support for public service workers is provided. In higher education and elsewhere training, development and support continues to be offered along highly specialised professionalised pathways that lead to distinct professional qualifications. Our post qualification training and development remains too sectorally focused and where we do create opportunities for cross sectoral development they tend to be at the top end eg. leadership programmes. We continue to assume that people's careers in public service (or anywhere else) will be 'linear, definite, specialised and predictable'[113]. In practice they are likely to be anything but.

Our proposals for a system of Local Public Support require the generation of a new kind of public servant, able to fulfil a variety of roles and equipped with a range of skills regardless of their professional identity. We recognise that particular public support functions demand a level of specialist skill, knowledge and know-how that needs to be developed through appropriate specialist training and education. But we argue that this emphasis on professional specialism needs to be

matched by possession of other attributes and competence in other skills relevant to all public servants. We also recognise that as career paths and opportunities change people are likely to move between the public, private and third sectors and this may happen throughout their lives. We outline our proposals for the 'Twenty-first century public servant' below.

- **Who are they?** Twenty-first century public servants may be: professionals, managers and/or practitioners from across the public, private and third sectors who are working in a system of Local Public Support.

- **What do they do?** Twenty-first century public servants fulfil a combination of roles, some of which are new, some evolving and some longstanding. There are four key new roles that will need to be developed.

The first is **storyteller**, the ability to author and communicate stories of how new worlds of Local Public Support might be envisioned in the absence of existing blueprints, drawing on experience and evidence from a range of sources. The Policy Commission heard from numerous respondents about the uncertainty and insecurity created by current economic and policy context but was struck by how few references were made to people able to envision what might be possible in the future and to communicate it effectively. This is not to underestimate the significance of the likely reductions in staffing and resources, but it is to suggest that the ability to fashion and

communicate options for the future, however tentative and experimental, will be crucial in engaging services users, citizens and staff in the project of redesign.

The second is **resource-weaver**, the ability to make creative use of existing resources regardless of their intended/ original use; weaving together miscellaneous and disparate materials to generate something new and useful for service users and citizens. The Policy Commission heard evidence from youth workers and others in the third sector of the need to develop skills in bidding for and putting together a patchwork of funds and looking for new ideas and ways of delivering services. Resource-weavers will do this but are likely to need to focus more on developing new uses for existing resources.

The third is **system architect,** someone who is able to describe and compile coherent local systems of public support from the myriad of public, private, third sector and other resources. This is a role that combines prescription with compilation and it is an ongoing task as system resources are likely to vary over time and space.

The fourth is **navigator**, a role specifically focused on guiding citizens and service users around the range of possibilities that might be available in a system of Local Public Support. This is the kind of role that some area based regeneration workers and neighbourhood co-ordinators and managers have developed in the past on a 'patch' basis.

In addition there are three evolving roles. The first is **commissioner**, a role which the Policy Commission spent a long time considering and which a great deal is already known about. The key issue here is ensuring that there are sufficient commissioners with the right range of skills to be able to commission services and support on a system rather than simply a service basis.

The second is **broker**, a role closely associated with but distinct from that of

advocate. It requires working closely with and on behalf of service users to access the appropriate portfolio of support. Its development is linked to the growing emphasis on personalisation and individual budgets and 'brokers' will make a key contribution to processes of co-production in these contexts.

The third role is **reticulist**, a role that is one element of the collaboration domain and focuses on the development and use of networking skills to identify new sources of expertise and support and /or to bring together agents who together can achieve desired outcomes.

Finally, there are four longstanding roles that will continue to be important, all of which are closely associated with the different elements of the roles of public service professionals. The first is **regulator**, associated with assessing the performance of resources against agreed standards; the second is **protector**, where the emphasis is on intervening to prevent harm; the third is **adjudicator**, the requirement to make decisions on balance of evidence; and the fourth is **expert**, specifically the exercise of judgement in decision making drawing on relevant skills and experience.

■ **What support do they need?**
Davidson's critique of university education draws attention to twenty-first century 'literacies'[114] – the specific skills that are required in the new working environment. These resonate strongly with the issues that the Policy Commission has been discussing and are relevant both to the domains of co-production, collaboration, and commissioning identified in chapters 3 and 5 and also to the roles outlined here. The twenty-first century literacies are:

- Interpersonal skills specifically facilitation, empathy and political skills;
- Synthesising skills, including sorting evidence from range of sources, analysing, making judgements, offering critique and being creative;

- Organising skills for group work, collaboration and peer review;
- Communication skills, making more and better use of new and multi – media resources.

