

Improvement Network

Briefing: Power in People's Hands - Learning from the World's Best Public Services

Purpose of Briefing: To provide a synopsis of the document '*Power in People's Hands: Learning from the World's Best Public Services*', jointly produced by the Cabinet Office Strategy Unit and HM Treasury.

The briefing note has six sections:

- introduction – section 1
 - rights and entitlements – section 2
 - empowering citizens in the information age - section 3
 - personalisation - section 4
 - prevention – section 5
 - new professionalism and new organisations - section 6
 - programmes referred to within the survey - Appendix A.
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Section 1: Introduction

1. A quote at the beginning of the study summarises what the report is concerned with:

Developed countries around the world have entered a new period governed by two facts:

- Many people face hard times and uncertainty, when the support and security provided by public services is more, not less, important.
- For everyone, including governments, using financial resources carefully and doing more with less matters more than ever.

2. The survey is based on 50 interviews with leading experts in public service reform from around the world.
3. The study examines some of the changes that will be most important at the interface between front-line professionals and the citizens they serve. It considers insights from around the world on five specific elements of this new relationship with citizens:
 - empowering citizens through **stronger entitlements**
 - empowering citizens through **better information** on services
 - developing more **personalised** services
 - working with people to deliver more **preventative** services
 - the **new professionalism** required to deliver these changes within services.
4. The annex provides links to and details of programmes cited as examples in the survey.

Section 2: Rights and Entitlements

5. This section of the survey poses the question: 'How can public services give citizens maximum power while guaranteeing high standards for all?' It gives the answer: 'Clear [citizen] entitlements with strong, simple systems of redress can help citizens themselves ensure public services are of excellent quality and fair'.
 6. The rationale behind rights and entitlements is to ensure that public services are not designed with the citizen in mind; rather it is the citizen who drives quality in the services. For example, **health patients in Sweden have recourse to the '0-7-90-90' health care guarantee**. Patients are offered an alternative service provider (private or even in another EU country) and travel costs if their entitlements are not met by their national provider.
 7. The result of having to procure external service provision is twofold:
 - the patient receives the care they need in a timely manner
 - the service provider, forced to procure external service provision, takes a financial hit for their inability to provide services to the citizen.
 8. The report argues that rights and entitlements lead to a reduction in bureaucracy; there are fewer top-down government targets because citizens themselves hold more of the power to ensure equal access to quality and standards in services.
 9. The report states that entitlements for citizens are particularly useful in improving access and quality in services. Unlike top-down targets, entitlements can be owned and policed by citizens themselves. They put the focus of accountability between the service and the user, rather than between the service and the government. The section concludes:

By providing powerful incentives to improve quality and equity, entitlements can drive productivity and performance without central government bureaucracies having to do so.
 10. Rights and entitlements are becoming a consistent theme in the Brown government's public service reforms. The NHS Constitution, the Policing Pledge, NHS waiting time entitlements and most recently the new pupil and parent guarantees all strengthen the rights of those who use services.
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Section 3: Empowering citizens in the information age

11. This section of the report examines how new technologies are providing opportunities to open up information to citizens and communities. It argues that, as a result, citizens are being empowered to make better-informed decisions over which service providers to use and to hold governments and public services to account.
12. However, some of this section presupposes the existence of mechanisms similar to those discussed in section 1 – for example a 'competitive-market' based model of service provision in which citizens act as knowledgeable customers.

13. The survey highlights four areas where the government could improve its use of information:
- a. **count what counts:** collect high-quality data in the first place, and combine performance data with information on wider social outcomes so that citizens have reliable and balanced information at their fingertips
 - b. **open up information for use:** make information (including performance and financial information) available so that citizens can compare services and make informed decisions, drive improvements in services, and hold government to account from the bottom up
 - c. **open up information for re-use:** make information and data available so that it can be easily re-used by citizens – mobilising a wealth of expertise to facilitate innovative use of data by citizens
 - d. **harness the power of networks:** use interactive technologies, such as web 2.0, to break government monopolies on information creation and open up dialogue between and among citizens and professionals.
14. The report argues that making performance information transparent is essential if citizens are to be empowered to hold governments and public services to account. Leading-edge governments and services around the world are making financial information transparent so that citizens can assess and compare the efficiency of services for themselves. Some governments such as the USA are bringing performance information and financial information together, for example with www.recovery.gov, which allows the public to see how federal money is spent and what is achieved as a result.
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Section 4: Personalisation

