



youth affairs network qld

GOOD PRACTICE IN INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY

RESEARCH PAPER

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Good Practice in Integrated Service Delivery : Research Paper
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This report is the product of a collaborative effort of the youth services sector in Townsville and the Gold Coast areas. It captures the data and findings that have been generated over a six month period during 2012 to create a picture of good practice in collaboration and integrated service delivery.

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The consultant

John Flanagan was contracted by YANQ to design and implement this research project. John has extensive experience working in the youth sector in Queensland, in team and organisational development, writing training and learning resources and implementing workforce development initiatives.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the findings of the Good Practice in Integrated Service Delivery research projects undertaken with the Queensland youth service sector with specific focus on two localities; Gold Coast and Townsville. It is a reflection of current practices in collaboration and integration service delivery practices and explores the critical ingredients required for good practice to exist.

This project was funded specifically to produce a research document on good practice in collaborative and integrated service delivery that will assist YARI funded services and Youth Justice Services to improve their service delivery to marginalised young people. Particularly, those collaborations and integrated service delivery methods with an evidence base that has been evaluated locally or demonstrated to work well at the local level. This aligns with the Department's priority to reduce offending and keep young people safe from harm.

The methodology looked at the current context of organisations' participation in collaborative works and integrated service delivery activities and their perspectives on intended or unintended outcomes with the aim of uncovering the driving values, assumptions and practices of successful models and the critical ingredients that are transferable from one environment to another.

A broad cross section of twenty-eight (28) organisations participated in the questionnaire with forty-two (42) questionnaires being completed. 42.9% of questionnaire respondents were from YARI funded services. Eighteen (18) youth service organisations, both government and non-government, participated in focus groups in both project localities. Individual interviews were conducted with six organisations including the Gold Coast and Townsville Youth Justice Services, the Youth Housing and Reintegration Service, the Complex Needs Assessment Panel (CNAP), the Gold Coast Partnership Brokerage Services and the Gold Coast Youth Services to gather a depth of information and generate contrasting and complementary case studies of integrated service delivery.

The terms collaboration and integration were explored to provide clarity on the definition used by the Queensland youth sector. Commonality across definitions of both terms exists in relation to organisations and programs working together with a common goal to improve service delivery and reduce duplication. However a significant difference of definition and orientation is also present. Integration was defined in terms of organisations' relationships with one another with a strong emphasis on the reduction of organisational boundaries and structures. For example, formal agreements across organisations, the co-location of different organisations to create a service hub or merging of organisations to form a larger integrated organisation.

Developing a shared understanding of the range of organisational values that drive and motivate service delivery was identified by respondents as an essential ingredient to collaborative work. Further it was noted in collaboration and integrated service delivery stakeholders need not necessarily share a consistency of values across all aspects of their practice but have an agreement and shared understanding of the core values that drive and support the collaborative work.

Collaboration in the delivery of services to young people and families is an embedded and long standing practice in the Queensland youth sector. Collaborative mechanisms such as consultation and liaison (85.2%), cross-agency client information and referral protocols (74.1%) and case conferencing (59.3%) were identified as common strategies employed in service delivery. Close to 30% of respondents identified the co-location of services as a useful service integration mechanism. Further, four key mechanisms were identified that provided the organisational support and mandate for collaborative work including memoranda of understanding or formal agreements between services (65.4%), common targeting strategies (65.4%), organisational protocols (61.5%) and policy and strategy documents (57.7%).

The research found that organisations report significant benefit from collaborative and integrated service delivery that included higher quality case planning with multiple agencies and professional involvement, the reduction of duplication of services and better, more sustainable client outcomes. Respondents identified seven areas that are required for collaborative relationships and integrated service delivery to be effectively delivered including: effective communication, shared values, shared vision, clear structures, strong relationships, information sharing protocols and accountability and evaluation.

However, a significant proportion of collaborative work (63%) and integrated service delivery has no evaluation and measurement framework embedded in the practice. The report identifies that often collaboration and integrated service delivery is unfunded and requires organisations to find additional resources for the development and implementation of data collection and evaluation systems. In some cases organisations are mandated to establish integrated service delivery systems and are required to develop and implement data collection and evaluation mechanisms. Further, the evaluation frameworks often used are orientated towards measuring client outcomes and not how the broader collaborative system is functioning. The use of an embedded action learning process for the collaborative system to consciously and systematically reflect on what is working, what is not working and what needs to change would be beneficial.

BACKGROUND

As the peak body for youth issues in Queensland, the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (YANQ) has been highly engaged and supportive of collaborative work and integrated service delivery in the youth services sector that promotes better outcomes for young people and their families. YANQ has been witness to, and participant in, a significant range of collaborative work over many years and believes a great strength of the Queensland youth service sector is the capacity of organisations to form highly constructive and effective relationships that ensure a more integrated and comprehensive service to their clients.

YANQ has been funded to produce a research document on good practice in collaborative and integrated service delivery that will assist YARI funded services and Youth Justice Services to improve their service delivery to marginalised young people.

This project has researched models of integration and collaboration, particularly those with an evidence base that has been evaluated locally or demonstrated to work well at the local level. This aligns with the Department's priority to reduce offending and keep young people safe from harm.

The project included a literature review about service integration and collaboration and research into good practice in collaborative work and integrated service delivery.

The Project was primarily conducted in both the Gold Coast and Townsville regions.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology was designed using a three pronged approach to explore a thorough picture of the models of service integration. The methodology looked at the current context of organisations' participation in collaborative works and integrated service delivery activities and their perspectives on intended or unintended outcomes with the aim of uncovering the driving values, assumptions and practices of successful models and the key success factors that are transferable from one environment to another.

Data Collection Methods

Questionnaires

The questionnaire was designed to gather a range of perspectives from individuals across the range of service types. Collated results provide a quantitative snapshot of the current practice in service collaboration and integration and identify good practice principles and potential barriers and obstacles. The questionnaire was made available to youth service in Queensland through the YANQ website.

Interviews

A small number of in depth interviews were conducted to present deeper insight through detailed experiences of individuals with key roles in developing and implementing collaborative or integrated service delivery models. This approach tapped into a greater sense of person or place, locating people in their particular work situation to gain a better contextual understanding of their story in collaborative or integrated service delivery. Participants were identified that 'typify' themes emerging from the data, for example a youth worker for an NGO that is a member of a case management panel.

Focus groups

Focus groups were conducted with specific groups based on involvement in collaborative work and integrated

service delivery models and practices. Through bringing a range of people together with varying perspectives and providing them with an environment to consider the benefits and obstacles to integrated service delivery new ideas and realistic possibilities emerged along with case examples.

