

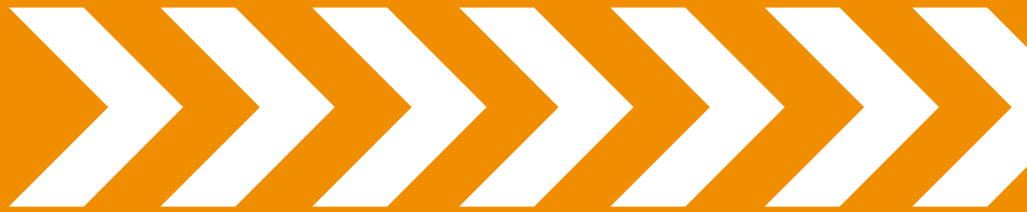


LEARNING the LESSONS from CITY STRATEGY

Reflections from practitioners on
improving partnerships, delivery and
outcomes for tackling unemployment

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Introduction

The City Strategy is led by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) which aims to tackle unemployment in some of the most disadvantaged areas across Great Britain. 15 City Strategy Pathfinders were launched in 2007 with support from DWP to March 2011.

The initiative was developed to challenge both local and national partners to learn from each other and stimulate new thinking by testing:

- > How best to combine the work of central, regional and local government and the private and voluntary sectors in a concerted partnership to provide the support that unemployed people need to find and progress in work;
- > Whether these partners can deliver more by combining and aligning their efforts behind shared priorities, alongside more freedom to innovate, and tailor services in response to local needs.

Pathfinders have been rising to these challenges in an ever-changing political (and economic) environment. The diagram below presents an overview of the key policy and programme developments which have affected CSPs.

This publication has been produced by the City Strategy Learning Network on behalf of the City Strategy Pathfinders (CSPs) to share their learning and experience with policy makers and providers on:

- > Their journey and where they might go next;
- > The difference they have made to funders, partner organisations and individuals; and
- > Their governance, organisation and succession.

At a time of change in policy, we often opt for the default position of starting again, forgetting the lessons and practice we have previously worked hard to achieve – essentially “throwing the baby out with the bathwater.”

Reading this publication, agreeing with it, or even being able to apply some of the practice in it is not the same as learning the lessons it contains. Learning something involves being able to do it naturally and instinctively because we understand it and it is, as Aristotle remarked, “woven into the living tissue of the mind.” At best it is a prelude or stimulus to learning. Someone who wants to learn the lessons will do at least two things, they will go and look for themselves in order to form their own judgement, and they will try out and adapt what they have seen in practice.



Stories not statistics

How best then to stimulate the desire to find out and to try out?

This document is not “evaluation lite”, so we have intentionally avoided statistics, or representing every CSP. Instead we have focused on individual case studies and stories, which reflect the varied nature and circumstances of the different pathfinder areas. We hope that at least some parts of the stories will encourage further contact with those we have spoken to in the CSPs for:

- > Heads of the Valleys,
- > Nottinghamshire,
- > Blackburn with Darwen (now Pennine Lancashire),
- > Liverpool City Region,
- > West London Working,
- > Edinburgh and
- > Tyne and Wear City Region

We grouped our discussions around four learning themes:

- > The journey undertaken by CSPs and where they want to go to next;
- > The difference that CSPs have made to individuals;
- > The difference CSPs have made for funders and stakeholders and
- > Issues around governance, organisation and succession.

The next few pages illustrate these points in terms of both *content* (what has been done or done differently and why?) and *process* (how was this done, or done differently and why?). We have done this through pen pictures from each CSP and then more analytically by comparing experiences.

Finally, we draw some tentative conclusions, aimed at getting three distinct audiences to take some of these lessons forward:

- > The Pathfinders and their own partners;
- > The DWP as the sponsor department;
- > Other government departments which have huge potential impact on addressing unemployment and empowering local agencies to create vibrant and strong economies.

Our thanks are due to Nicky Church, Matthew Crighton, Janet Doolan, Shona Duncan, Sue Jarvis, Rachel Moxey and Sarah Wilkins for giving us their time and insights.

