

Ipsos MORI

October 2014

Department of Health 2014 Stakeholder Research

METHODOLOGY



An **Immersion Phase** was held at the beginning of the project. This comprised a roundtable discussion between Ipsos MORI and the DH External Partnership team about the **wider context and objectives** of the project, followed by **several in-depth interview with senior DH officials**.



Following this, Ipsos MORI conducted **120 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders** identified by DH. Interviews were conducted between 4th August and 25th September 2014 and lasted 30-45 minutes on average .



Apart from six quantitative questions, the data presented in this report is qualitative and therefore **illustrative and exploratory rather than statistically reliable**. Verbatim comments have been included to provide insight into particular issues or topics.



This slidepack presents key findings from the following groups of stakeholders:

- Public Health
- ALBs
- Social Care
- VCS and Social Enterprise

It is designed to complement the overall findings discussed in detail in the main report.

SUMMARY OF OVERALL FINDINGS

PROGRESS OVER TIME

Previous waves of research took place during a period of transition. It is clear this year that **progress has been made**; there were examples of positive and transparent working, and more stakeholders said they would **speak positively** of DH.

2012: 67%
2013: 67%
2014: 71%

(% agreed that they would speak positively about DH in discussion with others)

"I feel that DH understand us better and are more interested in knowing us. They are more engaged and come to us."
VCS & Social Enterprise

"We don't have [a relationship] which is slightly disappointing but a lot has changed since responsibilities have moved from DH to NHS England."
Umbrella & Membership Group

However many now have **less regular contact with DH**, and were more aligned with NHS England or Public Health England. This may explain why fewer stakeholders felt DH was a **good organisation to do business with** (as these participants were less able to give an opinion).

2012: 65%

2013: 78%

2014: 69%

(% agreed that DH is a good organisation to do business with)

INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Progress has been made...



Stakeholders felt DH was making concerted efforts to engage and involve them in its work.



Civil servants were perceived to be hard working and committed.



DH has made good progress in joining up different parts of the organisation.

*"If you'd asked me a couple of years ago I'd have said the Department was very siloed and that it did not take its relationship with stakeholders terribly seriously. But I think there has been **substantial progress in the last couple of years.**"*
ALB

POLICY MAKING

Some stakeholders had seen DH take a more **open and proactive approach** to involving them in policy. However others had seen their policy contacts disappear and **no longer had a policy making relationship** with DH.

2012: 58%

2013: 66%

2014: 63%

(% agreed that DH involves stakeholders in the development of policies and strategies)

There were some concerns that DH only involves a relatively small group of stakeholders in policy making, and there was a desire for DH to cast the net wider.

"Most of their consulting is done with a small group of stakeholders and then opened up to others after the big decisions have been made."
Commercial & Industry

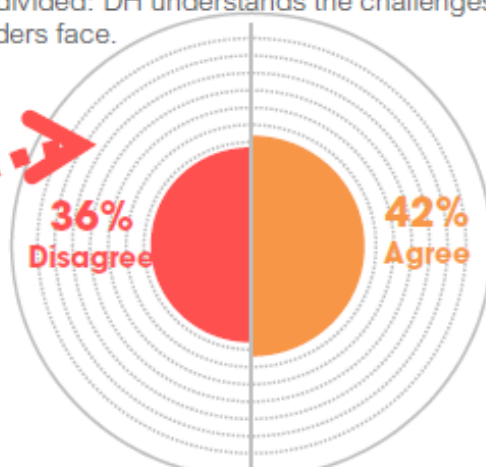


ONGOING CHALLENGES

Areas for improvement are still evident:

- DH seen as stretched and overly reliant on input and expertise of stakeholders.
- Stakeholders feel they are not involved early enough in the development of policies.
- Stakeholders feel DH does not always understand the constraints they are working under.
- Many are uncertain about the future of their working relationships.

Opinion divided: DH understands the challenges stakeholders face.



(% agree/disagree: DH understands the issues and challenges your organisation is facing)

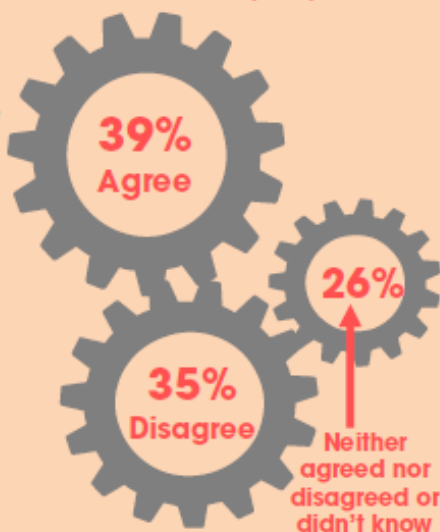
DH'S ROLE AND STRATEGY



...however their understanding of **how DH's role translates into practice is less clear**. For example:

- Many had seen DH take more of an operational role than they had expected.
- There was a lack of clarity on what DH has responsibility for, and how it works with ALBs.

