

WVAB



Working in place:

Collaborative funding in practice

*York Pathways: Supporting individuals
experiencing mental distress*



Acknowledgements

With thanks to our interviewees who took the time to support this research and shared their experiences with us openly and honestly.

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FOR MENTAL WELLBEING

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This case study is one of five exploring how independent charitable funders and local, regional and national public agencies can work together in a given geographic area.

The case studies are part of IVAR's wider work on place-based funding approaches, which includes *Working in Place: A framework for developing and designing place-based funding approaches* and *Working in Place: Collaborative funding in practice*.

This document shares the learning on independent and public funders working together in place from the perspective of the key partners involved in York Pathways. It is based on interviews with representatives from each of the participating organisations and a review of reports and papers that were shared with us.

For the full research series, please visit
www.ivar.org.uk/research-projects/place-based-funding/

York Pathways 'at a glance'

York Pathways¹ is a service that has been set up to support individuals experiencing a range of mental health support needs, including people who have complex needs, such as substance misuse issues or a history of offending. It was set up with the express intention to not just fill gaps in services and reduce demand on the emergency services but to identify where the gaps were and identify long-term solutions for tackling the issues, centred around improving multi-agency relationships and partnerships. The York Pathways frontline team therefore carries out two main functions:

1. Signposting, guiding and coaching individuals to get them the help that they need.
2. Referring issues and gaps identified to the strategy board to look for longer-term solutions.

Pathways workers provide individuals with practical support to manage their mental well-being and to access community resources, from employment and training, to housing, mental health and substance misuse services. The team also supports people to identify, understand and alter any behaviours that are perpetuating their mental distress, a term used to describe a range of mental health issues, from the more common problems such as anxiety and depression, to the less common, such as schizophrenia.²

The service works in partnership with a range of agencies across the region to ensure the best support for individuals who are referred and to reduce demand on emergency services. The partnership undertakes joint strategic planning about the needs of this cohort and aims to develop a systemic rather than ad-hoc response to people experiencing complex distress. The York Pathways two-year pilot was funded by Lankelly Chase Foundation, North Yorkshire Police, Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and City of York Council.

The York Pathways service consists of five locally recruited members of staff, four case workers, one of whom is based within the Community Safety Hub at York Council. The service is overseen by the Criminal Justice team at Together (the lead partner), a national charity that works alongside people with mental health issues and

¹<http://www.together-uk.org/projects/york-pathways-project/>
²<http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/mental-distress-stats.html>

supports them to live independent lives. The key partners involved in the design and delivery of York Pathways (the delivery partners), all of whom were interviewed for this case study, are: Together for Mental Wellbeing, North Yorkshire Police, Vale of York CCG, City of York Council, Tees Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Trust, York Pathways service users and Lankelly Chase Foundation.

Who provided funding?

- **Lankelly Chase Foundation – £151,170**
- **North Yorkshire Police – £17,000**
- **Vale of York Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) – £170,822**
- **York County Council – £10,000**

Timescale of the initiative

March 2015 to April 2017 (2 year pilot)

At the end of the pilot phase, the initiative received funding for 2017/18 to further embed the project aims.

Summary learning

Here, we summarise the learning about place-based collaborative funding from this case study.

- **Changing systems in place** – The York Pathways initiative is focused on an issue where there is no clear and consistent demand, yet all the partners involved have recognised different aspects of it and been willing to come together to seek solutions. The initiative is about providing a different perspective and uses a focus on 'place' and the City of York as a way to encourage a holistic approach to tackling the issue and encourage improved cross-sector working. However, whilst geographical boundaries can help to provide a focus and identify 'co-terminus' objectives, they can also be restrictive. For example, each of the agencies involved has their own centralised reporting structures and their own requirements in terms of what outcomes data is monitored and reported and the language/form in which it is captured. At a follow-up event to the interviews conducted for this study, participants discussed the idea of a set of common indicators or shared tools and a common language that could be applied by all of the different agencies involved in the design and delivery of York Pathways as a way of overcoming siloed working in place.
- **The kind of people that make it work** – The overriding sentiment from the individuals interviewed was their personal commitment to, and passion for, the York Pathways partnership. This meant they were motivated to persevere through challenges if and when they arose. Although not necessarily unique to place-based working, it appears to be an essential ingredient. Place-based working requires a willingness on the part of individuals and their organisations to give time and energy to something and form alliances that may not fit neatly within their day job. For York Pathways. It has meant finding those individuals who have the personal commitment but – often also the seniority – to ensure their organisations get behind them and the work of York Pathways.