Heads of the Valleys

The journey and its impact

Heads of the Valleys (HOV) was designated a strategic regeneration area in 2004, when it was realised that public interventions were not having any impact on addressing economic decline. A decision was made to stimulate the economy through coordinated public sector interventions in five local authority areas: Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau-Gwent and Torfaen.

It was a natural progression for HOV to become a CSP in 2007. Since then HOV has been the demonstration model for how to deliver strategic regeneration – this has led to the establishment of six other such areas in Wales. The model is best illustrated as follows:



There have been changes to the partnership structure (this includes representatives from the five local authorities, JCP, and careerswales) as it has evolved, but since the CSP designation partners are responsible for coordinating JobMatch – the employment pathway developed through CSP funding. The CSP experience has built on and enhanced an existing partnership programme and enabled the transfer of practice into tangible policy and a push for funding at the Welsh Assembly level.

Whilst there has been great progress in joining up mainstream funding, there continue to be some difficulties in aligning ESF with mainstream funds. Funding which is constrained by geographical boundaries often frustrates the delivery of interventions and impedes progress for the individual.

The funding of different interventions is complicated, in that some programmes have ESF, and focus on specific postcodes, whereas others focus on addressing particular types of client. This creates a mismatch when pathways are joined together. The aim of JobMatch is to identify what these gaps are, particularly for individuals with specific health or skills needs and to provide services and support that plugs the gaps. The Welsh Assembly is also developing investment programmes such as Arbed (a fund which is promoting the development of a low carbon/carbon neutral economy, providing 120 full time jobs with a focus on providing skills across the low-carbon industry) and including targeted training and recruitment clauses alongside a grant. JobMatch will provide the skills, support and contractual lever to make sure the jobs target is reached.

HOV's place within a devolved administration, and at the heart of policy making, has contributed to its progress, but this is also helped by the personality and experience of the CSP lead. The structure of the Assembly is not complicated with clear reporting lines and a national employment and skills board where key government leads sit round the table with DWP. This makes communication and accountability easier.

Wales was chosen as a Flexible New Deal round 1 area with two lead providers, Serco and Working Links, which began delivery in October 2009. HOV are yet to see how this will all fit together. However, they have been able to bring influence to the way in which the supply chain has been developed and to provide challenge and support where it is needed, especially in terms of local knowledge of providers.

CSP funding has been critical in helping to lever in the funding to pay for interventions. Using CSP funds of £800 per person, HOV has levered an additional £2,700 per person from other funding sources. However, the end of the pathfinder and Deprived Area Fund (DAF) pots of funding is likely to impact on the ability of the partnership to mesh the various programmes together.

The future

The JobMatch brand, promoted as a single entity, has made it easier to promote to employers and stakeholders. Though it has its complexities, it is seen as a whole programme approach.

Researching and providing the legal arguments and financial muscle for social benefit clauses in contracts has delivered community benefits from procurement by the WAG. There is still local reluctance to include social clauses, but this is a culture challenge that needs to be addressed within commissioning organisations and their procurement teams.

Building on an existing priority area, and established partnership, made it easier for HOV to bid for pathfinder status. It also smoothed the way for joining up priorities for both WAG and DWP. The existence of a devolved administration with clear accountability has made it easier to influence and shape Welsh policy.

Pennine Lancashire

The journey and its impact

Blackburn with Darwen was awarded CSP status covering an area with a population of 140,000. This has now been extended to cover Pennine Lancashire comprising six borough councils plus Lancashire County Council and a combined population of over 500,000. This reflects and builds on existing collaboration in the form of a Multi Area Agreement (MAA) and, importantly, has continued with the establishment since the CSP of an Employment and Skills Board (ESB) and a strategy group to help embed more collaborative ways of working.

Collaboration has extended to working with the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Jobcentre Plus (JCP) on commissioning processes and developing co-commissioning with health services, as well as involvement in the support contracts for JCP and the European Social Fund (ESF).

