

Kevin Brennan's speech to Turning Point/Revolving Doors conference,
London, 5th November 2008 am

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER PERSONALISED SERVICES

1. Thank you Richard for the introduction and to Turning Point and Revolving Doors for inviting me to speak at this important event.

2. Today, I want to focus on collaboration and how it can result in better, more personalised support. This is particularly important when people are going through times of transition and for those with complex needs.

3. My ministerial role covers both social exclusion and the third sector. So I want to talk about the crucial role that this sector plays and how it can best work with central and local government to deliver improved services to vulnerable people.

Social exclusion and complex needs

4. We know that for socially excluded people, problems rarely exist in isolation. For example, poor mental and physical health will often be combined with substance misuse, poverty, an offending history, learning disabilities, and so on. These problems can be linked and mutually reinforcing. And what is particularly challenging is that they are often present from one generation to the next. So problems seldom exist in isolation but services sometimes do.

Current economic downturn – but still committed

5. These issues have become more important given the context of the current economic climate. When times get hard, it becomes even clearer that we need to make sure the most vulnerable are not forgotten. We want to give everyone a fair chance. Fairness is about ensuring that it is not the vulnerable who pay the biggest price for economic difficulties. We need to give them the choices and

chances that most of us take for granted so that they too can make a contribution to society.

6. [Referring to the financial crisis, Warren Buffet said only when the tide goes out do you find out who's been swimming naked" – well to me the opposite analogy – when the tidal wave rushes in, its our duty to help those with no life jacket!]

7. Since the inception of the welfare state 100 years ago, Britain has had a strong history of supporting the most vulnerable. This has prevented countless people from suffering severe deprivation, allowing them to live lives where their skills and talents can flourish.

8. In a sense, the welfare state of the past was based on the off-the-peg, one-size-fits all principle – and those with complex needs were not getting the support they needed. Now we understand the life jacket needs to be bespoke and individualised.

History of silo working

9. There has been a tendency in the past for services to focus a bit too narrowly on their own areas. Silo working has meant that those with complex problems haven't always received the joined-up support that they've needed, allowing some to sink to the bottom. And even for those with lesser problems, it's difficult to negotiate fragmented systems and services.

10. When services work more collaboratively, it means that clients get the support they need, not just simply what is available from the service they happen to come into contact with.

Some progress

11. Of course, the concept of personalisation and collaboration is not new, and there has already been strong progress.

12. Take the new Socially Excluded Adults Public Service Agreement – an example of just how much

progress we have made. Not only is it the first ever PSA to prioritise excluded groups, but it also gives all of us a new incentive to work collaboratively across different services to deliver personalised services to people with complex problems.

13. We also have Local Area Agreements, Local Strategic Partnerships, Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, joint commissioning and individual budgets. They all support joined up working to deliver personalised services. So, let's make sure we make the most of them.

14. And the starting point for all of this collaboration is always to agree that we are all in the same boat, that we all want to travel in the same direction, and that we all agree to row at the same rhythm to move in that direction.

15. There are of course lots of examples where we are working together and travelling in the same direction. Take the Adults facing Chronic Exclusion

pilot programme. This is a 3-year programme which has received £6 million from central government for third sector organisations to test out new approaches to tackling chronic exclusion.

16. And Turning Point is delivering one of these - Connected Care in Bolton. The Connected Care approach integrates health and social care, as well as housing, employment and community safety, to provide targeted support for people with complex needs in deprived communities. This really exemplifies the joining up of bespoke services through a single entry to address a range of needs.

17. To understand how this would help someone with complex needs, let's look at Mary. Mary and her partner, Martin live with their two young children. Mary works part-time as a cleaner, and because Martin is diagnosed as schizophrenic, he is on incapacity benefit. But Martin also has a history of alcohol misuse, and has been violent towards Mary. The couple have let their debts pile

up significantly, including rent arrears. Mary has sought help from Connected Care to help her with these problems.

18. So how can Connected Care help? Well, because it provides integrated support, Mary only needs to go through them to get advice on her rent arrears, her husband's alcohol problems, and counselling to deal with the domestic violence.

19. The model also puts the local community and individuals at the heart of the process. It gives people maximum opportunity to influence the way services are designed and delivered. It also allows them to shape the priorities of commissioners, making services more responsive to their needs.

User engagement

20. This type of engagement with service users and involving the local community to help design services is something we need to champion across all sectors. And we're doing our bit. Several government departments, including the Department for Children, Schools and Families and Revenue and Customs have undertaken customer journey mapping to increase their understanding of clients' needs. This need to understand a clients' journey and the services they've been in touch with highlights the importance of joined up services and partnership working.