One of the key elements of York Pathways, and why it has been taken seriously, is the fact that it puts service users at the centre, placing a focus on partnering with service users to design and produce the initiative. This has meant the initiative

legitimacy, as they have been able to draw on the personal experiences of these individuals and identify where there are gaps in the system.

- **Putting service users at the centre** – One of the key elements of York Pathways is its focus on partnering with service users to design and produce the initiative. This has lent the initiative legitimacy as they have been able to draw on the personal experiences of these individuals and identify where there are gaps in the system.
- **Time** – York Pathways' experience demonstrates the fact that change takes time, particularly when dealing with such complex issues and attempting to change behaviour as well as practice. This means spending time from the outset, or even before an initiative is underway, setting clear expectations about the progress partners can expect to see over what timescale and discussing how this can best be measured. As the York Pathways partnership has been discussing, this might require trying to identify some common indicators or measures of progress that can be applied by all of the partners involved, whilst accepting that they will also have their own targets to meet.
- **The role the independent funding can play** – Lankelly Chase Foundation was one of four funders of York Pathways, along with the Vale of York CCG, North Yorkshire Police and York City Council. The addition of an independent funder to the York Pathways funding partnership appeared to provide:
 - Space and flexibility to think creatively in the development stages.
 - An external perspective that can help shift mindsets and bring learning from other disciplines and initiatives.
 - Resource to put behind giving partners the opportunity to trial new ways of thinking, designing and implementing services together.
- **Managing funder expectations** – Having one funder in the partnership that was able to be flexible alongside others with more rigid reporting requirements caused some challenges. Also, the fact that service delivery outcomes were easier to define and measure meant there was sometimes a desire to focus more on these than the system outcomes, e.g. shifts in behaviour and ways of working together.

- **Relationships of trust lie at the heart of effective responses to multiple disadvantage** – People need to feel safe to ask difficult questions and challenge the status quo, not least because this will raise uncomfortable emotions. The advice of Lankelly Chase staff involved in York Pathways to other independent charitable funders is to *'invest in the relationships as well as the work'* and to recognise that *'people own what they create'*.



The initiative is about providing a different perspective and uses a focus on 'place' and the City of York as a way to encourage a holistic approach to supporting individuals experiencing a range of mental health support needs and encourage improved cross-sector working.

3.0

About York Pathways

The idea for the York Pathways project arose when some members of North Yorkshire Police visited a similar project being supported by Together for Mental Wellbeing in Rotherham initiated by South Yorkshire Police (a T2A or Transition to Adulthood programme run in partnership with Barrow Cadbury Trust, South Yorkshire Police, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and Rotherham Doncaster and South Humber Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust).³ The police had been receiving a high level of emergency calls from individuals who appeared to be experiencing complex distress, and suspected that the same individuals were also heavily reliant upon other 24hr emergency services. Around the same time, there had also been an increase in the number of suicides in York and there was a general push from within North Yorkshire Police and increased public and political pressure to be doing more about mental health. York Pathways also fitted with the local strategic objectives as the City of York Health and Wellbeing Board had identified mental health as a priority in its strategic review.

Case study participants commented that it had mainly fallen to the police and local authority to look for solutions to these issues. The police had already begun to identify an action plan for how they would try to improve things, and it led to some research with University of York (who put in a bid for £1.1 million to the Police Knowledge Fund) to understand the impact of supporting mental distress on the police service. City of York Council had also set up the Community Safety Hub (which includes Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers) and put in a bid for Home Office funding for a mental health caseworker. When Vale of York CCG awarded the contract to TEWV NHS Trust to deliver mental health and learning disability services, a big part of the contract was focused on how TEWV works with the independent and voluntary sector bodies and uses the skills of voluntary sector experience to enhance the pathways of NHS work. There was therefore a strongly identified need across all agencies for improved solutions for supporting individuals in mental distress, but it was being tackled from a number of different angles and not in a joined-up way. The York Pathways partnership provided an opportunity to bring these different agencies together, to share what they were doing, identify the gaps that were still not being addressed, and begin to come up with joint solutions to the issues. The funding and resource put into the partnership also provided an opportunity for new ideas and ways of working to be piloted.

