Public sector austerity, personalisation and the implications for the voluntary sector workforce
Today

1. Outline of the research methods, findings and recommendations
2. Q&A
3. Coffee break
4. Group Discussion
5. Closing remarks
6. Networking lunch
Public sector austerity, personalisation and the implications for the voluntary sector workforce

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Aims of the Research

• What is the role of local authorities (LAs) in introducing personalisation and how are they influencing organisational change in voluntary organisations?

• How far is the personalisation agenda transforming voluntary organisations and reshaping their employment policies?

• What is the impact of personalisation on changes to employee attitudes, behaviour and morale?

• What is the role of service users and their families in transforming voluntary organisations, employment policies, the working lives of employees and their own service outcomes?
Background - Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act, 2013

• Genesis lay in Scottish Government’s national strategy for SDS.

• SDS to become the mainstream approach to delivering personal support.

• Four forms of SDS:
  – Direct Payments (DPs) to recruit Personal Assistants (PAs) or provider
  – Greater duty on LAs to offer Individual Budgets
  – Traditional LA arranged support
  – A mix of the above options.
Background –
Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013

• DPs afforded greater role despite current low uptake and concerns.
  – Ideological, supply of PAs, rights of workers and suitability for vulnerable users.
• Greater flexibility of support; treating people as equal citizens with rights and responsibilities, and the four options are part of assessment and review for all people accessing services.
Personalisation and Employment

- Creeping privatisation, threats to provider security, growth of PAs.
- Significant implications for the management of staff in voluntary sector as workforce reform becomes the centre of change (Kessler and Bach, 2011).
- Workforce up-skilling and empowerment a possibility, but potential problems in relation to a range of employment issues (Baxter et al, 2010; Cunningham and Nickson, 2010).
- LAs retain considerable influence on the employment relationships in the voluntary sector because of funding to the sector.
Personalisation and Employment

• Emergence of people accessing services as a new actor in the employment relationships in the sector.
  – Customer purchasing power
  – Influencing recruitment, working time, working practices, training, job security, ethos.

• Potential for transformation of providers. Are we witnessing the end of the sector as a large scale employer to a brokerage model?

• A future of large-scale provision by PAs seen as problematic (Howie Reid Associates, 2010)
The Study Method

- Phase 1 – Qualitative, semi-structured interviews with ten respondents in five LAs (SDS leads and Contract Managers).

- Phase 2 – In-depth qualitative case study research with five voluntary sector organisations.
  - Mental health (2) Learning disabilities (2), Mental health, Multiple provider (1)
  - Sixty six interviews
  - Senior and line managers, front line staff and union reps
  - People accessing services

- Supported by organizational documentation.
Climate of Purchaser – Provider Relations

- Financial pressures shaped relations in recent years – austerity on top of previous tight funding settlements
  'Before the real kind of hit, LAs in general were very bad in their relationship with the sector in terms of constantly trying to screw down the price. LAs talk about how much we need to invest in our commissioning and intelligent commissioning, something that is not really just about driving down price…' (Contracts Manager, LA 2).

- Efforts to introduce personalisation in context of continuing austerity. LA 1 directly linked personalisation with the need to make cuts.
  'Personalisation is not about cuts, but there are cuts happening in the midst of it, budgets are getting significantly reduced' (SDS Lead, LA 1).

- LA resources for personalisation limited and delivered a tough message to the sector.
  'The best of them will remain and the ones that are not quite as able will not…in some ways that is good thing, because why should we have service provision that is stuck in the dark ages not moving forward. If they are not prepared to engage and see that they have to change then they are not going to survive. I don't see that as a bad thing, that is the competitive market' (SDS Lead, LA 5).
Climate of Purchaser – Provider Relations Variation in Vulnerability to LA Cuts and Decisions

- Threats to sustainability of some providers. VO 1 particularly vulnerable to LA 1’s cuts as it was sole funder. Varying levels of vulnerability to these cuts among VO 2, VO 3 and VO 5 due to resource dependency.

- Different types of relationships evident between purchasers and providers
  - Voluntary organisations trying to develop relationship as ‘critical friends’ to LAs.
  - Other LAs adopting a much more ‘partnership’ approach to implementing personalisation.

- VO 4 reported less vulnerability as it relied significantly on DPs.

- All respondents agreed continued considerable power of LAs because of control of purse strings.

- Other significant issues included charging policies and eligibility criteria.
Figure 1

Key Funding relationships between participating LAs and voluntary organisations
Recruitment and Selection

- Evidence of changing policies to include service user input:
  - Service visits
  - Participation on selection panels
  - Recruitment of dedicated teams & relief and casual staff (VO 3, 4 & 5)
  - Local targeted recruitment
  - Individualised job descriptions and person specifications
  - Individualised advertisements
  - Database of profiles of interests of staff and people accessing services
  - Recruiting increased zero hour contracts in some providers

- Some reservations among staff re service user choice

- Mixed experience of people accessing services
  - Not all staff suitable for purposes/tasks
  - Unable to have people removed.
Pay and Conditions

- Variable impact of personalisation on pay and conditions

- VO 1 most vulnerable with pay cuts projected on top of extension of working week, on top of similar cuts.

- VO 2 and VO 4 faced uncertainty over pay and conditions.

- VO 3 and VO 5 more confident of retaining existing pay scales.

- Sickness absence increasingly an issue for concern among providers.
  - Long-term absence management particularly a worry.

- Union responses limited.
  - Vibrant and active regional campaigns
  - Workplace campaigns depended on organisational context.
Job Security

- VO 4 felt experience of more DPs reduced insecurity of funding.