To develop these new roles and skills Twenty-first century public servants will need appropriate and adequate support. Foremost among these is a Government that publicly values and supports public service and promotes careers in public services.

Educational and training programmes for public servants at all levels including at national level will need to be redesigned to accommodate these new roles and skills and to address the existing skills gaps. In addition the ongoing support offered from national infrastructure organisations will need to be pooled so that they can use their resources to provide the kind of cross sectoral support that public servants will need. In amongst this support will be on-line intelligence about developing trends e.g. demography, social relations, that can support public servants make good decisions with users and citizens about changes to systems of Local Public Support.

Universities have a significant role to play in supporting the generation of Twenty-first Century public servants[115]. Their extensive international connections and networks are valuable for the intelligence that they offer about 'how the world works' and what might be applicable in the English context. In addition their research can offer insights into how things might be done differently.

In a system of Local Public Support with an emphasis on systematic and shared learning, universities could work with different actors in the local system to develop collaborative research programmes where securing policy impact is integral and iterative. Just as shared services can create efficiencies within a given locality, so too shared learning can lead to increased investment and outcomes for citizens in

their locality. The emphasis would be on developing a continuum of exchange of knowledge and reinvestment. Alongside this universities could develop programmes of experiential practice, testing out and developing new policies, models of delivery and enhanced business processes in particular localities or social communities. These potential opportunities challenge universities to recover their criticality in teaching and learning, something that has been squeezed in the last two decades following the introduction of competence-based training programmes.

3. **A connected and connective local government**
Local government will become more important in the future. The redesigned system of Local Public Support that we are envisaging provides important opportunities but also presents difficult challenges. Local government will need to manage the different tensions created by a new system of support as well as changing the way it relates to citizens. To achieve this local government needs to be both connected and connective.

In its relationships with citizens and service users:
■ Local government needs to be connected directly into local spatial and social communities in order to develop a deeper understanding of their aspirations and concerns and the outcomes which they most value, and so be better able to connect them to resources that can offer appropriate support or mobilise for those resources to be developed where they are not available. This requires that that local politicians are perceived to be both credible and legitimate by their constituents.
■ Local government needs to be connected to the views and experiences of those accessing local public support in order to develop a more rounded assessment of the performance of the system of Local Public Support, hold service and

support providers to account and work with them to re-allocate resources to improve performance.

In its relationships with providers of public support:

- Local government needs to be connected to the range of potential providers of local public support in order to improve its commissioning capacity and connect existing resources together more effectively. This includes identifying opportunities for co-production and ensuring plurality of provision.

Finally, local government needs to develop a way of governing that engages individual citizens and communities and providers in and connects them to the construction of a larger project of social solidarity fundamental to a system of local public support. This will require:

- Local government and local politicians becoming more attuned to how citizens and communities organise, and work with these arrangements (providing they are in keeping with broader democratic values) rather than simply introducing its own 'participation' mechanisms.
- Local government working with other actors in the local polity to shape place and space in different ways in relation to different policy priorities e.g. sustainable economic development, health and well-being.
- Local government having the freedom to work with other local authorities and providers to make proposals to central government for a 'local' take- over of the running of a range of services where benefits to individual and community well-being can be demonstrated.
- Local government having sufficient capacity to act, i.e. it needs to have sufficient power and resource at its disposal to influence the conduct of others and to be influenced by them. This includes greater financial capacity and flexibility locally, including, but going beyond the reform of 'business rates'.

- Local government functioning as a 'failsafe, evening out inconsistencies or gaps in service provision, and helping community groups and the voluntary sector to grow their own capacity'[116].

4. A new national government/ community settlement

Flourishing systems of Local Public Support depend on action beyond the locality, specifically changes in the way that central government relates to local government and other local public institutions, and changes to the relationship between central government and citizens. Some of these actions are about the appropriate use of power to effect change that is beyond the scope of systems of Local Public Support. Other actions are about changing the culture of public discourse. They are linked.

The contribution of nationally organised public services and systems of Local Public Support to the public who benefit directly from them but also the contribution they make to creating the conditions for a prosperous private sector and wider social cohesion must be acknowledged by central government. This includes acknowledging the contribution of all 'public servants', whichever sector they happen to be delivering services and support from.

