



Case Study

Culture Change for Partnerships

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To make real partnerships work there has to be a real meeting of minds. Individuals and organisations have to set aside differences and look to achieve meaningful results arising from agreeing common goals.



“We've had very positive feedback from everyone. It was a valuable and productive exercise which stimulated very healthy discussion and gave us some positive and challenging things to develop”

Peter Hoyle
Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager

Background

Bournemouth Borough Council is a Unitary Authority charged with delivering challenging government targets for reducing homelessness. In order to achieve this Bournemouth required the active commitment of a large number of partners.

The Challenge

From “rights based” to “people centred” outcomes

Although partners had been instrumental in agreeing a homelessness strategy, there were ongoing concerns that historic behaviours and practices would diminish the successful delivery of the strategic aims. In addition some partners felt the council was seen as playing the role of gatekeeper to avoid accepting a duty for homeless people. The Homelessness strategy required a fundamental shift in culture in order to deliver a more person centred approach to preventing homelessness.

Our Approach

It was important for us to understand where everyone was on the new strategy so we agreed to handle the project in stages.

Stage 1 was designed to get a cross agency view so that we could design the culture change programme knowing that it would address the key issues for all partners.

We commenced by:

- Undertaking a 'health-check' to assess baseline position
- Identifying areas of skills/culture gaps
- Undertaking a desktop analysis of existing and proposed procedures connected to the homelessness strategy
- Holding a series of 1:1 discussions with each stakeholder organisation.

Once we had the key issues clearly identified we were able to move to Stage 2 which required the design and delivery of a bespoke culture change programme.



“They were good seminars which had a good balance and set a good pace. It was usually light at the start and becoming heavier later. Barriers were broken down well and everyone got a lot out of it”.

Peter Hoyle
*Housing Strategy and
Enabling Manager*

The Solution

From the outset it was important to create a platform from which a new approach of partnership working might be achieved.

We achieved this by having the initial 1:1 discussions and then having the initial workshops in “home” groups so that really contentious issues could be aired in safety. Partners appreciated this approach and it made the introduction of difficult topics much easier to face in later stages.

From our initial work it was clear that the culture change programme must focus on:

- Communication
- Leadership
- Coping with and managing change
- Action Planning

We then designed and delivered a programme running over 4 half days for participants which addressed the key issues above.

Results

From an initial viewpoint of scepticism all partners found they had much more in common than they had believed and they all committed and they all agreed action plans to make the strategy work. Two years on and the strategy is working well and the partnership approach is showing strengths and demonstrating value for money through significant savings in the use of temporary accommodation. Bournemouth are recognised as “homelessness champions” by Department of Communities and Local Government.

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