¹<http://www.together-uk.org/projects/rotherham-pathways-project-2/>

4.0

Looking at how York Pathways worked in practice

4.1

Design and delivery

The two-year pilot for York Pathways ran from March 2015 to April 2017 and they subsequently received some additional funding for 2017/18 to embed the work being carried out. The York Pathways service consists of a project manager and four case workers who work with a range of agencies across the region to provide support to individuals experiencing mental distress. The York Pathways Board is responsible for overseeing the design and delivery and includes the following partners: North Yorkshire Police, Vale of York CCG, City of York Council, Tees Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) NHS Trust, York Pathways service users, Lankelly Chase Foundation and other critical health and social care partners.

The York Pathways initiative is overseen by the Criminal Justice team at Together, a national charity that works alongside people with mental health issues and supports them to live independent lives.

4.2

Relationships

The word that came up time and again was *'passion'*, relating to the York Pathways' partnership's enthusiasm for finding creative solutions to the issue and their enthusiasm for the multi-agency approach:

'I often think that the time is right and the need is there, but if you don't have the right people ... to drive it then that won't happen.'

(Lead partner)

Interviewees said that although many of them had existing relationships with agencies or individuals within the partnership, they had not previously come together around a specific issue. A delivery partner said that partners shared the same frustrations and core vision that *'nobody should be in a position on the front-line of having to pass an individual from one person to another'* and belief that taking a multi-agency approach and *'sharing that rich intelligence'* was the only way to identify long-term solutions.

One delivery partner stressed the importance of *'understanding the structures and DNA of your partners'* so that you are able to understand what the motivating factors for partnership might be for them. For example, some partners were under pressure to reduce emergency call-outs and document reductions in the number of individuals experiencing mental distress who were calling the emergency services. They also said that when you have a partnership that consists of organisations and agencies of different sizes, from the very small to the very big, it can be very difficult for partners to understand the mechanics of each other's set-ups and structures, and so *'we generally need to help people in that start-up zone'*. There was a feeling that the different agencies involved in York Pathways, in addition to their passion and interest in the issue, had a general interest in learning from others and trying out new approaches. The lead partner commented that *'contractual would barely take us beyond step one'*, referring to the fact that so much of the work is about changing mindsets and wanting people to work together:

'It's hugely important to share that learning and have those different perspectives but as long as people are open. Whilst it can be a difficult climate to work in, we are committed to using whatever creative approaches we can to support people to engage with change and learning.'

(Lead partner)

Together and the police are in regular contact and there are a lot of overlaps in their work and the networks that they are linked in with. A member of the police also sits on the York Mental Health Crisis Concordat group, through which he has been promoting the activities of York Pathways and raising the issues that they have uncovered. York Pathways said the partnership between their team and the police has worked really well. For example, York Pathways workers are able to call the Force Control Room and get information on risk and look at whether they might double up on a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) visit to an individual.

The relationship with Lankelly was described by a delivery partner as *'respectful'* and *'collaborative'*. One interviewee commented that they didn't think the partnership could have achieved what they had with a more 'hands-off' funder as they needed a funder who was willing to engage more fully and get involved in the ongoing strategic delivery of the project. There was a clear understanding and agreement that the partnership could not be reliant upon the support of Lankelly in the long term. The lead partner described it thus, *'they are sort of the support vehicle behind us to a certain extent and ... we're not always ... we don't need that and we shouldn't need that'*.