Highlighting concerns about public safety will be one of the roles played by national regulators in relation to systems of Local Public Support. Another will be to offer assessments of progress towards outcomes. National regulators will have no role in promoting particular modes of providing support eg. encouraging competition or the extension of third sector engagement – these should be decisions made by localities themselves.

Localism should result in a much clearer framework of responsibility and accountability between 'the centre' and localities. These divisions need to be made clear to the public. Where responsibility and accountability is

located within localities central government should respect that and not seek to intervene unless there are legal breaches or concerns about public safety.

Localism will enable systems of Local Public Support to develop in diverse ways in response to the aspirations of local citizens and communities. This will generate increased variation in how resources are allocated and which outcomes are pursued across localities. Central government has two roles here: to set national standards for support in those areas that the public nationally have declared to be important, and to act on those issues that are outside the scope of systems of Local Public Support eg. action to address structural inequalities and economic disadvantage.

Public views about where responsibility for particular public policy issues should lie changes over time in response to changing circumstances. Where an issue has become a matter of significant public concern eg. as the funding of adult social care is currently, then it should become the subject of a national debate facilitated through a commission of enquiry and reporting to Parliament.

There is also a need for a more informed dialogue between national government and the public about the expectations of and possibilities for public services in the future.

There are at least three issues here:

- Whether the public's expectations about the levels and quality of public services and support can be met without addressing questions of general taxation.
- How the provision of public services and support should be rewarded in a plural system, including questions about the impact of significant pay differentials between executives and those at the 'front line'.
- What 'risk' and 'failure' means in a system of public services and support.

Notes

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6. The survey was conducted by LVQ Research between April 26 and 29th as part of the Children's Omnibus Survey. 782 young people aged between 11 and 21 were interviewed. See the technical appendix for detail
7. Envision undertook four focus groups with 50 school children aged 16-18 between March and May 2011. See the technical appendix for details
8. Identified and undertaken by Demos. See the technical appendix for detail
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Appendices

Appendix 1.
Policy Commission working principles

1. The Policy Commission's main focus is on 'local public services' and it will direct its research and activities towards 'the local'. However, its recommendations will be made to those institutions that have influence over the resourcing, planning and provision of local public services, which may include central as well as local government.

2. The Policy Commission will explore 'the local' in a variety of contexts including the urban, suburban and rural.

3. The Policy Commission has chosen young people as the specific group through which it will explore the future of local public services in the short, medium and long terms. The Policy Commission acknowledges the great diversity that exists within the group 'young people', and the services that they require, and will take account of this within its work.

4. While the specific focus of the Policy Commission is the future role of local public services in the context of the 'Big Society' initiative of the UK Coalition Government, it acknowledges that, the state has a crucial and ongoing role to play as an enabler, supporter, protector and regulator.

5. The Policy Commission will seek advice and evidence from a range of sources including: academics, practitioners, policy makers and service users. It will work through a variety of means including: taking evidence in hearings, holding workshops and other events and conducting further research where necessary (eg. surveys, focus groups and deliberative events).

6. The Policy Commission will also engage directly with young people, acknowledging the powerful contribution which young people already make to shaping the quality of their own lives and those of their peers, and exploring how this contribution might better be supported and shaped by local agencies to ensure more appropriate local public services.

Appendix 2.
Policy Commission work programme

The Policy Commission's work had three phases. **Phase one** involved establishing the Policy Commission and scoping its topic. In **Phase two** - the main phase – the Policy Commission heard and deliberated evidence from a range of sources. **Phase three** focused on agreeing conclusions and recommendations and promoting them through the media and national and local events.

Phase One (August to December 2010)

Activities included:

