The Governance of Collaboration in Local Public Service Delivery Networks

An Empirical Study of the Influence and Dynamics of Vertical and Horizontal Coordination Tools in English Homelessness Services

Submitted by **Alice Moseley**, to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics, October 2008

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Abstract

Multi-agency collaboration is often advocated asa means of tackling cross-cutting areas of public services and viewed asa solution to service fragmentation, with local agencies on the receiving end of government exhortations to collaborate. Yet there is relatively little research examining the effectiveness of policy tools and mechanisms aiming to stimulate local collaboration. This thesis examines the influence and dynamics of vertical and horizontal coordination tools, investigating their potential to enhance collaboration in local public service delivery networks and to reduce negative externalities. A theoretical framework is employed which synthesises models of policy implementation and bureaucratic decision-making. The empirical research is conducted in relation to organisations working with the homeless in England, and the research methods include a survey of Local Authorities and interviews with civil servants and frontline professionals. While governmental attempts to foster collaboration are partially effective, there are weaknesses with some of the policy tools employed, and limits to State control. Local actors' collaborative decision-making is influenced more by 'bottom-up' than by 'top-down' factors. Moreover, the competitive context in which service providers operate leads them to pursue strategies to promote their own organisational interests rather than working towards a dominant common interest. The strategies employed are broadly in line with a bureaucratic politics perspective, and include failure to share information, possessiveness over client outcomes and projecting an image of success rather than sharing problems. Nevertheless, formal collaborative mechanisms do have the potential to alleviate externalities associated with fragmented systems. With strong local management and appropriate central facilitation, they can help to meet client needs and to counter fragmentation, ultimately leading to better services.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all those who have experienced homelessness, and to the committed staff in local services who work tirelessly to help improve the lives of those affected.

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List of Abbreviations

ACPO	Association of Chief Policy Officers
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau
CFOA	Chief Fire Officers' Association
CLG	(Department of) Communities and Local Government
DAT	Drug Action Team
DH	Department of Health
DIP	Drugs Intervention Programme
DWP	Department for Work and Pensions
EMIF	Ethnic Minorities Innovation Fund
GORs	Government Offices in the Regions
KLOE	Key Line of Enquiry
LA	Local Authority
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LGA	Local Government Association
LHA	Local Housing Authority
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
LSVTO	Large Scale Voluntary Transfer Organisation
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MP	Member of Parliament
NACRO	Crime Reduction Charity (formerly National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders)
NASS	National Asylum Support Service
NHS	National Health Service
NOMS	National Offenders Management Service
NPM	New Public Management
ODPM	(The former) Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PIU	Performance and Innovation Unit
PSA	Public Services Agreement
QUANGO	Quasi Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisation
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
SP	Supporting People