

Making Data Count Regional Seminars 2008

Notes taken at the workshops held during the 2008 making Data Count regional seminars

Each seminar had three workshops with the themes of Health, Locality research and Closing the Gap

London – 21 October 2008

Health

John O'Connor, Lincolnshire County Council

Making effective use of Health Data in Children's Services

Improving data sharing with the health service is pivotal to improving outcomes for all children. Lincolnshire has made progress through working with the health service to use data more effectively, by understanding how the health service works and working on joint projects.

Notes

- The objective is to bring information and data together: need to cost, plan and agree "where function should sit". This entails a cultural change and time found for making agreed data protocols and governance covering what sharing data means, how to enable, and managing data feeds. Matching name data between partners is a great challenge and requires a cultural change.
- Trust needs to be built between partners including schools bearing in mind the objective of building a team to support the family, not just the child.
- Local authorities have to know the 'plumbing' of health service data
- Contactpoint – can be a vehicle to help discussion between NHS and LAs

Locality research

Troy Hutchinson, Luton Borough Council

Impact of the Children's Trust on re-offending

Luton Youth Offending Service investigated the impact of local of Children's Trust arrangements in bringing about change through commissioning a University study. This presentation outlines the findings in relation to reducing re-offending and describes how these are being taken forward through practical activities.

Notes

- The challenge is to transform the information 'sausage machine' to do locality research; corporate local authority knowledge has to be transformed into locality knowledge.
- Local authority choice: import new ideas through external support versus using in-house commissioning to build local capacity. Children's Trusts should establish dedicated posts to do locality research.

- Awareness of size of cohort in locality research is important: often firm conclusions cannot be made due to small sample size.
- Analysis of data leads to questions about localities and locality research. Locality research can be used to justify local need for improvement, indicating additional levels of resources required and commissioning extra services, which leads to self-evaluation. For example, drawing data together on vulnerable children in an area
- A national register of locality research should be established

Closing the gap

Dudley Bateup, Westminster City Council

Developing an area based approach to Early Years Childrens' Information

How one London Borough is developing area based approaches to Early Years Children's Information that can target support for vulnerable children?

Notes

- Need to consider a range of indicators to close the gap; closing the gap for one indicator can give a distorted picture.
- National initiatives can give local knowledge to help close the gap.
- Need to raise awareness that there is a gap to be narrowed, and answer the question: what is the gap that needs and narrowing?
- The gap can be narrowed by looking only at sizeable groups that need to improve performance; this excludes underperforming groups for which there is not a national indicator.
- There is enormous scope for local authority research into early years provision
- Data raise questions and can contribute to strategic policy developments
- Local authority dilemma over the resourcing frontline services versus improving information and research capacity

Manchester – 3 November 2008

Health

Ian Smith, Former Director of Children's Services Tameside MBC

Effective Use of Health Data in Children's Services

A look at the key factors which supporting the use of health data in children's services: accuracy, timelines, access, engagement, context and integration.

Notes

Sharing data is the greatest challenge. Joint funded posts are useful – so the post holder can access both NHS and local authority data.

- Need to ensure Fair Processing Notice (FPN) – allows information to be shared with NHS
- Health data have problems: issues of accuracy and lack of integration; distinct difference between public health data and acute hospital data
- Objective is to have LAs and NHS using common indicators; need to spend time on plumbing issues and get information sharing to work
- Need to know the right questions to ask to get the right data
- Need to have common standards for the treatment of new arrivals and ethnicity
- GP care versus A&E – culture in some areas for A&E to provide primary care especially where new arrivals have not been able to register with a GP
- Management of contact point can provide a good way of establishing working relationships on child data
- Housing information can be valuable for looking at health issues

Locality research

Fran Harrison, Sheffield City Council

Working through a local Children's Partnership to Generate Local Area Agreement Targets

An exploration of how Local Area Agreement (LAA) Targets were established in 2008 through the local Children's Partnership arrangements, focusing on lessons learnt.

Notes

- Need to promote engagement at grassroots local services in drawing up the Local Area Agreement
- Not all local challenges are the same; need to prioritise
- Major task is to disseminate of LAA information
- Care needs to be taken with drawing conclusions because of the size of data sets, for example children in care: best to share information with hard numbers
- Senior managers need to support locality research!
- Multiagency teams need to be research/intelligence competence
- Local authority role in local partnerships is pivotal – need to be aware of taking over the partnership and being defensiveness about the LA role

Closing the gap

Suzanne Carty, Durham County Council

Exploring in depth 6 vulnerable families across a range of information systems

Durham Council explored in depth six vulnerable families across a range of information systems in order to understand how far systems were working to support integrated practice.

