

LINKING POLICY, ACTION AND OUTCOMES IN IMPLEMENTING  
'CARING FOR PEOPLE'

- A note on the role of the Centre in a national implementation strategy

1. In launching the 'Caring For People' White Paper, Ministers and the Department have recognised that government policies present a major challenge to the agencies involved in implementation - both centrally and locally - the success of whose efforts must ultimately be judged by improved outcomes in the lives of vulnerable people and their carers.
2. Within the new policy framework, the main responsibility for managing change and the main leadership must necessarily rest with local agencies, particularly the local authority social services departments working in collaboration with the NHS and other parties. However Government has also recognised that there is much it can and should do both to provide the conditions for success and to promote informed change. Indeed the weaknesses in performance after thirty years of policy-making on community care underline the importance of very careful attention to the centre's role in a national implementation strategy.
3. Experience suggests that the centre's contributions to successful implementation should include the following, inter-related elements:
  - i) Promoting a clear sense of purpose
    - \* Providing and communicating a positive vision of the outcomes for people and their carers sought through national policies, the principles upon which these intentions are based, and the opportunities and services which should be made available.
    - \* Providing leadership on the rate of change towards these improved opportunities and services.
    - \* Demonstrating at national level the concern to improve the responsiveness of policies to the experiences and wishes of consumers.
    - \* Providing the legislative and regulatory framework necessary to define implementation responsibilities and arrangements.

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- \* Securing the intra and inter-departmental collaboration required to promote mutually reinforcing pressures on the different local agencies involved.
- ii) Providing incentives for positive change
- \* Establishing the resource framework and financial arrangements required to facilitate purposeful change.
  - \* Establishing a planning and performance review system designed to promote appropriate local action, monitor performance and reward achievement.
  - \* Providing financial leverage for achieving change in traditional provision.
  - \* Establishing and publishing credible indicators of comparative performance.
- iii) Providing support for positive change
- \* Planning and financing investment in improving the capacity for local action (eg. through management development and staff training).
  - \* Providing guidance on the implementation of new arrangements and processes (eg. producing community care plans, purchase-of-service-contracting, assessment and case management).
  - \* Providing guidance on the design of opportunities and services consistent with the principles identified in national policies.
  - \* Planning and funding appropriate demonstration projects, their evaluation and the dissemination of findings.
  - \* Establishing arrangements for the direct provision of advice and support to field implementors.
- iv) Promoting arrangements for learning from experience as implementation proceeds
- \* Establishing arrangements for feedback to the centre on both the outcomes for consumers and the adequacy of implementation arrangements.

- \* Establishing arrangements for the lateral dissemination and utilisation of experience across field agencies.
  - \* Fostering the development of local approaches to reviewing service quality.
4. As an earlier King's Fund paper\* suggests, these contributions are likely to be most useful if developed in the context of a central - local partnership and are likely to require a significant increase in the centre's capacity to operate in this developmental mode.
  5. In pursuing these contributions the centre needs to balance simplicity and selectivity with sensitivity. On the one hand, given the necessary limitations on what can be managed from the centre, there will be pressures both to carefully select where to focus effort and to make any arrangements as generally relevant as possible. (The White Paper itself, aside from the specific proposals on mental illness services largely aims to provide a framework of relevance to the whole field of community care.) On the other hand real improvements in community care will need to be sensitive to the wide variety of needs, issues and problems which these general policies are seeking to address. There are various ways in which this complexity might be approached, but probably the most productive 'first approximation' is to recognise the continuing usefulness of distinctions made according to client group - which have been both the traditional focus for central policy-making and an important basis for the local organisation of services.
  6. In developing the national implementation strategy, the suggestion therefore is that the centre should address a matrix of issues derived from the contributions identified above on one axis, and the different client groups on the other (See over),

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\* Inter-Agency Relationships In A National Strategy For Developing Community Care Following The White Paper (notes on a King's Fund College Seminar, 18 October 1989)

	CLIENT GROUP				
CENTRAL CONTRIBUTIONS	Children/Young People	Mental Handicap	Physical & Sensory Disability	Mental Illness	Elderly People
Clarifying intended outcomes					
Involving consumers					
Legislative implications					
Inter-departmental collaboration					
Resource framework					
Planning and performance review					
Management development/staff training					
Community Care plans					
Purchasing/contracting					
Assessment/case management					
Service design					
Demonstration projects					
Field consultancy					
Feedback on progress					
Quality safeguards					

Put simply, the expectation is that the centre will want (in consultation with the field) to develop policies, guidance, demonstration projects, etc. which deal generally with the themes in each row, but also to test out these contributions against the requirements of the client groups identified in each column, either to ensure that the proposed approach is robust or to identify where a more sensitive approach is required to accommodate client group differences.

David Towell

King's Fund



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