Research summary

Strategic planning for sustainable system wide transformation

This paper has been written by Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Strategic Planning team. It explores research findings on sustainable system wide transformation within strategic planning. This research was completed for Healthcare Improvement Scotland by the University of Strathclyde.

Transformational change has long been recognised as vital for the sustainability of health and social care services; enabling us to better meet the increasing demand and complex needs of the people in Scotland. NHS Scotland is yet to fully realise the value that transformational change can offer to our health and social care services. This is in part due to the significant time and resource required to invest and enable system wide transformation.

To develop the evidence base for successful transformation, Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Dumfries and Galloway Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), worked with the University of Strathclyde's Business Masters Programme to conduct research into:

1. **What matters in supporting effective transformational change** to help focus efforts in understanding and progressing transformational change.
2. **How to meaningfully measure transformational change** recognising that many more traditional throughput and outputs measures on delivery are unlikely to capture the essence of what it means to make progress on transformational change.

This insights paper summarises the findings of the research report submitted by the University of Strathclyde student Yashasri Shetty for her M.Sc. in Business Analysis and Consulting. This research drew on available literature on transformational change as well as an applied exploration of the Dumfries and Galloway HSCP's "Home Teams".

1. What matters in supporting effective transformational change

The research found that "integrated care is as much about reconciling professional systems as structural redesigns" but "cultural change is arguably more challenging than structural change." The research also identified that "while conceptual models rightly emphasise clinical integration at the frontline of care delivery as the cornerstone of integrated care, substantial cultural and structural barriers persist in translating policy aspirations into practical realities."

The research also identified that:

- The successful implementation of transformation change "requires acknowledgement that integrated care competes with, rather than aligns neatly with, established professional interests, priorities, and ways of working. Its advancement depends on reconciling these tensions through systematic efforts to build relationships, trust, and common purpose across boundaries."
- "Appeal to overarching shared purpose regarding person-centeredness is important yet insufficient alone."
- "Substantial timescales are required for embedding genuine interprofessional practice."
- At its heart "integrated care requires a transition from 'my' patient to 'our' patient. This takes time and likely occurs unevenly across teams, organisations and systems. Evidence informed frameworks emphasising gradual maturation along a continuum can help orient realistic expectations."

2. What inhibits transformational change

The findings of the paper identified that "deeply engrained differences in professional identities, cultures, priorities and power dynamics fundamentally obstruct effective joint working, care coordination and information sharing between health, mental health and social care groups". It also concluded that "variances in organisational culture and leadership styles, high staff turnover in social care roles, information governance restrictions and managerial power struggles severely impede the development of mature partnerships."

Key barriers identified in the research include:

- Substantial and persistent cultural barriers between professional groups.
- Power imbalances between professional groups that disrupt collaboration.
- Logistical frustrations that impede coordination.
- Poor integration of technical solutions and workflows.

3. How to invest in successful transformation

"Identified enablers for overcoming divisions point to the need for substantial, long-term organisational change efforts focused on systematically building mutual understanding and respect between professional groups" including:

- Investing in interprofessional education and training to break down cultural barriers between professional groups.
- Redistributing influence and control more evenly across diverse partner organisations through governance reforms.
- Adopting participatory design approaches to engage end users in co-creating technological innovations.
- Healthcare leaders modelling collaborative behaviors and promoting psychological safety for discussing integration concerns.

- Workforce development, interprofessional education and staff rotations can gradually contribute by building mutual understanding and respect between groups over the long-term.
- Openly acknowledging risks, losses and tensions created when disrupting traditional professional spheres of control.
- Honest discussions around developing new cultures and practice that ensure mutual influence and equality amongst stakeholders and lived experience.

4. How to measure transformation

Assessing performance is important for understanding progress, identifying barriers and training needs as well as evidencing value. What we choose to measure matters. As the success of transformation relies heavily on the human dimensions of change, the KPIs should be focused on understanding the following.

- The extent to which team meetings focus on relationship building and culture development.
- The extent to which decisions are co-designed by staff from multiple professions.
- Staff views on the extent to which power imbalances occur within decision making.
- The extent to which staff who report positive working relationships with staff from other professions.
- The extent to which staff demonstrate understanding and place value in other professions – including their priorities, pressures, values and decision-making logic.

5. The gaps in evidence on what works in supporting transformational change

The research identified the following gaps in available evidence on what supports successful transformational change.

- Nuanced detail on how to overcome complex human dimensions of integration.
- Full economic evaluations on the different integration strategies.
- How to adapt integration models to be more effective at supporting populations with complex need including homelessness, addiction, poverty, and trauma.

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This resource has been developed by Strategic Planners within the Transformational Change - Systems Unit within Healthcare Improvement Scotland. It is designed to support the Strategic Planning Community of Practice by providing introductions to concepts and topics relevant to Strategic Planners.

Reference

Shetty, Y (Oct 2023). Develop performance indicators for Dumfries and Galloway HSCP's community health and social care delivery activities.

For more information on this research please get in touch with his.transformationalsystemchange@nhs.scot.

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