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Conference Abstract

How effective is joint commissioning? An exploration of processes, practices and outcomes in five English localities

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Abstract:

Purpose: This paper investigates the issue of joint commissioning in the context of English health and social care, evaluating its purposes, processes and outcomes.

Background: Over time, health and social care policy has placed growing emphasis on the importance of a commissioning-led approach and on the need for more effective health and social care partnerships. Combining these two agendas together, policy has increasingly started to focus on the need for greater joint commissioning of health and social care. And yet, current policy rhetoric about the importance of joint commissioning often seems to lag behind the reality at ground level - despite the fact that aspirations for effective joint commissioning date back many years. At least part of the difficulty seems to lie in the fact that joint commissioning is, by definition, more complex than commissioning in single agency settings; joint commissioning almost inevitably brings additional challenges because of the need to develop effective partnerships between health, social care and beyond.

Objectives: This paper investigates the very different experiences of joint commissioning in five English localities. Each site has been the subject of an 18 month study employing a number of quantitative and qualitative tools of data collection to build up an in-depth case study of joint commissioning locally.

Conclusions: We will illustrate the very different practices and processes which are operated in the name of joint commissioning in these sites and make some tentative conclusions about the type of impacts these have had in terms of service user outcomes.

Keywords

england, health, social care, joint commissioning

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