

Argyll and Bute ADP in Recovery “A Bespoke Event”– Our Reflections

Tuesday 24th November 2015

Introduction

I designed a bespoke event to allow a platform for all parties participating by invitation only to explore and dialogue their frustrations, assumptions, lack of understanding, appreciations, and apprehensions. This would be conducted in a sensitive but honest manner creating a safe space for all to dialogue.

I guess the honest truth is that this was an “ADP” starting its recovery journey, but progress was being blocked by truly malicious and anonymous media coverage, formal complaints, and in my opinion slanderous personal attacks on staff. The ADP felt that a space had to be created to allow the dialogue both positive and negative. In order for its staff and the partnership to get on and do their jobs.

The reflection is long in terms of the survey monkey feedback and the journaling of the stages, however in order not to be selective in what I put in this report, all comments are included. There were 5 journaling entries and 7 survey monkey feedbacks.

Our aim

To allow everyone to voice their opinion. To Feel Safe. To understand the concept of “The Chatham House Rules” and the consequences of breaking these.

To understand the scope and remit of an Alcohol and Drug Partnership

To be heard as a participant.

To be able to contribute anonymously.

To trust the process and know that the wisdom and expertise is in the room

Agenda

This will be a solution focussed day where members can bring any issues they have, along with their proposed solutions.

All participants who attend the day are invited to come with an open mind and with the outlook of moving forward.

Stage 1

Appreciation (appreciating what has been and what is...)

Stage 2

The Howl of Despair (expressing our pain about what has happened and what is happening...)

Stage 3

Seeing with New Eyes (examples of how we can do and are doing it differently...)

Stage 4

Into Action (what are we each going to do differently to move us? Forward)

Event planning

I decided to facilitate this event on a “trust the process” basis. I prepared by offering the floor to whoever wanted it and at whatever stage they felt their dialogue would “fit in”

I presented all participants with a copy of Chatham House Rules in their entirety, and allowed time for every participant to read and ask me questions on.

All seeds who had agreed to share were briefed prior to the event, and participants who I felt may well want to speak were also contacted, however I was unable to connect with them prior to the day.

I presented a journal with each of the 4 stages on it. All thoughts could be journaled as the seeds went through the various stages. No dialogue allowed at seed sharing.

59 people were invited including

- Partners
- Commissioned services
- Funded organisations past and present
- Elected members
- MSP's and MP's who had expressed an interest in the ADP

11 people apologised and 37 attended

- In attendance were:
- Scottish Recovery Consortium – facilitation
- Scottish Drugs Forum
- Scottish Families affected by Alcohol and Drugs
- Scottish Government National Support Team for ADP's
- 6 Councillors

The newly appointed Independent chair, John Owens and this was his first engagement in post.....for his sins.

The previous chair Christina West Chief Officer of the A & B HSCP.

The Event

The event was hosted by the ADP and was held in Inveraray. The Argyll hotel which since this event has now changed to the Inveraray Inn



Designed by John Adam and opened in 1755, The Inveraray Inn is the oldest and most historic hotel in Inveraray as well as being one of the most iconic hotels on the west coast of Scotland. It occupies an unrivalled location on Inveraray's Front Street, overlooking Loch Fyne. This famous hotel, which has also been known in the past as The Great Inn, The Argyll Arms Hotel and The Argyll Hotel, Inveraray

It was a difficult conversation to be sure, however my overview was most people got a chance to contribute who wanted to, and in fact some didn't know they wanted to until the day so the events flexibility allowed for this and I truly believe an honest conversation was had.

I asked 2 people to speak who felt they should not, but given they had the greatest "howl of despair" and the most to lose I could understand their reluctance, however on the day they rose to the challenge and as a direct result of this, the event became real and meaningful. Well done.

The survey Monkey Feedback – 7 Responses

Stage 1 Appreciation

Extremely powerful Excellent that people felt moved to make a contribution showed that there are far more positives about the ADP than negatives - it's just that the negatives get the limelight

was a good positive start to the day and important to focus on positives and to acknowledge that the ADP is supporting good worthwhile projects

It was good to hear the positive things said about the ADP. Positive partners never have a chance to be heard or get their view heard because of the continual issues and negative comments from only a few partners both at meetings and in media. So much time is taken up at meetings on negative stuff the ADP is never allowed to do anything and most partners can't get a word in at meetings

This balanced the howl of despair. A positive start.

Very nice. Snug. Yum.

It was good to hear these; however, given that these were all in support of the ADP and were offered at the beginning of the event, this may have given the impression to some that the event was biased towards a positive view of the ADP. In turn, this may perhaps have deterred some on the other side of the argument from offering their opinions, as there were ultimately very few given?

There seemed to be a decided lack of appreciation and a huge silence and then people got with it and the conversation flowed. Would be really nice to find out the general appreciation dialogue.