Two recent positive examples of collaboration have been affected by changes to the external environment. The Pennine bid for the Future Jobs Fund was successful, though this programme is now being superseded by other initiatives. The planned involvement in the assessment process to select a Flexible New Deal (FND) bidder will need to be revised in the light of the move to the Single Work Programme (SWP) in 2011.

Reflections on the journey so far have been around underestimating the time required to break down 'silo working' and maintaining strong relationships from the restructuring of JCP, contrasted with the strength of the consortium and in particular the strong partnership between delivery agencies. An example of this is the insights that the CSP was able to offer around the JCP support contract and avoiding duplication of activities. Another example is where existing services, for which funding was due to end, were not continued through the same organisations, but folded into the work of the new DWP/ESF contractor in order to generate a more joined up service for clients.

The future

Because of the MAA and the fact that the CSP team is small, the option to move into that MAA structure and still be able to support the ESB is viable, as is the position of continuing to be supported by Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. Whichever of these options happens, staff will keep in touch with some of the other CSPs, either because of proximity and economic links (Manchester), demographic similarities (Leicester, Nottinghamshire) or the issues of working across local government boundaries (Tyne and Wear).



West London Working

The journey and its impact

West London Working (WLW) brings together the 6 local authorities and partners responsible for employment and skills within the West London sub-region. WLW built on the existing partnership arrangements in West London through the West London Alliance, established in 1999, and those forged through having a co-terminous JCP District. The CSP is hosted jointly by the London Development Agency (LDA) and the London Borough of Ealing, with the LDA serving as the accountable body.

As one of the first two CSPs, WLW had a head start in terms of the thinking and planning around what it wanted to achieve. WLW is headed by a Board with high level business representation. Having an active business leader as chair, WLW has managed to exert influence with Chief Executives and senior policy makers. It has also meant that the vision and objectives have had consistent leadership and drive, which in turn has enabled WLW to remain focused on achieving objectives around partnerships, products and programmes (some of which are being continued beyond CSP funding in 2011, whilst others will come to a natural end).

In terms of achievements around *partnerships*, WLW has been able to bring together and coordinate views to influence how £40 million of DWP investment in the area should be targeted. The sub-region benefits from ESF funding and WLW is now on the regional committee for ESF, which has enabled the CSP to influence the use of an annual investment of £20 million through co-financing arrangements

To address areas of need identified in the original business plan, WLW have developed a range of products which provide practical solutions to supporting the employment and skills supply chain, including:

- > Employability Performance Rating system that benchmarks the achievements of skills and employment providers. This has been adopted across London by LDA, London Councils and the Ministry of Justice.
- > Directory of Employment Services – a web-based tool targeted at personal advisors (although publicly available) to identify the right service to help residents into work.
- > Provider Confederation – a series of networking events, bringing together prime contractors with smaller and niche providers and an e-communications programme providing news to keep providers in the sub-region informed of contracting and networking opportunities. The Confederation has grown from just over 100 provider representatives to more than 500 in less than a year.
- > Business Partner Mentoring Programme which has 10 business mentors working with providers on developing their business model, ensuring that support given to residents meets employer needs.

WLW developed a series of *programmes* to test new ways of working. Working with the area's FE colleges, they have developed pathways for adult learners to improve their employability potential, at the same time as building capacity within colleges to signpost learners to appropriate employment Information Advice and Guidance (IAG). Their Personal Advice and Outreach projects have supported 648 residents and four out of the six boroughs will continue providing this service once programme funding has ended.

Getting the right people engaged in organisations was critical to supporting the delivery of programmes. The funding provided to colleges was relatively insignificant compared to their annual income, but provided a lever to get partners' commitment. For example the Hammersmith and Fulham Employment Ladder worked closely with the Borough's Temporary Accommodation Service to double the number of residents originally targeted to go through the programme. It helped to have experienced professionals deliver the programme who understood homelessness issues, and brought a clearer understanding of how to help a particular group of individuals along an employment pathway.

The future

WLW has been pragmatic in its approach to CSP status. It has had clear leadership and direction from the beginning and understood its role in brokering and aligning programmes, rather than delivering its own. Clear branding has enabled it to be distinct from the LDA, yet still retain the ability to make the best use of connections, and WLW have been clear about how and when to involve employers in the process, but not the bureaucracy.