Macro Inquiry Questions

The following inquiry questions focused the case study process:

- What would/does it take to develop strong collaborative relationships across key service providers to promote integrative service response?
- What guiding principles and practices need to exist between service providers to ensure high quality integrated services to marginalised young people?
- What would/does it take to understand and grow through differences and obstacles encountered in service collaboration processes?
- What would it take for a group with diverse practice frameworks and values to collaborate or to integrate service delivery?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review focused on taking a cross section of current models of integration and collaboration literature, especially those with an evidence base that have been evaluated locally or effectively demonstrated at the community level. Models which demonstrate collaboration and integration between Government and Non-Government service providers; in particular relationships with local Youth Justice, Child Safety and Housing services were reviewed.

In recent years in the human services sector, there has been a shift away from specialised and bureaucratic patterns of service provision towards a more coordinated, integrative approach. This more holistic approach aims to create greater connections and purpose leading to innovation and streamlining of service delivery through information and skill sharing with greater engagement with all stakeholders. The Local Compact-Working Together model typically commit partners to working together on identifying gaps, avoiding duplication, using resources effectively and providing better services. Boosting involvement of groups in service planning, design, delivery, review and improvement increases their influences while enabling public bodies to draw on their knowledge. This type of integration cannot happen without groups knowing what processes exist, how to get involved or what support they would get and be asked to provide.

Service integration has been defined as the bringing together of previously dispersed and independent services into a more comprehensive service delivery system (O’Looney 1997; Fine 2001). Integration manifests connections between separate agencies and draws them into a single cell unit which restructures and dissolves the boundaries between the agencies as they merge into one system (Lennin, 2009). Keast (2007) highlights the profound problems in achieving successful integration and the literature portrays the sense that current trends are fragmented and lack appropriately coordinated and integrated services. This is the result of “siloes” or traditional single agency responses that are widely considered to be the most costly problems impeding effective and efficient government service provision (Aucoin 1993; Peters 1998; Keast 2001).

Alternatively, Scott (2005) defines the term collaboration as all interaction aimed at working together, both informal and formal, which occurs across the boundaries of different organisations and sectors. Having a range of services which have highly collaborative relations are better able to develop effective implementation of a consistent framework through diverse expertise and experiences, informed by a greater knowledge base

(ARACY, 2009). Collaboration enables the development of a framework that addresses a problem holistically and includes interventions and solutions that have greater acceptance and traction in the community. The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) (2009) maintain that collaboration focuses the collective capacity of policy makers, service providers and researchers on addressing the needs of children and young people. It puts children and young people firmly at the centre of services and removes the need for individual services to compete for time, money and resources.

Models

Several different models of integrated and shared service delivery have been adopted in both Australia and overseas. The Strengthening Non-Government Organisation (NGO) report (2005) and other literature suggest that the NGO sector in Australia has been using collaborative arrangements and variations of the shared service model for many years (Lennie, 2010). Outlined are a number of models that explore collaboration as an essential mechanism for integration between the Government, NGO's and the community.

The Continuum of Integration model developed by Fine, Thomson and Graham, 1998; and Leutz, 1999 (Social Policy Research Centre 2001) explores the continuum from complete service autonomy to full integration with two intermediary forms of collaboration identified which fall between these two defining possibilities.

- **Autonomy**-Services act without reference to each other, although the actions of one may affect the other.
- **Cooperative Links**- Services establish ongoing ties, but formal surrender of independence is not required. A willingness to work together for some common goals is clearly present. Strong communication is emphasised and requires good will and some mutual understanding.
- **Collaboration**- Planned harmonisation of activities between the separate parties. Duplication of activities and resources is minimised. Requires agreed plans and protocols or appointment of an external coordinator
- **Integration**- Links between the separate parties draw them into a single system. Boundaries between parties begin to dissolve as they become effectively work units or subgroups within a single, larger organisation.

One of the lessons Leutz (1999) drew from his review of attempts to integrate medical and social services in the United States and United Kingdom, is that the level of integration required should be determined by the degree of need amongst clients. For those with the least severe needs, linkage and perhaps coordination should be the preferred options. For more severe cases, more expensive forms of coordination and perhaps full integration are likely to be preferred. (Social Policy Research Centre 2001)

Waldfoegel (1997) extends the definition of integration through description of the following levels:

1. The top or macro level of integration involves the level at which policy; planning and financing decisions are made. In public services in Australia this task is usually undertaken by the Commonwealth and/or State governments.
2. The next level down, the meso or middle service level, involves relationships between services within a region and the relationship between one service and another in the local area.
3. A third level, the micro level may also be identified. Integration activities at the micro-level concern the inter-personal relationships between different service staff and between staff and consumers. It involves the direct relationship between services and the individuals they assist.

Research conducted by Keast, Brown & Mandell (2007) explores and clarifies meanings associated with the integration terms *cooperation*, *collaboration* and *coordination* (3Cs) and presents a framework for understanding and more effectively using various forms of integration. As a consequence, there will be improved ability

to match appropriate integration mechanisms with contexts and strategies. The 3C's concept proposed by Keast et al. (2007) is that of a continuum which ranges from cooperation, as fragmented and on a low intensity level, to coordination, as medium intensity, and finally collaboration as high intensity and fully connected. Collaboration is the most challenging and intensive type of integration and relationship and requires a new way of thinking, both at a strategic level and practitioner level. Keast et al. (2007) argues that each of the '3Cs' are different and consequently achieve different objectives. However, the conceptualisation of this continuum and its relationship to integration mechanisms are relatively recent contributions to the knowledge base and are yet to be fully "unpacked" in order to provide a more detailed understanding of the different elements comprising each of the integration terms.

Bronstein (2003) uses multidisciplinary theoretical concepts and research pieces from social work literature to support the development of a model to guide interdisciplinary collaboration. Berg-Weger and Schneider (1998) define interdisciplinary collaboration as "an interpersonal process through which members of different disciplines contribute to a common product or goal." Interdisciplinary collaboration is an effective interpersonal process that facilitates the achievement of goals that cannot be reached when individual professionals act on their own (Bruner, 1991). Bronstien (2003) describes a two part model: part one consists of five components that constitute interdisciplinary collaboration between social work and other professionals, and part two consists of four influences on collaboration. The five components for part one are: interdependence, newly created professional activities, flexibility, collective ownership of goals and reflection. Complimenting these are the influences of part two: professional role, structural characteristics, personal characteristics and history of collaboration.

Functionally, interdisciplinary collaboration is employed for colleagues to work together and maximise the expertise each individual can offer. The influences allow for reflection on professional collaborative practice in order to maximise effectiveness and efficiency. This model is intended to be a generic depiction of the components of optimum collaboration between social workers and other professionals.

