

other was an attempt to communicate developments so far with a District-wide audience convened by the Unit General Manager, including some Social Services personnel.

The seminar involving a wider audience began with a brief presentation of the main findings of the Interim Report by the authors. This was followed by some observations from the Cosham team on 'the experience of being researched' during this period of transition. There was general agreement that having an 'independent view' was helpful in encouraging an atmosphere of questioning and reflection, enabling them to see more clearly some of the issues underlying their day-to-day activities.

The second half of the programme was more specifically structured to facilitate both information-sharing and learning across local area and professional boundaries. Small groups, deliberately including managers and practitioners from different disciplines and areas, were invited to discuss the two key issues identified above, to which we added the question of how to provide for ongoing systematic review. This was followed by a plenary discussion, during which the main points from each group were shared and brought together.

Becoming more actively and directly involved in the dissemination process, and in encouraging participants to identify general learning points from the particular experience of one local service, is a relatively new experience for us as researchers. We would, however, argue the need for such initiatives in the context of researching organisational change. Planning for change inevitably involves uncertainty:

Planning should be a continuous process of generating and testing ideas, with review and feedback mechanisms

built into the system as key features (Kingsley & Towell, 1988, p. 67).

There are many ways in which the experience of service development can be used as learning for subsequent initiatives. In this paper we have tried to exemplify an approach to evaluation which can directly contribute to the ongoing process of service development, in this case assisting a service actively engaged in establishing comprehensive and locally based mental health facilities.

## References

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A full list of references is available on request from the authors.

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