

Data-Driven Social Care Roundtable

Session write-up

Held on 19th January 2021



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Introduction

The topic of discussion was particularly timely considering the current pandemic, as we have seen local authorities turn to innovative approaches to ensure the continued delivery of critical services for vulnerable adults over the last 10 months. Data has been a key enabler of this, and will continue to be, as councils progress through the recovery phase and work within the context of the 'new' normal.

The discussion was extensive. This write-up summarises the outcomes of the discussion, including the key issues discussed, experiences of the attendees and potential solutions going forwards into the 'new' normal and recovery stage. It is hoped that this write up will allow others in the social care sector to benefit from the thought-provoking conversation that was had.

The only way is data

Andy Begley (Chair and CEO of Shropshire Council) kicked off the session by outlining the focus of the afternoon was around discussing the use of Data and Impact on the sector; review where are up to, how we can continue to innovate; and how we can collaborate across the sector. In doing so, the objectives of the session were to:

- Explore the future of social care now, next and beyond and how collaboration and data can play a key part in this
- Agree a sector view of how to use data to deliver better outcomes for residents which can inform the ADASS perspective and shape future policy
- Identify the levers required to help the social care community achieve to improve data can be utilised to improve commissioning and front-line service delivery

Ultimately the outputs of these roundtable discussions could be used to drive forward the Social Care agenda and influence government policy in this field.

Helen Sunderland opened the discussion by acknowledging continued importance of technology and data given the pandemic has shifted the goalposts for how social care is being delivered. Shu Fei Grindlay introduced some of the ground-breaking work EY is undertaking on the use of Data Analytics; citing examples with Frontline Services and some local Councils

What does it all mean?

Pete Jackson and Richard James spoke about the journey the West Midlands have been on to better understand data; beginning by acknowledging a key role Andy Begley played by bringing data tools to the West Midlands that demonstrated the impact and usage of data. This included bringing in teams from Microsoft to demonstrate how MS teams and Power BI can be harnessed to visually understand data.

Pete went on to describe the challenges faced during the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic - where the council had the technology but lacked the ability to bring people together to analyse data.

The Council learned from mistakes and were then able adapt and harness the power of data; developing trackers to ensure PPE was reaching the right recipients; care homes; staff etc. The West Midlands' approach was garnering attention; with Sir David Pearson referencing the work the West Midlands were doing with data in November 2020. That set the basis for a partnership with EY; where EY were able to draw on their experience and capability to combine datasets and deliver a truly dynamic and multi-faceted picture. Richard posed the question "when should we start work on the future", noting that there is broad agreement on what we should do (invest in developing Local government digital and intelligence capabilities) but what is missing is a sense of urgency to take action now, leading to slower progress that could likely cost the sector dearly in the future.

Telling a story

Andy steered the discussion towards to Covid-19 Response: the biggest capability that helped deal with events over the past few months; or indeed the biggest gap that hindered the response.

Graeme Betts spoke to a gap in shaping a shared care record to help inform the delivery of frontline services. He spoke about the need to focus people on the citizen rather than the data around them. Graeme also spoke about positive strides made in building trust with health partners.

Alison Barker agreed with the point on the Shared care record. She also spoke about the need to recognise the importance of education and training to further develop analytics capability in the Social Care sector.

Sue Wald was keen to talk about how we are in the privileged position of having access to more data than ever before in the field of Health and Social Care. Sue however, noted an observation - the data on its own is not as effective as it is when paired with a proper narrative.

Speaking on a regional level, Sue spoke about how wider and more accurate data has helped drive service improvement - with Capacity Trackers enabling the south west to support particular areas and share expertise as well as identify and respond to changes in policy within the region.

Ian Crabtree spoke about the Lancashire perspective; how they developed a local capacity tracker that displays live information from providers. LCC staff call over 700 providers daily in order to gather information on various categories; starting from PPE, to food supplies; more recently progressing to information on outbreaks, cases and now vaccinations. Ian was keen to point out 100% compliance rates were achieved on provider data returns when financial incentives were involved. Ian also caveated that the data is 'here and now' data but would not help with market management in the future - that Lancashire County Council were in the process of planning for a long-term solution.

Donna Talbot added a comment around a mismatch of skill-sets within Adult Social Care bought on by the influx and availability of data: councils are now relying on performance officers to perform as analysts - which should only be viewed as a stopgap given the different subject matter expertise required to accurately analyse and interpret the data..

Helen Sunderland spoke about the ability to act on data in an operational capacity and echoed the importance of ensuring there was a relevant narrative to accompany data; citing the work EY are undertaking in Barking & Dagenham to convert data into case notes - bringing it to life by telling a story.

Jan Thurgood spoke positively about the availability of data on vaccinations as well as the importance of data collaboration with adult social care providers, in order to glean cross sector insight.

Technology Blind Spots

Andy Begley shifted gears by posing a question on the implications of continued lockdown - especially the opportunities, concerns and/or impact on individuals we support.

