

Third Sector Research Centre

Service Delivery Workstream

Progress Update January 2011

Service Delivery

From housing, to health, social care, employment and criminal justice, third sector organisations (TSOs) provide an increasing number of public services. Working with policy makers and practitioners to identify key priorities, this work cuts across a number of research streams and a series of key issues.

Critical understanding of service delivery by the third sector is important to policy making as the third sector now provides a major - and very different - option for public services, which may be more responsive to the needs of citizens and service users. At the same time, there are dangers inherent in the third sector becoming over-dependent on funding from service contracts – particularly in terms of a potential loss of its independence. Meanwhile reductions in public spending are having a direct effect on the sector's income from public contracts.

The Centre's research is helping to inform the debate on the way in which service delivery is developing, the potential role of the third sector in commissioning as well as contracting, and the implications of different approaches to service delivery on the overall impact of the third sector. Fourteen working papers and briefing papers on service delivery topics have been published within the 50 TSRC working papers available from our website (www.tsrc.ac.uk).

Much of the new Government's programme for deficit reduction and public services reform has been of direct relevance to third sector organisations. The centre has been active in reviewing policy development and potential impacts for public service delivery. This activity is also reflected in our policy and knowledge exchange work.

This update provides brief information on the people, projects, publications and policy related activities involved in research on service delivery by the Third Sector Research Centre. We hope that you will find this a useful guide to our work and where to find out more. Following recent changes in our structure we plan to update information on our service delivery activities on a regular basis. We are interested in your views on our activities and on future research, publications and events and whether this service delivery update provides a useful format.

David Mullins
Service Delivery Stream
January 2011

People

Core Service Delivery Team

David Mullins is now co-ordinating the service delivery stream. David continues to lead the housing stream and is currently completing work on the first core housing project on self-help housing with Simon Teasdale and Patricia Jones. This project included a literature review, eight case studies and a policy workshop with the Building and Social Housing Foundation. This followed on from scoping work on six sub-fields of third sector housing. A consultation event on the housing workstream is being planned with HACT (the Housing Action Charity) for June 2011 and a paper comparing the experience of housing and health service transfers to third sector bodies is being planned with Helen Dickinson. David supervises three Birmingham PhD students working on third sector housing topics and two PhD students at Delft University of Technology working on comparative studies of third sector housing organisations. He can be contacted at d.w.mullins@tsrc.ac.uk.

James Rees has been appointed as Research Fellow to work full time for the Service Delivery stream. He joins us on February 1st 2011 from Manchester University where he was a Research Associate working on UK sub-national governance and in particular the development of new city-regional governance structures, as well as a wide variety of connected issues in economic development and regeneration. At Manchester he worked on projects concerned with housing, employment and the labour market, and third sector delivery of public services. James will be completing the partnerships for service delivery project with Tony Bovaird before starting work on the employment services project. James will also be working with David Mullins to draw together some general themes and policy related issues from across the service delivery workstream. Contact James at j.rees@tsrc.ac.uk.

Tony Bovaird continues to work on service delivery issues and in the first half of 2011 will complete work on the TSRC core service delivery project on third sector partnerships for service delivery. Following a literature review in 2010, this project will continue with case studies and practitioner and policy workshops. Tony has also developed a proposal for a further core service delivery project on employment services which was scoped in 2010 and will move into delivery phase in 2011. This project will include national stakeholder interviews, a literature review and case studies exploring the role of TSOs in the Work Programme and the impacts of the prime contracting process on TSOs. This project also involves Rebecca Taylor and James Rees. It will build on further scoping work currently being undertaken by Helena Duigan. Contact Tony at T.Bovaird@tsrc.ac.uk

Helen Dickinson is leading the health and social care stream. She has completed work on personalisation and the implications for the third sector. She is currently working on commissioning and the difficulties in the relationship between commissioners and TSOs. An initial briefing paper will set out these issues and will be complemented by a number of case studies. This will link to a briefing paper on the recent Green Paper on commissioning and the latest NHS White Paper. She is planning work with David Mullins and Robin Miller comparing housing and health service transfers to the third sector. Helen's address is h.dickinson@tsrc.ac.uk.

Alice Mills, Rosie Meek and Dina Gojkovic are undertaking research on the criminal justice system and the work of TSOs with offenders. This involves nine case studies based in prisons and probation service. Alice Mills is leaving for New Zealand at the end of the month but will continue to be involved with the project as a visiting fellow. For information about this project based in TSRC at Southampton contact d.gojkovic@tsrc.ac.uk.