15. This section deals with a tailoring of services to the citizen's need. It examines ideas such as 'one-point of access', where citizens choose how they want to interact with different services. The survey recommends three approaches:
- **streamlining transactional services** so that they are more integrated for the user, for example by making it easier to claim a range of benefits online
 - **using lead professionals** to better engage with people with complex needs who access a range of services
 - **giving users of services genuine control**, for example by providing new funding mechanisms, not just one-off choices.
16. The paper argues that one of the most successful examples of personalisation in the UK is Jobcentre Plus. Jobcentre Plus has brought together employment and benefits services and given people the choice of accessing services and support in person, over the phone or on the internet. This has delivered over £450 million in efficiency savings between 2004/05 and 2007/08.
17. The survey cites Service Canada, which brings together over 77 government programmes, and Centrelink in Australia, which are 300 'one-stop shops', as beacons of good practice that the UK may wish to follow.

18. The survey acknowledges that over the last two decades multi-agency collaborative work has increased and has resulted in efficiencies. For these changes to be embedded in the way services operate, the survey suggests government will need to offer leadership by:
- establishing standards for transactional services, such as protocols for sharing information
 - incentivising multiple providers to join up in different configurations for different groups in the population
 - ensuring that professional boundaries do not undermine the greater use of lead professionals
 - joining-up funding streams.
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Section 5: Prevention

19. This section considers the case for increasing prevention across public services. The government states that it has focused increasingly on preventative investments over the last few years. These include Sure Start Children's Centres, the Change 4 Life healthy living programme, more targeted services in education such as child and adolescent mental health services, Youth Offending Teams, the Family Nurse Partnership programme and more active employment and retraining advice.
20. The report draws attention to the growing third sector and individual citizen involvement in the provision of preventative services traditionally undertaken by the state alone. The survey's international research suggests that there is significant untapped scope for driving better value for money by mobilising the time, motivation and energy of citizens. Without an effective partnership between citizen and state, many chronic and complex problems are impossible to prevent - and any spending might achieve very little.
21. The survey suggests that leading examples of prevention and early intervention across the world take the time to work out the risk factors behind a problem, and invest in ways of identifying them. They collect and use high-quality, real-time data.
22. An example of a good system is the **Chicago geographical information system (CLEAR)**, which enables officers to pinpoint hot spots of criminal activity and focus deterrent efforts accordingly. The public-facing CLEAR Map website allows citizens to search for crimes that have happened in the last 90 days, and to filter results by address, police beat, school, park, community area, type of crime, time of day and even specific locations.
23. Crime rates have dropped every year in Chicago since CLEAR went live in 2003, with 613 fewer homicides and 8,734 fewer shootings between 2004 and 2006 - although there has been no evaluation of how much this can be attributed to the introduction of CLEAR map.
24. The survey states that the world-leading examples of preventative health, education, policing and welfare systems indicate that it is not enough to roll out individual preventative programmes, better diagnosis and problem-solving

approaches. Organisations should instead examine whether their preventative programmes are as collaborative as possible, including whether different agencies are genuinely focused on the problems that create greatest risks for people and whether they are targeting the right people in the first place.

Section 6: New professionalism and new organisations

25. The section on new professionalism recommends that organisational change is required if any of the good practice the report has highlighted is to be put into use. The chapter opens up with a clear message:

The performance of public services cannot exceed the quality of the professionals working in those services. No matter how empowered the citizens, transparent the performance management system, personalised the service or collaborative the culture, poor-quality staff cannot be compensated for.

26. Fast-track schemes such as 'Teach First' are highlighted as ways of attracting and retaining the best people into the public sector. However, more is required than merely attracting highly skilled people - the creativity and ambition of professionals must also be unlocked, for example through professional ownership of the quality improvement agenda. The survey argues that the services that achieve this are characterised by the following:

- **individual professionals comparing their performance with their peers**, so that each professional knows how their performance compares to their peers and how to improve
- **professionals owning the quality improvement agenda** – professional organisations, bodies and networks that own the quality agenda and are responsible for driving improvement
- **innovative organisational forms**, combining strong local accountability with high levels of professional expertise; for example, organisations operating as part of chains, networks and umbrella associations.