Bronstein's (2003) components and influences of interdisciplinary collaboration are supported in the work of Gray (1985) who proposes facilitative conditions of collaboration that relate to personal and interpersonal behaviours and attitudes (e.g. belief in benefits of collaboration, coincidence of values, recognition of interdependence, perceptions regarding legitimacy of stakeholders, convener characteristics). Similar sentiments are discussed by Molyneux (2001) who highlights personal qualities and commitment of staff, communication and opportunities for creative development of working methods and how these elements contribute to cooperative and positive working relationships.

One particular integration and collaboration model developed in the ARACY's Advancing Collaboration Practice Program is the Seamless Service Model or Comprehensive Service Approach Model (2009). This dictates that services for children and young people need to share common aims, needs analysis, research, understanding and priorities. Rather than operating independently, service providers must form strategic partnerships with a range of other organisations that are providing services to the same target groups. It goes on to propose that the sharing of information and making of referrals is an essential part of this approach, although it is not holistic. The model encompasses a comprehensive and collaborative approach to strategic planning with partners, essentially creating opportunities for the engaged participation of users.

Somewhat related is a report by Lennie (2010) completed for the Queensland Government Department of Communities (DoC) that demonstrates this model on an inter-organisational level. The report provides research on and resources for NGOs that are planning to implement shared or collaborative arrangements with other agencies. It summarises results from an evaluation of the implementation phase of the Multi-Tenant Service Centre (MTSC) Pilots Project, which was completed in June 2008. This project was included in the DoC's Strengthening NGOs strategy because of its potential to assist NGOs to improve client outcomes, increase

service viability and build capacity. The objective of the MTSC Pilots initiative was to co-locate separate service providers in an appropriately located centre, operating with effective and transparent management, which enabled service providers to improve client services. It used a co-location model that involves coordination or cooperation between agencies, and the use of formal agreements and other protocols to clarify roles and responsibilities, governance and administrative arrangements, and policies and procedures. This model has been successfully adopted by a number of not-for-profit organisations around Australia (Lennie, 2010). A well-known example of this model is Ross House in Melbourne.

The Interagency Collaborative Framework for Protecting Children (ICFPC) was developed by the Interagency Child Protection Coordination Committee (ICPCC) in 2003 to improve the level of child protection in Western Australia. Its purpose was to strengthen collaboration and partnerships between individuals, families, professionals, communities, community agencies and government departments to enable children, young people and their families to receive the most appropriate services and support to ensure their safety. The role of the committee was to develop a framework to ensure effective coordination and collaboration in child protection across relevant government and community agencies. The framework clearly defines and identifies the roles and responsibilities of the seven government and community agencies (for example the Department of Community Development, Department of Education and Training, Department of Justice and the West Australian Police) and highlights, as a guiding principle, the necessity for collaboration and partnerships between the community, agencies and government. Collaborative methods in this context were based on agreed frameworks and a shared knowledge of contemporary child protection practice.

Benefits and Outcomes

The Australian Institute of Family Studies recently released two briefing papers (McDonald and Rosier in Carlyon 2011) on collaboration that take a narrower focus on direct outcomes of collaboration for children and families. Collaborations are seen as most effective and appropriate in two circumstances. Firstly, to address intractable, 'cross-over' problems between agencies such as homelessness and poverty. Secondly, to address the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged families who have multiple and complex problems. Further it was found that involving parents and children in interagency collaborations can benefit them through, for example, increased self-confidence. They can also benefit the effectiveness of the collaboration as a whole, for example, by bringing 'local knowledge' to the table.

Importantly, McDonald and Rosier note that employing a central agency to facilitate interagency collaborations can be effective at increasing levels of collaboration between agencies. However, changes in service system coordination are unlikely to bring about improved client outcomes unless they lead to change in professional-client interactions.

There are various situations where collaboration is highly beneficial on a community and local level. For instance, Logan City's intercultural city project effectively utilises a cross-cultural collaboration and interaction framework directed at acknowledging and celebrating differing cultures. According to the research findings, it is equally important to realise that all planning and design decisions will have an impact on the cultural life of the people using, living or working in the resulting environments. Innovation flows from the sharing of cultural knowledge, where cross-cultural interaction can take place in an environment of trust, respect and collaboration. The inter-cultural approach requires engagement of people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds at varying operational levels (ARACY, 2009).

Barriers and Obstacles

There are barriers that arise for collaborating service providers that hinder the efficiency and effectiveness of performance. Axelsson and Axelsoon (2009) recognise that these barriers can come in the form of existing legislation, organisational rules or regulations, and administrative boundaries that are difficult to cross. They go

on to propose that there are also barriers related to cultural differences between professions and organizations, for example, specialized languages, attitudes and values that make communication and collaboration difficult (Axelsson & Axelsson, 2009). Both Bate (2000) and Abbott (1988) share the notion that collaboration may be perceived as a threat to professionals' territorial control and consider this a sizable barrier. Barriers can be compounded by limitations of some disciplines, limited understanding of roles and expertise of other professionals, increased requirements for accountability and documentation, and complex diagnoses and treatment methods (Bronstein 2003). Furthermore, the time-limited nature of this funding does not encourage proactive and long-term planning. It also fosters a culture of competitiveness, rather than collaboration, among agencies vying for the scarce resources available to assist in meeting the needs of a common client base (Axelsson & Axelsson, 2009). Where compacts between the Government and NGO's are concerned, the research suggests that the main barriers include: the grafting of compact's processes onto political and social frameworks that are not ready to support it, a lack of government and sector champions to drive the process, changes in personnel or government, a lack of resources to fully implement the compact's commitments and a failure to address the primary issues of funding and the independence of the sector (Mahoney, 2006).

Gray (1989) argues that collaboration breaks down in circumstances where stakeholders are unwilling to work together, when substantial power differentials exist, when maintenance of inter-organisational relationships represents significant costs to partners, or when a legitimate facilitator or mediator cannot be found. McLaughlin and Covert (1984) recognise participating organisations can manifest undesirable characteristics that have the potential to impede successful collaboration. These characteristics include competition and rivalry, narrow-mindedness, personal resistance to change, inadequate orientation and negative staff attitudes. Gray (2002) and Gibbs (1999) support these characteristics and also identify that collaboration can be susceptible to varying protocols, structures, systems, cultures and values of individual agencies. Finally, it is worth noting that well-established practices do not change overnight and collaboration may be perceived as a new way of working. Opposition to change is a well-recognised organisational response and those leading collaborative endeavours should prepare accordingly to address the reasons why people in government agencies may decline to engage in collaboration (Majumdar, 2006).

