

WRVS RESPONSE TO MODERNISING COMMISSIONING

New Opportunities

What are the implications of payment by results from civil society organisations?

Payments by Results (PBR) would, if introduced, represent a major change for local commissioning and needs to be carefully considered. WRVS urges ministers to directly engage with the sector about the measurement indicators that would be potentially used and we also hope for recognition of the practical problems that locally based small civil society actors would face in complying with a payment by results regime.

On a practical level precisely the type of emergent small locally based and resource light actors that ministers wish to encourage to challenge service provision and undertake social action, are the ones that will struggle to both capture relevant data and potentially to analyse it as part of a payment by results regime. Given the Government's commitment to reduce regulatory burdens on the sector, it is important to avoid the introduction of regimes that could further add to these burdens.

Measurement

There are also specific methodological issues specific to our sector that WRVS would wish to discuss further with the Department prior to the introduction of any payment by results regime. These are as follows:

- ageing is intrinsically a dynamic process and so outcomes secured, such as avoiding in-patient admission at any given time may be much more difficult to achieve as older people become more impaired over time. It will therefore be important for measures to be finely tuned to take into account the different levels of impairments across the older population that can be expected to develop over the lifecycle. This is the context for any preventative work designed to improve the quality of older peoples life and health/social care outcomes. in this respect the Government should consider drawing upon the methodology used for the large scale Partnership for Older Peoples Projects study that evaluated preventative interventions relative to a control group of older people

- measurement tools also need to embrace not only outcome valued by

commissioners, such as reduced in-patient admissions but those which directly speak to older people's self-defined well-being. Many people with long term illnesses or chronic conditions may have a range of impairments but what matters to them are the ones that cause them most distress or that most impinge on their well-being. Older people should be directly consulted about the well-being measures that are incorporated in any payment by results framework. Within this context, WRVS will be sharing with the Department of Health the findings of our Shaping Our Age study that gathers data from older people themselves about the services that most enhance their well-being.

Procedure

It is critical that in a PbR framework contracts are agreed that provide for partnership-like relationships with good payment terms and access to working capital.

If payment by results is introduced then we ask that a separate consultation should be conducted on the measures that will be used

Should Government explore extending the right to challenge other local state-run services. If so which areas and what benefits could civil society organisations bring to these public service areas?

If the right to challenge is introduced, then ministers should focus on reviewing the performance of current providers in order that these findings can inform local actors about the services areas where new providers could enhance outcomes for users.

Citizen and Community Involvement

We welcome the Government's encouragement for the voluntary sector to be treated as an equal partner in the process of commissioning health services under the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNA). The JSNA process is fundamental to developing stronger joint working between health and social care and to overcoming the enduring problems that service users, including older people and their families have faced in accessing support that responds to the realities of their changing lives rather than one that is determined by institutional boundaries and budgetary frameworks. For joint working to be successful civil society involvement is essential and we have set out proposals here for furthering this objective.

The sector at local level knows its market. It has often come into being to help meet unmet needs within the community. It has developed means of designing and delivering services in more personalised and tailored ways, involving users at all points. It also understands changing needs and expectations, is able to detect trends

in individuals' experiences of service delivery through advice services and so provide an important source of intelligence and data for statutory service providers.

We believe that new statutory guidance on joint strategic needs assessments should incorporate the following proposals:

We propose that the sector is proactively approached by local authorities and PCTs to provide their views about patterns of needs at the needs assessment stage.

We also propose that decision makers are obliged to outline the key stages in the process of undertaking commissioning and identify the stages where they would welcome contributions from civil society.

Decision makers should be required to seek out community views amongst client groups where there are heterogeneous needs from the low to severe.

Decision makers should also be obliged to report back on decision making outcomes to both the civil society representatives who have been involved in the process of commissioning and those who have not. The basis for making strategic choices about investment in different areas should be clearly outlined.

In line with the statutory equality duty, commissioners should seek to look at variations in access to services across the community, such as inequalities that may exist according to disability, age and race, when they undertake needs assessments. The Secretary of State for Health had acknowledged that social determinants of health are a major factor in contributing to life expectancy and morbidity and there is extensive literature in this area from the Marmot Commission.

<http://www.marmotreview.org/>

Value

What approaches would best support commissioning decisions that consider full social, environmental and economic value?

Procurement should be supported by a tender process that measures technical and commercial content in the context of agreed and published outcomes.

Costs

As well as the question of how commissioners determine the value of the services they commission, there is also the issue of how costs are calculated. WRVS reiterates its view that the costs associated with the contribution of volunteers needs to be fully recognised both in accounting terms and in terms of the added value that they bring. Commissioners need to take into account the costs associated with the recruitment, development and deployment of volunteers. They also need to take into account the added value of volunteering, recognised by bodies like the Centre for Social Justice, in delivering services.