27. The survey argues that professional quality and motivation can only be realised in an organisational environment that values the expertise and aspirations of users. The survey states that achieving both is a significant challenge.

Appendix A: Programmes referred to within the survey

Name of Programme	Nature of programme	Country	Link
The '0-7-90-90' health care guarantee	Health care.	Sweden	http://www.cprn.ca/doc.cfm?doc=1665&l=en
Social rights and minimum standards in health and childcare	Health care. Children services.	Finland	Link not found
Compact with Young Australians	Employment. Training. Education.	Australia	http://www.coag.gov.au/coag_meeting_outcomes/2009-04-30/index.cfm#jobs
The e-Citizen Charter	e-services. Citizen Engagement.	The Netherlands	http://burger.overheid.nl/service_menu/english
The National Ombudsman	Regulation. Corporate complaints.	The Netherlands	http://www.ombudsman.nl/ombudsman/informatiemateriaal/documents/Summary%20Annual%20Report%202008.pdf
State of the USA	Social intelligence. Citizen engagement.	USA	www.stateoftheusa.org ,
Healthcare Quality and Efficiency Reports	Social intelligence. Citizen engagement.	Sweden	http://www.socialstyrelsen.se/NR/rdonl/yres/1482B3AF-ED64-4B31-983F-7788AC43D020/10176/20081313.pdf
Online information to compare social care services in Stockholm	Social care. Social intelligence.	Sweden	http://www.stockholm.se/ http://www.sll.se/sll/templates/NormalPage.aspx?id=19
Democratisation of government data in Washington D.C.	Social intelligence.	USA	http://www.appsfordemocracy.org/
Open Book portal, New York	Social intelligence.	USA	http://www.openbooknewyork.com/
Data.gov – open government initiative USA	Social intelligence.	USA	www.data.gov www.sunlightlabs.com
Participatory budgeting through web 2.0	e-government. Local government finance.	Germany	http://theconnectedrepublic.org/posts/323
The Cyber Policy Forum	Policy development.	S. Korea	http://www.unpan.org/Library/MajorPubl

Name of Programme	Nature of programme	Country	Link
	Social intelligence.		ications/DigitalGovernanceinMunicipalitiesWorldwide/tabid/804/language/en-US/Default.aspx
Service Canada	Customer Service.	Canada	http://www.accenture.com/Global/Research_and_Insights/By_Industry/Government_and_Public_Service/2008LCSROutcomes.htm
Special education teachers	Education.	Finland	Link not found
Crossroad Bank	Knowledge Management.	Belgium	http://www.belgiumlex.be/V2/belgiumlex/website/en/
Sundhed.dk (Danish health website)	Health e-government.	Denmark	http://www.sundhed.dk/
Wraparound Milwaukee	Mental Health. Children's services.	USA	http://www.milwaukeecounty.org/WraparoundMilwaukee7851.htm
Personal budgets for mental health patients	Mental Health. Social Care.	USA	http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/addiction/index.shtml
CLEAR Map	Social Intelligence. Community safety.	USA	http://gis.chicagopolice.org/
Health Buddy pilot	Health.	The Netherlands	https://www.healthhero.com/press/press_releases/pr_06_01_04.html
Harlem Children's Zone	Education. Community cohesion.	USA	http://www.hcz.org/
Justice Reinvestment	Criminal Justice.	USA	http://justicereinvestment.org/states/texas
A performance and development culture in schools	Performance Management. Service improvement. Education.	Australia	http://www.bcg.com/publications/files/BCG_Driving_Cultural_Change_March_2009.pdf
Performance management in Singapore's schools	Performance Management. Service improvement. Education.	Singapore	Link not found
The Alberta Initiative for School	Service improvement. Education.	Canada	http://educ.ucalgary.ca/home/deans-office/alberta-

Name of Programme	Nature of programme	Country	Link
Improvement			initiative-school-improvement-aisi
The Knowledge Is Power Program	Service improvement. Education. Knowledge management.	USA	www.kipp.org
Harbour 17 - Children's Social Services	Children's services. Service Improvement. Community cohesion.	Germany	Link not found
Neighbourhood Place	Service improvement. Citizen engagement.	USA	http://www.louisvilleky.gov/NeighborhoodPlace/