

# ST GEORGE'S HOUSE CONSULTATION



## DELIVERING SOCIAL JUSTICE – UNLOCKING LOCAL LEADERSHIP

TUESDAY, 4<sup>TH</sup> – WEDNESDAY, 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2013



In partnership with

The Department for  
Work and Pensions



## Introduction

The focus of this consultation was to explore how to support more effective innovation and delivery of social justice through local approaches.

At the heart of the shift from a centralist to more local approach we agreed that transformational leadership needs to be encouraged and allowed to flourish at a local level. In addition, we considered the barriers that need to be removed and practical measures that could be adopted to encourage greater local ownership of the Social Justice.

St George's House is grateful to DWP, the speakers who provided their personal insights on the challenges and changes taking place in the Social Justice arena, and all the participants who took part in our discussions for their open and forward facing contributions; such insights and ideas have helped to break new ground on what is a difficult and complex issue.

This report is structured to highlight the main themes emerging from our discussions and to summarise the conclusions and actions that we wish to recommend to DWP for the future. As with all St George's House Reports, this report aims to reflect from an independent standpoint the main ideas and views put forward during the event, with the understanding that not everybody involved in the discussions will have endorsed all of the ideas included.

Case examples have been included where possible in italics, together with a list of participants and the power point slides used to stimulate discussion as an Appendix.

## Background

The Government outlined a new framework and approach to Social Justice in the *Social Justice: Transforming Lives* White Paper published in March 2012. This paper argued that previous approaches had done little to create lasting change and that rather than enabling people to generate their own sustainable routes out of poverty, it had in fact encouraged a dependency on benefits.

The new Social Justice strategy has at its heart an ambitious plan for diagnosing the root causes of poverty – focusing on family breakdown, educational failure, worklessness, drug and alcohol dependency, debt and crime. It has adopted five core principles to inform delivery of a new approach:

- Focus on prevention and early intervention;
- Where problems arise, concentrating interventions on recovery and independence rather than maintenance;
- Promoting work as the most sustainable route out of poverty, whilst offering unconditional support to those severely disabled and unable to work;
- Recognising that the most effective solutions will often be designed and delivered at a local level, and
- Ensuring that interventions provide a fair deal for the taxpayer.

Government recognises that it is just one lever for delivering Social Justice, albeit a key one, and that centrally designed and imposed solutions are often not as effective at tackling complex and multi-faceted needs as locally designed services. The current economic climate and budget pressures have also created even greater pressure to ensure that services are delivered as efficiently and cost effectively as possible. A transformation is needed in terms of how Social Justice services are designed and delivered. A stronger emphasis on local networks and more collaborative approaches are seen as essential if services are to be more efficient and joined-up.



Our challenge was to draw on examples of how and why transformational leadership is happening in pockets around the country, but not consistently everywhere, and what more needs to be done to stimulate and embed a culture of safe-guarding and ensuring social justice through local strategies and delivery.

## Innovative Approaches

Our discussions were informed by three speakers who gave their personal insights in to new ways of working and changes to the policy landscape, which are likely to have a demonstrable impact on delivery of the Social Justice strategy.

### Challenges of Integrated Working

Firstly, we heard from the Margate Task Force regarding the benefits of integrated local working, and the impact of creating a taskforce on levels of criminality and community cohesion. The Task Force operates by bringing together representatives from some 16 different agencies/teams to address a range of crime and anti-social behaviour issues facing a specific area of Margate. A number of lessons were identified from this approach, including:

- Importance of local leadership and support – strong support was available from Thanet District Council who provided space for the taskforce, and setting up the taskforce was pioneered by a senior police officer who championed the initiative across different agencies.
- Information sharing is critical – being co-located has enabled more effective information/knowledge sharing, and reduced bureaucracy. Data layering and analysis was used to identify hot-spots of activity in the local area.
- Strong public engagement – considerable investment in engaging the local community has generated buy-in and ensured the taskforce understands local priorities. A community Panel now takes this forward
- Staff need to manage the conflict which can arise when professionals of different disciplines and working for different organisations are expected to work in new collaborative ways as part of a Task Force, especially when these ways are different to their organisation's custom, practice and working culture.
- Continuity of knowledge can be an issue with staff turnover and it is important to obtain a replacement as soon as a member of the taskforce leaves

There was some discussion about the benefits of using a partnership based model to create the Task Force rather than a single overarching organisation – the latter having the benefit of staff working for one organisation rather than having a duality of role. Whilst the duality of role does create additional tension for staff it does ensure that they maintain an interest in both their core department/organisation as well as the Task Force, and is considered preferable, as you need to maintain both relationships. We also discussed the use of technology enabled solutions for both public engagement and information sharing, and concluded that community buy-in does require considerable upfront investment (through face-to-face engagement) before a social media/technology based solution can be introduced.