Together said that being a new project coming into York and not having any foundation there was challenging. Although the strategic links had already been formed, this hadn't filtered down and a lot of services weren't sure of who York Pathways was and what York Pathways was about. All of the legwork that they assumed had been done had to be done by the York Pathways team and it took a long time to embed themselves. They said that the relationships with local voluntary sector organisations took time to build but are now strong, and they are now regarded as an asset, rather than a threat. York Pathways gave the example that when they get their clients to a more stable stage, they refer them on to voluntary sector organisations who offer other support services,

e.g. advocacy, or befriending, that they may want to access. It was only really after the first 16-18 months that they felt like they were embedded within York. However, York Pathways said that the flexibility provided to the project also gave them the opportunity to consider, *'why is this not working? And change to fit the need of the city and learn to work with partners differently.'* The York Pathways initiative therefore provided the support of a team of people who had the time and resource to step back from the detail, identify where there were gaps, and decide what needed to happen to address them.

Several participants acknowledged that there were both advantages and challenges to inviting an outside organisation into a place, as opposed to working with an organisation already embedded within that place. The advantage in the case of York Pathways was that they were able to bring a fresh perspective and had some resource behind them to support opportunities to do things differently. One of the challenges was that in order to work effectively, they still needed to be embedded within York; this took time and has required continuous resource and effort to maintain.

4.3

Structures

There are three main components to the York Pathways initiative – the partnership board, frontline service delivery and an Information Sharing Agreement (ISA). The individuals involved in York Pathways have a responsibility to input in different ways into each of these three components.

York Pathways Board

The York Pathways Board includes membership from all of the key delivery stakeholders as well as two service users. The key principle of anyone that joins as a board member is that they *'have to commit to doing stuff'*, so it was important that the people putting themselves forward to join the Board are those that *'are going to be able to make decisions and take actions'* and *'who have the right contacts ... (and) resources to look at and develop such a project.'* The Board meets on a regular basis to review the structure and process of York Pathways.

The unusual thing about the York Pathways Board is that it was set up before the initiative had officially received any funding. This was described as a way to bring some of the key stakeholders together so that they could challenge any potential resistance to the initiative and problem-solve at a senior, strategic level before attempting to implement anything. It also provided the opportunity to involve York stakeholders in the design and development of the service.

Frontline service delivery

The York Pathways team provides free, personalised, one-to-one support to adults (aged 18-65) experiencing mental distress who may repeatedly make contact with emergency services, or are at risk of entering the criminal justice system. They also provide advice and training to other services in York already working with individuals who need this kind of support.

One of the statutory partners said that in this area of work it is important to have support staff with the right qualifications and skills, including the ability to be quite accepting of certain risks involved in working with clients experiencing mental distress: *'they have always tried to find a way through problems when they are dealing with quite difficult clients at times.'* They thought that York Pathways had not yet had to turn anyone away based on risk.

York Pathways was set up in tandem with separate initiatives undertaken by the police and local authority. North Yorkshire Police recruited mental health specialists into the force control room and, in partnership with the local authority, set up a Community Safety Hub (CSH). The CSH includes a team of police officers, anti-social behaviour officers and neighbourhood enforcement officers who are based out of the York Council office. York Pathways have a member of staff based within the CSH, and said this has *'helped to cement the wider team as they are sat with the police, Housing ...'* The whole York Pathways team also have building passes so that they can work from York Council, making it easier for them to build relationships with the CSH and other Council employees.

Together provides support in terms of oversight over the York Pathways team, including supporting the set-up phase: providing individuals in the team with training on working with individuals experiencing mental distress, and identifying key stakeholders in York that the project would need to work with. Together reflected that they had to provide more internal resource and time, particularly in the set-up phase, than originally anticipated. However, they said that in hindsight they are not surprised at this. Their experience illustrates the fact that, for organisations looking to set up partnerships in areas where they have not previously worked, the set-up phase can often take longer and/or require greater resource than when working in an area where they have existing links or infrastructure.

A member of the police said that getting involved in York Pathways had taken him away from other priorities but that it had happened at a time when policing was placing more of a focus on 'vulnerability', so it made sense to pay more attention to York Pathways.

