Understanding Partnership Working

Objectives

- Define partnership work
- Define partnership terminology
- Discuss why partnership is needed
- Identify what partnership work involves

What is Partnership Work?

- Much has been written about the theory of partnership working.
- However, translating theory into practice is not always easy.
- Partnerships can be formed between a number of individuals, agencies or organisations with a shared interest.
- There is usually an overarching purpose for partners to work together and a range of specific objectives.
- Partnerships are often formed to address specific issues and may be short or long term.

Partnership Working

- Working in partnership incorporates a complex network of relationships with a range of bodies, which feed into the process of commissioning and delivering services at every stage.

- It applies to the following processes:

Principles of Partnership Working

- Identification of needs
- Planning
- Joint commissioning and integrated service delivery
- Contracting
- Staff development and training
- Monitoring, review and regulation
- Learning and lobbying
- Working with service users and their families

Partnership Working- Working Together

- Different services and professionals working together with other teams of people in order to meet the needs of the people they care for.

- May also be called multi-agency working, multi-disciplinary or integrated working, inter-agency, inter-professional working or collaboration.

Terminology

- **Maclean & Maclean (2007)** suggest that

- **Multiagency** – staff from different agencies seek to work together e.g. Social worker has contact with a worker on the Youth Offending Team. Both workers could be social workers but their role is different.

Terminology

- **Multidisciplinary** – staff working with colleagues who have different professional training and roles, may or may not be employed by the same organisation (NHS/ Social Services).

Terminology

OR

- A team of professionals who are from different agencies but are brought together to support a service user. In this context the terms multi-disciplinary and multi-agency are interchangeable.

- Phrases such multi-agency/multi-disciplinary/ inter-professional working have the potential to cause confusion.

Terminology

- Partnership Working
- Involves partnership and collaboration

- **Partnership** -different services joined together in relation to working in parallel concerning a shared objective, may have little interaction with each other.
- **Collaboration** - different professionals coming together to actively work towards achieving the goal. Skilled collaboration is essential to ensure effective provision.

(Whittington, 2003; Bell, Corfield, Davies and Richardson, 2009)

Terminology

- **Multi-agency, multi-professional or multi-disciplinary** - organisations who may work on or for the same thing but not necessarily collaborate together.

- **Inter-agency, inter-professional or inter-disciplinary** - agencies who come together to work in a planned formal way to achieve a specific objective.

(Whittington, 2003; Bell, Corfield, Davies and Richardson, 2009).

Do we need to work together?

- Why? To prevent incidences such as Victoria Climbié (2000) and Peter Connolly (2007).

Victoria Climbié

- Victoria Climbié died on 25th February 2000.
- There were 128 separate injuries and scars on her body; described as the worst case of child abuse ever recorded.
- Investigations following her death outlined the horrific conditions in which Victoria was living at the flat and her cruel and abusive treatment and poor care she had endured.

Serious Case Reviews

- All instances of child death are looked into in great detail.
- When a child dies from abuse or neglect, the local inter-agency group responsible for child protection conducts a review.
- Its aim is to identify how local professionals and organisations can improve the way they work together to safeguard children.
- Reviewing the sequence of events following a safeguarding incident is a good way to gain understanding of the circumstances leading to the tragedy.

Serious Case Reviews

- Reports analysing the details and recommendations from case reviews provide a valuable overview of common themes that can make children vulnerable.
- The reports can also highlight how professionals and organisations can improve the way they work together to safeguard children.
- England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales have their own guidance on when and how to carry out a case review following the death or serious injury of a child where abuse or neglect is believed to be a factor.

Laming Inquiry 2003

- After Victoria Climbié's death, the parties involved in her case were widely criticised.
- Public inquiry, headed by Lord Laming, was ordered.
- It discovered numerous instances where Victoria Climbié could have been saved.
- Laming noted that many of the organisations involved in her care were badly run.

Organisations who had opportunity to intervene:

- Three London councils (including Housing Authorities).
- Social Services department of four local authorities
- Metropolitan Police.
- Child Protection teams within the Metropolitan Police.
- Two Hospitals.
- Specialist centre managed by the NSPCC.
- Church.

12 opportunities missed

Laming Report 2003 Findings

- Lack of good practice and poor information sharing.
- Gross failure of the system.
- Inadequate resources.
- Widespread organisational malaise.
- Management issues.

Laming 2003

- "Evidence to this enquiry demonstrated very clearly the dangers to children if staff from different agencies do not fulfil their separate and distinctive responsibilities. No set of responsibilities is subordinate to another; each must be carried out efficiently and effectively. **Gathering together staff in a dedicated team might well run the risk of blurring their responsibilities**"

Laming 2003

- 108 recommendations for change in childcare and related to child protection made to prevent a repeat of this tragic case. Laming said 46 should be implemented within three months, 38 within six months and the rest within two years.