Solutions and Conclusion

Current literature shows that developing and implementing shared and collaborative arrangements is a complex process that presents many risks, challenges and barriers to success, but can have many potential benefits across and between the Government and NGO's. Where a fully integrated, amalgamation approach would present considerable barriers and a potential narrowing of service provision, a collaborative approach would enable the development of a framework that addresses a problem holistically and includes interventions and solutions that have greater acceptance and traction in the community.

SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTED

The majority of organisations participating in this research were dedicated “youth” service providers, with a sole or primary target group aged 12-25. The demographics of this group then diversify greatly to incorporate culture, sexuality, youth justice, sexuality, homelessness, education, training and employment pathways and a range of other personal, social and lifestyle factors.

A broad cross section of twenty-eight (28) organisation participated in the questionnaire with forty-two (42) questionnaires being completed. 42.9% of questionnaire respondents were from YARI funded services. Youth Homelessness Services and Youth Support Coordinator funded programs represented 38.1% of the questionnaire respondents with smaller contributions from Youth Justice, Child Safety and youth development funded programs

Respondents Demographics

Length of time in current position	Length of time in organisation	Length of time in the youth sector
3.7 years	5.16 years	12.08 years

The respondents of the questionnaire reflect a more experienced cohort than the average length of time in spent in their current position, organisation and youth sector as reflected in the Youth Sector in Queensland Report (YANQ, 2010).

Eighteen (18) youth service organisations, both government and non-government, participated in focus groups in the project localities of the Gold Coast and Townsville. The intention was to bring a range of services together with varying perspectives and provide them with an environment to consider the benefits and obstacles to integrated service delivery whilst discussing good practice examples of integrated service delivery.

Individual interviews were conducted with six organisations including the Gold Coast and Townsville Youth Justice Services, the Youth Housing and Reintegration Service, the Complex Needs Assessment Panel (CNAP) conducted by the Wesley Mission in the Gold Coast, the Gold Coast Partnership Brokerage Services, and the Gold Coast Youth Services to gather a depth of information and generate contrasting and complementary case studies of integrated service delivery.

CASE STUDIES

The following is a brief introduction of each of the services and their collaborative work and integrated service delivery story provided through a case study. Throughout this paper small vignettes from these case studies will be used to illustrate findings from the data.

Case Study One

Complex Needs Assessment Panel (CNAP) conducted by the Wesley Mission in the Gold Coast

This panel brings government and community representatives in partnership to provide a coordinated approach when assessing and planning the needs of clients with complex needs. The CNAP’s function is to address identified issues and barriers by planning, implementing and reviewing the strategies and interventions required to support marginalised young people and their families. Their function also involves advocating within their organisation, networks and sectors to ensure the effectiveness of collaborative partnerships. The CNAP is funded by the Department of Communities and auspiced by Wesley Mission Brisbane (WMB).

Case Study Two

The Townsville and Gold Coast Youth Justice Centre Collaborative Panels

In 2010, an analysis of operational data indicated that a small cohort of young people were responsible for the majority of offences committed in Queensland. The Department of Communities identified solutions to responding to this cohort through a collaborative case planning model that is underpinned by integrated case management directed at young people who are currently subject to statutory youth justice intervention. The Co-ordination Panel aims to promote a coordinated planning and delivery of services to young people subject to youth justice intervention aimed at reducing recidivism.

The aim of the Collaborative Panels is to provide advice to the Youth Justice Service Centre on initiatives, and opportunities to addressing the complex needs of young people subject to youth justice intervention. This is achieved through the following objectives:

- Identify and monitor the emerging young cohort entering the criminal justice system that are committing a large number of offences, with a focus on early intervention
- Share information which will ensure a collaborative approach is supported by common knowledge and mutual understanding
- Promote, develop and maintain a service delivery environment that will ensure the safety and well-being of the target group and actively encourages and support them to reduce their offending behaviour
- Focus on accommodation, family engagement health, education and/or employment and culture
- Identify and discuss recurring themes, issues, systemic gaps and barriers

COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION

The terminology used across the youth sector to define the terms collaboration and integration share both strong commonality and some diversity. Both terms are often used interchangeably with assumptions that they have similar meanings and functions. This is evidenced in collaboration and integrated service delivery terminology used to describe attendance at youth interagency meetings where agency information sharing is the sole function. That being said, respondents of the project questionnaire, focus groups and interviews were able to provide a sophisticated definition and distinction between terms that provide valuable insight into how collaboration and integrated service delivery occurs in the youth service sector.

Collaboration was defined with various emphasis; the following are some examples:

“When two or more services clarify how they could work with one another with clarity about roles and responsibilities for each body as well as respect for autonomy of each service”

“Collaboration is about working together to identify strengths and as well as weakness to better support clients, services and community”

“A range of organisations working together to achieve a common goal, each taking a role and contributing.”
“Collaboration is about working together, sharing resources, ideas and expertise”
“Working together filling the gaps”

“Collaboration is about ‘sharing power’ with another organisation or worker”

A consistent theme in the definitions of the term collaboration in the youth services sector is the notion of service organisations working together towards a shared goal or common outcome. This goal is often orientated towards delivery of services and resources to shared clients in specific localities. It is generally not implied that more formalised structures such as partnership agreements or memorandums of understanding are required at this level however it was reported that a clear understanding of service organisations roles and

responsibilities was essential is services working together successfully. The essence of collaboration implies a strong level of goodwill and good intention between organisations to ensure the best possible outcomes to the client. Collaboration across organisations requires at its heart a client centred approach from all contributors.

Interestingly, the research conducted by Keast, Brown & Mandell in 2007 explores and clarifies the meaning associated with the term integration. They describe the 3C's model, cooperation, coordination and collaboration and present a framework for understanding and more effectively using various forms of integration. This framework would suggest that the above discussion of collaboration straddles this definition of cooperation and coordination in that a low to medium level of intensity of relationship and agreement across organisation is required at this level.

Similarly, the Continuum of Integration model developed by Fine, Thomson and Graham in 1998 and Leutz, 1999 (Social Policy Research Centre 2001) which explores the continuum from complete service autonomy to full integration would argue that the above discussion on collaboration seats itself in the Cooperative Links and Collaboration stages of their continuum.

Integration was defined with various emphasis; the following are some examples:

“When two or more separate services are mixed in a way that they could not be identified as a stand-alone service”

“Integration is about combining programs and services together to apply for funding to become a larger more sustainable entity”

“Integration means that all services, people, and agencies work seamlessly together to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people they are supporting”

“To me integration means a group people coming together from a variety of cultures, ethnicities and backgrounds and working together”

“A service system that works together and attempts to avoid gaps and duplication in service delivery in order to maximise pathways for clients”

“Bringing together people/organisations/systems to form partnerships in order to meet a common goal and enhance collaboration”

“Integration is the “joining up” of the service system. It enables services to work in partnership and collaboratively to bring about improved outcomes for its target group”

As can be seen from the above quotes, the term integration shares commonality with collaboration in terms of organisations and programs working together with a common goal to improve service delivery and reduce duplication to the client group, however a significant difference of orientation is also present. In the discussion of integration respondents overwhelmingly discussed this in terms of organisations relationship with one another with a strong emphasis on the reduction of organisational boundaries and structures.