Information Sharing Agreement (ISA)

One of the major achievements of the York Pathways initiative, which involved considerable efforts from all of the key stakeholders, has been setting up an overarching Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) between York City Council, the North Yorkshire Police, Yorkshire Ambulance Service, York Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and TEWV NHS Trust (previously Leeds and York Partnership NHS Trust), with a hope that they may be able to get other agencies to sign up going forwards. The ISA enables these parties to share certain data on the issues faced by individuals experiencing mental distress and data on how the different agencies have responded to them. It has been a huge contributing factor to the ability of the partnership to identify potential joint solutions to these issues. York Pathways said that sharing data between the various agencies also really helps with taking a holistic approach and making links, such as spotting where there are generational mental health issues.

Managing risk

There was a concern expressed by some that, if York Pathways was not successful or had to end early for some reason, all the groundwork, including hard-won trust and relationships, would be lost: *'it's literally like pulling a plaster off'*. However, one of the delivery partners said that there had to be a level of shared risk-taking, as partners were putting their faith in an organisation not currently working in York:

'I don't think you can be risk averse. I think you need to try and accept the fact that [if] you work in these sort of programmes you will always have failure[s] and failure shouldn't be seen as a negative thing.'

(Delivery partner)

5.0

Benefits of York Pathways

5.1

Benefits for individuals experiencing mental distress

According to the police, there has been a significant reduction in emergency call-outs in the project's first year and they believe the York Pathways initiative is a huge contributing factor to this. At a strategic level York Pathways has also been able to raise awareness of the fact that there is a cohort of people who want to access support but are facing barriers to doing so. The assumption of some service providers had been that these individuals were not accessing support simply because they did not wish to engage. York Pathways has been challenging these views and looking at ways to provide more joined-up, bespoke support to these clients.

Several interviewees said that the project had been an education for them in terms of understanding the time it can take to get something started and begin to see the impact, particularly when the clientele it is being set up to support have complex needs.

‘When you start something like this from a standing start, it’s important not to feel too underwhelmed at the first quarterly meeting, but then I thought, “these people are starting from scratch with these individuals and they’ve been disappointed time and time again, so why would they believe that they [Together] are any different?’”

(Delivery partner)

They were highlighting the fact that issues that have been ‘long-term stresses’ on the system require long-term interventions and that there are no quick fixes. Because of this, the individuals and organisations involved need to have a long-term view and commitment to tackling these challenges.

Referring to Together's ethos, one of the delivery partners said that they were good at *'making the most of informal opportunities,'* and being able, *'to think outside of the box.'* They said that they (Together) understood the challenges of engaging with individuals with mental health issues and the importance of inspiring them with confidence. Another partner said that, in their experience, nationally, *'there's a real absence of having an informed group of people who are able to identify what services might be able to help best and help somebody to get access to them.'*

The lead partner said that they felt they had seen the attitudes of some partners begin to change and understand that what they as a partnership are trying to do is not simply redirect resources to fill the gaps in services but to work together to understand why the gaps exist and, eventually, *'manage out those gaps.'*

5.2 Benefits for practitioners

Despite the fact that the project has had its ups and downs and requires people to take time out from their day jobs to engage in it, there is a core group of people who have been engaged in the project since the start and remained interested over time. The lead partner said that *'The fact that people came around the table so swiftly and quickly, suggests that they were willing to be partners and to partner with an organisation which isn't an incumbent provider to York ... this does suggest a willingness.'* Almost all of the individuals interviewed for the study said that their engagement in York Pathways was not just motivated by what their agency or organisation would get out of it, but by what they as individuals got out of being part of it – having time outside of their day job to think creatively, the opportunity to test out new ways of working – in the midst of what is often very difficult work.

One of the statutory bodies said they felt that because voluntary sector organisations are not bound by the same bureaucracy as statutory organisations, they also have the flexibility to do things in a different way. There was also some discussion about the benefits of having an independent funder, the funding from whom has provided them with the time and space to think creatively and step outside of the day-to-day to take a more strategic approach. One participant thought it had enabled them to move things on more quickly and do the sort of systems thinking within a two- to three- year time span that might have taken public sector bodies much longer.

5.3

Systems/structural changes

Much of the systems change work that York Pathways is doing is about *'unpicking all the negative experiences they've (service users) had with services, e.g. discharging them and leaving them, then understanding the barriers and to overcome them'*. So systems change in this case is about rebuilding trust as well as trying to generate new partnerships and relationships.