There has been strong engagement with the area's current and potential prime contractors and the Confederation has supported them to develop their supply chains with smaller and niche providers and keep good, local provision sustainable.

With the planned changes to programmes, it is important that local circumstances and needs are met if bigger and larger contracts are to come into place – a move to national commissioning would make it harder for local partners to influence the way in which employment services are delivered. The CSP experience has shown that this can be done through co-commissioning.

Tyne and Wear City Region

The journey and its impact

For Tyne and Wear, the CSP bid stemmed from the fact that 13 local authorities across the city region were already developing a joint economic approach, and that five local authorities in Tyne and Wear had been working together on employability issues for a number of years. This collaboration was partly the result of recognising the benefits of partnership working involving JCP, One NorthEast and the LSC, and partly the result of the collective awareness of the scale of worklessness, and that employment and skills issues do not respect administrative boundaries.

The CSP has enabled Tyne and Wear to do a number of important things. The existence of a core team looking across all local authorities has enabled it to interpret and apply central government policy, and in doing so create closer working relationships with government departments and a much better understanding of their expectations and what the impact may be for local travel to work areas. It has also provided the resources to learn from other CSP areas – Manchester in terms of working across local authority boundaries; Glasgow in terms of aligning or pooling funds; London in terms of understanding that the London Accord model (of employer engagement) was not right for Tyne and Wear and the setting up of a business-led ESB.

As with other areas, part of the frustration in the current climate is the continued lack of connection between employment programmes such as the Future Jobs Fund and Flexible New Deal (FND) and local strategies. Though the (now abandoned) FND phase 2 tender did enable local co-commissioning (with resources from One NorthEast) there is now greater opportunity to develop this further to co-design new programmes around local capacity and priorities. One important feature has been the adoption of the Hanlon management information system for sharing personal data amongst services, which has produced significant benefits for both clients and delivery partners in terms of cost savings, less duplication, savings in time for clients and staff and making it easier for staff and clients to see what is available in their area.

Despite the progress that has been made locally, it is still proving difficult to simplify and co-ordinate the offer for employers, who remain confused by the variety and volume of organisations trying to deal with them. This will continue to be an issue so long as new national provision has a job output as the target, encouraging providers to 'own' their employers rather than sharing employer contacts.

The future

Before the CSP there was no cross-boundary plan that identified priorities for action and approaches to address labour market issues, and no real way of analysing or understanding what new policies meant for the area. The CSP has brought a better understanding of who does what and a better evidence base on current provision. There is now a better relationship with both the Skills Funding Agency and JCP at regional and district level, and a better understanding within JCP of support that can be offered by other partners.

Liverpool City Region

The journey and its impact

The Liverpool City Region City Strategy Pathfinder has undergone significant evolution during its lifetime. CSP status laid the foundations for a strong Multi Area Agreement and Knowsley Borough Council taking the strategic lead for Employment and Skills on behalf of six local authorities.

The CSP built on existing relationships across the natural economic area, which had been developed through European Objective 1 status. It has enabled partners to work at a strategic level, as well as to test new ways of working. Most importantly it has created the framework to align discretionary funds across organisations: this included aligning £80m of investment through the co-financing plans of the then Learning and Skills Council and Department for Work and Pensions. This has provided a more consistent offer for residents and businesses so that access to opportunities is not restricted by postcodes or local authority boundaries. This work has led to a City Region Strategy and Commissioning Plan for Employment and Skills which was signed off in March 2010. This will build on the co-commissioning that has taken place with DWP over the Specialist Support Contract.

CSP Funding has been used to procure the Hanlon management information database (as in Tyne and Wear) to share information across authorities and to bring efficiency into data sharing and analysis. The CSP was one of several pilots to test the sharing of DWP customer data to enable better targeting of programmes and projects. This has had a big impact on the approach to commissioning and ensuring the most vulnerable areas are targeted for interventions.

