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Evaluating policy-driven multi-agency partnership working:

*A Cancer Prevention Strategy Group
A Multi-agency Domestic Abuse Forum*

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The policy context

- Health and social care services have distinct responsibilities (although there is potential for overlap in some community settings)
- UK government(s) want partnership working to replace the NHS internal market
- There are differences in the drivers of this in Scotland, England and Wales
- Northern Ireland has joint health and social services Boards

What are the questions?

- Are there expectations of what partnerships should achieve?
- What kinds of partnership are developing?
- Are there any new recommendations or is there a need to re-emphasis with the reinvention?
- Are there any dangers?

What kinds of partnership are developing?

- Two examples
 - Ayrshire Cancer Prevention Strategy Group
 - South Ayrshire Multi-agency Domestic Abuse Forum
- Very different in size, mode of operation, style of leadership
- Many similar evaluation results, but different responses to them!

Ayrshire Cancer Prevention Strategy Group

- Evaluation of the consultation phase
- Methods
 - feedback public and professional meetings
 - feedback from non-attenders
 - semi-structured interviews with CPS group
- Interviews asked about consultation phase, but much of the response related to partnership issues

CPS consultation evaluation results

- Very few people attended the public consultation meetings, mainly women, mainly responding to personal invitation, mainly with personal interest
- Non-attenders didn't see the relevance for them, although timing was an issue
- The mailing list used was a problem

CPS multi-agency partnership

- Health Promotion & local authority
- No uniform view of purpose
- Not agreed who consult, when consult, what to do with feedback, need for lay language version, separation from Smoking Cessation Strategy
- Group membership changed over time

Partnership more than rhetoric?

- Little evidence of partnership working, other than multi-agency meetings (a sub-group did the work)
- Not communicating well
- Recognition of positive aspects, but membership changes (leader too) can be a sign of problems
- Chair did not accept the results

S. Ayrshire Domestic Abuse Forum

- Evaluation of the projects and partnership development
 - Working with women and families in rural areas
 - Additional security project
 - Training programme
 - Development of the multi-agency forum

Methods

- Working with women + families in rural areas
 - attended the Women's Day, analysed feedback questionnaires, interviewed organisers
- Additional security project
 - interviewed some of the women
- Training programme
 - analysed feedback questionnaires
- Development of the multi-agency forum
 - questionnaire to all members, interviewed non-sleeping partners

Project evaluation results

- Rural initiative successful. What next?
- Women with alarms described how their lives had changed. Sustainability?
- Training raised awareness, trainees wanted to help, some groups have not been represented so far, may need updating/reinforcing in future

Multi-agency Forum Development

- Health, LA, Voluntary Orgs, Police
- Forum agreed goals at start and sub-groups to do the work (report back)
- Core membership stable for two years
- Focus on successful projects rather than needs of women and children
- Partners not perceived to be equal, within or outwith meetings

Partnership more than rhetoric?

- Seem to have the right ingredients, and communicating reasonably effectively
- Real partnership requires dedication and is difficult between organisations
- Choice offered
 - Build on project successes
 - Refocus towards real partnership
- Punch up, now changes being made

Revisit the questions

- Are there expectations of what partnerships should achieve?
 - Identify expectations at outset
- What kinds of partnership are developing?
 - All communicating partnerships?
- New recommendations or re-emphasise with the reinvention?
 - Not new - re-emphasise

Are there any dangers?

- Successful partnerships
 - people jump on the bandwagon (or stay)
 - ideas/focus can get steamrollered
- Unsuccessful partnerships
 - representatives change frequently or abandon ship
 - goals not achieved and downward spiral

Questions

- Is a partnership approach always necessary?
- Where it is, does it positively reinforce differences or should we encourage people to go beyond networking?
- Is there enough common ground between medical and social models?
- Does it sometimes just need time?