Integration is defined more in terms of organisations being drawn together to form a joined up system in the delivery of services and programs to the client group. This implied either more formal agreements across organisations, the co-location of different organisations to create a service hub or merging of organisation to form a larger integrated organisation.

The above discussion on integration is consistent with other research such as Fine et al (1998) that defines integration as the links between the separate parties that draw them into a single system. Boundaries between parties begin to dissolve as they effectively become work units or subgroups within a single, larger organisation. Furthermore Keast and Brown (2007) found that their research respondents defined integration as requiring much closer relationships, connections and resources and even a blurring of the boundaries between agencies. Frequently mentioned across all of respondents was that integration requires a higher

levels of contribution, commitment and joint effort.

DRIVING VALUES AND PRINCIPLES OF COLLABORATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

A range of core values and principles were identified by research respondents as critical to the success of collaborative relationships across organisations. A shared understanding of the values that drive collaboration and integrated service delivery was seen as a fundamental cornerstone in the establishment of collaborative relationships. Importantly, the individual interviews and focus groups identified that all participants in collaborative work need not necessarily share a consistency of values across all aspects of their practice but have an agreement and shared understanding of the core values that drive and support the collaboration. Respondents also identified that different emphasis on core values will occur in different contexts of collaborative relationships and integrated service delivery. For example collaborative work may include organisations with significantly different values pertaining to social control nevertheless this does not preclude these organisations working effectively together on a range of purposes and goals. It is however critical that a clear vision and purpose is agreed upon early in collaboration and a genuine understanding and respect is developed about different organisational mandates and functions.

The following is a list of driving values and principles identified as essential for successful collaborative service delivery as identified by research respondents.

Driving values and principles identified as essential for successful collaborative service delivery

Commitment to client centred work	Value the need that a multi-agency approach to address complex need is essential
Commitment to dialogue	
Commitment to strong and robust relationships	Commitment to positive social change and providing support to local communities is at the heart of collaboration
Mutual respect for organisational mandates and boundaries	No one organisation has the skills and resources to be all things to all people
Respect for professional boundaries	
Young person/family inclusion and participation	Flexibility in response and approach
Information sharing	Commitment to the vision/goal
Accountability and responsibility for follow through of actions	Commitment to a safe environment
	Allow influence by other stakeholders to occur
Commitment to creative problem solutions	

Individual interviews and focus group discussion identified that in the establishment of collaborative processes, time is required to clearly discuss and define the values, vision, purpose and intended outcomes of the work. Collaboration and integrated service delivery has often proved difficult when no sense of shared values and principles exists between stakeholder's and furthermore difference in values and principles can become significant obstacles to attainment of positive outcomes. Without a focus or emphasis on what binds stakeholders together such as common values and shared vision, differences and blocks to collaboration can become figural and stagnate collaborative development. Additionally, early conversations on values and purpose provide the opportunity for services to opt in or out of the collaborative process.

Case study example

The Townville Youth Justice Collaborative panel contain a very broad membership from mental health services, Child Safety services, Qld Police Service, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island representatives and housing services. Of course the values held by each member of the panel will vary and at time be opposite. What was highlighted by this group was the commitment to higher order values that was shared across the membership such as 'we do what it takes for the young person and family'; 'we are flexible and responsive to needs of our client'; 'we follow through on commitments made at the panel'; 'together we can work with complexity'. It was the focus on what connects the membership and what the membership can agree on that promoted and strengthened good practice.

COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATION SYSTEMS IN PLACE

Respondents report a broad cross section of systems that are currently in place across organisations to promote collaborative and integrative service delivery. This ranges from service information sharing mechanisms, referral processes, collaborative case work panels, joint service delivery systems to the deliberate co-location of services.

96.3% of respondents identified interagency meetings as a common collaborative system used. This is consistent with the "The Youth Sector in Queensland Report" 2010 that found about 80% of youth sector workers indicated that they participate in one or more networks based both on geographical and program or client group type variables. Individual interviews and focus groups reported that the use of interagency meetings was an important first step in collaborative practices where workers were able to gain service delivery system information, develop relationships and begin conversations of collaboration. Interagency networks however do not provide the necessary structure and focus to support sustained collaborative work. They are useful as an information dissemination point and to orientate workers to available services and referral points.

Significantly, respondents identified consultation and liaison (85.2%), cross-agency client information and referral protocols (74.1%) and case conferencing (59.3%) as common collaborative strategies employed in service delivery. Focus group data would further indicate that collaborative systems in the delivery of services to young people and families is an embedded mechanism in the Queensland youth sector.

Close to 30% of respondents identified the co-location of services as a useful service integration mechanism.

Some examples of this type of collaborative work presently occurring in the Queensland youth services sector gathered in this research include:

"PCYC works from an open framework of partnering with all services, people, and agencies who are willing to work for the best possible outcomes for young people. This is achieved through open discussion and the ability to be responsive to new ideas and the needs of the clients".

"Networking with others services finding each other's strengths and promoting each other's services".

"GCDC has multiple services from within the same site and we all work together to wrap services around a client and their families. We also participate in forums like Youth Network and Indigenous networks to build relationship with other services so that we can work effectively with them to wrap services around a client".

"Youth Support Coordinator's work in collaboration with internal school support staff to support young people to reengage and remain engaged in their education. We also work collaboratively with other community services on projects that directly benefit young people and their education outcomes"

"YPA is leading in bringing together services once a month as part of the Youth Alliance and Integrated Case Management meetings"

*"We are attempting to enter into MOUs with other services in order to better deliver programs and groups".
"We have co-locating other services at our site".*

"The primary goal of our Complex Needs Assessment Panels is to support the integration of services on the Gold Coast and in Beenleigh to improve outcomes for our target group"

For the purpose of this report where much of the attention is given to the collaboration and integration of service delivery, it is also worthwhile noting that research respondents also identified a range of collaborative work directed toward strategic planning on an organisational, community, regional and state levels. Some examples of this type of broader collaborative work presently occurring in the Queensland youth services

sector gathered in this research include:

“At the Deception Bay Community Youth Programs we actively participate in the following collaborative activities: Moreton Bay Youth Services Collaborative Action Group; YSC Regional Network; Deception Bay Manager’s Network; Sunshine Coast CPLAN”

“We work with other Qld peak bodies and have invested in creating the Futures Forum which has brought 52 of Queensland’s largest peaks and state-wide services under one umbrella”

DEPTH AND EXTENT OF COLLABORATIVE AND INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY

Respondents were asked to identify the systems and mechanisms that are embedded within their organisations that provide the infrastructure to support collaboration and the integration of service delivery.