Liverpool City Region has recognised the important role that housing providers play in connecting customers to services. Working with social landlords across the city region they have delivered a series of training sessions to housing staff on worklessness in order to help them to signpost clients to services. The Housing Associations are now in the process of agreeing a compact to describe how they are working together to employ and train local people.

Resources have also been invested to understand the nature of child and family poverty across the City Region and a toolkit developed to help authorities deliver on their Child Poverty Assessment and coordinate efforts through the establishment of a City Region Child and Family Poverty Commission.

The foundations from the CSP also allowed significant partnership delivery of Future Jobs Fund, with over 6,700 jobs being created across over 200 organisations, with a common wraparound model across all partners. The tracking of completers of these jobs has already begun and will continue to determine the impact of this significant intervention.

An important focus has been the challenge of engaging employers, recognising that they are critical players in the employment pathway and that programmes targeted to engage employers were fragmented. The partnership is led by an Employment and Skills Board (ESB), headed up by Jaguar Land Rover. The CSP has developed an employer engagement framework working from the definition:

“Employer Engagement is the process of building and developing relationships with employers to design and deliver an efficient, high performing employment and skills system.”

Working across the city region, the CSP is developing a single employer-facing brand, drawing together the various programmes and interactions that different agencies have with businesses. Supporting this brand is an integrated communications strategy and an employer champions network; they are also piloting an Integrated Account Management framework to bring the employer a single offer from providers, colleges, Connexions, local authorities and Jobcentre Plus.

Single LCR Employer-Facing Brand			
Communication Strategy	Integrated Account Management	Network of Employer Champions	Business-led ESB

The future

Through the CSP, the region was able to make connections to key policy leads within both DWP and DCLG which helped to bring about the MAA. The main challenge now for Merseyside is ‘Where does the City Region fit within the Coalition Government’s agenda?’ CSP status has enabled them to gain critical mass at a time where there is even more need for coordination of services. These kinds of arrangements need to be seen as long-term solutions and protected from short-term policy changes. It is more effective and efficient to commission on a bigger scale, without losing the intelligence and understanding of local needs.

Multi-area partnerships are, by their nature, fragile. The quick wins that CSP has brought in terms of delivering new programmes and efficiencies, have given confidence to local partners and helped create trust, which will deliver the necessary strategic and operational buy in to coordinate services for the benefit of customers and employers.

Nottinghamshire

The journey and its impact

The establishment of the CSP had been preceded by the setting up of an Employment and Skills Board (ESB), so there was an existing, common agenda around which the partnership could start to develop its business plan. The plan developed around a partnership delivery model known as Making the Connection and attracted Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) which has now ended, but was successful in terms of engaging with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups and achieving high rates of sustainable outcomes, with the third sector as a key component.

The significant element in the development of the ESB was its progress from starting as a public sector forum (with emda, the LSC, JCP and local authorities) to one where employers are now in the majority. Moreover, the employer contingent does not just include large companies such as Boots and Capital One, but now has a healthy range of SMEs and business organisations which represent or support SMEs such as the Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses. The other area of progress in the ESB has been the active engagement of employers at the strategic level with board members acting as champions for different elements of the strategy.

No CSP can deliver change across all areas and the Nottingham experience illustrates the importance of finding areas of common interest where a focus on joining up can produce results. In this case it has been in the area of health, where joint health and welfare to work programmes have been developed between ESB partners and the health service using DAF resources. There has also been a Department of Health/DWP 'Fit for Work' £1.2m pilot project for employees and small businesses around in-work support for those with health problems. Part of the reason for success here has been effective leadership in terms of the value of partnership working and sharing priorities.

This can be contrasted with other projects, which for one reason or another, did not 'take off' in the same way. For example, developing actions around housing proved difficult because of the lack of NRF, and the over-arching issue of child poverty was seen as less important than a focus on Early Years' Interventions by the LSP. However, the general view is that the process part of the CSP has been good, not least because it has helped to avoid duplication and over complicating issues.


The journey has been made more complicated, however, by different views (and agendas) from different government departments. Though DWP and BIS (via the RDA) were praised for their help and support, the CSP also reflects on the tensions between their thematic priorities and the objectives and programmes of DCLG with its spatial emphasis.