A clear understanding of DH's role and purpose:



38% agreed that DH effectively communicates what it is doing.

Stakeholders want:

- Clarity on how DH works with ALBs.
- A better understanding of who has responsibility for what.
- An understanding of what this means for their relationship with the Department and other national bodies.



A broad cross-section of stakeholders called for DH to establish and share an **overarching and long-term vision or strategy** for the sector – something they felt was a key aspect of its stewardship role and was not visible to them currently.

"I think the term steward involves taking some responsibility for the direction and strategy of the system and it's that bit that I think is not quite at the point of maturity."

ALB

PUBLIC HEALTH

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP

"They're helpful. We meet on a one-to-one basis every two months and I feel we can pick up the phone and get a meeting easily. They are also very visible to us; we often see each other at the same events."
Local Government

"The Public Health people are particularly nice to deal with and particularly open'."
Professional Body

Stakeholders describe having close and long standing relationships. Staff are seen to be very responsive.

CHANGING RELATIONSHIP

The relationship has matured over the past year as people have settled into posts.

However others have seen their relationship with DH decline as they build stronger links with NHS England and Public Health England (PHE).

"The relationship has matured in the past year. This is because they have been in post longer and grant arrangements have developed. We have a stable, honest and open relationship."
Local Government

"The PHE relationship is more open than with DH...with DH, the relationship seems very formal but with PHE we can pick up the phone and have an informal chat whenever, and PHE are quicker to respond than DH."
Local Government

COMPARISON TO PHE

It was suggested however that there was a more open, informal relationship with PHE.

ARM'S LENGTH BODIES

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

SPONSORSHIP TEAMS

Sponsor teams have fostered closer relationships and collaboration between ALBs and DH. The teams were seen as hard working, considerate and responsive, while working in a challenging environment.

"The sponsor team relationship is very good – they are well informed, committed, understand a line that needs to be drawn between their sponsorship role and our role as an ALB; are reliable, and we can speak to them about issues that concern us."

"The relationships feels relaxed and easy... These are complicated, complex issues we're dealing with but the relationships are good and constructive."

Transparent relationships with DH are key for ALBs. ALBs emphasised the importance of having open, frank discussions with the Department.

"I cannot emphasise too strongly that we will make this work by the quality of our relationships...if we can get some of the softer relationship stuff right we will build those relationships to the point that we are really wanting to do the best for each other."

IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS

"They wanted to really kind of carry on doing some of the things that were now our responsibility...so we got off to a bit of a rocky start I would say, last April, but things have improved pretty significantly."

Positively many ALBs had seen improvements in their relationship over the past year. This was largely due to DH and other organisations readjusting to their new roles, and relationships settling as a result. Individual contacts had consequently been strengthened, becoming more mature, honest and collaborative.

Further improvements could be made however.

Some stakeholders reported receiving conflicting and competing demands on their time, unbeknown to the sponsorship team. These ALBs would like to see fewer requests for information from different parts of DH.

"They don't always seem plugged in to what's going on in the Department."

There was also a continued call for the relationship between DH and ALBs to be further streamlined to avoid duplication, as well as allowing ALBs greater freedom to pursue their individual responsibilities.

"Our ask would be: for DH to be as disciplined as they can about what their priorities are, and what they want to intervene in, and what they're happy for us to get on with; and try not to meddle too much in what we do."

DH'S ROLE

A MORE HANDS-ON APPROACH

ALBs had a good understanding of DH's role as 'custodians of the health sector' and ensuring ALBs work together in a coordinated way.

DH TAKING A MORE 'HANDS-ON' ROLE

Impact on working relationships

Some ALBs felt DH was 'micro-managing' them which created duplication and added unnecessarily to their workload.

"There's a team of people in DH, who I feel are marking our homework...And there's quite a lot of overlap – and not necessarily particularly healthy overlap – between what DH does and what we do."

Impact on clarity of role

This blurred the division between different organisations' roles and there was a feeling that DH was taking more of an active focus on operational delivery than expected.

