

Together Alone

Summary of a Review of Joined-up Social Services



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

2022

This review was intended to analyse the effectiveness and productivity of joined-up social services. The review also found that government agencies must work better to understand the underlying causes of the socioeconomic inequities which cause people to need social services. Further, it's clear that truly collaborative approaches to social services were highly effective, as this best met the needs of people engaging with social services.

The report outlined that for 'effective implementation' services required:

- .1. Funding,
- .2. Trust between providers.
- .3. Trust between providers and recipients, clear objectives.
- .4. Sound governance and sufficient staffing.
- .5. Effective data collection and evaluation.

Further findings / points of interest to note include:

- In general, government agencies struggle to work together effectively – despite working well together in times of crisis, they have a tendency of 'snapping back' after crises finish.
- Previous negative experiences may put people off dealing with central government agencies, and trust is higher in general with NGOs and community-based groups.
- NGOs and community-based groups are often more effective due to their knowledge of the needs of the community.
- Despite the comparative effectiveness of social services which are embedded in the community, central government is hesitant to provide sufficient and consistent funding. Confidence in resourcing is important to make long-term plans.
- Lack of resourcing and red tape can lead to understaffing and overworking, especially for those who live and work in the areas they service.
- Siloed approach to funding which is preferred by central agencies does not lend itself to holistic/all-encompassing social services.

The implications for the social services sector are clear and reinforcing, that the repeated calls for more permanent and reliable funding are in fact vital for the effectiveness and efficiency of the sector. Without security of funding, social services are unable to plan towards a joined-up future, where services work to their strengths.

A key indicator that is required to access funding is the ability to show that what is done works. Central government generally doesn't understand collaborative approaches to social services, and as such the effectiveness of these must be demonstrated through data. This means that some programmes and initiatives will never be attempted due to a lack of data to back them up. It also creates an opportunity for NZCCSS to advocate for evaluation funding with Government (which you can see in our recent Te Ara Pairangi submission).

This report also lays out the groundwork for organisations such as NZCCSS to serve their membership through both in-house research and developing ways to support others to engage in their own research. But most importantly, enabling and growing connection between our members to allow collaboration to occur.

You can find a link to the report [here](#).

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