

Championing Social Value

David Williams

David Williams
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Background

David Williams has been Executive Director of Social Care Services for Glasgow City Council since December 2012. Starting as a social worker in Glasgow he then worked for thirteen years in the third sector, first as Assistant Director with NCH (now called Action for Children) and most recently as Director of Services at Quarriers.

Responsibilities

When he came to Glasgow he was aware that the commissioning and procurement approach needed to change, and that this would have a major impact on the way third sector organisations operate.

He has been keen to encourage engagement of third sector providers in co-production. This has included linking closely with Social Ideas Factory¹ around self-directed support.² The notion of personalisation and self directed support was looming large before David left Quarriers. Even in 2005 he felt that services for adults with learning disabilities or mental health needs, which

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<http://www.socialcareideasfactory.com/adults/commissioning-services-in-glasgow/>

² Social Value Lab (2012) Personalisation: readiness and Capacity to Respond. A survey of providers in Glasgow.

http://www.socialcareideasfactory.com/files/3913/4617/1409/1340872065_2121228158_GlasgowPersonalisationReportFINAL1.PDF

thrived as a result of the hospital closure programme, were no longer sustainable.

Now he and his social care teams, along with third sector providers, are responsible for taking thousands of people with physical or learning disabilities, or mental health issues, through an entirely different co-produced assessment process resulting in individual outcomes based support plans.

Personal attributes

For him the personalisation agenda, in which third sector providers are key partners, is about enabling people to live and remain inclusively within their own communities, to take control over their own lives. His vision for social care services in Glasgow in partnership with providers from the third and independent sectors is: "To protect people from harm, to promote independence, and to deliver good outcomes".

Enablers

David is very aware that this is a difficult transition for service providers, and for service users, and that a cultural shift is required which will not happen overnight. Leadership he feels is key to this transition and the preparedness, in the case of the third sector, of its boards and CEOs to see this as the way forward.

He feels that smaller local organisations in Glasgow have possibly been more able to adapt to the personalisation agenda than larger organisations, just because

they are small and are able to be flexible and responsive to the needs of local service users.

Challenges

Transformational change.

His experience has been that only a small number of third sector organisations have transformed the way they do their business. Some organisations want to, but can't keep up with the pace of change, while others prefer to be dependent on local authority contracts rather than take the risk of being subject to the vagaries of individual choice and self directed support.

Strategic partnerships.

Another challenge is encouraging third sector provider organisations to take on a strategic partnership approach, which maximises their contribution to redesign of services including what they offer from being based in local communities.

Understanding the difference - person centred planning/personalisation.

Another challenge relates particularly to disability organisations, some of whom confuse person centred planning with personalisation, which for him is not the same. He senses that there is sometimes resistance to moving away from this now dated person centred planning approach.

Consortium working.

A final challenge he feels is getting the third sector to work together. He senses that if larger organisations approach smaller organisations to work with them this is sometimes perceived as a take over. There also seems to be resistance to consortia working. This David feels provides an alternative to mergers by enabling third sector organisations to retain their unique identity and at the same time to work together, which makes better value for the money that the individual and the Council have.

Achievements

Given the context - that of Glasgow's £590M annual expenditure budget, £360m is spent on purchasing services - David feels it is important to have a strategically proper relationship with both the third and independent sectors. Hence he has led on Glasgow City Council's recently developed framework agreement. Through a framework tender providers will have the ability to manage individual support funds. Potentially Glasgow City Council will also be able to subcontract support for individual support funds. He sees this as creating flexibility and making the best use of public resources.

Ambitions

David is optimistic about the contribution that Public Social Partnerships can make to this agenda. He views the PSP as facilitating a transition for people out of day services to experience community based living. This will involve developing a strategic vision jointly with providers, carers and service users. Glasgow Life will be involved as it has the biggest level and range of resources that people can access. The challenge will be to make these more accessible.

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