



ACADEMY for
JUSTICE COMMISSIONING

Evening Seminar

**Effective decommissioning:
The flip side of effective commissioning**

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Your challenges and questions

- Range of reasons to decommission
- Range of experience levels
- Evidence base
 - *Understanding the impact, alternative arrangements*
- Planning and delivering change
 - *Planning, risk, transition arrangements, sustainability*
- Managing relationships
 - *Leadership, providers, service users, media*

The context

- Dependent variable problem (what counts as decommissioning?)
- We decommission all of the time
- There are positive reasons to decommission
- The austerity narrative
- There is no single, simple answer
- Problems faced in all sectors – opportunities for learning
- Lack of academic evidence
- Decommissioning is a political, rational, technical and emotional process
- Myth of the policy cycle
- Myth of evidence-led policy

The evidence

- Lack of evidence base
- Some resources
 - NAO – *focuses on rational*
 - Healthcare dominates
- Four key ingredients (*mixing rational, political, emotional*):
 1. Make the case
 2. Manage relationships
 3. Strong leadership
 4. Communicate, communicate, communicate

Make the case

- Planning is important
- Focus on rational and technical
- Quick fixes no longer an option – *transformational change needed*
- Difference between what should and what does affect decommissioning (Robert et al, 2014)
- What should ‘make the case’
 - Clear strategic goals
 - Fair decision-making process
 - Strong evidence of case for change
- Decommissioning costs
 - Time and money to implement
 - Impact of closures
- Face the future (what happens following decommissioning)

Strong leadership

- Complex system with complex governance
- Part of whole complex, adaptive system
- ‘Wicked problems’
- Decommissioning is difficult and stressful
- Active role of senior managers
 - Clients
 - Staff
 - Partners
 - Wider public
 - Legal
- Challenge vested interests
- Political support

Manage relationships

- Map/identify key stakeholders
- Plan how to manage these relationships
- Be proactive (don't wait for the s**t to hit the fan)
- Don't just focus on 'core' stakeholders
- Decisions to de-vest: knock on implications for others
- Be clear about:
 - pace of change
 - transitional arrangements
 - support arrangements
 - future arrangements
- Remember that change is difficult and emotional

Communicate, communicate, communicate

- Planning is important
- Media
 - Make local contacts
 - Actively manage relationships
- Regular updates to all those affected
 - Email updates, meetings, public meetings
 - Clear, accurate messages
- Appetite for risk decreases as you approach D:Day
- Gauge risk appetite
- Public, community, service users involvement and engagement
- Positive not negative

Useful resources

National Audit Office: decommissioning toolkit www.nao.gov.uk

HAC (2010) *Ten lessons learnt from closing the Hearing Aid Council*

Robert et al (2014) Disentangling rhetoric and reality: an international Delphi study of factors and processes that facilitate the successful implementation of decisions to decommission health services, *Implementation Science*, 9 (123) (open access article)

Robinson et al (2013) It ain't what you do it's they way that you do it: lessons for healthcare from decommissioning of older people's services, *Health and Social care in the Community*, 21 (6), pp614-622

Bunt and Leadbeater (2012) *The art of exit: in search of creative decommissioning*, National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts

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Any Questions ?