Other People Working on Service Delivery

Helena Duignan is on part-time secondment to TSRC from December 2010 until March 2011, and is working on developing the new workstream on employment services delivery by third sector organisations. This work will involve undertaking scoping work to inform further research by the Centre. Helena comes to TSRC from the West Midlands Regional Observatory, where she leads the Economic Inclusion research team, undertaking innovative customer-led labour market research to inform decision makers across the West Midlands, primarily the Economic Inclusion Panel. Helena has a decade of experience in social and market research and a Masters degree in Research and Social Policy from the University of Birmingham.

Heather Buckingham was based at TSRC in Southampton until December 2010 and undertook research for her PhD on TSOs involved in the provision of homelessness services. She produced two TSRC working papers on the commissioning process and organisational strategies in homelessness TSOs casting light on hybridity and diversity within the sector.

Rob Macmillan leads the Real Times stream and undertook the initial evidence review on third sector service delivery. Regular meetings are held to maximise the links made between work on Real Times and on service delivery.

Angus McCabe and Jenny Phillimore lead TSRC work on below the radar organisations including their engagement with service delivery.

Rebecca Taylor works on the Theory and Policy and Real Times streams. Her research interests include the meaning of work in its various forms; work outside the labour market, such as voluntary and informal work; career transitions and

experiences of disadvantaged or excluded groups (older people, ethnic minorities) in the labour market. She will contribute this expertise to the employment services project.

Simon Teasdale works on Social Enterprise and has undertaken research with the Housing Stream on innovation in the homelessness sector and the role of self-help housing in relation to tackling homelessness. He has also been involved in commentary on the Public Services (social enterprise and social value) Bill, and the role of social enterprises in public service delivery.

Projects

The projects listed below include two core projects (partnerships for service delivery and employment services) being undertaken by the service delivery team and a number of sector specific projects being undertaken by team members.

Evidence Review (Working Paper 20)

This working paper by Rob Macmillan provided a preliminary evidence review for the service delivery stream. It provided a comprehensive assessment of public service delivery, and the third sector's experience of commissioning and procurement, and serves as a 'stock-take' and 'baseline' for the newly emerging political and economic context the sector is facing.

Third Sector Partnerships for Service Delivery

This was our first cross-cutting project to link research on different service delivery sectors. Its aim was to build on existing research to explore long term partnerships between third sector, public and private organisations, mergers and alliances within third sector and innovation and learning from partnership working. Progress to date has included:

1. Initial project briefing paper produced in April 2010. This set out the purpose of the research, the preliminary research questions that would be addressed, the methodological approaches to be undertaken and a proposed research timetable. This document was circulated to all stakeholders that were approached to take part in the scoping interviews with stakeholders: the first stage of fieldwork for this project.
2. Stage 1 Fieldwork: scoping interviews with stakeholders: 22 stakeholder organisations were approached to participate in this fieldwork. They included third sector and private sector practitioners, third sector representative membership organisations, research consultancies and academic experts and policy makers. In total 11 stakeholders participated between April and August 2010, this included three interviews with national policy makers, three interviews with third sector

representative membership organisations, three interviews with national third sector practitioners, an interview with a large private sector organisation that specialises in partnership working and an interview with a research and support consultancy to the public sector. These stakeholder interviews are being updated between December 2010 and February 2011, in the light of recent developments, such as the new Green Paper on *Modernising Commissioning: Increasing the role of charities, social enterprises, mutuals and cooperatives in public service delivery*.

3. Stage 1 Literature review. This has covered the academic, policy and stakeholder literature on partnership working and collaboration, including government reports and publications from umbrella bodies and consultancies. The literature review will be available in May 2011.
4. Stage 2 will consist of in-depth case studies of different types of partnerships and collaborations involving third sector organisations. We are still considering whether some of the issues which have emerged in Stage 1 may be explored further in a survey of third sector organisations in late Spring 2011.
5. A final report is expected in September 2011 following discussion of a draft with key stakeholders. This will be widely disseminated and used as the basis for policy circle and impact events.

Criminal Justice

Scoping work included a literature review and key player interviews as reported in Working Paper 34: 'The role of the third sector in work with offenders: the perceptions of criminal justice and third sector stakeholders' by Rosie Meek, Dina Gojkovic and Alice Mills. This reports the findings from stage one of the research which consisted of 14 interviews with key national stakeholders in the voluntary sector and criminal justice arenas. In relation to stage two, four out of the nine case studies were completed by 15 August, with the remainder scheduled to be completed by November 2010.

