

Targeted youth support

Integrated support for vulnerable young people – emerging practice



Developing the multi-agency workforce

Area: Government office regions; North East; North West and Yorkshire and Humber

“Putting a group of practitioners in a room together does not make them a team. There are potentially many issues to deal with such as conflict, a lack of understanding of each others roles, responsibilities and pressures and feelings of inequality. The National College for School Leadership's (NCSL) Multi-Agency Team Development Council (MATD) programme is designed to improve individual and team behaviours and result in effective multi-agency working” – **David Collier; MATD Programme Manager, Brathay, April 2008**

Challenges

- To develop effective multi-agency teams to improve outcomes for children, young people, parents and carers
- To develop a multi-agency workforce by addressing the challenges teams face when coming together
- To form teams who can successfully deliver the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes

Key Actions

- October 07 – following NCSL pilot, education charity Brathay wins contract to deliver the MATD programme to train professionals working with children and young people; one of four providers
- 180 multi-agency teams to be trained over next three years; participants include teachers, social workers, nurses, police, senior managers, volunteers etc.
- Period of preparation and training and accreditation
- Cumbria County Council Children's Services first to take up training programme in January 08 – group of senior managers on its Children's Centre's Board from the council; voluntary sector, health and jobcentre plus
- Programme involves combination of residential overnight and day events plus team and individual project working – takes six to nine months with facilitation throughout
- Tools include personality profiles, coaching, developing personal and team action plans, problem solving, identifying team values, giving and receiving feedback etc
- Works with new, existing, co-located and virtual teams
- Development can be done with cohorts of up to five teams each – either from one or a mix of areas to provide opportunities for sharing ideas, practice and networking

Key Implementation Tips

- If all you do is locate a group of people together and label them as a team – that's all it will be, a label
- Breaking down the stereotypes about different professions and sectors at the outset is vital
- Don't under estimate how much a lack of trust between professionals can undermine the development of any multi-agency team – work to build trust at the outset
- Remember that most individuals have history and baggage they bring to a team relationship – deal with this up front and don't let it derail the process
- This is not about skilling up – concentrate purely on getting teams to overcome the barriers preventing them from working collaboratively and effectively to deliver positive outcomes

Impact

Still early days, but the projected outcomes of the programme include improved levels of trust between individual staff and agencies; improved effectiveness of multi-agency teams; accelerated progress towards integrated service provision; enhanced leadership skills and effectiveness and increased capacity for improved team working throughout the different organisations. Sheffield Hallam University is evaluating the programme's impact.

According to one of the first participants, Cumbria County Council's Commissioning Project Manager, Nicola Jackson: “The programme has been invaluable to us as a team, allowing us to address issues in a safe and respectful environment. Thanks to the facilitated events, issues that may have bubbled away beneath the surface have arisen and been addressed together. We have been able to off load our historical baggage and have developed a shared vision and objectives enabling us to work more quickly and effectively. I am confident that this will lead to improved services and outcomes for children and young people”.

To find out more, contact

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