- Developing the idea for the Policy Commission with University of Birmingham academics and Demos
- Launching the Policy Commission with a debate on 'the role of the state and civil society', Chaired by the Vice Chancellor at the Conservative Party Conference (October 2010) www.inlogov.bham.ac.uk/News/2010/10/launch-birmingham-policy-commissions.shtml Speakers at this event hosted by Demos included Rory Stewart, MP and Ben Lucas Director of the Public Services 2020 Trust
- Appointing the Commissioners
- Commissioners' meeting to agree the content and process of the Policy Commission (01/12/10)
- Review of existing University of Birmingham research
- Developing the Policy Commission website www.birmingham.ac.uk/policycommissions
- 'Table for Ten' event – Helen Sullivan (the Policy Commission's academic lead) hosted a dinner for University of Birmingham alumni on theme of 'Where now for the Public Sector and the aspiring Public Service Professional?' www.inlogov.bham.ac.uk/News/2010/11/table-for-ten-policy-commission-future-local-public-services.shtml
- University of Birmingham Online Debate: 'Does the Big Society approach have a future?' www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact debate/big-society.aspx
- The Birmingham Brief: 'Enabling' – the future of local public services in the Big Society? www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/thebirminghambrief/items/publicservices,bigsociety.aspx
- Conferences attended
Young People – the Big Problem or the Big Solution, Envision (11/11/10)

Phase Two (January to April 2011)

Activities included:

- Workshops to hear and deliberate evidence from witnesses working in the public, business and voluntary/community sectors, focused on the Policy Commission's key themes:
  - Workshop 1: Redesigning public service relationships (27/01/2011)
  - Workshop 2: Changing citizens' behaviour (17/02/2011)
  - Workshop 3: Reproducing success and mitigating failure (10/03/2011)
- Commissioners' meetings to reflect on the issues raised at the workshops and deliberate policy options (09/02/11, 21/03/11)
- Primary research led by Demos - survey and practical cases exploring the views of young people, innovations in practice and implications for future service design and delivery
- Consultations with young people in schools across Birmingham - University of Birmingham in conjunction with Envision - a national youth empowerment charity. 4 focus group discussions starting in the week beginning 21/03/11
- Additional meetings organised to fill gaps identified by Commissioners:
  - Roundtable event with the CBI Public Services Strategy Board (28/03/11)
  - Meeting with Sir Bob Kerslake, Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities and Local Government, (07/04/11)
- Vice Chancellor's Select Dinner (29/03/11) to test out initial findings/questions with national experts on the 'Big Society' not otherwise involved with the Policy Commission's work
- University of Birmingham Debate: The Big Society: Can a Government change behaviour? www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/debate/big-society-behaviour.aspx
- Developing the Policy Commission's conclusions and drafting the report (Commissioners' meetings – 08/04/11)
- Conferences attended
  - "Young People, Decision Making and the Big Society" Faith Matters (26/05/11)
  - "Coproducing the Big Society" Resident University, Chamberlain Forum (18/03/11 & 19/03/11)
  - "Transforming Local Government: Lessons for the Future" Birmingham City Council (02/03/2011)
  - "Young People – the Big Problem or the Big Solution" Envision (11/11/10)

Phase Three (May to July 2011)
Activities included:

- Meeting with Sir Michael Lyons (11/05/11)
- Commissioners' meetings to finalise the findings and recommendations (16/05/11, 10/06/11)
- A Birmingham focused workshop organised with the University's 'civic engagement' team, to consider the implications of the Policy Commission's findings and recommendations for the city (01/07/11)
- Launch of Policy Commission Report (11/07/11)

Appendix 3.
Contributors to the Policy Commission

Lord Victor Adebowale Chief Executive, Turning Point

Steven Altman-Richer Policy Adviser - Public Services, CBI

Edward Andersson Deputy Director, Involve

Kathleen Armour Professor of Education and Sport, University of Birmingham

James Arthur Professor of Education and Civic Engagement, University of Birmingham

Malin Arvidson Research Fellow, Third Sector Research Centre

Andrew Bacon Business Development Director, Public Sector, BT Global Services

Chris Banks Chair of the Public Chairs Forum and Deputy Pro Chancellor, University of Birmingham

Fiona Blacke Chief Executive, National Youth Agency

James Blake Chief Policy and Partnership Officer, St Albans City and District Council

Mark Bramah Assistant Chief Executive, Association for Public Service Excellence

Brian Carr Chief Executive, Birmingham Voluntary Service Council

Mary Cook Co-founder and Managing Director, Uscreates

Nic Crosby Director, Children and Young People, In Control

Peter Davies Professor of Education Policy Research, University of Birmingham

Johnny Davis VP Student Welfare, University of Birmingham, Guild of Students

Stuart Derbyshire Reader in Psychology, University of Birmingham

Tiger de Souza Knowledge and Innovation Manager, v

Helen Dickinson Lecturer in Health Care Policy and Management, University of Birmingham