- VO 1 – workers being interviewed for their jobs, some on more than one occasion. Others felt palpable sense of insecurity.

- Some senior managers saw this as a positive move:
  - ‘It allows people’s perceptions to change… They [employees] are able to think actually while I’m getting paid through xxx in reality this person has got an individual budget. This person can decide if they don’t like my support then they can say “I would prefer some other organisation”. It allows an employer to reinforce the idea that there is a shift in power going on’ (CEO, VO 5).

- Majority of employees rejected status of PA preferring stable employment relationship.
Changes to Working Time

- Greater expectation on workers across organisations to be more flexible.
- VO 1 and VO 2 planning recruitment of zero-hour contracts.
- Other organisations (VO 3 and VO 4) relying on dedicated casual staff. VO 5 already reliant on part-time contracts.
- VO 3 using new technology – tablets
- Workers expressed concerns regarding work – life balance, especially in relation to split shifts.
- People accessing services becoming increasingly demanding – VO 4.
- Some changes to working time the result of fragmented care packages due to cuts and involved no increase in choice or service quality.
- Increased isolation of some people accessing services, and ghettoising into particular activities.
  - ‘I felt disappointed. It’s kind of stupid now. That’s not being pleasant to me at all. It’s kind of cruelty. That’s kind of silliness not giving me three days now. That’s kind of daft’ (Service user, VO 2, female).
- People unaware of why their services have been cut.
Skills and Training and Development

Up-skilling

- Community integration
- Helping establish relationships.
- Coaching people into mental health recovery.
- Develop self-management roles in dedicated teams.
- Front-line staff marketing services
- Skill gaps in developing ‘outcomes’, knowledge of SDS, community engagement, Customer awareness & dealing with multiple diagnosis.
- Involvement of users in training – VO 4.

Threats to Skills and Training

- Growth in Support Assistants – VO 1, VO 2.
- Diminishing resources for training.
- Poor calibre of staff entering care.
- Evidence of inspection poorer inspection reports.
- ‘Hollowing out’ of senior management/backroom staff and line management.
- Generic training vs individual needs.
- Perceptions among the workforce that nothing has changed and up-skilling not needed.
Performance Management

• Several organisations considering ‘co-supervision’ (VO 1 – VO 5)
• Issues around finding participants among people accessing services.
• Interference from families threatening security of staff.
• Developing generic vs individual performance matrices.
• General curtailment of resources to undertake review, appraisal and supervision.
Employee Morale and Commitment

• Some employee rejected marketised aspects of personalisation
  ‘It’s the one thing that’s actually making me think of changing my career. I am not here to talk to people about money…I’ve worked in mental health since 1979 and I was saying to a friend ‘oh this just isn’t for me’ (SW, VO1, female).

• Workers across cases to varying degrees reporting growing dissatisfaction with pay and conditions and intensity of work.

• Threats to job security leading to lower morale.

• Threats to quality of support also a source of discontent.
Discussion and Conclusions

- Variable vulnerability among providers to austerity and financial shocks from personalisation.
- Little appetite among providers to move to pure brokerage provision.
- Move towards greater user involvement in recruitment, minor interventions in training.
- Sustainability of terms and conditions of employment are questioned.
- Current voluntary sector workforce not willing to move to PA status.
- Changes to working hours reflecting service user choices, but also cuts in services.
- Contradictory pressures on learning and development, but resource constraints are a major concern.
- Worker morale relatively robust but areas of concern around pay, job security and quality of services.
- Some service user become more vocal and confident in shaping lives.
- Others becoming isolated due to cuts and not aware of why cuts have fallen on them.
Joint recommendations

• Sharing experiences of personalisation across LAs making use of SDS leads network and Joint Improvement Team.
• LAs make efforts to provide more market intelligence to providers.
• Continued dialogue between employers and unions regarding implications for terms and conditions from personalisation.
• Encourage round-table dialogue to overcome tensions with regard to working time, work-life balance, training needs, sickness absence and performance management.
• Draw examples of best practice in rest of UK and overseas regarding implementation of personalisation.

Resourcing issues

• Voluntary organisation to explore alternative funding to reduce resource dependency.
• Investigation into adequacy of resources within LAs to implement personalisation.
Recommendations

Policy Recommendations
• Campaign for protection of regulation of training and extend such provision into the working lives of PAs.
• Provide sufficient funds to provide the learning needs of the voluntary sector workforce.
• Review implementation of four forms of SDS in voluntary sector providers to identify innovation.

Future Research
• Comparative work with England
• Longitudinal research on LAs and providers re personalisation
• Lifestyles and outcomes of those refusing services because of charging policies and eligibility changes.
• Explore impact of delayering and leaning out of management in providers.
• Explore orientations and competencies of new entrants into care workforce.
• Explore why people accessing services leave providers
• Transitions to PA from employment with providers.
• How far private sector notions of customer change ethos of sector and impact on worker attitudes.
Any Questions?
Coffee
Break
Group Discussion
Discussion 1 - about the research

1. What really stood out for you from the research?
2. What was familiar/wasn’t new?
3. Was there anything that wasn’t clear?
4. Was there anything you think should be explored further?

You have **20 minutes**

feel free to note key points on the paper provided
Discussion 2- using the research

1. How does your organisation use research?
2. How do you use research?
3. Which parts of this research are most relevant to your work?
4. Who else needs to know about this research?
5. What should they do about it?

You have 25 minutes
Closing remarks
Thankyou!

Please join us for lunch.
About P&P

P&P is a four year policy and practice change programme supporting providers to prepare for, and showcase good practice in the journey to Self-directed Support.

P&P is open to all third sector care and support providers.

http://www.ccppscotland.org/providers-and-personalisation

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