York Pathways said that their eventual aim is *'to do ourselves out of business,'* as by working long-term with the individuals who need support the focus would eventually be on the preventative side, and the dual focus on systems change would see agencies working together better to provide this preventative support. One delivery partner said that York Pathways' approach to providing training to local organisations and community groups, as well as the larger statutory agencies, meant that the emphasis was on increasing the resilience of an area to address these issues while also ensuring they are the ones directing the solutions. They said this fits well with the current national agenda that is focused on individuals helping themselves and communities working together. It is also important in terms of sustainability, as the aim is to strengthen capacity at local level so that the measures taken forward by York Pathways remain embedded after the initiative comes to an end.

6.0

Challenges encountered

6.1

Systems change takes time

It took the York Pathways team a long time to embed themselves and become known in York. One of the challenges for the Pathways team has been managing positive working relationships, whilst highlighting gaps in service provision at a strategic level. The team initially met with quite a lot of resistance because of this and had to demonstrate that they were not criticising services or necessarily trying to fill all the gaps themselves. One delivery partner said that *'if they [the people of York] don't like things they change things, but they don't like change.'* Explaining this, they said that agencies in York had their own reservations about working with outside agencies and that one of the legitimate reservations was that York Pathways would eventually finish and the work they had been doing could be undone or potentially left to local agencies. The lead partner said that if they were to start again they would perhaps have spent more time on building relationships and introducing the idea of York Pathways prior to getting started, *'having someone coming and introducing themselves to services, saying "this is what I do", going to team meetings, handing out literature ... just two months, one month before you've started.'*

Although York Pathways' referrals process started straight away, with referrals initially coming from the council, it has taken time to get it right and this has meant that progress and reported impact was slow initially. Interviewees commented on the need to set realistic expectations; with time they recognised that York Pathways cannot solve everything and that some cases do take a long time to process, as they might have been open for as long as 20 or 30 years. They are also trying to tackle the wider determinants of complex distress – not just medical – such as housing, substance misuse etc., and need to consider all of the possible contributing factors. However, as a partnership they have grown in confidence over time to take risks and be *'more imaginative'* in the solutions that they seek. If a place-based approach is being used to try to make long-term changes to a system, then it requires long-term involvement and investment and an understanding that, initially, progress may be difficult to measure.

Working with the right people and sustaining partnerships

Part of the York Pathways model, which builds on the ethos of Together, relies upon the inputs and advice from *'experts by experience'* – individuals experiencing complex distress who are accessing services currently or who have done so in the past. Two service users sit on York Pathways Board. Speaking to one of them, they said that it can be challenging to find service users that are willing and able to speak out. They said this is because you need someone who is well enough to talk about what they have been through and also willing to relive their experiences in person. They pointed out that those individuals who are more in need of help are often less likely to be able to participate.

Talking about some of the broader factors that can inhibit partnership and strategic change, one delivery partner used the term *'integration without legislation'*, referring to the fact that different sectors and statutory providers are being asked to work together and make budgets stretch further, but that there is no legislation or guidance setting out how this should be done or incentivising such partnerships. They said this is really difficult when different agencies are operating across different geographical boundaries. Another delivery partner said that although the only way systems level change can be achieved is to work in partnership; in reality there is often little time in their day to work more strategically. The volatility of the voluntary sector and the fact that voluntary sector organisations keep changing due to short contracts, was also raised as a challenge when it came to maintaining relationships.

Police, ambulance and other statutory services were also highlighted as being very hierarchical: *'You have to go in at the right level to get the right response'*. Sometimes it is difficult to know who you need to speak to and how to get access to them. Whilst the partnership has formed very good relationships with a range of agencies, there was a concern about what would happen if individuals within these agencies had to leave. The York Pathways Board have tried to mitigate the risk of staff turnover and dependency on key individuals by ensuring that each agency involved is not just represented by one individual, and that those involved engage their colleagues, sharing information about York Pathways.

Some individuals felt, however, that the level of commitment across stakeholders was still uneven, as there were some board meetings that only the Chair and two other lead individuals had attended.