Ade Duncan Support Officer, National Youth Reference Group

Cheryl Garvey Chief Executive, Birmingham Association of Youth Clubs

Jon Glasby Professor Health and Social Care and Director of Health Services Management Centre, University of Birmingham

Jonathan Grix Senior Lecturer in Sport Politics and Policy, University of Birmingham

Ed Hammond Research and Information Manager, Centre for Public Scrutiny

Matthew Horne Managing Partner, Innovation Unit

Carole Ann Jasilek Commissioning Locality General Manager, Leicestershire County Council

Haki Kapasi Founder and Chief Executive, Inspire

Nigel Keohane Head of Research, New Local Government Network

Sir Bob Kerslake Permanent Secretary, Department for Communities and Local Government

Zubair Khan Crime Scene Investigator, West Midlands Police

Ben Kyneswood Community radio worker and community education tutor for young people; Doctoral researcher, University of Birmingham

Elizabeth Ladimeji Head of National Partnerships Development, Citizens Advice Bureau

Peter Latchford Chair, Urban Living; visiting Professor of Enterprise, Birmingham City University; Chair, Healthcare Improvement Partnership

Andrea Legal-Miller Youth Council Development Manager, Lambeth Youth Council

Will Leggett Senior Lecturer in Political Sociology and Social Theory, University of Birmingham

Julia Lowndes Birmingham Safer Community Partnership

Sir Michael Lyons former Chairman of the BBC Trust

Rob Macmillan Research Fellow, Third Sector Research Centre

Sir Bert Massie Commissioner, Commission for the Compact

Angus McCabe Senior Research Fellow, University of Birmingham

Stephen McKay Professor of Social Research, University of Birmingham

Afsa Mitha Performance Improvement Officer, Leicestershire City Council

Domenico Moro Research Fellow, Third Sector Research Centre

Louise Morpeth Co-Director, The Social Research Unit, Dartington

Kevin Myers Senior Lecturer in Social History and Education, University of Birmingham

Spike Orion Member, National Youth Reference Group

Therese O'Toole Lecturer in Sociology, Department of Sociology and Centre for the Study of Ethnicity and Citizenship, University of Bristol

Ben Page Chief Executive, Ipsos Mori

Sharon Palmer Chief Executive, Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM)

Aaron Porter President, National Union of Students

Denika Porter Member, National Youth Reference Group

Ukeila Prophet Member, National Youth Reference Group

Aidan Rave Director of Interim and Consulting, Pinnacle PSG

James Rees Research Fellow, Third Sector Research Centre

Oliver Reichardt Head of the Public Services and Partnerships Team, NCVO

Liz Richardson Research Fellow, Institute for Political and Economic Governance, University of Manchester and Director of Trafford Hall, home of the National Communities Resource Centre

Richard Selwyn National Lead on Efficiency, Commissioning Support Programme

Baroness Maeve Sherlock Baroness of Durham, House of Lords

Richard Simmons Co-Director, Mutuality Research Programme, University of Stirling

Charlotte Slater Operations Director, Moo Moo Youth Marketing

Judith Smith Head of Policy, The Nuffield Trust

Catherine Staite Director of Organisational Development, Institute of Local Government Studies, University of Birmingham

Garath Symonds Assistant Director, Young People's Services, Surrey County Council

Tamzin Taylor-Rosser Co-ordinator, National Youth Reference Group

Jean Templeton Chief Executive, St Basil's

Andy Thornton Chief Executive, Citizenship Foundation

Alan Tien Member, National Youth Reference Group

Aaron Towler Member, National Youth Reference Group

Lisa Trickett Director of Knowledge Transfer, Birmingham Business School, University of Birmingham

Lord Nathanial Wei former Government Advisor, Big Society

Sue White Professor of Social Work (Children and Families), University of Birmingham

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The College of Social Sciences is home to the Birmingham Policy Commissions. Its mission is 'to generate new knowledge about society, and to transform this in ways that improve well-being.'

The College has extensive expertise in charting the changing shape and nature of public services in a global context. Working with governments, politicians, civil servants, professionals and communities to generate new knowledge about how to deliver better services with limited

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The University also hosts the Third Sector Research Centre which is exploring the role of the community and voluntary sectors and social enterprises in redesigned systems of public service.

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UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

College of Social Sciences
Edgbaston, Birmingham,
B15 2TT, United Kingdom
www.birmingham.ac.uk