

An Overarching Framework – for evaluating and reviewing the way in which we deliver a range of public services; in particular, those pertaining to community and social services.

While there can be no dispute that our community/social services are in crisis as a consequence of prolonged underfunding, exacerbated over recent years by Draconian austerity, the situation has been compounded by the incremental manifestation of a governmental and institutional approach to their design and delivery which is ineffective, wasteful and undermining of societal cohesion and communal resilience.

It is evident that the provision of sufficient funding alone will not on its own begin to remedy the situation.

Over the decades since the birth of the Welfare State we have increasingly ignored the fact that the core wealth of individuals, families and communities resides in relationships and social capital. From time to time, as evidenced presently by the Welsh Government's espousal of Coproduction, policy makers acknowledge the issues but, heretofore, it is rarely long before that awareness dissipates. Those devising public/human service policies or designing services must be held accountable for ensuring that what they do strengthens rather than diminishes that fundamental resilience.

Successive administrations' failure to attend to the 'big picture', preoccupation with money and services, and ignorance of their role in nurturing and sustaining resilient communities, largely as an unintended consequence, has served to dismantle society's innate resilience and normalised an erroneous assumption that products, professionals and services can deliver comprehensive satisfaction of peoples' needs and aspirations.

On top of the adverse impacts upon citizens and communities, our failure to nurture and strengthen society and communities has engendered dire economic consequences as the State, in its aspiration to be all things to everyone, has stimulated unbridled demand and, unable to satisfy that demand, instituted systems and controls that everyday make the crisis exponentially worse.

A radically different approach to social policy development is needed:

- We must do all we can to ensure that our public policies (and the way in which our public services go about their work) recognise and value the essentialness and centrality of strong, resourceful and connected communities to the resilience of our citizens and their communities.
- We must pay as much attention to nurturing caring and resilient communities (attending to society) as we do to organising public services – and invest and prioritise accordingly.

- We must evaluate the extent to which our public services function in ways that are complementary, supplementary and supportive of the core economy – sustaining strong, resilient, interdependent and well-connected citizens and their communities – and root out those systems and practices that discourage, disempower or make redundant the relational assets of our communities.
- We must attend to equipping our human services workforce with the principles and skills congruent with the aforesaid direction of travel, and reorient professional training and contemporary practice accordingly.
- We must design human services systems – based upon transparent purposes and explicit principles - that positively serve and reinforce these objectives.
- We must establish local and fully representative democracy with local revenue raising powers and understand that priorities will rightly differ.

We believe that good government is concerned with strengthening and nurturing caring, interdependent, resilient and sustainable communities peopled by resourceful and talented citizens. It seems that - as a society, politically and culturally – we have lost our way and been coerced and seduced into an unquestioning and largely unconscious ‘acceptance’ that the ‘marketplace’ is at the core of human existence and that the purpose of life is, in essence, the consumption of others’ goods, services and expertise.