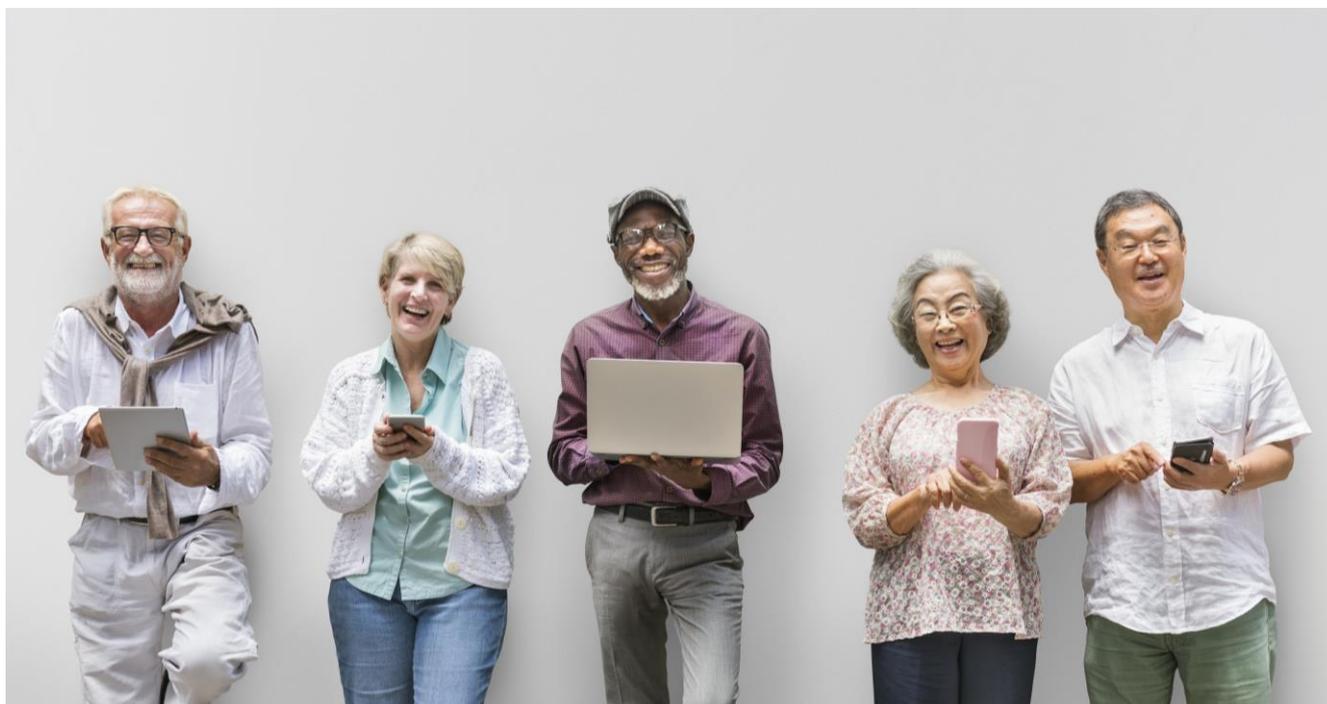
Pete Jackson spoke about his experience with family carers as an area where large numbers of people are disconnected from data. He described an initiative in the West Midlands that used text messages to communicate with people in those categories to great effect. The lesson here was not to overcomplicate things; how simple technology can be used to engage with communities.

Sue Wald shared experiences from Swindon which echoed a similar theme; where the council used letters and phones to communicate with individuals who were shielding - as those communities tend to have limited access to technology. Sue also spoke of how the Voluntary sector and Parishes were the most proactive and effective in reaching out to these groups. Sue spoke of the need to design intervention that can target the right people at a local level.

Graeme Betts spoke about his experience with outreach at Birmingham City council. In a survey conducted after the first lockdown; 50% of respondents felt very well supported, 50% did not feel supported. This led the council to change tack and employ greater use of phones and letters as well as reinvesting in community networks to reconnect with communities. This helped the council secure greater satisfaction with council accessibility.

Alison Barker continued the theme of digital exclusion, speaking of how coordinating data on a neighbourhood and place level helped highlight the exacerbation on disadvantaged communities.

Ian Crabtree lauded the examples of community outreach undertaken by councils and shared two observations.



He highlighted people with learning disabilities as being disproportionately affected during lockdown as well as a need for looking into the impact on the new ways of working for Adult Social Care staff.

Helen Sunderland drew attention towards the ability of data to identify vulnerabilities - pointing to the work EY has done to deploy analytics capability across housing, adults, social care, shielding data. This has allowed EY to view communities across three different lenses: those impacted by health due to lockdown; impacted by lockdown and isolation and those impacted by the prolonged economic impact of lockdown.

Making it human

Andy Begley posed another question - asking about the broad opportunities and risks of harnessing data sets as well as how we ensure we humanise the data and embed ethical principles into the use of said data.

Richard James suggested an innovation culture is needed within the public sector: one that champions and encourages exploring, creates a safe-fail, instead of a failsafe, environment and innovates to expand Local governments tool kit to solve modern day challenges. This coupled with more effort into user experience, user research and user design would help understand people's jobs, gains and pains. This would be key to humanise data as well as aid the design of future proof technology.