"We, as the ALBs, have our roles which are set out in a statutory framework agreement that should be quite clear and tidy. It's not helpful from that point-of-view that the Department is as hands-on as it is. We are all working through that."

UNDERSTANDING THE FRONT LINE



As other stakeholders found, DH was perceived to take longer than expected to execute tasks. ALBs, with their operational responsibilities, found this to be a particular problem. They specifically felt DH could be overly **focussed on process**, without recognising the urgency with which some matters had to be dealt with to implement decisions at an operational level.

*"They aren't at the frontline of a lot of what's happening, and they therefore don't necessarily feel the heat and pressure and burden, and **progress things through in a more strategic fashion**, whereas actually we quite often have a requirement for operational decisions."*



IMPLEMENTING A VISION

Many stakeholders wanted to work in partnership with DH to develop and drive forward its vision, however ALBs were particularly keen to see progress in this area. In particular they wanted to see DH take more of a leadership role to bring together ALBs and other organisations to shape and act upon a strategy.

*"DH needs to **use ALBs and national agencies to ensure their vision happens**...they could come together to form a more explicit senior management team that is more formal and more visible."*

*"I think the term steward involves **taking some responsibility for the direction and strategy** of the system and it's that bit that I think is not quite at the point of maturity."*



SOCIAL CARE

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

POSITIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS



"It feels like a real partnership. There's a blend of formality and informality."
VCS & Social Enterprise

*"We have found them to be very, very helpful, collaborative, open, constructive in all things that you want them to be. In terms of individual relationships, there is a **real openness to engaging** and working with the voluntary sector and I really want to feed that back strongly and say that's very helpful."*
VCS & Social Enterprise

Stakeholders recognise that DH has worked hard to improve relationships, becoming more available and engaging. Stakeholders with a social care interest talked in particular about having supportive contacts who they could have frank conversations with.

On the whole social care stakeholders felt their engagement had been productive, and they were able to really make a difference.

*"By and large, they're people who do what they say they are going to do. I feel like I'm listened to and **able, with most people, to exert influence.**"*
Local Government

*"I think they recognise the kind of in-depth, often quite 'wonkish', if you like, policy knowledge that we have been able to bring. I think there is a **genuine recognition that we have some value to add**... I think it's good from that point of view."*
Umbrella & Membership Group

TIMELINESS OF ENGAGEMENT



There was a desire for DH to give stakeholders more advance warning and time to prepare for consultations and engagement events. Stakeholders also wanted DH to consider the amount of consultation requests and make them more targeted so to maximise the expertise available in the sector.

*"There are certainly occasions where people **lack insight into the amount of time that people will need** to prepare properly. Sometimes that's unavoidable, I get that. But other times, with a bit more planning they could be better at it."*
Local Government

*"**Timeliness is an issue** at times... communication has come a bit after the event, or not with the time built in to prepare that one might like... also there are times when just getting internal clearances on correspondence takes longer than one might like."*
Local Government

POLICY-MAKING

CARE ACT: A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE



The
Care
Act

The Care Act was hailed as a positive example of policy making in DH.

Willingness to engage and openness to new ways of doing things:

"Policy-making feels like a well oiled machine. It feels that in the consultation and information gathering phases there is a general willingness to engage. Over the last year there seems to be a willingness to develop new approaches to policy development."

VCS & Social Enterprise

Involved early and with the ability to make a difference:


"On the whole the Care Act has been good because we've been involved at an early stage, at all stages and we have genuinely been able to shape and inform thinking... it's probably the most open, constructive relationship that I've had with the DH and in comparison to engagement with other departments."

VCS & Social Enterprise

EMBED PRACTICE ELSEWHERE

These stakeholders would like to see the approach taken in the development of the Care Act replicated elsewhere. Including:

- ✓ Involving service users.
- ✓ Co-production approach with stakeholders.
- ✓ Involving a wide cross-section of stakeholders.
- ✓ Engaging stakeholders early in the process.



"There have been lots of engagement events where people using services have given their views but that's been unusual and still as a whole I think the department could learn some lessons from that."

VCS & Social Enterprise

DH'S ROLE

As with stakeholders more widely, concerns remain regarding DH's relationship with partners and how it will implement the policies it develops. However, the Care Act is seen as a significant achievement, and an example where DH has stewarded the system well.

"I do genuinely think that they've carried out most of their role well, they've engaged extensively around the legislation. The legislation got through; it's a very substantial piece of legislation in terms of the Care Act."