One agency said that York Pathways had particular difficulties engaging the Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS). It was thought the reasons for this were perhaps to do with a reluctance to work in partnership, as they had their own systems for dealing with high volumes of emergency call-outs and their own performance indicators to meet. However, the issue of how organisations involved in a partnership like York Pathways could measure their individual/organisational contribution to a broader initiative was raised by organisations currently involved in York Pathways. One of the health commissioning bodies involved in the project commented that, *'as a commissioner, how do I measure this?'* York Pathways partners have therefore begun to discuss how they might develop a set of shared proxy indicators that would satisfy the requirements of each of the partner organisations.

6.3

Time and communications

Although York Pathways was successful in setting up data-sharing agreements, there were considerable delays due, in part, to some mistrust between different agencies about why access to certain information was needed and how it would be used. Interviewees said the main way in which this had been overcome for York Pathways was through building trust and relationships. One delivery partner stressed the importance of constant communication with all partners and avoiding the pitfall of assuming that all partners know what you're doing and why.

'If you're not careful you get through to the same cohort of partners all the time and you need to keep going out to those people who perhaps aren't interested or you don't think are listening because they are the very people you want to be involved.'

(Delivery partner)

Some agencies said that it was about coming to a shared understanding of who the partnership is trying to support as well as the geographical area that it serves, as each individual agency not only has a different focus in relation to adults with complex distress, but may also operate within slightly different geographical boundaries.

6.4

Funding

One delivery partner commented that the York Pathways partnership did not talk and plan enough around commissioning structures and funding priorities in York, and how to influence these, so they could start to build a collective understanding of how they undermine the work of the partnership. The funding streams it has been able to access are all very short-term, yet the changes it is trying to achieve take time, particularly on such a complex issue that has not been adequately tackled for years.

There is perhaps a role here for funders in thinking about what they can do to help prompt reflections and conversations around these issues. Funders need to understand and have conversations with grantees about the sorts of outcomes that they can realistically expect to see over a particular period of time and avoid putting unnecessary pressure on grantees to produce figures or data that does not necessarily provide an accurate picture of the complexity of the issue being addressed.

7.0

What happened next?

York Pathways' plans for 2017/18 include:

7.1

Service delivery

York Pathways will continue to provide one-to-one support to up to 30 adults experiencing complex distress and are supported by the CCG and other partners/commissioners in their approach. They will also continue to provide support to other agencies working with adults experiencing complex distress, including a range of statutory agencies and voluntary sector groups.

7.2

Systems change

During 2017/18 York Pathways will be putting greater time and resource into engagement with, and relationship building across, the City of York. This will be done through York Pathways' participation in a variety of forums where senior leaders and commissioners are in attendance. For example:

- Health & Wellbeing Board
- Crisis Care Concordat group
- TEWV's complex needs for North Yorkshire group
- York's third sector meeting group and mental health forum
- Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM)
- Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Partnership Board

York Pathways' engagement in these forums will provide an opportunity to articulate to these groups which parts of the system are not working and preventing the needs of adults in complex distress being met. They will also look at where and how resources across the different agencies can be better aligned.

The aim is to encourage greater discussion and action around opportunities to pool budgets across agencies, identify ways to commission services collaboratively, and provide more joined-up support for adults experiencing complex distress.

Part of this work is about shifting behaviours so that staff work collaborate more and to generate practices to support system-wide change from the *'ground level'*. This includes engaging front-line workers and understanding what the challenges are and, if they had the opportunity, what might they do differently.

The learning from piloting these new ways of working with public agencies and frontline workers will be fed back to senior commissioners via the strategic board and other forums for action to be taken. Based on the success of these activities, York Pathways may look into developing a learning community on an ongoing basis.

7.3 Service user voice

York Pathways is working with a learning partner to look at ways in which adults experiencing complex distress can be given a greater voice in the way services are designed and delivered. This will include training a group of service users to be peer researchers and to interview people with lived experience of complex distress.

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For more information on place-based funding and collaborative working, visit www.ivar.org.uk

Funders of the study:



Lankelly Chase



JOHN LYON'S CHARITY



The Old School
Exton Street
London SE1 8UE

020 7921 2940
enquiries@ivar.org.uk
ivar.org.uk

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