- Lord Laming highlighted the need for improved partnership working.

- Legal requirement following the Children Act 2004 stressed the need for agencies to cooperate to improve the wellbeing of children.

Peter Connelly

- On 3 August 2007, Peter Connelly was found dead in his cot 48 hours after a doctor failed to spot the child's severe injuries, including a broken spine.
- The toddler was on Haringey Council's child protection register throughout eight months of abuse, in which he suffered more than 50 injuries.
- His family had been seen 60 times by agencies, including social workers from the Council, which previously found itself at the centre of a national outcry over the murder of Victoria Climbié by her great-aunt and her boyfriend.

Laming Report 2009

- Child protection issues in England had not had "the priority they deserved" and many of the reforms brought in after Victoria Climbie's death in 2000 had not been properly implemented.
- There was a lack of communication and joined-up working between agencies.
- 58 recommendations for improvement made

Integrated Children's Services mean?

'Service integration is an ecological integrated children's system that is centred on the child and their family, served through service coordination, and supported through integrated organisations and agencies.'

(Siraj-Blatchford and Siraj-Blatchford 2009)

Munro Review (2011)

- Professor Eileen Munro commissioned in 2010 by Government to conduct review into child protection system England.
- Focus of review:
- Early intervention
- Trusting frontline social workers
- Transparency and accountability

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175391/Munro-Review.pdf

Munro Findings

- Social workers failing to meet needs of children – too focused on complying with regulations and targets.
- Safeguarding overly dependent on procedures and paperwork – 60% of professionals' time spent in front of computers.
- Serious case reviews not fostered a learning culture to support improved practice.
- Integrated children's systems not adequately examining quality of direct work with children and young people.
- Assessment framework inefficient and not helping social workers make judgements about risk.
- Services not offering comprehensive early specialist support.
- Some unnecessary bureaucracy, inefficient multi-agency work causing barriers to effective work with families.

What have we learned?

- Children have always been the victims of malicious adults.
- Services have grown over time into the advanced infrastructure we have today.
- Has anything changed following reports and reviews such as Laming?
- Significant safeguarding issues remain in every part of the country.
- Can more effective partnership working help to reduce the risks of harm to children?
- What does this involve?

Activity 1

Why is partnership working with others so important ?

Why do we work together?

Why should we work in partnership?

- Partnership working helps to promote a holistic rather than fragmented approach to meeting the needs of individuals and families.

- Partnership working can also help support early intervention as children and young people are identified through contact with other services and agencies. For example, an adult services worker can flag up to children's services if there is a child in the family of an adult they are supporting.

- Police, schools and health visitors can also help identify children with unmet needs. Most importantly, partnership working and good communication across agencies, services and professionals is what children and young people say they find supportive.

Why Work in Partnership?

- To ensure that there is a co-ordinated network of health and social care services including services for children, young people and families.
- To make best use of the range of statutory and independent sector bodies that contribute to the provision of health care services.
- To make the best use of resources.
- To enable services to be responsive to the needs and views of service users.
- To develop and share best practice.

Why Work in Partnership?

- To create an integrated holistic approach to policy and service delivery
- To overcome narrow organisational or departmental perspectives
- To reduce costs
- To reduce overlap and duplication
- To improve coordination
- To develop innovative approaches
- To pool resources and expertise
- To share knowledge
- To tackle complex issues that are beyond the capacity of one agency

Why Work in Partnership?

- To offer pragmatic (sensible and realistic) solutions
- The development of new partnership arrangements – in a number of policy areas.
- To challenge Hierarchy performance management systems
- To ensure faith in partnerships – to integrate multiple central initiatives and to address fragmentation.
- To help sustain a modernisation agenda.
- To encourage privatisation, pluralism and competition in public service provision.

Partnership Working Involves

- Information sharing – knowing when and how to share information.
- Early intervention – early identification of unmet needs.
- Common assessment processes – identification of the need for an assessment.

Principles of Effective Information Sharing

- Need to follow the 7 Golden Rules
- Being alert to signs of abuse and taking appropriate action.
- Awareness of the legislative framework – Data Protection 1998 and General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.
- Knowing how and when to share information.

Principles of Effective Information Sharing

- Necessary and proportionate
- Relevant
- Adequate
- Accurate
- Timely
- Secure
- Record
- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/721581/Information_sharing_advice_practitioners_safeguarding_services.pdf

Working in Partnership for child protection – a case study

Further Reading

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