Local Government

"If you accept that their role steering the system, there have been strong and important developments (for example The Care Act and engagement with local government) but they need to develop their relationship with PHE and NHS England."

Local Government

VCS & SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

VCS organisations reported concerted efforts from DH to engage them – many suggested that DH had become more receptive and responsive recently.

“There’s been a change in the quality of interactions with DH over the last year, it’s a lot better than it used to be. The tone is better and they’re working with us; they’re not doing stakeholder stuff as a box ticking exercise.”

“On the whole it’s been very constructive. We’ve appreciated the level of transparency about what some of the parameters are, and I think that’s really important when you’re wanting to engage with voluntary sector organisations.”

UNDERSTANDING VCS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

While many stakeholders described improved relationships with DH, it was felt that the Department could better understand the challenges VCS and Social Enterprise organisations face.

In particular, stakeholders suggested that they are often frustrated by the tight timescales set by DH around consultations and project deadlines. It was felt that this highlighted that DH was unaware of other pressures on stakeholders and the constraints on their resources.



In addition, it was felt that DH was frequently slow to respond and act. This frustration was most strongly felt by stakeholders who were funded by DH; they reported that procurement processes took too long, and that funds were released too slowly.

“There will often be tight timescales on projects. This is understandable, but often it feels as if DH isn’t as good at sticking to the tight timetables that they set as they expect other people to be.”

“Payment mechanisms could be more straightforward - we’re still waiting for grant money to be handed out 6 months down the line.”

The Strategic Partnership Forum

The Strategic Partnership Forum was viewed very positively.

The programme was perceived to be unparalleled elsewhere in government and an ideal means for engaging the voluntary sector. Participants valued the networking opportunities it provides and the opportunity to shape policy and have direct contact with ministers and senior civil servants

“DH is the only government department that works in this way with the voluntary sector, so clearly this is a really positive thing and it works really well.”

Subgroups were particularly valued, and a few participants suggested that greater emphasis could be placed on this approach in future.

Linked to this some VCS & Social Enterprise Stakeholders felt they were receiving requests from DH that went over and above what they were funded to do.

“We’re bombarded with calls to input, but we’ve committed our resources to a plan. We’re being asked for feedback over and above what we’ve been paid/committed to do. Maybe 50% of our time we’re paid for and the rest will be ad hoc.”

”



DH'S ROLE

“I'm just starting to get to grips with it. It became clearer at a recent meeting – a small meeting on prevention – where DH clearly laid out how it was interacting with PHE on this matter.”

Stakeholders from the voluntary sector are split in terms of their awareness of the DH's role

“People who work closely with DH should understand the structures but it does probably need to be articulated more clearly for those who don't. They need to think about messages and demonstrate what they can deliver.”

Those who work closely with DH

Tended to have a good understanding as they were able to see the role in practice. For example, through observing DH working with ALBs in meetings.



Those with a more ad hoc or niche relationship

Were more likely to think the role of the Department had not been effectively communicated to them. These stakeholders were therefore less clear on DH's wider role and vision.



DH'S VISION

A number of stakeholders from the voluntary sector felt they had a lot of expertise to give, but DH was not exploiting this enough.

“Whilst we don't expect them to take on board everything we're saying and implement it, what we do want is for them to listen to what we have to say, as we have particular expertise that they don't.”

“I think they need to be more proactive, they need to be clearer on what they're actually working on and their priorities. If something isn't a priority for them, they should say so, as then I wouldn't have any particular expectations from them.”

It was felt by some stakeholders that a clearer understanding of DH's vision would help them to understand where their expertise may be most useful, and on what topics they should be engaging the Department. This insight into DH's work and priorities was lacking in some cases.

However, for voluntary organisations that work at the front line, there was some concern that DH lacked the power to influence how its vision would be implemented on the ground.

“The difficulty is how little influence DH has on the services on the ground. They have had less influence since NHS England was formed...I sense a disconnect between what we talk about with DH and what we see on the ground.”

Anna Quigley
Research Director
Anna.Quigley@ipsos.com

Robert Melvill
Research Manager
Robert.Melvill@ipsos.com

Rachel Burkitt
Senior Research Executive
Rachel.Burkitt@ipsos.com

Harriet Fowler
Research Executive
Harriet.Fowler@ipsos.com

For more information

Ipsos MORI
79-81 Borough Road
London SE1 1FY

t: +44 (0)20 7347 3000
f: +44 (0)20 7347 3800

www.ipsos-mori.com
www.twitter.com/IpsosMORI

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