

Complexity: a Framework for Policy and Decision Support

Challenges faced by Local Authorities

- **Incentives to break down Professional Boundaries.** We see this in the combination of Social Care and Education professionals in Children's Trusts, but are aware that **we are not meeting the needs of vulnerable children.** Children and adults with disabilities are also subject to many assessments in order to access services because of the different models used by professionals to understand needs.
- **Integration within and across organisations, to support more organic collaboration and learning and development.** This would need to address the current systems of rewarding and motivating people, and supporting a workforce that could take managed risks.
- **How to engage people in decision making where there are no obvious representative stakeholders,** and yet the perception is that we need a macro policy response rather than a very locally based response (which could be designed by communities).

Our discussion focussed on the 'relationship' issues behind the above: how to build trust and legitimacy, how to remove power struggles. Our thinking turned to the need for groups of people to 'co-evolve', and the time and effort involved in this progression: that this is not rational or predictable. We picked up on some of what came out of the session on collaboration: that we're in zone 2 now - feels like things could get a lot worse in the public sector unless we make major strides in working across organisational boundaries.

We talked about some things to try to resolve these issues:

- Bringing honesty into our perceptions of personal issues that are blocking collaboration: facilitating partners describing their issues, but taking them anonymously so people aren't afraid to raise them.
- Having the content to engage people in, so not only focussing on the sensitive relationship issues.
- Needing to start where the energy is, and start small before thinking about scaling up.

Interested participants

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