The research has revealed some of the key tensions surrounding the Government's plans to expand the role of the third sector in the criminal justice system. The case studies have confirmed that inter-sectoral tensions exist between criminal justice personnel and third sector staff and are likely to be exacerbated by the announced cuts to the Prison Service budget which, according to our interviewees, have left public sector employees feeling at their most vulnerable. For this reason, some Prison Service employees saw the involvement of other sectors in prison provision, most particularly the involvement of the third sector, as a considerable threat due to its competitiveness on the market. These tensions, unless addressed in the near future, could considerably interfere with the resettlement and rehabilitation of offenders who currently receive services for a variety of different providers.

The Criminal Justice research team's paper '*Exploring the relationship between the voluntary sector and the state in criminal justice*' won the The Campbell Adamson Memorial Prize at the NCVO/VSSN research conference on 6-7 September 2010 in Leeds.

Nine case studies based in prisons and probation are currently being undertaken with the following aims:

1. to look at the role and value of TSOs in the resettlement of offenders;
2. to explore the extent of third sector work with ex-offenders and their families before and during resettlement;
3. to examine the 'added value' of third sector work with ex-offenders and their families in relation to resettlement, from the perspective of service users, criminal justice personnel and TSOs;
4. to look at the impact of volunteering on empowering offenders and ex-offenders to desist from crime.

Case studies include semi-structured interviews with criminal justice staff, third sector staff and offenders as well as administering a short survey to all prisoners about their involvement with TSOs. Field work is nearly complete (8 case studies out of 9) and individual reports are being prepared for each participating prison.

Employment Services

This project was scoped in 2010 and a brief literature review and work package proposal were produced. This has been updated with further work by Helena Duignan. It is now moving into delivery with fieldwork planned for Spring and Summer 2011 to be undertaken by James Rees, Rebecca Taylor and Tony Bovaird. It will explore the following research questions:

- **What is the role of the third sector in employment service commissioning and delivery?** What are the assumptions made by the key players with regards to the role, nature and value of third sector involvement and how does this differ to assumptions regarding private sector involvement? What evidence is there that these assumptions are justified?
- **What are the specific challenges and obstacles for third sector involvement – particularly with regards to successful tendering and delivery of services?** How have different stakeholders and policy makers viewed and responded to these challenges? How have partnerships and consortia with public and private

sector organisations – and with other third sector organisations - worked out?

- **What does ‘success’ look like for the third sector in employment services?**

How do policy makers and stakeholders measure or view success of providers to deliver services and to what extent has ‘success’ been achieved? What have been the consequences to date of the unique outcome-based commissioning, procurement and contracting approaches which have been employed in UK public sector commissioning of employment services?

The project will involve a literature review, a short survey of third sector organisations working in employment services on emerging trends and issues, and a number of in-depth case studies on the second and third research questions.

Health

The Working Paper No.30, ‘Personalisation Agenda: implications for the third sector’ on the implications of the personalisation agenda for the third sector and work on the relationship between statutory and non-statutory sector agencies has been well received. Work around commissioning and the third sector has commenced. The literature review started well and the first draft of the paper has been completed although this is presently being re-cast in the light of the recent White Paper which has significantly altered the context.

Housing scoping studies

The scoping work for the Housing Stream consisted of five working/briefing papers which have been updated to include post-election impacts:

WP11: Self-help housing: could it play a greater role?

WP16: Housing associations

WP17: Co-operatives and mutual housing in the social rented sector

WP18: The evolution of tenants’ and community organisations and their relevance to policy and regulatory issues today

WP19: Homelessness advice and support.

Self-help housing

Following this scoping work the first topic selected for a housing core project was self-help housing in recognition of the puzzles and gaps in existing research, its fit to the current policy agenda, opportunities for access to case studies and potential for social and economic impact. The project has involved close working with several key partners: self-help housing.org, CRISIS, the Building and Social Housing Foundation, Community Development Foundation and HACT (the housing action charity). The research carried out by David Mullins, Simon Teasdale and Pat Jones explores the limited role that self-help housing has played to date in enabling people to take action to resolve their own housing problems, and to how the barriers to wider take up might

be tackled in the future. The research included five main and three mini-case studies to explore innovation, barriers and enablers from the perspective of different stakeholders, and a national policy forum (held with BSHF in December 2010) to explore how learning from the case studies can be applied to policy for the sector. A final report will communicate key learning to a range of audiences and an academic journal article will add to knowledge on a relatively under-researched topic. TSRC is continuing to work with the partners outlined above to maximise the impact of this research, for example in relation to recent policy announcements on empty homes.

Linked Housing Projects

A linked project on the '*Social Investment Performance Management Toolkit for Housing Organisations*' led to a partnership with the G15 Group of large housing associations. Research was completed in April 2010 with outputs which included a toolkit report and summary for the Tenant Services Authority. This work is being discussed at a roundtable convened by HACT as part of its housing and empowerment network in February 2011. It is being followed up in a PhD project and will feed into the TSRC conference in the impact of evaluation in April 2011.