Four key mechanisms were commonly identified by respondents that provided the organisation support and mandate for collaborative work including; memoranda of understanding or formal agreements between services (65.4%), common targeting strategies (65.4%), organisational protocols (61.5%) and policy and strategy documents (57.7%). Respondents identified the importance of organisations to clearly articulate a commitment to collaborative practices and for this strategic intention to be reflected in key organisational documentation that drives the business and direction of the service.

Individual interviews and focus groups reported the importance of ensuring organisations mandating collaborative work and integrated service delivery and the requirement of internal strategic documents that articulate the necessity, expectations and resources required for this approach. Interestingly, some focus group members found memoranda of understanding to be cumbersome and potentially an obstacle to collaborative work. It was viewed that MOU’s can at times focus on what can’t be done rather than on what can be done. MOU’s tend to predetermine limits of collaborative relationship before those limits are explored actually explored in practice.

Case Study Examples

The Gold Coast Youth Justice Collaborative Panel strives to make the participation of stakeholders as effective and efficient as possible. It was a strongly held view that whilst the cases presented at the panel were highly complex, the participation and engagement of key stakeholders should not be. Whilst MOUs were viewed as useful tools in defining roles and responsibilities, the time required to develop such a document would be unwelcomed impost on the members of a relatively new group.

A similar view was held in by the Townsville Youth Justice Collaborative Panel in which MOU’s were viewed as a way of building fences not opening gates. It was also identified that the Collaborative Panel’s Terms of Reference adequately defines the panel purpose, objectives and the membership’s roles and responsibilities.

Interestingly, CNAP is presently investing time in the development of memoranda of agreement (MOA) between panel members to ensure clarity of role and purpose. This decision emerged during the CNAP summit in 2011. Members of the community believed there would be more security for panel members sharing information as well as more information shared between government and non-government organisations.

The objective of this MOA is to achieve standard arrangements for the Complex Needs Assessment Panels

in relation to the sharing of information between the signatory agencies and improvements in the appropriate level and quality of information shared. The intended outcome of the implementation of this MOA will be more informed, coordinated and integrated responses that will improve service delivery for young people with complex needs.

The use of an advisory group (50%) to promote integrated service delivery and the embedding of collaborative intention in organisational service agreements (53.8%) were also viewed as useful mechanisms that support continuous and ongoing collaborative service delivery.

Individual interviews and focus group participants expressed a range of views on how best to engage and involve young people and families into integrated service delivery. Common across all respondents was the consistent use of client permission consent forms pertaining to their involvement and information sharing. Views of the respondents differed in relation to young people and families attending collaborative case panels. Some respondents viewed client participation as favourable and promoting buy in, whilst other respondents viewed the attendance of a young person to a multi-agency panel as overwhelming and potentially negative for the client.

Case Study Examples

The Gold Coast and Townsville Youth Justice Centre Collaborative Panels do not have young people attend the panel and rely on the nominated case worker to be the conduit of information between the panel and the young person. It is a firmly held view that little benefit would be gained by the young person in attending the panel and indeed the young person may find it a negative or overwhelming experience with a range of services including Child and Youth Mental Health, Qld Police Service and Child Safety sitting around the panel.

Alternatively the Complex Needs Assessment Panel (CNAP) conducted by the Wesley Mission in the Gold Coast promotes client participation on the panel. They report approximately 40% of young people and their families will attend a panel meeting at least once. Detailed work with the young person and family is conducted prior to panel participation to minimize potential negative effects. Interestingly young people and families have often wanted to attend at the final panel meeting to thank the members of the panel for the progress they have made.

IMPACT OF COLLABORATION AND INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY ON CLIENT OUTCOMES

“If the collaboration is done well, positive client outcomes can improve exponentially. With the current climate of government funding tightening up and social need increasing, service providers need to be working collaboratively in order to be more effective in supporting the community”.

*“Effective collaboration requires continuous effort from all stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes”
“Attending the Collaboration Panel saves me time, I have all the service providers in one room and come with a range of questions and requests, far more effective than email”*

Overwhelmingly respondents reported significant benefits from collaborative and integrated service delivery that included higher quality case planning with multiple agencies and professional involvement, the reduction of duplication of services and better, more sustainable client outcomes. The following is a list of positive impacts of collaborative service delivery on young people, families and organisations.

Positive impacts of collaborative service delivery on young people, families and organisations

Impact on Young People and Families	Impact for Organisations
Improves likelihood of good outcomes for young people	Smoother transitions from homelessness
More holistic and person centred services	Stronger links to community
Less young people falling through the gaps in the system	Better informed service delivery
More and better options for young people	More efficient use of resources
Wrap around support to obtain better outcomes and meet all areas of clients identified needs	Reduced duplication of services
Provides a broader access point for service delivery	Increased shared professional knowledge of what other services do, their resources, systems and protocols
A more thorough investigation of client issues, needs and responses	Greater accountability and transparency across organisations
Improved referral pathways for young people and families	Development of a stronger service delivery system in the community
Reduction in the client having to negotiate services from multiple points	Provides consistency in messages if partnered services collaborate and understand each other when working with the same group or individuals.
	Identification of gaps, issues and barriers in the service delivery system
	Focusing on what services are best positioned to assist and support clients, as well as what resources in the community is available

Case Study Example

The Townsville Youth Justice Service Collaborative Panel, through a multi-agency approach has had significant impact working with complex needs family. The following is an example of collaboration and integrated service delivery:

Family Description

- A large family that residing in public housing
- The primary carer is the maternal grandmother who has major health issues
- Known to be seven siblings/half siblings/cousins residing in the household
- One of the mothers also resides in the household however has major substance use issues and often will reside in one of the parks
- Another mother just visits on an irregular basis
- There has been numerous complaints from the neighbourhood about this family due to the gathering of people
- Four of the boys have been involved in the youth justice system
- Two boys aged 16 and 14 years are heavily involved in the criminal justice system with them committing

over a 100 offences, many property and unlawful use of motor vehicle

- Both have spent significant time in detention
- The eldest one (17 years) is no longer involved and resides in the studio

Concerns

- Primary care gives health issues
- Young people offending and substance abuse
- Disengagement of school
- House and living environment for a large family
- Neighbourhood complaints
- Multiple agency involve with no coordination

Agency involvement

Agencies working with the family include: Youth Housing and Reintegration Service (YHARS), Family Support Service, Volatile Substance Misuse (VSM), Good Beginnings (targeting the younger children through play groups support etc.), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Service Adolescent Forensic Mental Health, CYDC, Flexible Learning Centre, Shallom College and the Townsville Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Service.