The future

There is a confidence that the ESB will continue to move forward, but that in the coming age of efficiency savings and pressures on RDAs the resource implications for other projects and programmes may be difficult.

Nottingham is different from the other areas because it is not covered by an MAA, and the CSP remains the only example of cross-boundary working. The importance of this has been reflected by the expansion of coverage from Nottingham to take in the whole county.

A good relationship with DWP should continue through co-commissioning activities and play to the joint strengths identified, of patience and flexibility over rigid interpretation of guidance and rules.



Edinburgh

The journey and its impact

CSP status provided partners in Edinburgh with the catalyst to develop a framework for joined-up working on employability. By building on the jobs strategy already developed through the Capital City Partnership, pathfinder status brought:

- > Wider *recognition* of the role of different services on employability
- > *Stimulus* to join up activities of key partners such as JCP and Skills Development Scotland
- > *Opportunity* to bring in and work strategically with health partners, social care as well as colleges
- > *Funding* to create an infrastructure for strategy and operations to coordinate spending and investment on employability interventions.

All of this has been supported by a single brand, *Joined Up for Jobs*, which has provided a clear employability focus for partners and providers, distinct from a broader economic development programme. It has also provided a platform for further work around joining up the 'offer' for employers, and for work with colleges to ensure that the supply of skills and vocational training is linked to employers' needs.

Bringing together a framework for joined up commissioning has enabled the CSP to test new models of working and ensure that programmes are complementary. For example, the Academy for St James project has brought together a single job and skills brokerage service with local colleges, targeted at businesses within a redeveloping retail centre.

The CSP has taken a practical approach to make sure that providers offer a consistent and high quality service to both employers and customers through the development of a customer charter standard. Organisations achieving the Charter are required to provide evidence of a high standard of customer service to both jobseekers and employers, (which make it distinctive from other standards) through seven key commitments. Assessed by a panel with a focus on quality rather than 'box ticking', providers are awarded the Charter every three years and achievement is promoted through an on-line directory of employability services.

Joined Up for Jobs

Customer Charter

- > We will ensure that our service is accessible to all eligible jobseekers.
- > We will provide a professional and responsive service to employers.
- > We will ensure that customers have up to date and relevant information.
- > We will provide the most appropriate services to each customer's needs.
- > If we cannot provide a service that customers need, we will refer them to a service that can.
- > We will engage with customers to ensure that our services are high standard and meet customer needs.
- > We will respect customers' right to privacy.

A further development has been the introduction of Caselink, a client tracking system which provides intelligence on an individual's pathway through the city's employability services. However there continue to be challenges around accessing performance and management information from some mainstream programmes and bringing data together to assess how well providers are performing on a whole-area basis.

The future

A key difference of the devolved administrations in comparison to England has been in their approaches to localisation. In Scotland, architecture to deliver sub-regional working such as Multi-Area Agreements does not exist. It is left to local authorities to decide whether they come together or not to respond to common labour market issues. For Edinburgh, the CSP experience has enabled these kinds of discussions to take place with neighbouring Lothian authorities, in particular around the delivery of skills.

The Capital City Partnership will continue to influence employability services through *Joined up for Jobs*. The organisation provides an efficient means for co-commissioning of services across Edinburgh. It has used its influence to create a consortium for funding individuals with high support needs, joining up resources and programmes through a single offer.

**Lessons
to be learnt:
is there a
pattern here?**



When people talk about success and failure, the crucial determinants often fall into three categories – *money, ideas and people*. There is, of course, a danger in trying to turn what are complex problems into things that can be solved by reciting the equivalent of a bumper sticker. The self-help industry and much of what passes for management training (the seven secrets, habits, or theories of effective management, or leadership anyone?) are testimonies to our irrational belief in the fashionable fraud of any age. So the points below need to be seen as pointers towards concerted, long-term action, not a substitute for it.