Vanessa Wilkes has been awarded an ESRC CASE studentship supervised by David Mullins with the National Housing Federation on *understanding and improving the measurement of community investment activities by housing associations*. The project commenced in October 2010 and runs to September 2013.

A collaborative project, 'Close Neighbours not Distant Friends', with TU Delft, four English and four Dutch housing associations, the Housing Associations Charitable Trust, and the Dutch housing innovation body, SEV, was completed in July 2010. Dissemination of this work has included case study reports and events: Rotterdam, March 2010; EU COST Action workshop Malta, May 2010; European Network for Housing Research conference July 2010, Finland Ministry of Environment November 2010 and a workshop with Metropolitan Housing Partnership, one of the Close Neighbour partners to be held in February 2011. This project is attracting considerable interest in the context of the localism and big society agendas and current challenges faced by the housing association sector.

Linked TSRC Service Delivery Projects

Two other service delivery projects have been commissioned from TSRC by external bodies:

- Evaluation of ChangeUp (commissioned by Capacitybuilders), undertaken during 2008-2009 and published in January 2010 on the Capacitybuilders website.

- Commissioning Across Government (commissioned by the National Audit Office), undertaken from February – April 2010 and published by TSRC in May 2010.

Economic and Social Impact

Assessing the economic impact of third sector organisations is a key research priority for TSRC. It has a particular focus on the role that third sector organisations (TSOs) play in delivering public services and contributing to general community wellbeing.

Key questions

- Contrasting and combining economic and social impact
- The effectiveness of existing tools for impact assessment within TSOs
- Defining and measuring the added value of third sector activity
- Development of aggregate measures of impact

Current work

We are engaged in a review of the wide range of existing methods and tools for measuring impact within TSOs including Social Return on Investment (SROI), blended impact measures and other adaptations of cost/benefit analysis. We are also developing sector wide analysis of the economic impact of third sector activity and its contribution to the wider economy, including analysis of workforce trends, volunteering and third sector value. We are also developing quantitative measures of aggregate impact and will utilise existing datasets to explore operationalisation of these. Working Paper 49 published in January 2011 is on **Ambitions and Challenges of SROI**.

Next steps

- Completion of scoping papers on different impact measures including SROI
- Impact of Evaluation Conference, February 2011.
- Quantitative analysis of income, workforce and volunteering
- Critical assessment of classic economic tools including cost analysis, cost benefit analysis, cost utility analysis and cost effectiveness analysis
- Development and operationalisation of aggregate measures of value

Research contacts

Steve McKay (Research lead)

Domenico Moro

Pete Alcock

Malin Arvidson

Fergus Lyon

Andrea Westall

Other Streams

Real Times: A panel study of 16 Third sector organisations.

Social Enterprise Stream.

Below the Radar Stream.

Further details of these workstreams can be found on the TSRC website at <http://www.tsrc.ac.uk/Research/tabid/391/Default.aspx>

In addition the SEIF Project on Social Enterprise and Health is jointly undertaken with the Health Services Management Centre.

Planned projects

Future projects planned by the service delivery stream include:

Education

Peter Davies, Professor of Education at University of Birmingham, is interested in developing interdisciplinary research on delivery of education by third sector bodies – more specifically perhaps the extent to which the ‘free schools’ initiative is promoting the development of a new third (sub)sector within education. Discussion is underway of how this work could be developed in partnership with TSRC.

Health and Housing Comparative Study

Helen Dickinson, David Mullins and are developing a new project with Robin Miller from the Health Services Management Centre comparing the experience of health and housing sector organisations in transferring assets and activities to TSOs.

Papers

TSRC WORKING PAPERS ON SERVICE DELIVERY TOPICS

The following 14 papers on service delivery topics can be downloaded from the TSRC website using the URLs below.

Paper 50: Hybridity, diversity and the division of labour in the third sector: what can we learn from homelessness organisations in the UK?, Heather Buckingham (Dec 2010) [Abstract](#) | [Working paper](#)

Paper 49: The ambitions and challenges of SROI, Dr Malin Arvidson, Professor Fergus Lyon, Professor Stephen McKay and Dr Domenico Moro (Jan 2011) [Abstract](#) | [Briefing paper](#) | [Working paper](#)

Paper 41: Capturing diversity: a typology of third sector organisations’ responses to contracting based on empirical evidence from homelessness services, Heather

Buckingham (Sept 2010)