Outcomes

- Prior to YHARS being involved the house was in disarray. YHARS has assisted refurbishing the house and making repairs
- The Dept of Housing and Public Works provided a studio that was installed in the backyard providing appropriate and stable accommodation for the 17 year old male, offering independence and maintaining needed connection and support to family
- Increase family supports and specific support for Grandmother
- Reduction of substance abuse by the 13 year old
- School engagement has gradually improved

Benefits of Collaboration

Importantly, through the Collaborative Panel organisations engaged with the family are now cognisant of each other's roles and responsibilities. There has been a total reduction of duplication and cross purpose. Further, all organisations involved now share the same goals and direction of the work.

It was the view of the collaborative panel that integrated service delivery has greatly assisted in providing a far more effective and efficient delivery of services to this family although several issues are still continuing. Integrated service delivery is by no means the silver bullet in addressing highly complex client situations, generally there is no single or straight forward approach or amenable solution. Complex client issues generally demand complex and long term responses. As one member of the panel notes 'at least we know we have done our best and brought the best of the service delivery system in a coordinated and integrated way'.

CRITICAL INGREDIENTS THAT ENABLE GOOD PRACTICE

A broad spectrum of critical ingredients to successful collaboration was identified by respondents and focus group participants. These responses have been themed into seven areas that are required for collaborative relationships and integrated service delivery to be effectively delivered.

Communication

Communication was identified by respondents as an essential ingredient to collaborative practice. Respectful,

open dialogue between stakeholder with an appreciation of one another's organisational purpose and boundaries was viewed as a prerequisite to developing collaborative relations for integrated service delivery. Multiple communication processes such as clear documentation of meetings with actions and tasks highlighted, email communication concerning meeting times and client management tasks updates were viewed positively as a mechanism to ensure clarity of information and continued momentum of action. Further, formal documentation including terms of reference, decision making protocols and conflict of interest protocols were also identified as tools to enhance constructive communication.

Finally, a willingness to communicate, share information and problem solve creative solutions was seen as fundamental to the overall success of collaborative relationships and integrated service delivery

Values

Developing a shared understanding of the range of organisational values that drive and motivate service delivery was identified by respondents as an essential ingredient to collaborative work. Importantly the focus groups identified that all participants in collaborative systems need not necessarily share a consistency of values across all aspects of their practice but have an agreement and shared understanding of the core values that drive and support the collaborative work.

As previously stated without a focus or emphasis on what connects stakeholders such as common values and shared vision, differences and blocks to collaboration can become figural and stagnate collaborative development. Early conversations on values and purpose provide the opportunity for services to opt in or out of the collaborative process.

Vision and Clear Purpose

The development of a clear, realistic and shared vision and purpose of the collaborative relationships and integrated service delivery was identified by respondents to greatly assist the sustainability of this work. Focus groups discussed that in a time and resource poor environment, collaborative activities and integrated service delivery strategies require clear goals, objectives and targets that are measurable and have an immediate and positive effect on client outcomes and service delivery.

It was the experience of the respondents that when insufficient thought or time is given to developing a clear and agreed upon vision and purpose, organisations quickly opt out of the process as the costs of participation is not matched by client and service delivery outcomes.

Structure

For collaborative process to be effective and sustainable over the medium to long term appropriate structures need to be in place to support its function. The structure will vary depending on the purpose of the collaborative work, nevertheless the most commonly used structures identified include:

- Development of a terms of reference that clearly describes the vision, purpose and objectives of the group, group membership, roles and responsibilities and structural operations
- Memoranda of Understanding
- Communication and information sharing protocols
- Client consent protocols
- Partnership agreements
- Appropriately facilitated/chaired meetings
- Decision making processes
- Agreed upon targets and outcomes
- Explicit resourcing agreements
- Organisational management commitment to collaboration

Relationships

Collaborative work and integrated service delivery requires strong relationships between key stakeholders to effectively work together in often complex client situations. Respondents regularly identified the need for respect to be the driving principle in relationship development. When unpacked, respectful professional relationships encompasses a clear understanding of other organisations purpose, needs and limitation, transparency in interaction and importantly accountability and follow through of actions in agreed tasks. Focus groups participants reported that taking time in the formation stages to discuss values, purpose, expectations and organisational roles and limitations greatly assist to set the environment in which professional working relationships can be developed.

Information Sharing

The capacity of organisations to share information required for effective integrated service delivery is a critical ingredient to the success of collaborative work. Respondents in this research identified that organisations ability to share client information allowed for greater discussion, planning and joint case management and case work. Whilst respondents were mindful of confidentiality and privacy considerations and the limitation on some organisations such as statutory bodies to share client information, the sharing of information both organisational and client was paramount to collaborative work. Unwarranted or needless constraints on client information sharing reduced effective collaborative relationships.

Client information sharing consent protocols and confidentiality protocols are commonly used to address confidentiality and privacy consideration. Respondents reported that in the main use of these protocols effectively addressed these issues.

Accountability and Evaluation

Collaborative work and integrated service delivery is strongly supported when accountability processes are established at the onset of the work. The initial cornerstone of accountability in collaborative practice is the agreement and documentation of a clear vision, purpose, roles, expectations and intended outcomes contained in document such a terms of reference or a memorandum of understanding.

Further, documentation of meetings need to include clear task allocation and timelines and these actions needs to be reported on at the subsequent meetings promoting partner responsibility and documenting follow through on agreed actions.

Finally, monitoring and review processes need to be a regular feature of collaborative work where data is regularly collected to assist in measuring effectiveness of the stated purpose, objectives , deliverables and outcomes.

Case Study Examples

Both the Townsville and Gold Coast Youth Justice Collaborative Panels and CNAP have clearly defined mission and structure. All three panels have terms of reference, communication protocols, information sharing protocols and clearly articulated expectations of membership. CNAP has a 70% attendance guideline with their membership which highlights the importance of consistency attendance and membership. Providing clear structure and expectation has supported active participation and engagement to integrated service delivery and is a critical ingredient to good practice. The Townsville Youth Justice Collaborative Panel briefly discuss their terms of reference every second meeting to ensure understanding an agreement. It was reported that this has been a very important strategy particularly given that the group is relatively new.

Importantly all case studies identified a key success factor of relationship development and the

understanding of different organisational functions and boundaries. It was discussed that time, open dialogue and the building of trust were the critical ingredients in the formation of constructive and professional relationships.

BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES THAT HAMPER GOOD PRACTICE IN COLLABORATION WORK AND INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY

A range of barriers and obstacles that hamper good practice in collaboration work and integrated service delivery were identified by respondents and focus group participants. These responses have been themed into five areas that require attention in developing good practices in collaborative work and integrated service delivery.