### Landscape of Local Commissioning

We then heard from Public Health England about the health challenges facing the country and changes taking place to the health commissioning landscape. In particular we focused on the growing health responsibilities of Local Authorities, new roles and responsibilities emerging and the requirement to appoint a Director of Public Health in each Local Authority.

We heard about the considerable health inequalities across the country, the multivariate causes of health issues and the considerable costs associated with preventing and managing health issues. Following the Marmot review on health inequalities and social causes, the Government has created a new delivery structure for health which includes four key agents: the Government (setting overall priorities and ambitions), Local Authorities (with a duty to improve the health of people within their

area), NHS England (for delivery of key public health services), and Public Health England (with a duty to protect health and address inequalities). In addition to these structural changes the Government has introduced a set of outcome-focused priorities for health, and wishes to see a much stronger emphasis on local priority setting and accountability. Many participants felt that a similar requirement should be made on Local Authorities with regards to Social Justice.

At the same time, other bodies have been established such as Health and Well-being Boards to identify local strategic health needs and set priorities for the future. These Boards will include both elected representatives as well as a much broader range of service heads covering children's services, adult social services and the Director of Public Health. Over time the Government's ambition is that the Director of Public Health is recognised as a key local individual who is well known locally and seen as both responsible for and accountable to the local population.

Whilst our discussions endorsed the concept of greater local accountability and recognised that the newly appointed Director of Public Health will have a much wider remit and opportunity to influence policy decisions, it was felt important that the new structures are not overly bureaucratic and are visibly different from the existing structures. The newly appointed Directors of Public Health were seen by many as a great opportunity to show case more integrated working across the Local Authority areas.

## Harnessing the Energy of Social Entrepreneurs

Our final insight discussion considered a more commercial model of innovation, and the role of social entrepreneurs as agents for change in delivering the Social Justice strategy. UnLtd, an organisation which specialises in supporting social entrepreneurs, believes that people who face the most intractable problems in their lives and communities are often those to create the most innovative solutions.

Successful social entrepreneurs need to have passion, tenacity and drive but above all else a strong commitment to solving an issue that they feel deeply about. Without a real passion they often can not handle the highs and lows of establishing a social enterprise. Many social enterprises start and remain small, and the ability to scale ideas remains a key challenge, as does resistance from more traditional third sector organisations to such operating models. Non-financial support is considered as important as seed funding, and the skills/ability to create local partnerships is crucial.

Local Government is showing greater interest in this approach as a means of service innovation. There are indicators that suggest that Local Authorities view the introduction of social enterprise as an important way of both stimulating innovation and offering cost effective solutions at a local level. At the same time, Central Government also has a role to play in creating the frameworks and systems to facilitate start-up of new enterprises. Programmes such as the Innovation Fund are seen as crucial to supporting this approach, and the recently announced Social Impact Bonds are likely to create greater access to commercial finance where there is a clearly definable return on investment.

Encouraging greater use of a social entrepreneurship approach requires more than simple awareness. In many cases potential entrepreneurs need to be spotted and encouraged to consider such an approach. With the current financial pressures on Local Authorities, we heard that many are keen to take on this 'talent scout' role and encourage more local organisations to consider using social entrepreneurship as a pathway towards Asset Based Community Ownership of projects.

*An example of such an Asset Based Community Ownership project was provided by the Outer Hebrides, where legislation differences have allowed the local community to take ownership of a large percentage of the island, and to embark on a programme of community owned projects such as renewable energy generation, which in turn has created an income stream that can be used to fund other local community projects.*

## Emerging Themes

Our discussions highlighted a number of recurring themes in terms of encouraging greater innovation and leadership in the delivery of Social Justice at the local level.

