

Community-led support – Sharing the Learning from Scotland

Question:

Were there any community-led organisations that already existed that you brought into your work?

Answer :

- (From East Renfrewshire team): Yes –we have gone to existing community groups e.g. one in a church called Helping Hands who work with people with dementia. Working with 4 altogether (50-60 people) and looking at how to complement what they are doing.
- Kenny (South Ayrshire): Social workers went to a community hub to work alongside them to help individuals.
- You should go to places where people are already e.g. Wetherspoons etc.
- Elaine (Scottish Borders): Using this approach empowers people and allows more people to be involved in what you're doing.

Question:

We need to progress our localities agenda, in terms of community-led support how do you make this work?

Answer:

Think about what is the front connection for people. We have developed localities and community-led support together.

Question:

How does NDTi tackle fear around taking a new approach?

Answer:

- It's about balance and saying "let's help you spend your money well" but also understanding that people do have less money now. Start conversations by looking at what matters and focusing on that and by the time the statutory sector are involved decisions are clearer. It's about doing more with what we have and this offers a positive way of addressing the challenges that services are facing.

- We need to remember that local people can be very direct and creative in the way they seek funding, in a way that a Health and Social Care Partnership can't.
- There is growing evidence that this approach saves costs long term and brings a host of other benefits that remove pressure on services. But you need to start using community-led support for the right reasons.
- We need to develop our relationship with other communities and let go of our worries. It's not just about groups; it's about individuals and right skills. We need to use these in the right way.

Question:

How, using the community-led support approach, are you able to step away as a leader? Usually we can't do this.

Answer:

- The strength of the steering group helps. You need to go out and speak to people and before you start you need to accept that you will need to let go a bit. The strength behind you of other people will give you confidence and support.
- Sometimes leadership is about letting go.
- As a leader I will put my suggestion forward but good leadership means accepting you don't have all the answers.

Question:

Are there parts of our communities that would be damaged by this approach?

Answer:

Not if you work at a sensible pace. It has to be the right time for the right reasons in the right way. You can't rush this approach and it needs to be done in a sustainable way. The real barrier is having the bravery to go through that journey.

Question:

What are the critical things that need to be put in place for community-led support to work?

Answer:

- Good leadership, a willingness to address potential barriers like IT issues. "Don't break the law and don't break the bank" but everything else needs to be on the table for consideration if there is a better way of doing it.

- There are marginalised groups that are socially isolated and we need to ask how to find them and connect them using community-led support. CLS can be a great way to link people up.
- You need to be bold, take some risks and “proceed until apprehended”!

Question:

The statistic was given that anything from 30-70% of people won't engage with social work. Regardless of the accuracy of this there will be a lot of people coming in the door with a wide variety of social worries. Are we having the right conversations with people in communities?

Answer:

- Jenny: In areas like Shropshire once you have a community hub you can bring in other services like housing. There is a lot of potential for people to realise they are entitled to social care. We need to go much further with getting the right information out and letting people know where they can go if they have a problem or query.
- Usually you aim for one thing but end up with many more/different aims because you have these conversations, see what is needed and work in different ways to address the problems.