Limited Communication and Conflict Resolution

Respondents identified that a significant barrier to good practice in collaborative work is the lack of effective communication between organisations and an appreciation of each stakeholder's values and service limits. This is played out in collaborative work through a lack of clarity and agreement on purpose, information sharing protocols and decision making procedures. Respondents also noted that poor relationship development, minimum level of trust, unresolvable differences and conflict and a lack of team cohesiveness is also a feature when effective communication does not exist.

Respondents identified that a lack of effective communication between services reduces the efficacy of integrated service delivery especially where multiple organisations are engaged in case management with a client. Where services are unclear of each other's roles and responsibilities in integrated service delivery it is often the young person and their families that are left confused and potentially disillusioned with the service provided.

As previously mentioned, focus group participants highlighted the necessity in the formation stages of collaborative work to discuss values; purpose, expectations and organisational roles and limitation however time poor organisational workers may have a tendency to short cut this stage.

Resources

55% of respondents identified constraints on resources as a potential obstacle in collaborative work and integrated services delivery. It was described that some hesitation can exist for organisations to engage in collaborative work because of work load and capacity issues. Resource restriction and strain becomes evident when additional referrals, case work and projects are identified in collaborative work and integrated service delivery mechanisms for an organisation to take on when they are already at capacity. It is critical collaborative work and integrated serviced delivery is cognisant of individual organisations resourcing limitations and these conversations are promoted, supported and understood in this work.

Alternatively it was highlighted in focus groups that collaborative can be an effective mechanism to reduce workload.

Values and Philosophy Conflict

42% of respondents identified variation in or conflicting values and philosophy in collaborative work and integrated service delivery as barrier to good practice. Fundamental issues such as voluntary and non-voluntary participation of young people, leadership and decision making responsibilities, client involvement and participation and organisational limits and capacities are areas in which differing values and philosophies are held.

Limited Funding Arrangements

Government funding arrangements was viewed by 45% of respondents as a potential barrier in some circumstance to collaborative work and integrated service delivery. It was noted that funding arrangements in some programs are so closely tied to a certain level of client outcomes and that the time resources required to be spent in a developmental process with other organisations may or may not be worthwhile and is often hard to judge initially.

Strict funding guidelines concerning client typology (or at least how these guidelines were interpreted) had the potential to limit the flexibility of organisations in fully engaging in integrated service delivery. Respondents reported gate keeping practices where referrals were rejected by certain agencies. Often these rejected referrals were of clients with highly complex needs and requirements.

Competitive funding was seen as a hindrance to relationship and trust development across organisations as service compete for the same small pool of funds.

Limited Organisational Commitment and Understanding

The degree of commitment of organisations engaged in collaborative work is an essential component to efficacy of this practice. When organisations demonstrate a lukewarm commitment to collaborative work or integrated service delivery, significant barriers to good practice emerge.

Respondents noted that issues such as fluctuating attendance at meetings and panels, different staff members of the organisation attending meetings, inconsistent follow up of agreed tasks and duties, lack of service flexibility in referral and service delivery and a lack of information sharing are common signs of poor commitment to collaboration by an organisation.

Respondents identified that barriers occur when organisations send staff members to collaborative work meetings with inadequate delegation and decision making authority. The effectiveness of decision making and action planning is greatly reduced when the people around the table do not have a mandate from their organisations to progress collaborative work. When this is a regular occurrence, collaborative work and integrated service delivery can often stall.

EVALUATION, STATISTICS OR OTHER EVIDENCE OF OUTCOMES

The need for evaluation, statistics or other evidence that can demonstrate a higher level of outcomes for young people using a collaboration and integrated service delivery was highlighted through this project.

A significant proportion of collaborative work and integrated service delivery has no evaluation and measurement framework embedded in the practice. 63% of respondents could not identify any data collection or evaluation mechanism used in collaborative work.

Focus group participants identified that often collaboration and integrated service delivery is unfunded and required organisations to find additional resources for the development and implement and data collection and evaluation system.

Only 37% of respondents report data collection and evaluation systems in place. In some cases organisations are mandated to establish integrated service delivery systems and are required to develop and implement data collection and evaluations mechanisms. It is generally in these cases that the effectiveness and efficacy of collaborative work and integrated service delivery is measured.

Case Example CNAP

Currently, the Complex Needs Assessment Panel (CNAP) conducted by the Wesley Mission in the Gold Coast has invested in the use of the Common Assessment Tool (CAT). This tool is used for collecting information from a young person about their life for the purpose of assessing multiple and complex needs. It is used to plan and carry out appropriate and coordinated interventions to strengthen protective factors against, and to reduce the risks associated with social exclusion. It has been successfully trialed for use by the Logan-Beenleigh Young Persons' Project "The Next Step."

Importantly the use of CAT has allowed CNAP to engage in the Longitudinal Outcomes Study (LOS) conducted by the Evidence & Modelling Unit Department of Communities. This study aims to investigate the effectiveness and benefits of selected programmes funded by Department of Communities such as the Complex Needs Assessment Panel (CNAP). This is being done by collecting information about client outcomes during the program, information about their experiences and access to other services after leaving YARA/ CNAP.

Interesting the evaluation frameworks in place are orientated towards measuring client outcomes. This is not necessarily measure the how the broader collaborative system is functioning. The use of an embedded action learning process for the collaborative system to consciously and systematically reflect on what is working, what is not working and what needs to change would be beneficial.

CONCLUSION

Collaboration and integrated service delivery has consistently been a constructive and positive feature of the landscape of the Queensland youth services sector for many years. Organisations have come together with good will and good intention, putting to one side differences and competitiveness for the benefit of marginalised young people and their families. The level of sophistication and depth of relationships that is required for collaboration and integrated service delivery cannot be understated and yet youth service organisations in general navigate this terrain well.

Now more than ever the Queensland youth services sector are required to effectively utilize the limited resources they have in an environment that cannot tolerate needless duplication and waste. Complexity of the client situation and the complexity of the service delivery system demands that organisations do not work one out but collaborate in finding solutions to complex situations.

Good practice in collaboration and integrated service delivery requires people in different organisations to come together with shared mission and purpose, to be client centred and prepared to share information and resources. Collaboration requires transparency, honesty and flexibility from organisations and discussion on the values that drive and motivate practice. Collaboration and integrated service delivery requires clear structures and protocols with deliberate and agreed upon strategies and action.

The Queensland youth services sector has continued over the years to have successful client outcomes through collaboration and integrated service delivery. It is important to acknowledge the resources that are required for effective collaboration processes to be established and reflected in service agreements between organisations and funding bodies.

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