### 1. Changing external context

A number of participants mentioned the importance of considering the current external climate in which priorities are being set and services delivered. The economic climate remains uncertain, budgetary pressures are increasing and tough political choices have to be made with the scarce resources available – there is a growing need to do more with less and to look for innovative and flexible ways of delivering the social justice strategy.

Within this context there is also the need to consider what citizens believe is 'fair', and recognise that Government is trying to balance the need for interventions and resources being made available to distinct groups of citizens against the needs of the wider population. Some mentioned the closure of successful community projects (eg due to lack of funding or space) whilst others highlighted the need to look a new ways of supporting such work (eg new sponsors or seeking new shared facilities); there is a need to recognise that we are all facing challenging times, and to see the current situation as something 'we are all in together'.

### 2. Better co-ordination at all levels

Stronger coordination is required at all levels and not just within Local Government to ensure effective delivery of Social Justice. Whilst it is recognised that the Social Justice Cabinet Committee plays an important role in breaking down Departmental silos there is a need for greater co-ordination particularly in terms of family policy (where there is a need for strong co-operation between DWP, DH and DfE) and in terms of policy for individuals facing multiple needs (where the co-operation of a wide range of government departments is needed. We recognised that progress is being made with the current focus on relationship breakdown and the creation of an outcome framework by DWP, but more is required.

Many strongly supported the idea of DWP developing and publishing a Social Justice outcomes framework along similar lines to that which was presented on health outcomes. At the same time, it was strongly recommended that Government should consider creating a Department for Social Justice to encourage greater co-ordination of departmental activity rather the current Cabinet Committee model.

*An example of effective Central and Local government coordination was provided in terms of Scotland where a senior civil servant is assigned to each Local Authority as a key link to Central Government – this person then provides advice and guidance about policy changes and linkages across Central Government.*

### 3. Changing nature of the Local Authority role

The changing nature of the role and responsibilities of Local Authorities was raised on a number of occasions. Local Government is having to re-appraise its role given tough budget constraints and changes to service responsibilities. For example, more schools are moving from Local Authority control as they achieve Academy status, responsibility for public health however is growing in importance with a desire for greater local priority setting and accountability. Across all service areas there is a drive to deliver more for less, and there is a need for Local Government to consider more radical changes to service delivery.

We also noted that the current relationship between central and local government has not been an easy one, and that in some cases Local Government is being asked to do something that Central Government is often reluctant to allow or empower them to deliver! Concerns were also raised over the growing

emphasis on localism and whether this might create a stronger 'postcode lottery' in terms of equality of access to services.

We considered the need for better communication between Central and Local Government, and for the development of a new paradigm in which Local Authorities no longer see themselves as direct service deliverers. Instead their focus should be on enabling local service provision and service innovation through facilitating greater partnership working, encouraging social entrepreneurs, or providing stronger local leadership to 'unlock' latent potential and talent. A stronger emphasis on Asset-Based Community Development models of delivery was considered essential.

#### 4. Generating stronger leadership and accountability

The need to create stronger leaders at the local level was mentioned throughout our discussions however there was some debate over what makes an exceptional leader. Some felt it was a person who acts in a slightly maverick way, deliberately breaking the mould and operating outside traditional structures, whilst others felt this was unfair and that there are many excellent leaders who operate as 'agents of change' helping organisations to redefine their role and purpose, and bring staff along with them. Such change requires a leader to have the 'space' to innovate and design new models within the constraints of a corporate structure. It is clear that there is a need to replicate exceptional leadership if innovation is to occur in more local areas, and we concluded that the new Director of Public Health role could be a catalyst in demonstrating new more integrated ways of working across Local Government.

The changing role of Local Government and the need for a different type of local leadership also raises the need to reassess the skill sets that are needed for the new roles within Local Government to be effective

#### 5. Procurement barriers to change

The current manner in which services are procured both by Central and Local Government does not always support enterprise and innovation at a local level. The siloed nature of procurement, use of prime/sub-contract models and a desire to transfer risk for innovative solutions to contractors often prohibits smaller providers from bidding.

Greater emphasis needs to be made on the use of Asset Based Models of Community delivery for services that are designed, owned and delivered by the local community.

