Loti

Summary Notes - Data Exchange workshop with Central Bedfordshire and Camden

Context
On the 5 August, Camden, Central Bedfordshire and LOTI held a workshop with colleagues from the GLA, and a number of partner and VCS organisations, including CVS Beds, Beds RCC, London Plus etc. The main objective of the workshop was to discuss the Data Exchange project which recently secured MHCLG funding. The project will be led by Central Bedfordshire and Camden, with support from LOTI and GLA, to explore how more effective sharing of data could develop better working relationships between councils, VCS and partner organisations. Participants also discussed their ambitions and potential barriers to what this project could deliver.

About MHCLG C-19 Challenge fund
Ed Garcez opened the meeting by explaining the objectives of the funding opportunity in supporting local authorities to design solutions to support residents impacted by Covid-19. More information about the challenge fund can be found [here](#).

About the Data Exchange project
Ed Garcez from Central Bedfordshire and Sudip Trivedi from Camden, outlined the project proposal. More information can be viewed [here](#).

Outcomes and barriers workshop
Participants then took part in a short workshop session facilitated by the London Office of Technology and Innovation (LOTI). The workshop started with an introduction to [LOTI's outcomes based methodology](#) followed by a discussion on outcomes the different stakeholders wish to achieve and barriers that may prevent those outcomes. A summary of the discussion can be found below; raw notes can be viewed [here](#).

Exercise 1 - Outcomes
In this exercise, participants were invited to identify the specific outcomes they wish to achieve through this project. The following themes emerged from that discussion:

- **Data:**
  - Participants expressed that having the right mechanisms in place to enable reciprocal data sharing between councils, VCS and partners is important for supporting residents and communities.
  - Having clarity on the legalities and information governance aspects of data sharing was raised as something that needed to be addressed.

- **Co-designing of new services:**
  - Participants raised that better collaboration, co-designing of approaches and sharing of the capabilities and goals of individual organisations, including VCS, health and others, were key to meeting needs
  - New approaches should build on the existing strengths and capabilities of partners
- **Collaboration in delivering joint services**
  - Participants highlighted the importance of supporting residents and meeting needs in a more coordinated and collaborative way, with clear feedback loop mechanisms in place, which can inform future support.
  - Having a better, shared understanding of the scope of what each partner may be able to deliver, and what existing knowledge of local needs and goals they have, would enable them to better understand the strengths and needs of communities.
- **Digital inclusion / exclusion**
  - Participants raised that technology (and data) are likely to play a key role in responding to need. Consideration should be given to our approaches so that all citizens and partner organisations, including the VCS sector, are able to engage and meaningfully contribute.

Exercise 2 - Barriers and problems

In response to the outcomes defined in Exercise 1, participants were invited to identify barriers and challenges to achieving these outcomes.

Data

- A number of common data related barriers emerged, including concerns about existing data quality and data entropy - how to ensure data shared is kept up to date and reflective of the real world it describes.
- With a lack of data standards in place, linking data sets (new and existing) together will prove a challenge.
- With variation in how metrics and KPIs are collected, meaningful understanding of impact may be limited.

Technology

- The overall technology landscape is fragmented within and between different organisations and stakeholders. This increases the cost and complexity of effective data sharing.
- Some of the technology currently in play is not easily adaptable for new purposes, with access to the data via API limited. Existing systems may not be suitable for capturing new data fields.
- Digital capabilities vary across the partners organisations. Some organisations will have limited resources to implement new tech or adapt existing systems.

- While visibility of data is crucial for collaborative service design and delivery, many organisations will struggle to make the data available to the right users in an accessible, safe and legal way.

People, Process and Conditions

Skills and Capacity
- As with digital skills, capacity for process change varies across organisations, with all requiring well designed and supported processes for effective change.

Trust and ethics
- For some VCS organisations, service delivery is built on trust. Data sharing with local government could put relationships with service users at risk.
- Consideration of the balance between privacy and duty of care will need to be part of the project design. This should include an awareness that if trust is lost it could lead to negative outcomes for individual service users and the overall provision of services at an aggregated level.

Culture and Relationships
- There are differences in culture and operational models between local government, VCS and supporting partners.
- These cultural differences enable successful service delivery and must be understood in building closer relationships as part of a data enabled partnership.

Other potential areas of challenge
- Some participants noted that a lack of health and care partners on the project could limit the overall effectiveness of any solution developed.
- An awareness that English is not always the language of service delivery or the first language of service users is required.

Conclusion
These exercises were intended as a first pass at understanding the outcomes and challenges for the wider project stakeholders. It will equip the project delivery manager with a starting point for further work as part of the discovery phase. While some of the barriers may appear difficult to surmount, they provide a platform for designing effective solutions.

In this phase there will be scope for a more in-depth assessment of the needs of residents and communities and we invite all partners to work with us in co-designing any potential solutions to ensure that real needs are being met.