Stage 2 Howl of Despair

Extremely powerful Disappointing that those who have been criticising couldn't have been there and all who were there didn't contribute because it was made a very safe environment

this actually was like an appreciation of the ADP from another angle, as the howl of despair was primarily aimed at the way individuals had been treated and a howl of despair of how this was not okay and how this was detrimental to the development of the ADP I expected angry people against the ADP but primarily it was despaired people in support of the ADP. Was interesting that no-one against the ADP chose to talk

This was heavy but needed said it must have been so hard to speak. The police got the elephant out the room with For Argyll which everyone had ignored. I thought the stuff on for Argyll last year was bad enough but the latest article referred to in the howls is hellish this must be defamation and for Argyll and the folk in the ADP who feed that website need to be held accountable. It has to be a partner or somebody with links to ADP info as the level of detail in the articles has to be an inside job. If I was a member of staff getting that abuse and lies said about me because that is what it is I would be contacting a lawyer and the police. Elected members who promote the articles need to be held to account too. Worst thing is where are the service users in this??? The ADP needs to get on with the job it's embarrassing to hear what folk in other areas think of this ADP

I can appreciate why this needed to be heard and agreed with sentiments However, I was saddened to disagree with people's opinions that the answer to defamation on a website is to ignore it. This must be dealt with by any means possible. People have acted without accountability for long enough. Professionals must be accountable for their actions.

Much of the despair seemed to stem from members of the ADP and the NHS, regards the For Argyll website and how it had made personal attacks while reporting the transfer of adult addiction services. Was this the purpose of this section?

It was humbling to hear the testimony of individuals who have been directly affected in adverse ways by the actions of others for their personal agendas. It was necessary for this information to be aired in a forum such as this to provide a counterbalance to other views which have been freely promoted.

This was really interesting as people decided on the day to speak.....which is incredibly brave.....but is also a good marker for how strongly they felt to get up there and share their pain. My hat of to all the seeds especially Carol and Craig. Craig kept his professional hat on although given his situation was amazing he spoke at all. I truly feel that it was as a direct result of these seeds that people finally understood the extreme situation in Argyll and Bute. So well done to all.

Stage 3 Seeing With New Eyes

can't recall this now!

had to leave

This is all very well looking forward and I want to move forward and so do a lot of partners but we are not able to because of the ongoing obstruction to anything One of the howls said it well that it's all about money and if some folk are not getting money then they just don't accept the democratic decisions made. I'm worried that even though a lot of cards were on the table that those who could have spoken either didn't come or didn't speak. This was a day for their issues. No matter what we do some folk are never going to move on and I'm worried that after all that pain nothing will change as it will just carry on as usual where the negative voice is heard and the positive partners are ignored

I'm not certain how I benefitted from this. May have strayed into the negative. Too near to lunch, I think.

I feel the real picture is not in view.

Not sure how useful this was, as discussion at my table didn't stick to the theme.

Fantastic that the new chair John Owens was there and the x-chair. Also the elected members who I feel made significant contribution. Wonderful. It was also incredibly brave of Carol to organise this and create the opportunity for people to bring themselves to something quite unique and different. They clearly felt (the majority) safe and can't wait to hear the general feedback from the survey monkey.

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Stage 4 Into Action Community Circle

Again - very powerful Useful detail articulated Excellent facilitation throughout

had to leave

This again was hard. I felt a lot of hope in that room that day but I have felt hope before and then it gets hammered because of a minority. Someone in that circle said that all the complaints which held up funding was because folk that had had funding for a long long time didn't get any. They said no one complained about processes or governance for all the years they were getting money. To hear that youth services were held up doing good work because of complaints to block funding was an eye opener. My eyes have been opened and I want a line drawn and all the crap stopped so the ADP can function until some home truths are given to folk or we can't go into action. If partners are obstructive and manipulative in the background they need to be expelled or we will just be sitting here again next year going right we need to move on. If you can't work in partnership you don't deserve to be at the table

Perhaps the most effective and pragmatic part of the day in that some injustices were recognised and an apology given. All due respect to the professionals who issued them. However... I felt the latter could be considered a little vacuous until we hear what would be done differently in the future and how.

Perhaps the best part of the day. Let's go!

Felt a bit rushed as people had to leave and the session ran over time. Probably should have allocated more time to this but nonetheless it seemed to secure close to a consensus that it is time to move forward with a positive agenda.

The apology from the chair was crucial in terms of "feeling heard". This was also interesting, participants generally had relaxed into the conversations and fully involved themselves in the community discussions. It was clear that unanimously people need to see change to happen and the sooner the "next right steps" for Argyll and Bute are implemented the better. I look forward to the Recovery Bounce from this event. again....and again.....and again.

What did you find most useful on the day

hearing the strength of feeling behind people's support of the ADP

The amount of people in that room who want to work together to make a difference for service users and who want the ADP to be able to do what it's supposed to. I think it was useful to see elected members there I think like many folk they got a shock at how bad things are. Also to have a GP and the chairs there. I hope folk listened

An opportunity to listen. The normal people versus addicted people graph was wonderful.

Meeting and putting faces to the people who had only been names up until then.

Opportunity to hear impact on individual officers (and service users) of selfish and ill-informed actions of others.