Notes

- LAs need to assess what they have achieved
- Journey from Identification, Referral and Tracking (IRT) to Contactpoint
- Need new IT tools to complete central government returns
- Government needs to set standards for data exchange between systems; should standards be-enforced?
- Senior managers need to be challenged with data; sometimes difficult. The capacity of senior managers to identify and understand issues needs to be improved.
- New capacity needs to be found to manage data

Birmingham – 4 November 2008

Health

Louise Campion and Chris Cooke, Swindon Borough Council

Making effective use of Health Data in Children's Services

Swindon has developed an integrated management structure with health base on localities. This has led to various data teams working together and developing new ways of working.

Notes

- Challenge – getting LA and NHS software and systems and systems to interact, which requires investment in relationships and partnerships?
- LA concern over timeliness and quality of NHS data
- Matching data LA and NHS data, e.g. teenage pregnancy – use staff secondment/transfer
- NHS child level data – LA staff need to have knowledge of what is health and access
- Data protection issues need to be solved
- Need a secure portal for local authority and NHS to share information
- Co-locating staff is an advantage, but more important is talk! Need to schedule information management meetings
- Integrating data is important for many indicators, for example obesity
- Objective is to have a corporate children's data team
- Invest in time for staff development – change is not achieved by dictat

Locality research

John Hill, Birmingham City Council

Using data on children's well-being to plan and commission services

In 2007 Birmingham carried out a detailed needs assessment using epidemiological data from a large scale (c16,000) survey of children and young people. The data are being used in planning and commissioning services, with a particular focus on improving children's social and emotional health and behaviour. All implementation activity follows a common methodology to service design and development. The hallmarks of this method are (a) clarity about outcomes, (b) guided by high quality evidence on children's well-being, (c) focused on logic (how activities relate to outcomes), (d) informed by robust evidence on what works, and (e) committed to the highest possible standards of evaluation.

Notes

- Children's Trusts need capacity to do locality research
- When is it best to use external research, including universities?
- Message needs to be got across that to invest in locality research is to make long-term savings
- Mature local authorities support reflective practitioners (Steve Aos, Washington State University)
- Partnerships depend on goodwill, difficult if 'partners' are not working together
- 'Communities that care' programme can lead to a reduction in risk factors

Closing the gap

Nick Taylor and Moira Pratt, Gloucestershire County Council

Developing an understanding of the scope & impact of homelessness on families & children

Gloucestershire Council had to develop its understanding of the scope & impact of homelessness on families and children as a result of a JAR inspection. The County has worked with its districts in order to obtain and analyse housing data and the impact of families and children.

Notes

- Advantages of focusing on an issue, making sure it has done well and that it is the right issue
- Narrowing the gap is best seen as “turning the curve” for vulnerable groups

Leeds – 12 November 2008

Health

Simon Willson and Rob Papworth, Stockton MBC

Making effective use of Health data in Children's Services

Stockton has developed integrated commissioning with its health service, and this has led to informal sharing of non identifiable client data. Looking forward to developments.

Notes

- Local authorities still need to integrate education and social care data
- "Outcomes-based accountability" - does information tell us anything meaningful about outcomes?
- Leadership - can make things happen
- Protocols can make sharing data sustainable, although sustaining a protocol is not easy
- Managing local data requests – need to be set in a local governance structure
- Protocols can give the motivation to share; structural changes have not helped

Locality research

Heather Eyre and John Maynard, Leeds City Council

Developing a Framework for understanding vulnerability

Leeds Council has developed a framework for understanding the various factors that act to increase vulnerability or protect children and young people.

Notes

- Look at children with high risk factors who succeed, however care needs to be taken with the significance of results given the low numbers of high risk children who succeed.
- Need to have management commitment to take forward results of locality research.
- Control groups should be used to verify findings from locality research
- The challenge is to ensure research can contribute to strategic thinking
- The acquisition of a wider view has to change from being "your job" to "our job"
- Data needs to be shared at all levels between agencies
- Impact analyses are valuable on issues like reading recovery and study support
- Pupils need to be tracked in and out of school activities, e.g. youth service, and the effect on outcomes assessed
- Locality research can give valuable information to community groups and partnerships
- There is value in driving home the research findings from national initiatives, and seeing whether the same findings can be repeated locally

Closing the gap

Susan Wallbridge, Sheffield City Council

Placement Stability for Looked After Children

Sheffield City Council has researched the placement stability of looked after children and the implications for outcomes

Notes

- There are difficulties in using "well-being" as a means of assessing performance
- Are research findings from social care translatable into education and vice versa?