#### 6. Community engagement

Throughout our discussions there was a strong support for service user and community engagement. In some instances we recognised that this can require considerable investment (with face-to-face engagement) however it was felt that there is also more that can be done to utilise existing networks and social media as a way of engaging local populations. Effective engagement not only ensures services are correctly focused on local priorities but also encourages a stronger sense of community buy-in to projects and a sense of local empowerment.

*An example was discussed of the rehabilitation of offenders into a local community, and how this is more likely to succeed if the community has a stake in the initiative and all community groups are consulted and asked to support the programme.*

#### 7. Data sharing as a key enabler

Greater co-ordination and targeting of services can only occur if data sources are more accessible and shared. The meeting recognised that this can be a major barrier to innovation and change, and that whilst data sharing can be facilitated through co-location (as in the example of Margate), this is not always feasible in larger operations. Examples were given where digital solutions are now available to allow for sharing of confidential data without contravening data protection rules.

## 8. Challenges of scale

A number of people raised the challenges of scaling up initiatives, especially when you take a successful (but local) initiative and try to replicate it in other areas. There were no immediate answers to this challenge – invariably a service has been successful because of an inspirational leader or because a small organisation is more flexible/innovative in terms of delivery. However as the scale of an operation grows so does the need for greater consistency, stronger governance and risk management as contract sizes increase - this can often be counter to the original idea and flexibility of the service offer. Sharing knowledge and best practice with local social entrepreneurs to enable more localised service innovation is potentially one solution to this challenge.

## 9. Early engagement

There was considerable discussion about the importance of early intervention and the need to adopt a more preventative approach to Social Justice rather than the current 'deficit' model, where support is only provided once an issue has escalated. Although such an approach appears empirically sound we felt that there is a distinct vacuum in terms of evidence on the impact of early intervention in many of the problem areas we worry about.

We accepted that change is unlikely in the current financial climate where many projects prioritise service delivery over formal evaluation of outcomes. The Innovation Fund does provide some support here, but further work is required to look at the benefits of early intervention. Targeting schools was also mentioned as a possible way of supporting this approach – you have a captive audience and it supports behaviour change at any early age. A balance does however need to be struck between intervening early and not reducing support for older age groups who might require more intensive support once presenting with antisocial behaviour.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Our discussions informed the following recommendations designed to support stronger local leadership and delivery of services in support of the Social Justice strategy. These are grouped by likely timescale for implementation.

### Short-Term (Immediate) Ideas

1. **Innovation Fund** – DWP to consider running a further round of Innovation Fund (Round 3) with smaller individual grants but a larger overall fund, and ensure that outcomes are identified and driven by local communities (eg to encourage more examples of 'estate' owned community services)
2. **Encourage stronger data sharing** – Central Government to consider how this can be facilitated as it underpins shared delivery, targeting and outcome evaluation.
3. **Improve communication** – Consider how we can increase understanding of Social Justice, at a local level, and create a more positive news agenda around the benefits of prevention and use of sustainable solutions. A DWP communications campaign should focus on encouraging more organisations and individuals to recognise the Social justice agenda, and consider establishing local Social Justice Forums. One idea was to create a civic communication and education programme that raises awareness of Social Justice, including what Social Justice involves, how someone can become involved in delivery, and the different models of local service delivery (eg asset-backed social enterprise).
4. **Strengthen linkages between Central and Local Government** – Central Government to consider adopting a similar model to Scotland where each Local Authority has a Senior Civil Servant appointed as a link person/key account manager to advise on new policy and provide an overview of possible linkages.
5. **Challenge businesses** – DWP to be more challenging to businesses on their role locally in supporting the Social Justice agenda.
6. **Engage citizens on Social Justice** – Central Government to encourage Local Authorities to use public engagement and insight to support stronger policy and service design. Recognise the importance of placing the service user at the centre of service design, and recognising that creating stronger community buy-in has wider benefits in terms of community cohesion.
7. **Develop and publish a common lexicon for Social Justice** – DWP to lead the development of a common lexicon that can facilitate greater joined-up working across Social Justice services.
8. **Utilise the Director of Public Health role** – DWP to consider how the new Director of Public Health role could be used to practically demonstrate the benefits of stronger co-ordination, accountability and joined-up thinking at a local level.