What did you find least useful on the day?

not everyone spoke who had things that could have been aired

That there was probably people in that room who are the cause of a lot of the issues and they are just negative. Also folk flouncing out in big drama. Why come if you can't try and work together. Also the worry that nothing will change as usual and the minority who shout loudest will just carry on complaining.

A lot of what I actually heard.

A reluctance in some to move forward

Nothing in particular; all useful.

What was the most significant experience for you on the day?

the support of partners

The amount of people who want to move on and also the clear statements that those who speak as the third sector are not speaking for all third sector partners. I heard all day that the complaints and all the awful stuff on for Argyll was 'not in my name!' And the howls were gut wrenching this was significant no member of staff should have their name blackened like that it's just wrong and those who are part of that libellous behaviour because it's obvious lies should be deeply ashamed of themselves

Free speech. One each.

By far the "howls of despair" left me really wondering how we can implement a recovery orientated system of care when the "paradigm shift" has still to happen in some services. To counteract that there was open honesty and directness from the police, and other seeds.

Hearing about negative impact on service users, whose interests should be central to all our business.

What do you think should be the ADP's next step after the day?

Get on with the business people have had their opportunity we need to serve those who are at risk and those who are vulnerable in Argyll & Bute

Listen to the partners who never get heard listen to the national support organisations and work with them to move this ADP forward. Get rid of the third sector forum. It was described as a negative group of just a few organisations who are not representing other 3rd sector partners in a good light. If these people in that forum would not listen to their chair who resigned when she tried to get them to talk about service users it does make me wonder if these people should be anywhere near a service user. I wouldn't want any of my family there. It looks like there aim in life is to get at the ADP the powers that be in the ADP needs to stop pandering to the - and stay strong and move on with the +

It should start to value, support and utilise all the resources available to it.

I would shut down the forum or sub-group and start afresh. Some things can't be fixed, nor should we be wasting our energy trying to. In a ROSC we can go round, underneath over the top and if people want to stay stuck that is their choice. The local forums should be very clear about what part of the governance they are expected to contribute to and what part they have NO say in. Good mental preparation at this end, laying the ground rules means that this new group regardless to who sits on it, needs a strong chair but will have a tight remit.

Publicise widely the positive agenda going forward and identify allies. Ensure a line is drawn under past events by denying opportunities for abuse of processes for furtherance of spurious agendas.

Do you have any other comments?

once again - excellent facilitation thank you

Just that I hope something does come out of the day. That a line can be drawn that things do change and that the ADP can start functioning properly to make a difference for service users and their families and to get some prevention happening. If it just carries on as before and more complaints and investigations or more abuse of staff then the Gov or someone needs to step in and help the ADP expel the partners who are blocking the process and also find who is leaking all that ADP stuff to the media. I thought that the woman who did the facilitating was amazing too. Please can we move on and work together for the good of the service users if not I'm not sure I can waste any more time on this as we will get nowhere.

Genuine ROSC embraces everything in the world, and the way that we relate to it.

It was a privilege to be involved and hopefully things will continue to move on. In any change process, just before people start to quieten down and fling in the towel. There is a lot of unrest....hold firm. Just like a mother who keeps giving her son money for heroin, so he knows she cares and is worried sick about him; one day that mother says "no more". The son comes back over the next couple of weeks then moves on when he realises it is JUST NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. Give time, TIME.

No.

No Recovery Commitments were made: I decided not to offer out the Commitments as it was a bespoke event and participants were already doing much writing.

Visibility: Initial impact

Disbelief from many participants who were only hearing about many things for the first time. On the day several “seeds” which are 10 minute shares which informs the dialogue questions at the tables, impromptu decided they wanted to speak. Fantastic.

International impact

None

What did we learn?

Open and honest dialogue, however difficult must be allowed a safe space.
We as human beings can try too hard to get individuals to see things from our point of view.
We have to accept and respect the right of all individuals to express themselves.
Difficult decisions have to be made and not everyone is going to like them.....

Appreciation

Carol Muir for continuing to move on with their vision from the implementation day.

John Owens for his contributions on the day.

Scottish Government ADP Support Team and all the national organisations who attended.

To all seeds and contributions

For your information and on a lighter note

The **A83** is a major road in [Argyll and Bute](#), Scotland, running from Tarbet, on the western shore of [Loch Lomond](#), where it splits from the [A82](#), to [Campbeltown](#) at the southern end of the [Kintyre](#) peninsula.



Since much of this scenic road runs along the shores of Loch Fyne, the highest point is reached only ten miles after Tarbet at the famous pass called Rest and Be Thankful. This pass on the A83 is 245m above sea level and it divides Glen Kinglas from Glen Croe. On top is a viewpoint with beautiful views in Glen Croe where you can clearly see the old valley road which was engineered by General Wade during the subjection of Scotland following the Jacobite rebellion. A stone was erected to commemorate the completion of this military road in 1750.

So although very beautiful, my appreciation for all who made the journey from many different parts of Scotland, Campbeltown, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and many different parts of Argyll. As I travelled on to Fife via Stirling on this dark wet road, it was not one of my easiest journeys **and I truly appreciate those** who live and work in Argyll & Bute and drive these rural roads, prone to landslides....every day.

Anne-Marie Quigg

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