Our sense of the important *lesson from funding* has been around flexibility and focus rather than volume. What this means in terms of flexibility is that CSPs have been able to fill gaps, rather than ‘shadow’ mainstream expenditure. They have looked to invest in activities which have the potential to be either *replicated or scaled up* or use their funding to influence programme performance, targets and outcomes. In terms of focus, this does not mean being rigid, but in being consistent *rather than uniform*. In other words it means focussing on the outcome and impact that is desired, rather than just focussing on eligibility or a postcode. There will be less money in the future, and the CSPs are a source of intelligence on how to do things differently whilst achieving impact.

The *generation of ideas*, in the sense of what activities to support; which organisations to work with; even where to start, shows a fascinating diversity within the CSPs. What binds them together seems to be three things. First they have been around the key questions of *transition* into work, where health or transport or debt (i.e. non-core employability tasks) are crucial to success. Second, they have been round working with employers to gain a better understanding of *demand* and the skills required locally. Third, they have been, to a great extent, driven by *opportunity and willingness* – health programmes worked and those on child poverty did not – which is not a fault but shows how an idea, however good on paper, needs a push behind it.

This brings us to the third and most important point – *people*. What is striking are a number of characteristics of those (in both CSPs and their partners) who are leading the programmes. First of all, they are people who take *responsibility*, rather than waiting to be given it. This ties in with a related point that responsibility is not the same as accountability, and that seeking clearer lines of accountability does not negate the need for someone to take responsibility for driving something forward. Second, they are pragmatic listeners, who are willing to find a line of compromise to make something work on the ground. Thirdly, they are persistent and push issues to the point of irritation, but not beyond. Finally, and most importantly, they are *comfortable with ambiguity* and uncertainty and recognise that in their position, neither of these issues can be removed necessarily by greater clarity, or more instructions from the centre. The ability to improvise seems to be a leading characteristic of success here.

Conclusions & Recommendations



For CSPs

In looking at the case studies, it is important to recognise that there are indeed, lessons to be learnt, rather than that there is information to be exchanged. But learning is an active process about doing, not reading. The implication for CSPs is that they can and should build on the networks and relationships that they have developed with other CSPs and see where these particular journeys end up.

A second lesson for CSPs is to look at their internal partnerships and ensure that the best of what they have done is embedded as far as possible in mainstream delivery. What can be replicated across other areas? What can be scaled up? The third lesson is to keep hold of the key people, and look at how they can exercise more influence in their agencies and across local partnerships.

For DWP

We know that DWP will face major challenges over the next five years, and that this area may not be one of its core priorities in the immediate future. However, a lot of value has come out of the CSP experiment which potentially has beneficial effects on the design and delivery of the Single Work Programme (SWP). In particular, the importance of local knowledge and judgement in getting better results from providers has been a feature of the case studies, along with the ability to transfer good practice from one locality to another. This will become especially important in an age of very large contracts covering very large areas. *Though those at the centre may have a map, those on the ground know the terrain.*

DWP needs to take some of the lessons of the CSPs into its contracting and procurement divisions, so that it can better appreciate the issues around co-design and co-commissioning. It also needs to be specific about how it expects potential prime contractors for the Single Work Programme to engage with sub-regional/area employability partnerships during the bidding process, and what role it wishes them to play in bid assessments.

It is also important for DWP to recognise that influence on programme delivery is based on strong partnerships and there is a continuing role for DWP to provide support for local partnerships in terms of their governance and through the role of JCP as a key partner.

For other Government departments

We have already noted that other Government departments have an interest in the effective working of CSPs and learning from them. This needs to be translated into action.

There are two crucial elements. The first is around where, and at what level, the policy and operational implications of linking employability to (in particular) spatial programmes can be resolved. The paradox of worklessness is that although it is often spatially concentrated, the solutions do not lie within those spatial areas, but in connections to the wider economy and labour market.

The second is the implications within the context of devolution. It is important to note that relations with Scotland and Wales are driven both by the fact that there are different devolved responsibilities and that since 1999 the process of devolution has itself delivered new attitudes, new issues and new powers. Both DWP and other departments should identify how they wish to take forward CSP mechanisms and lessons with the Scottish Government and the Welsh Assembly Government.

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