### Medium Term (2-3 years)

9. **Create Social Justice outcomes framework** – DWP should consider leading the development of key outcomes measures (15-20 max) for Social Justice, against which progress can be measured across the country.
10. **Encourage Local Government to take greater ownership and accountability for the Social Justice agenda** – DWP to consider placing an expectation on Local Authorities to have a Social Justice strategy and to report against key outcomes measures, in a similar way to the public health strategy requirement. We recognised this is a cross-Departmental issue and needs to *consider how best to proceed (eg whether legislation is required, or change through guidance)*.
11. **Review procurement of employment support programmes** – DWP should consider making Local Authorities part of the commissioning/procurement process for employment support programmes; enable smaller providers (who are able to demonstrate positive outcomes) to play a bigger role in delivery of such programmes, as this will create stronger local flexibility.
12. **Review role of Head teachers in promoting Social Justice agenda** – DWP to work with DfE to consider making Headteachers more accountable for Social Justice issues as part of encouraging early intervention. Consider embedding the *Every Child Matters* strategy in to the job description of Headteachers.
13. **Review professional development processes** – DWP to create stronger linkages between different elements of the Social Justice agenda (eg Health and Social care). Look at training and career pathways so that they join-up more in the long-term.

### Longer Term (3+ years)

14. **Transform relationship between Central and Local Government** – Central Government to consider how it can bring about a 'sea change' in terms of its relationships with Local Government; to improve both the quality and depth of the relationship. This needs to recognise that whilst the current administration has held a somewhat negative view of Local Government we need to look to the future and consider how things can be improved, and what skills and capabilities are needed at a local level to take on a stronger Social Justice role. Consider developing linkages with the training sector to facilitate this.
15. **Cross-Party Commission on Social Justice** – Establish a Cross-party Commission to create a 10-20 year plan for Social Justice and provide longer term vision.

The meeting concluded with confirmation from all attendees that they would like to remain in contact and dialogue with DWP regarding the Social Justice strategy and next steps. DWP will now consider how best to facilitate such a dialogue using digital media.



## Attendees

Ms Celia Atherton	Director of Social Justice Dartington Hall Trust
Mr Adam Baker	Social Justice Department for Work and Pensions
Ms Geraldine Blake	Chief Executive Community Links
The Very Reverend Peter Bradley	Dean of Sheffield Church of England
Miss Katharine Danton	Director of Research and Policy UnLtd
Mr Mark Darby	Chief Executive Alliantist Limited
The Rt Hon. Iain Duncan Smith	Secretary of State Department for Work and Pensions
Mr David Fisher	Director of Services Broadway Homelessness and Support
Mr Mark Fisher	Universal Credit & Social Justice Director Department for Work and Pensions
Mr Christian Guy	Managing Director Centre for Social Justice
Mr Tony Hawkhead	Chief Executive Groundwork UK
Mr Oliver Hilbery	Project Director Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM)
Mr David Hutchison	Chief Executive Social Finance
Ms Helen Judge	Director of Sentencing and Rehabilitation Ministry of Justice
Dr Michael Kerman	Clinical Director, Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist Kids Company
Mr David Lyon	Director of Resources Centre for Mental Health
Ms Kirsty McHugh	Chief Executive Employment Related Services Association
Mr Gary McKeone	Programme Director St George's House
Dr Éamonn O'Moore	Director, Health & Justice Team Public Health England
Ms Noreen Oliver, MBE	Director BAC and O'Connor



Mr Brian Parry	Rapporteur
Inspector Mark Pearson	Police Inspector Margate Task Force (Kent Police)
Mr Ian Porée	Director, Rehabilitation Programme Ministry of Justice
Mr Paul Raynes	Head of Programmes (Localism and Finance) Local Government Association
Mr William Roe	Non-Executive Director Department for Work and Pensions
Mrs Patricia Russell	Deputy Director, Social Justice Division Department for Work and Pensions
Mr Chris Sherwood	Director of Policy & External Affairs Relate
Mr Dave Simmonds	Chief Executive Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion
Mr Herman Stewart	Founder / Consultant Herman Stewart Consultancies
Mr Dominic Williamson	Chief Executive Revolving Doors Agency