

FREE EVENT:

Making the Equality Framework work for you: place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

21 October 2010, Herefordshire Racecourse, Hereford, HR4 9QU

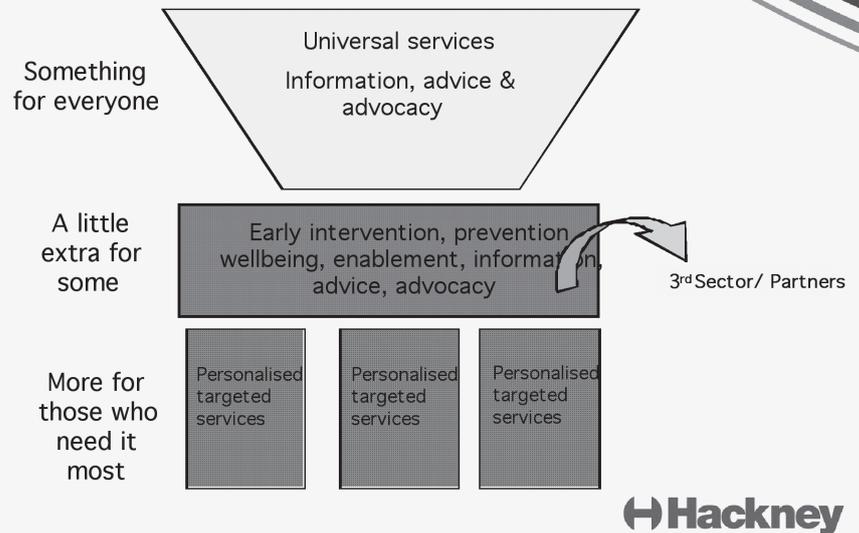
Local Government Improvement and Development (LGI&D) is organising a series of 5 free events in partnership with Equality Works over the forthcoming year.

The events will focus on how the sector both strengthens its own self-assessment by using the Equality Framework for Local Government; and articulates the legal, business and case for equality to drive service improvement in times of change. The programme will focus on:

- using the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process to improve organisational commitment
- building good relationships between officers and councillors
- the changing role of equalities practitioners; increasing interaction between equalities practitioners and the rest of the organisation
- human rights based approaches to equality and service delivery
- shared services and effective partnership working.

In order to maximise the value of these events, LGI&D is running online support activity on the Equality community of practice (CoP) to encourage in depth dialogue in the lead up to the event, support discussions during the event, and share the learning as widely as possible. For further information, please visit: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelid=22419540>

Hackney Person centred services delivery model



tool was developed, adapted from SCIE's 'Dignity Challenge' For more information about this, please visit <http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/guides/guide15/standupfordignity/dignitychallenge/index.asp>

For more information on their methodology and results to date, please see the ppt slides on the SSRG website.

New Directions in Social Care and Related Services for Children Innovation, Information and Indicators

Tuesday 30th November 2010

The Banqueting Suite, Council House, Birmingham

Speakers Confirmed:

- Andrew Mellon, DfE
- Adam King, Ofsted

Key themes: Policy drivers re 'big society', proposals for evaluation and regulation of services; existing good practice

For example, Andrew Mellon will discuss how DfE is applying ideas from disciplines such as behavioural economics to policy problems, so that government can intervene in a less burdensome and more effective way, using policy levers that don't rely on regulation or financial incentives

Fee: SSRG Members: £95; Others £155

A booking form is available on the SSRG website www.ssr.org.uk



Silly Sausage Corner

Hi there to all you social services silly sausages! Guess we knew it would be like this!

Given a choice of getting the rich bankers or poor families and disabled and older people to pay for the greedy banker-created financial mess, the new government has decided that it is the poor who should feel even more pain. It is benefits not bonuses which are to be hit. Hope you are still feeling angry!

But there is also some good news from the coalition government. They are on a mission. Here come the bureaucracy busters! Most of those New Labour created centralised, controlling and castigating performance indicators, largely used to blame and shame rather than cheer and celebrate, are to be discarded.

And there is also to be a cull of the quangos and of special units within government, those beasts who kept issuing more guidance, more procedures, more requirements, and which meant that managers spent more and more time reading and rescuing in-trays and email inboxes than keeping in touch with their front-line services. Just recall all that stuff that used to splurge out of the government regional offices and from the National Safeguarding Delivery Unit in what was the Department for Children, Schools and Families. Bet you are not missing them too much, and hopefully all the experience and expertise they cocooned is now being released out into service delivery.

But beware! There is always a danger when fired up and on a mission of over-shooting, especially when new government ministers arrive with loads of energy and enthusiasm but little experience. Were ALL those performance indicators really so bad and unnecessary?

Most of us have performance indicators ingrained within our every day lives. It's the start of the new winter sports season. Yet again I am rushing to check the rugby results to see if the teams I support have by 5 pm each Saturday done the business, and by 6 pm I'm checking the internet to view the up-dated league tables. This Saturday afternoon fetish usually wanes again in the un motivating mediocrity of mid-table and the adrenalin rush of anticipated success has long past, but for three months those rugby performance indicators loom large every weekend.

And I do recognise I need to lose some weight (no doubt a consequence of not now getting my kit on as the new sports season kicks off). So what do I do? I optimistically jump on the scales in the bathroom to check that the weight trend is downwards rather than upwards. I then crawl off the scales disappointed yet again!

And then each month I get a bank statement. Opened with trepidation, it is a necessary reality check on the life-style I would like to lead contrasted with the one I can afford (please don't get me started again on the rich champagne-drinking, Porsche-driving boys and girls of the banking world!).

So my life is ruled by performance indicators. Some like the league tables for rugby are incredibly important, others like the weighing scales should be more important, and some like the bank statement only get the attention they deserve when a crisis looms!

May be there are some lessons here as we watch the flames of the bonfires of the quangos and PIs shoot up into the autumn skies. For example, if the

PIs make sense for those who need to generate them and need to give them most attention, which is largely front-line workers and teams and their managers, they may be worth keeping. It is helpful, for example, to have information about workload trends and how these may be escalating, as has happened with child protection workloads over the past two years. It is also helpful for teams to be able to benchmark with others and for managers to be able to recognise and question variations in practice between services and over time.

But the BIG message here is to keep those PIs which are useful and make sense for those delivering and managing services, and which can be collected economically. Do though discard those PIs which have just clogged up the machinery of service delivery, are contentious in their interpretation (why is it good or bad that there are high or low rates of children removed from child protection registers within two years ... surely it should depend on the needs and circumstances for each child), and which anger and annoy front-line workers because of their irrelevance and indeed sometimes perverse consequences (such as those assessment time limits).

So as November and bonfire night approaches do be careful which PIs are thrown into the flames, but also rub those hands in front of the smouldering embers of those PIs which were just waiting to be set alight to warm all those silly sausage hearts.