Abstract | Briefing paper | working paper

Paper 34: The role of the third sector in work with offenders: the perceptions of criminal justice and third sector stakeholders, Rosie Meek, Dina Gojkovic and Alice Mills (May 2010)

Abstract | Briefing paper | Working paper

Paper 30: The personalisation agenda, Helen Dickinson

Abstract | Briefing paper | Working paper

Paper 20: The third sector delivering public services: an evidence review, Rob Macmillan (July 2010)

Abstract | Briefing paper | Working paper

Paper 19: Housing scoping papers: homelessness advice and support, Ricky Joseph

Abstract | Briefing paper

Paper 18: Housing scoping papers: the tenants' and community movement, Patricia A Jones

Abstract | Briefing paper

Paper 17: Cooperative and mutual housing in the social rented sector, Rob Rowlands (August 2010)

Abstract | Briefing paper

Paper 16: Housing scoping paper: housing associations, David Mullins

Abstract | Briefing paper | Working paper

Paper 12: User and community co-production of public services: fad or fact, nuisance or necessity?, Tony Bovaird

Abstract | Briefing paper

Paper 11: Housing scoping papers: self-help housing, David Mullins

Abstract | Briefing paper | Working paper

Paper 10: Housing scoping papers: overview, David Mullins, Patricia A Jones, Ricky Joseph, Rob Rowlands and Simon Teasdale

Abstract | Briefing paper

Paper 5: Innovation in the homeless field: How does social enterprise respond to the needs of the literal homeless population?, Simon Teasdale

Abstract | Briefing paper | Working paper

Policy and Knowledge Exchange

The Service Delivery stream engages with policy and practice in the third sector in a number of ways. Please contact Razia Shariff r.s.shariff@bham.ac.uk or Naomi Landau n.landau@tsrc.ac.uk in our Knowledge Exchange Team (KET) for further details:

Reference Group

Provides opportunities for dialogue with key players in the sector and policy community to build stronger links between research and practice.

Policy Circle Events

Provide opportunities for informal discussion with policy makers and officials drawing on TSRC research and relating it to current policy issues and questions.

Draft legislation

The Service Delivery Group have been working on commentaries and responses on current legislation: Localism Bill, Commissioning Green Paper, NHS White paper, Housing Consultation Paper and the Public Services (social enterprise and social value) Bill.

Impact Events

In December 2010 TSRC research on self-help housing, local people bringing empty homes into use, was fed into an expert workshop convened by Building and Social Housing at St George's House, Windsor Castle.

On February 10th 2011 a roundtable organised by HACT for the Housing and Empowerment network on how social housing providers are measuring the impact and value of their social investment work will include an invited contribution on TSRC research for Tenant Services Authority on measuring social performance.

On February 22nd 2011 action research on neighbourhood working by housing associations in England and the Netherlands will be the focus of an event with Metropolitan Housing Partnership showcasing the Close Neighbours project.

On March 16th 2011 we are running a London Research Seminar at NCVO on the NHS White Paper implications for TSOs.

On April 5th 2011 a one day event will bring together practice, policy and academic communities to consider the impact of evaluation in the third sector.

On June 9th 2011 a joint event with HACT (the housing action charity) will review evidence from housing scoping work and relate this to the localism context.

Other University of Birmingham policy work relevant to Service Delivery

Professor Helen Sullivan is leading a University of Birmingham Policy Commission with Demos on the future of local public services in the context of the coalition Government's 'big society' initiative. The Commission will critically investigate -

- How citizens' behaviour is expected to change and the role of local institutions such as local government in enabling these changes
- How public service relationships will need to be redesigned and the implications for the training and practice of future public service professionals
- How we can anticipate and mitigate 'failure' as well as evidencing success in civic action

The Commission focuses particularly on the implications for young people as potential volunteers and civic actors, employees, entrepreneurs and service users.

Further details can be found at

<http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/impact/policy-commissions/current-commission/index.aspx> Helen can be contacted at h.c.sullivan@bham.ac.uk

About the Centre

The third sector provides support and services to millions of people. Whether providing front-line services, making policy or campaigning for change, good quality research is vital for organisations to achieve the best possible impact. The Third Sector Research Centre exists to develop the evidence base on, for and with the third sector in the UK. Working closely with practitioners, policy-makers and other academics, TSRC is undertaking and reviewing research, and making this research widely available. The Centre works in collaboration with the third sector, ensuring its research reflects the realities of those working within it, and helping to build the sector's capacity to use and conduct research.

Third Sector Research Centre, Park House, 40 Edgbaston Park Road,
University of Birmingham, Birmingham, B15 2RT

Tel: 0121 414 3086 Email: info@tsrc.ac.uk www.tsrc.ac.uk