



Alternative to Traditional Commissioning Event – Workshops

Workshop #1 – Glasgow North and North West Family Wellbeing Partnership PSP delivered by Isobel Lawson, Stepping Stones for Families.

Stepping Stones for Families, Action for Children and Glasgow Education services developed a Public Social Partnership¹(PSP) to work strategically across the targeted locality to deliver an early engagement and assertive outreach programme that supported existing provision & contributed to the aims of ‘One Glasgow.’ The session explored the learning outcomes from the Stirling University Evaluation Report of the PSP.

Isobel reflected on the organisation’s experience of being part of a Public Social Partnership alongside Action for Children. The two organisations agreed to build on an existing family wellbeing service to expand the remit and reach. The Scottish Government decided that instead of allocating funding directly to local authorities, they would take a different approach, by providing funding to the third sector. A number of test phases were rolled out across Scotland, all with varied levels of success. However, many faced challenges with this new approach, particularly around the length of time it took to establish consortia.

Issues identified:

- Limited time for planning: The Scottish Government released funds very quickly, leaving little time to prepare and organise the new partnership.
- Despite a successful start, the PSP was sadly short lived. A lack of public sector engagement created barriers around the number of referrals received, making it difficult to test the new model.

Positives:

- Stepping Stones and Action for Children worked very successfully together, despite no previous engagement, highlighting the value in partnership working and a collaborative approach.
- Stirling University conducted an evaluation exercise of the pilot and identified positive outcomes, which led to a period of extended funding for the partnership.

The third sector has a significant role to play in partnership working and alternative commissioning. Leaving enough time for preparative measures and data collection is vital, as well as finding the right partners to work collaboratively and successfully in practice.

¹ Public Social Partnerships (PSPs) are strategic partnering arrangements, through which public sector commissioners collaborate with third sector organisations to share responsibility for designing or redesigning services. Importantly, the people that the services are aimed at are involved at the heart of the design process.

Workshop #2 – Elevate PSP – An Employability Partnership delivered by Pauline Gordon, GCVS and Zara Dyer, GCA

Third sector partners and NHS GG&C came together to explore improving outcomes for people in recovery to enter employment through a range of person-centred services. They adopted a PSP model and this session outlined how the PSP has developed and continues to use co-production approaches to enhance services and deliver positive employability outcomes.

Elevate Glasgow PSP launched in 2016, with the aim of improving employability opportunities for people in recovery from substance misuse. The PSP, led by Glasgow Council on Alcohol (GCA) was supported by a significant number of third sector partners and NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde. The shared vision was to test new approaches to support better employment outcomes for people in recovery through person-centered supports to enable individuals to explore new pathways to positive destinations.

The PSP pilot period of 3 years was supported via funding from NHS GG&C and through Scottish Government's Strategic PSP Support Programme. Upon external evaluation of the outcomes during the pilot period, it was pleasing to see that NHS GG&C put elements of the service out to competitive tender - 'Recovery Employability Service'. Led by GCA (lead partner in the PSP), the service was awarded to GCA to continue a third sector collaborative approach to delivery. Other elements of the PSP continue to offer additional support to individuals that is out with the scope of the NHS contract but that means added value for participants who are referred or self-refer to GCA for employability support.

Elevate Glasgow continues to listen to the barriers and aspirations presented by participants and works to create or direct them to programmes and support arrangements to break down barriers and meet their aspirations – drawing on the rich blend of support services across the third sector partners. The PSP is based on an asset-based approach to bridge the gap from treatment and care to sustainable recovery - emphasising the positive contribution individuals can make to their personal, social and economic wellbeing and that of their community. <https://www.elevate-glasgow.org/>

Workshop #3 – Collaborative Working in Highland Council on Asylum Seekers and Refugees delivered by Jim Wallace, Aberlour

This session discussed how positive collaborative working between The Highland Council (THC), Aberlour, Barnardo's, Right There and the University of Highland and Islands created a service for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people.

Aberlour, Right There and Barnardo's have created a strategic partnership to work collaboratively in The Highland Council area. The partnership was asked to support the National Transfer Scheme Service for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people. Immediate action was required and so an innovative, flexible and responsive commissioning process was essential in order to deliver a timely service to vulnerable young people. The Highland Council produced a rolling contract, with Aberlour as a lead partner, and agreed on an official Memorandum of Understanding before service delivery began. Originally, when demand was highest, the service operated on a 24/7 basis, however, this was scaled back after the first three months of delivery. Now fully contracted, the service is no longer a temporary arrangement. Initially, partners were drawing on staff from other areas, however, given the more permanent nature of the current contract, partner organisations are now able to employ staff on more stable, longer-term contracts.

Reflecting on the journey so far, the forming of operational partnerships is easier when agencies involved are already familiar with one another and have existing working relationships. Although the Highland collaborative has only been in operation for a short time, the level of trust between partners has fostered a positive partnership to form. This example demonstrates that the third sector can respond quickly and efficiently and produce innovative solutions. The ability to deliver effectively and to a high standard is key when establishing pilots and pathfinders and informing alternative ways of working. The formation of the Highland Collaborative is a positive step which avoided a traditional competitive tendering process, which can cause tensions and disappointment for those who miss out on crucial funding.

Workshop #4 – Dundee Alliance – A Strategic Partnership Approach delivered by Karen Head, Barnardo's and Anita Roweth, Action for Children.

History and learning from the Dundee Alliance of the evolution of a cross-sector strategic partnership.

The Dundee Alliance, a partnership between Action for Children and Barnardo's originated following The Child and Family Support Review 2020. The review highlighted increasing supply and demand issues for family support, and prioritised a community wide approach. The city was not lacking in positive examples or options of family support services, but existing services were working in silos, rather than collaboratively. Scotland's national policy, The Promise, helped drive a culture change concerning partnership working between services and placed importance on community asset models.

What does the Dundee Alliance look like? A cross-sector strategic partnership of over forty members including senior decision makers from various sectors. Membership is organised via an online referral tool 'Fast Online Referral Tracking System (FORT)', which was the first piece of work commissioned by the Alliance. The Alliance also informs and influences commissioning decisions. Collaborative discussions between services and sectors can be challenging, particularly where money is involved. Positive relationships are key in the development of frameworks and in strategic decision-making. Third sector interfaces have a crucial role in representing the voluntary organisations within their local authority areas.