Lead professionals

21. The Milton Keynes Link WorkerPlus Scheme is another exemplar of this. Revolving Doors helped instigate it, and it is now being delivered by the Milton Keynes Community Safety Partnership and the charity P3.

22. This scheme helps excluded people access services by engaging clients in a relationship based

on trust. Link workers offer practical help and support based on individual needs and have access to 'devolved budgets' to provide an immediate response, or longer term support. For example, deposit for accommodation, basic hygiene or clothing needs, or access to vocational or education pathways.

23. I know that this scheme has helped client X, let's call him Mark, get through his alcohol and drug problems. When link workers assessed Mark, he was taking heroin and 8mgs of diazepam a day, smoking cannabis, drinking heavily, and was committing crimes to fund these activities.

24. The Link Workers helped Mark get in touch with Alcohol Anonymous, got him on a Methodone programme, supported him in court appearances, and helped him access his GP for his physical health problems. Despite difficult periods, Mark has turned a corner; he is currently drug and alcohol free, no longer offending, and has even completed

his European Computer Driving Licence course. What's more, Mark has used his experience to work with P3 to represent service users.

25. Having someone who is able to make the links between different services and who can assess all the needs of a client is crucial to increasing the life chances of that individual, and encourages service providers to work collaboratively.

26. This doesn't mean of course that they should be expected to do everything for the client. The role of lead professionals is to act as a catalyst to support joint working across boundaries.

Key transitions

27. Lead professionals also play a key role in helping people when they are at transition points. I know from my experience as a Children's minister that this is an issue when young people move from being the responsibility of children's services to

adult's services. That's why we now have Personal Advisors who help care leavers access the right services.

28. Similarly, we now also have Offender Managers who work with people whilst in prison to develop plans and ensure this support continues when they return to the community. This helps offenders gain skills for jobs and find suitable homes so they're less likely to re-offend.

29. Tower Hamlets, in partnership with the housing charity St Mungo's and the Providence Row Housing Association, are doing just that. Their Reducing Re-offending Beacon initiative 'Looking Out' involves resettlement development officers working with offenders to develop support plans. The officer liaises with services and ensures coordinated support is provided beyond the release of prisoners.

30. Looking Out has helped Jane start to rebuild her life. Jane started taking heroin 2yrs ago when her child was taken into care while she was living in temporary accommodation. At the time of assessment, Jane was on remand for 3weeks at Holloway Prison.

31. Jane's caseworker helped Jane complete a housing benefit claim and deal with her £25,000 rent arrears. They also helped Jane to access a GP service so that she was able to get a sick note to claim incapacity benefit. The caseworker supported Jane to contact her solicitor and social services to regain some contact with her child. They have also liaised with Jane's mother to help her through this transition and maintain contact with the services.

Think Family

32. Services working together also mean thinking about whether an individual has a family who also

needs support, so they are not an individual in isolation.

33. The Think Family model, developed by the Social Exclusion Task Force encourages all services to:

- Have no wrong door, so contact with any service opens a door into a joined-up system;
- Look at the whole family and not just the individual;
- Encourage families to deal with present and future problems and take responsibility for their own lives; and
- Tailor services to the needs of the individual and family so support is targeted and relevant to a family's problems.

Vision

34. So as a new minister for the third sector and social exclusion, I'm committed to the agenda to

personalise services, because it will make the difference to socially excluded people.

35. I am sure you're all committed to achieving personalisation – that's why you're here. And this commitment is shared by the Prime Minister and across Whitehall. Most of you will be about the recent 'Excellence and Fairness' report which set out our vision for achieving world class public services – and personalisation is a key part of this.

36. So our challenge is to continue building on the progress we have made on this very important agenda. Personalisation needs to be at the heart of all parts of service delivery – from needs assessments, to service planning and commissioning, to service design and implementation.

37. So my vision is one that focuses on the person – their needs and ambitions. It is one where every sector and front line worker understands their role

and how this fits with what others are doing.

38. And I want you to tell me what more we all need to do to make sure that our services speak to one another and maintain focus on the client – giving them choice and control.

39. But I'm also asking you to make sure every frontline worker, whether they work in local government, third or private sector puts the individual first, to think about all of their needs, and to always think family.

40. And finally, I'm asking for your help in working towards this happening consistently and everywhere, so that it's the norm, and not the exception, so we all row together not just in the same direction, but at the same rhythm.

41. Thank you.

[ENDS]