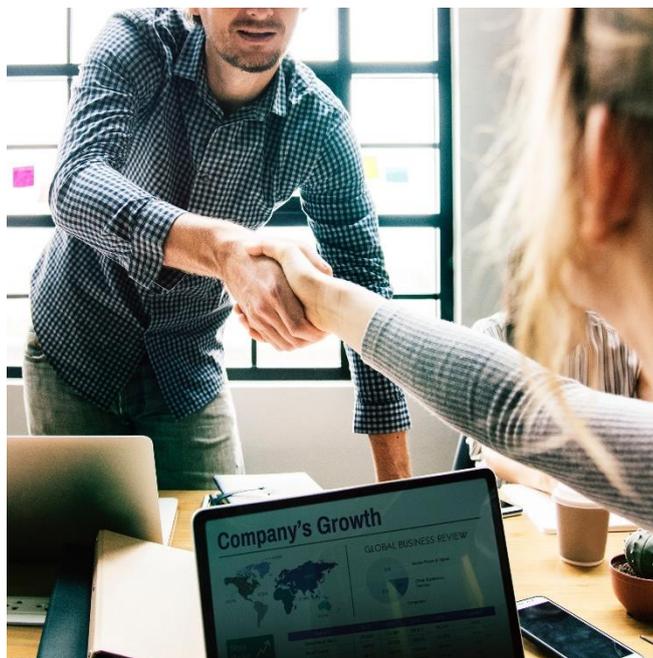
Pete Jackson echoed the previous comment around innovation and creativity, challenging government to create space that allows creative thinking. Pete also referenced EY's work at Bronze Labs that helped link volunteers.

Helen Sunderland suggested humanising data begins with shedding labels - one example being 'vulnerable'. Helen also spoke about the opportunities of using weekly data extract to predict escalating circumstances and initiating early intervention and outreach.

A Fresh Approach

Graeme Betts spoke about embedding a data driven approach - discussing the importance of sharing insights with frontline staff to see if this resonated with them; then re-analysing and changing the data based on feedback.

Alison Barker had been looking at hospital avoidance and concludes the question we need to ask ourselves is "What data do we have and what data do we need to understand our communities and priorities across the whole system?" Rather than trying to understand system needs, without the right data to support this. We need to press partners to understand and collect different data - even though health systems are not comfortable with it - as this helps understand best how to support people in the community. Alison reiterated the need for commitment and shared understanding of the data requirements to serve communities.



Sharing is Caring

A final question was posed on where we get the best value from Data Sharing. Alison Barker's advice was to act in small ways to bring about big outcomes.

Graeme Betts suggested ICS presented a good opportunity to bring together data and knowledge in an integrated way.

Pete Jackson spoke about innovation in the language used to describe our services and the mediums employed to reach out to national audiences to mirror the vision proposed for social care.

Sue Wald said it was important to build on links and priorities built up during the Covid-19 crisis. This could include using data at a regional level to set out a proposition for adult social care that truly projects the voice of the sector.

Helen Sunderland spoke about starting with an approach to look close at home - emphasising the importance of not underestimating the value of data within your own organisation. Building on what you have will allow you to achieve even more without having to crack system challenges in the first instance.

Conclusion

Andy Begley spoke about the value of coming together in such forums to share knowledge and opinions from people on the front lines but more importantly; the challenge is to bring that information together to effect policy and practical change across the systems in which we work.

In closing, Helen Sunderland spoke of the need for a cultural revolution to compliment the technology one. If the technology is there: **How do we entice, excite and build confidence in what is available? How do we remain curious and agile in understanding the tools that are there as well as those that will inevitably come along?**

Today's forum and others like it, create the space to think through sector approaches to the above big questions and support a shift to action by harnessing the convening power of sector leaders. We all look forward to driving this debate going forward.



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With thanks to the attendees of the roundtable:

- ▶ Alison Barker, Director of Adult Social Care, Hull City Council
- ▶ Andy Begley, Chief Executive, Shropshire Council
- ▶ Graeme Betts, Corporate Director Adult Social Care Birmingham City Council
- ▶ Ian Crabtree, Director of Adult Social Care Transformation, Lancashire County Council
- ▶ Richard James, Strategic Development Lead Shropshire Council
- ▶ Pete Jackson, Improvement Director, WM ADASS
- ▶ Wajid Shafiq, Chief Executive, Xantura
- ▶ Helen Sunderland, Director, EY
- ▶ Shu Fei Grindlay, Senior Manager, EY
- ▶ Donna Talbot, Head of Service - Business Intelligence, Lancashire County Council
- ▶ Jan Thurgood, Corporate Director for Adult Social Care, Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole Council
- ▶ Sue Wald, Corporate Director Adult Services, Health & Housing, Swindon Borough Council

And to those additionally in attendance:

- ▶ Marie Rogers, Precious Akpoviroro and Mike Chard (ADASS)
- ▶ Salman Khan (EY)

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